INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG THE KENYA'S YOUTH

BY

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DECLARATION

Declaration by Candidate

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father the late Engineer Samuel E. Buluma and my mother the late Lucy N. Buluma, my wife Viola Cherop, daughter Azriela, and Son Alver, for being a key pilar to my academic excellence.

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ABSTRACT

In political communication, there is a surge in the use of social media as a tool for communicating to the electorate. Kenya has not been left behind by this technological advancement. For instance, the country is experiencing a surge in the number of young people and politicians using these virtual spaces. Despite the rising numbers, it is not clear about its influence on political participation. Moreover, the available studies emphasize on the use of social media for political revolts in the Arab world, political campaigns and fundraising in advanced democracies. Therefore, this study sought to examine the influence of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth. As such, it sought to answer the following research questions: how has social media affected political awareness? How has social media affected mobilization of young voters? And what are the gains and setbacks for using social media for political purposes by the Kenya's youth? The study was informed by the cognitive engagement and technological determinism theories and guided by the pragmatist research philosophy. It adopted mixed method design and the study area was Nairobi City County and Kakamega County. A sample size of 600 respondents was selected from a target population of 398,166 respondents. Purposive, stratified, and snowball sampling was used in selection of the sample population. Structured oral interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, and documentary analysis were used for the generation of primary data while secondary data was derived from documentary analysis.Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis and quantitative data descriptively. This study determined that social media to a larger extent has positively influenced political participation among Kenya's youth. Social media provides a space for Kenya's youth to discuss politics. It has enhanced engagement of the youth in political parties' affairs, campaigns, and activism. Secondly, social media has enabled the formation, solidification, and operations of the social movements. Morever, it has been used to promote peace, national cohesion, and integration. However, a significant number of youths do not want to voice their political concerns through these platforms due to fear of victimization. Moreover, fake news, hate speech, and content manipulation were among the major challenges. This study concluded that, first, social media usage positively affects political awareness and significantly contributed towards the mobilization of the young electorate. The youth have immensely benefited politically from the usage of social media however to a lower extent they face a fair share of setbacks. This study recommends; the government and other stakeholders to tap into this area and advance it in enhancing youth political participation. Scale up the accessibility of political information in rural areas. Protect users from political victimization and counter fake news, sensitize the youths on constitutional and legal legislations on the use of social media.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BAKE -Bloggers Association of Kenya

BVR -Biometric Voter Registration

CAJ - Commission for Administrative Justice

CAPU -Coast African People's Union

CEIP -Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

CIPEV -Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence

CMS -Church Missionary Society

CORD -Coalition for Reform and Democracy

CSOs -Civil Society Organizations

DFID - Department for International Development

DP -Democratic Party

ECK -Electoral Commission of Kenya

EPP -Engendering the Political Process

EU EOM – European Union, Elections Observation Mission

EVR -Electronic Voter Registration

FORD -Forum for the Restoration of Democracy

GAA -Government Advertising Agency (GAA)

GOK -Government of Kenya

HRW -Human Rights Watch

ICC -International Criminal Court

ICCPR -International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICG -International Crisis Group

ICT - Information Communication Technology

ICTA -ICT Authority

IEBC - Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

IED - Institute for Education in Democracy

International IDEA- International Institute for Democracy and Electrol Assistance

IPOA   -Independent Policing Oversight Authority

IPPG   -Interparty Parliamentary Group

IREC   - Independent Review Commission

KADU   -Kenya African Democratic Union

KANU   -Kenya African National Union

KAPP   -The Kenya African People's Party

KAU   -Kenya African Union

KCA   -Kikuyu Central Association

KEAP   - Kenya Electoral Assistance Program

KHRC   -Kenya Human Rights Commission

KNA   -Kalenjin National Alliance

KNA   -Kalenjin National Alliance

KNBS   - Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

KNCHR   -Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

KNC   -Kenya National Congress

KPHCR   - Kenya Population and Housing Census Results

KSC   -Kenya Socialist Congress

KTWA   -Kavirondo Taxpayers' Welfare Association

KYPA   - Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association

LDP   -Liberal Democratic Party

MCA   - Member of the County Assembly

MENA   - Middle East and North African

MoU   -Memorandum of Understanding

MP   -Member of Parliament

MUF   -Masai United Front

NAK   -National Alliance Party of Kenya

NARC   - National Rainbow Coalition

NASA   -National Super Alliance

NCCK   -National Council of Christians of Kenya

NCDP   - Nairobi County Development Plan

NCIC   -National Cohesion and Integration Commission

NCOSTI   -National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation

NCS   -National Communication Secretariat

NCSW   -National Commission on the Status of Women

NDI   -National Democratic Institute

NGOs   -Non-Governmental Organizations

ODM   - Orange Democratic Movement

OMR   -Optical Recognition

PCP   -People's Convention Party

PICK   -Party of Independent Candidates of Kenya

PNU   -Party for National Unity

SDP   - Social Democratic Party

SLDF   -Sabaot Land Defense Forces

SNSs   -Social Network Sites

UDHR   -Universal Declaration of Human Rights

USA   -United States of America

WWW   -World Wide Web

YK4R   -Young Kenyans for Raila

YP4C   - Young Patriots for Change

YVote   -Youth Vote

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Effect A consequence of social media usage on political participation.

Gains Positive features obtained in political participation through the use of social media.

Influence The power to affect, control or manipulate political participation.

Online Political Activism Refers to active and coercive online initiatives and campaigns to create awereness about political issues and / or promote political reforms.

Political Activism It is an action on behalf of a cause, action that goes beyond what is conventional or routine.

Political Awareness Knowledge and understanding of a political happening

Political mobilization Activities that intend to motivate masses of organized or unorganized participants to express themselves and to undertake a particular political action to accomplish political aims.

Political participation For this study, political participation refers to taking part in political action or a matter where the two dimensions of political participation, direct and indirect political participation are taken into consideration. Conventional forms of direct political participation include party

membership, voting in referendums, and elections activities. While engagement in other political organizations, trade union affinities, non-governmental organizations, and interest groups come under indirect political engagement.

Social media   Refers to an instrument for mobilization, communication, political deliberation, and an arena to exchange ideas.

Youth/Young Person   Refers to a person between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study sought to determine the influence of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth. Therefore, it examined how social media has affected political awareness and electoral mobilization. Moreover, it discusses the achievements and challenges facing Kenya's youth while using social media for political purposes. This chapter sets precedence for the study by providing a detailed explanation of the grounding of this research by presenting the background, the research problem, and the purpose of the study. It goes further and discusses the research objectives, and questions, assumptions, scope, and justification.

1.1 Background of the Study

This study was motivated by the growing number of politicians using social media, a platform popular among the youth as an alternative means for campaigning and communicating with the electorate. A cross the world, there is a high appreciation of the role of social media usage with regard to political revolts, fundraising and political engagement. Kenyans have not been left behind by this technological advancement. Communication and information in the modern era are affordable and easy to access because of the new media networking sites (McQuail, 2005). A new form of political participation is provided by the websites and social media networking sites. The platform has a networked design a powerful feature that poses threats to autocratic leaders (Li & Bernoff, 2011).

The design structures of the new media sites enable people to overcome state control and exercise their democratic rights, these people need only basic skills to use the new

media networking sites. Through the social media, users are enabled to form public opinion and forums for interest groups. Moreover, social media allows the engagement between politicians and the active citizens, therefore, providing an avenue for discourse and public opinion (McQuail, 2005). Internet expansion has necessitated the access to information and the exchange of both social and political ideas. Moreover, it has led to the rise of social movements through political participation, enhancement of democracy and the solidification of the civil society.

Social and political activists are able to form online identities through the use of the new media networking sites (Qui, 2008). The pro- and antigovernment groupings have been enabled to fight one another and maintain status quo through social media usage (Rahimi, 2011). Therefore, the usage of the new media networking sites plays a significant role in promoting competition in the political systems and political dialogue (Rahimi, 2011). Lenhart and Madden, (2007) noted that in many countries the young people seems to have been attracted to use the social media networking sites.

We cannot overstate the critical aspect of social media in political participation as new platforms for political dialogue have been developed through the new media networking sites for example Twitter and Facebook (Abdulrauf, Hamid, and Ishak, 2015). Moreover, the realm of political engagement has been advanced through the digital technology a key platform for the global social media (Valenzuela, 2013). The usage of social media networking sites as an integral component of the campaign strategy is on a steady rise as many politicians have adopted this approach based on benefits attached to it such as the affordable costs and a larger magnitude of users.

1996 marked the genesis of the usage of the new media social networking sites for political campaigns, however, by very few politicians.

The year 2000 marked a turn around in the usage of the new media networking sites for political campaigns in the US as it saw the use of sophisticated websites by Gore and Bush presidential campaigns (Shmuitz, 2010). In 2004, thousands of political groups were advancing political messages through the use of the online platforms (Williams and Gulati, 2006). Therefore, the 2004 US presidential campaigns were critical in advancing the usage of the internet as a tool for political campaigns. Pollard, Chesebro, and Studinski (2009), pointed out that the potential power of the internet usage in influencing elections outcomes and the political campaign process was exhibited by the 2004 US presidential campaigns.

Howard Dean successfully fundraised and rallied supports for the 2004 US Democratic Party nominations through the use of the internet hence becoming a pioneer for using the digital platforms for political purposes. Despite failing to clinch the Democratic Party nominations due to the failure to address the electability and the extremism questions he managed to fund raise for his political campaigns using the internet (Strait, 2008). The Obama's foundation adopted the use of the internet as one of the key tools for presidential campaigns based on the efforts exhibited Howard Dean in 2004 (Aronson, 2012).

In Kenya, there is a growth in appreciation and recognition of the role played by social media to political campaigning and communication. There are a growing number of youths, virtual political groups and immense political information on social media. A significant number Kenyan politician are using social media as an alternative means for political campaigning and engagement. The usage the new

media networking sites played an important role during the 2013 and 2017 Kenya's presidential campaigns as the major political parties and presidential candidates among other aspirants utilized the new media networks such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp to update their supporters and voters concerning their campaign activities and also to receive feedback. The first and second Kenya's Presidential debates trended on social media across the world. It is against this background that the study sought to critically examine the influence of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The research problem for this study is examined from the political and academic perspective. Participation in politics by young people forms the basis of the political dimension. Social media is one of the forms of media in Kenya that plays a critical role in the dissemination of political messages. Rexha (2014) points out that an active role of the media is paramount to the success of political communication in modern societies. For instance, politicians rely on the media among other platforms disseminate information and messages of the daily political activities to the public. Therefore, the media plays a critical role in supporting politics to attain its goals and mission in society.

Kenyans enjoy the freedom to access information and freedom of expression under the provisions of Chapter Four of Kenya's Constitution, 2010. The freedom of expression and access to information is a fundamental prerequisite for political participation. These fundamental rights and freedoms have opened a free space for political discourse. Therefore, the proliferation of social media in Kenya has resulted in the widespread use of these sites in the country's politics and showing signs of a

future upsurge. Political parties, activists, and politicians have resorted to the use of this form media to persuade its users, the majority are the young people.

Despite the rising number of young people and politicians using social media, it is not clear about its effects on participation. It is important to point out that the youth form the largest population and voting bloc of the country. 70 percent of Kenya's population is below 24 years of age, 28% are youth age 15-24 (NCPD, 2018). 51% of the total registered voters as per the 2017 voter register were the youth of age 18-35 years an improvement from 46% in 2013. Therefore, the young people are an important population in Kenya's politics as they have numbers that can determine an outcome of elections both at the national and local levels. Moreover, they play a critical role in politics in the country as they participate in political campaign meetings, work, and contribute to a political party and persuade other voters. The AFROBAROMETER Kenya survey of 2013 revealed that about 60% of the youth voted in the 2013 general elections, 47.8% attended campaign meetings, 14.2% worked for a candidate or a political party, 31.1% persuaded others to vote for either a certain political party or candidate, 9.95% contributed to a political party and 58.6% felt they were close to a political party.

A number of scholars have concentrated on the examination of the new media networking sites in relation to political participation in advanced democracies. However, these studies have emphasized on online political campaigns and fundraising. A significant number of studies in this area were on how the digital media contributed to the successful political campaigns in the US that enabled Barrak Obama to clinch the presidential seat and retain this position for two terms. The Arab world has also received a fair share of studies on how social media contributed to

political revolutions and civil unrest. A need arises for examination on how social media has affected politics in developing countries such as Kenya. Moreover, studies on how governments have enhanced the usage of social media networking sites in political participation, the effects of fake news, and how political systems are countering these messages were significant areas to this study. Therefore, this study sheds light on the contribution of the usage of social media by the Kenya's youth in political participation. To understand this quest the study analyzed the effects of social media on political awareness and mobilization, and activism among Kenya's youth. Further, it laid out the gains and setbacks of social media usage by the Kenya's youths for political purposes.

1.3 Main Objective

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of social media on political participation among the youth in Kenya.

1.4 Specific Objectives

i. To assess the effects of social media on political awareness among Kenya's youth.

ii. To analyze the effects of social media on mobilization of young voters in Kenya.

iii. To layout out the gains and setbacks for using social media for political purposes by the Kenya's youth.

1.5 Research Questions

i. How has social media affected political awareness among Kenya has's youth?

ii. How has social media affected mobilization of young voters in Kenya?

iii.   What are the gains and setbacks for using social media for political purposes by the Kenya's youth?

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

This study's assumptions are as follows;

i. That both the youth and politicians are using the new media networking sites for political purposes and the use of these platforms effects on political participation of Kenya's youth.

ii. That the respondents gave genuine and truthful responses to the questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions.

1.7 Justification of the Study

Studies on social media, political communication, and political participation are important in the contemporary world because they give us an insight into the effects of the social media usage in political engagement. They reveal how social media platforms stimulate citizen participation in politics where electoral campaigns and elections play a central role. Studies done in Kenya on social media have not attempted to analyze the effects of social media on political participation. There are existing gaps in the use of the new media sites in politics especially during the general elections periods from 2013-2017.

This study, therefore, sought to analyze the effects of social media on political awareness, voter mobilization, and activism among Kenya's youth which is an area that needed more investigations. The findings of this study benefit the electoral bodies, political parties, policymakers, politicians as well as political science and communication students and scholars on the usage of the new media platforms for

political purposes as it recommends the best practices for social media usage for political related endeavors.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study focused on analyzing the effects of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth. The study was restricted to Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp as they are the most popular new media networking platforms in Kenya. Moreover, these sits allows the users to post to messages, share videos and form virtual groups. The use of the new media sites for political campaigns became significant during the 2013 Kenya's presidential campaigns. The major political parties and presidential candidates among other aspirants utilized Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to update their supporters and voters concerning their campaign activities and also to receive feedback from them. Therefore, the usage of the new media sites by political aspirants and the young people for the 2013 and 2017 elections was used to ensure that the study remains reasonable in scope.

1.9 Structure of the Chapters

Chapter one presents an assessment of background of the study; it discusses the problem of the study and provides the purpose of this research. Further, it provides research objectives, and questions, assumptions, scope, and justification of the study. Finally, it presents the structure of the chapters. Chapter two discusses the literature review. It provides a description of theories and a review of existing studies. It identifies and explains the variables of the study. Finally, it discusses the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Chapter three analyses the methodological position for the study. For instance, it consists of the research design, a detailed description of the study area, the targeted

population, the sampling design, data collection methods and instruments, procedures for data collection, and data processing strategies. Chapter four examines the first research question. The research question was on the effects of social media on political awareness. The findings and discussions are presented thematically in the following order; Internet connectivity, mobile phone penetration, social media, and political information; Social media and users' age; Social media, gender and participation in politics; Motivation for social media usage; Social Media and level of education; and Social Media and Economic Status

Chapter five discusses the second research question. The research question responds to the effects of social media on electoral mobilization among Kenya's youth. The findings are presented thematically in the following order; social media and mobilization of the electorate; Social media as a forum for political parties and voters' engagement; Social media and political campaigns in Kenya; and Social media and electoral violence in Kenya.

Chapter six discusses the gains and setbacks for using social media for political purposes among the Kenya's youth. It presents the study findings and discusses the third research question. The discussion is presented thematically. The chapter begins by discussing the effects of social media on political activism. Secondly, it analyses the extent to which social media has enhanced political expression among the youth. Thirdly, it critically analyses the contribution of the usage of the new media on social movements in Kenya. Fourth, the chapter evaluates the influence of the usage social media networking sites on political protests, and fifth social media contribution to electoral violence in Kenya. Lastly, it discusses the institutional framework,

constitutional and legal provisions on the usage of the new media networking sites in Kenya.

Chapter seven presents a summary of the key findings, conclusion, and recommendations of this study. The chapter is organized in line with the research questions and the main findings of each research question. Therefore, first, it presents a detailed summary and conclusion of the findings from the first research question on the effects of social media on politics. Secondly, it presents findings of the second research question on the effects of social media on the mobilization of youthful voters. Thirdly, it presents the gains and setbacks for social media use by the Kenya's youth for political purposes. This is followed by recommendations of the study with the main focus on policy and proposes areas for further studies.

1.10 Summary of Chapter One

Chapter one presented a critical insight into to the study by presenting a detailed background of the study. It went further and intensified the research objectives and questions and elucidated the statement of the problem. Moreover, it discussed in detailed the significance, scope and justification of this study. Chapter two of this study discusses a detailed background on the usage of the new media networking sites in politics by reviewing secondary sources.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed the available literature thematically and organized sequentially as per the specific objectives of this study. First, it discusses social media and political awereness with a main focus on social capital and political participation; social media and mainstream media; and the process of media communication. Secondly, it analyzes social media and voter mobilization with a view on social media and political participation; and the youths and political participation. Third, it discusses the gains and setbacks of using social media for political purposes. The key subsections in this area include an examination of literature on social media utopians, the internet, and political participation; political participation in the modern world; social media proliferation in the contemporary political scene with a focus on American and African contexts. Further it discusses the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Finally, it presents a summary for the chapter while identifying and analyzing the existing gaps in the literature.

2.1 Social Media and Political Awareness

For this study political awareness means the level to which individual's pays attention to politics and understands its content (Zaller, 1992). Therefore, this section analyses the available literature of political knowledge in relation to political participation. Political knowledge is the other significant factor that is critical in the analysis of the levels of political participation. Moy, Torres, Tanaka & McCluskey (2005) define "political knowledge as a cognition that reflects an intellectual capacity attained through the process of political learning". Moreover, "political knowledge is a

collection of actual political information that gets stored in the long-term memory of a person". For instance, it might be inform of interpersonal discussions about political issues (Wells & Dudash, 2007). It is through social media that there is an acquisition of knowledge and not formal education in this digital age (Abdulrauf, Hamid, and Ishak, 2015).

Some scholars have rejected the notion that the typical measure of political knowledge is formal education. Individuals can gain knowledge in this digital age by looking for knowledgeable friend within the new media sites (Whiteley, 2005). The knowledge of politics can be acquired from interpersonal interaction and family social networks however most of it is acquired from social media (Wells & Dudash, 2007). Therefore, there is a relationship between political knowledge and education among people who are more exposed political discussions on the new media sites. An individual is attracted to use social media for political reasons due to frequency of using this type of media hence leading to political engagement.

Media is a major channel that facilitates political participation (Banducci et al., 2009; Pasek, Kenski, Romer & Jamieson, 2006). Three major concepts explain the potential to access information and political knowledge. The first concept is *media malaise* which means that the low quality of the information on media decreases the youth knowledge and interests that eventually affect political engagement (Abdulrauf, Hamid and Ishak, 2015). Secondly, *the virtuous cycle category* argues that through media exposure political exposure increases (Norris, 2000). The third concept is the *effects category*, it indicates that other types of media have positive effects and others harm political knowledge.

There is a belief that political knowledge and the youth involvement in politics are significant aspects of the democratic processes (Vreese and Boomgarden, 2006). Therefore, political knowledge was a predictor of political participation (Charles, 2010). Social media affects public awareness, therefore, providing an appropriate venue for participation in the political process. Moreover, social media affects the share of votes (Mascaro and Goggins, 2010; Vitak et al., 2011). Social networking sites play a critical role in advancing knowledge and awareness on rights hence a need for political engagement.

Some governments have formulated policies that restrict the use of the internet and social media. Singapore enacted policies that restricted the use of social media from 2008 to 2011 parliamentary elections (Skoric et al., 2012). A significant number of national surveys indicated that many social media users are politically and civically engaged in comparison to the non-users (Rainie et al., 2012; Smith, 2011; Allstate/National Journal Heartland Monitor Poll XIII, 2012).

2.1.1 Social Capital and Political Participation

Social capital is a critical aspect in the analysis of level of political engagement. For instance, Yang and Dehart (2016) point out that social capital is seen to be instrumental in political participation. Personal networks in which some social capital are created are relevant politically, therefore, social capital accumulation might result in an increased levels of political participation (Lake and Huckfeldt, 1998). Moreover, the social connectedness of citizens encouraged political and civic participation (Zhang & Chia, 2006). Further, the greater involvement of individuals in non-political formations in the Latin Amreican countries increased the levels of political participation (Klenser, 2007).

The digital Social capital was identified as an aspect that influences online political participation (Skoric et al., 2009; Gibson & McAllister, 2013; Valenzuela et al., 2012). A study on the Australian Election of 2007 by Gibson and McAllister, (2013) revealed that online bonding social contracts predicted political participation. Moreover, the larger digital networks are associated with the digital political participation. Social capital provides an online bridge hence a stronger predictor of political engagement on digital platforms whereas online bonding capital predicted positively the Singapore's traditional political participation (Valenzuela et al., 2012; Skoric, 2009).

A study on the German federal election of 2009 on the use the new form of media, particularly Twitter revealed that the researchers were attracted to investigate the role of Twitter in areas such as project management and marketing hence discovering that it is the platform is used for political communication and it is a two-way form of communication (Tumasjan et al., 2011). One of the most challenging endeavors in political discussion on an online platform is to keep the electorate engaged. A turnout strategy in some elections can be successful if voters are made to be attentive to information that persuades them to cast their votes.

Though the findings of a field experiment by Dale and Strauss (2009), it was that the most effective way of mobilizing voters was through text messaging. However, there was a need to consider willingness of registered voters to engage in the process of election, impersonal and personal reminders, and the consequence of the voter's registration as others will need more persuasion than others. There is much attention on the expanding forms of the new media networks like Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook,

and YouTube as not only a medium for developing digital communities but a means of moving to action the users and instant communication.

Previously, information on social media sites focused on either a post that describes personal activities or marketing to target groups and hence is considered trivial. However, in 21st century, social media transformed the delivery of both serious political and social messages that have been focused on calling for actions that have later lead to political revolutions and protests (Bermudez, 2012).

The new media played an important role in changing individuals' viewpoints which in turn promoted revolutions against non-democratic governments. In November 2007 in Pakistan, the youth had to use the new media networking sites and text messages to disseminate political messages after the government had taken control of newspapers and television channels (Shaheen, 2008). Social media especially Facebook played a significant during the Arab uprising (Yousif and Alsamydai, 2012). It is from this view that many researchers have been attracted to studying the impact of political interest, political trends, and political arena on the messages posted on social media walls of the users.

Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Syria were the four countries that were affected by the Arab uprising hence an analysis of their citizens Facebook pages was critical in informing the political decisions made by their governments. Egyptians used the new media to freely discuss their political views due to the restrictions and control of the local media by the government. Their numbers on social media kept on increasing, while the youth were also agitated with the rise of unemployment levels. The alteration of a 40 years long regime was successful due to the intensified calls for a

revlolt through the digital platform (Tufekci and Wilson, 2012). Khashman (2011) noted that the Egyptian pages had negative messages that ousted Egyptian President.

The internet can be easily be accessed in public spaces due to the advanced systems of mobile communication (Tufekci and Wilson, 2012). For instance, a case at hand is the role of mobile phone and the internet that contributed to the Tunisia and Egypt's protests where the protesters coordinated through mobile phones linked with the social media apps (Tufekci and Wilson, 2012). However, it important to point out that initially, before the 1990s media in the Arab nations was under strict supervision and control by the government, moreover, majority of the media outlets were owned by the state.

Khamis and Vaughn (2011) were of the view the use of the new media and mobile phones were not an exception due to the penetration of the internet in the Middle East countries. For instance, there was a significant usage of social media a region that was perceived to have limited media freedom (Dubai School of Government, 2011). The number of young people using social media increased by 30% in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya at the beginning of the Syria's upspring in 2011. However, it is important to point out that the spread of the internet, mobile phone connectivity, the freedom of media and the degrees of desperation in the Arab world occurred differently (Dubai School of Government, 2011).

The lifting of the ban on the usage of the new media by the Syrian government in February 2011, led to a rise of 9-10% of Facebook usage from the initial 1.5%. However, a slow trend was registered for the Libya's case , O'Brien (2012) argues that the slow passé could be attributed to the disruptions of internet connectivity by the Qaddafi's regime. There were thousands of Facebook posts and Tweets from the

Middle East and North African (MENA) countries despite the relatively low penetration of social media in Lydia and Syria. The "#Libya" was amongst the top three trending Twitter hashtags in the Arab region in the first three months of 2011 (Biswas and Sipes, 2014). In the first quarter of 2011, there were over 64,000 active users of Twitter in Libya and over 40,000 in Syria (Dubai School of Government, 2011).

2.1.2 Social Media and Mainstream Media

This section discusses the significant components of social and mainstream media. It is important to point out that media is classified into two major forms, traditional media that include the print media, face-to-face, radio and telephone, while the new media is composed of the computer and multimedia networks (Dijk, 2012). Fulya SEN (2012) points out that mass communication impeded active political participation as access was limited and discouraged a deliberative dialogue within the public. However, the new form of media is hailed as a potential means for breaking away the 'top-down' politics where issues on politics are made without the grassroots support and negotiation, and the vertical flow of information (Fulya SEN, 2012).

Wills &Reeves (2009) notes that social media has developed a platform, especially among the young population to engage in interpersonal communication. Social media describes a collection of internet platforms that have ended up creating virtual communities through the use of communication technology that has set a stage for instantaneous messaging that is brief, targeted. The term 'social media' is associated with multiple concepts as argued by (Mandiberg, 2012), such as the concept of corporate media favorite, participatory media which is politically infused, and peer-production which was developed by Tim O'Reilly 'Web 2.0' (Mandiberg 2012). For

this study, social refers to an instrument for mobilization, communication, political deliberation, and an arena to exchange ideas (Kersting, 2017).

Fulya SEN (2012) study revealed the significance of social media in comparison to traditional media such as the radio, television, and print media. However, his study generalized the social networking sites in one key classification "social media". The different types of new media networking sites like the Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, and others have contrasting features hence their benefits, disadvantages, and functions may not be generalized. As such, this literature is significant in analyzing the influence of the new media networking sites on political participation in Kenya while focusing on the different forms of social media sites.

Fulya SEN (2012) points out that the new form of mass communication provides a model for the provision of political information where there is feedback between followers and their leaders and unlimited access by different persons. From this study, the new media plays a significant role in disseminating information vertically. Transnational and national ties get facilitated through the internet that enables connections and communications between ordinary citizens (Seo & Thorson, 2012). Moreover, the internet provides high significance when used for the maintenance and building of social relations, as it gives significant information infrastructure for contemporary social movements.

From the existing literature, many scholars have paid attention to the new media networking sites such as Twitter, MySpace, Facebook and YouTube as these specific digital networks have captured the attention of many scholars. The reviewed studies in this section have focused on how social media has influenced political participation however, there is scanty information on the flip side where active political

participants get discouraged after using social media, a quest that this study sought to unearth.

2.1.3 The Process of Media Communication

The process of media communication is significant in understanding the subject matter of this study. Trottier and Fuchs (2015) point out that the social media constitutive characteristics consist of both integrated roles and sociality converges communication on social media. Three major modes of sociality converge on the new media sites through the sociality integrated feature. Cooperation, cognition and communication are the three modes of sociality. For instance, on a cognitive level, an individual can create a multimedia content on Facebook publish it and enable the consumers of the information comment on it, manipulate, remix leading to multiple authorship leading to new contents (Trottier and Fuchs, 2015). A component of social media that is significant to this study in analyzing the challenges that social media users face while using this type of media for political purposes.

It is important to note that the use of technology enables the combination of the activities of communication, cognition and cooperation. Moreover, the transition of sociality from one step to the other in a similar social space is enabled by Facebook. For instance, this type of social networking site provides an example of an integrated role on the basis of a personal profile that describes the roles of an individual life.

Trottier and Fuchs (2015) point out that in the modern world in different social spaces converge with regard to social functions. However, the boundaries between the public and private life, workplace and home are now porous, hence an emergence of a new form of liquid and porous sociality. Therefore, an important aspect used to inform this

study in its quest of examines the effects of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth.

In the analysis of the communication process on the use of social media, Trottier and Fuchs (2015) note that an Individual partly acts with different functions in a social space. For instance, there is the mapping of the various roles played by different people on a single profile accessed by many people on social networking sites such Facebook (Trottier and Fuchs, 2015). However, these individuals have different duties they do on the platforms. Therefore, Trottier and Fuchs (2015) point out that social media is a social space where social roles tend to converge and get integrated into single profiles.

It is important to note that the converging and integrated feature of social networking sites has varying social activities such as communication, cognition and cooperation and plays a critical role in individual's behavior system of the economy, state, the private, socioeconomic, sociopolitical, social-cultural and the worldly life in general gets mapped in a single profile hence generation social activities and roles (Trottier and Fuchs, 2015). For instance, social roles and social activities tend to converge as social media platforms hold communicative data, social networks and personal data (Trottier and Fuchs, 2015). Although Trottier and Fuchs's (2015) study when explaining a detailed process of media communication over relies on Facebook, a social media site that shares some similar features with other social networking sites. This literature is significant in discussing the influence of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth with a reference other social media sites such as WhataApp and Twitter analyzed in this study.

Figure 1.1 presents the communication process on a single new media networking platform in this case Facebook. This diagram indicates that the social media communication process is a network and a combination of a number of processes. It has a myriad of social roles and activities that a single system can serve due to the integration of social and sociality roles on social media. Therefore, citizens might use it for communicating with other individuals in transcends or social roles, moreover, communicate with institutions and organizations. However, a citizen would monitor communication among these social actors.
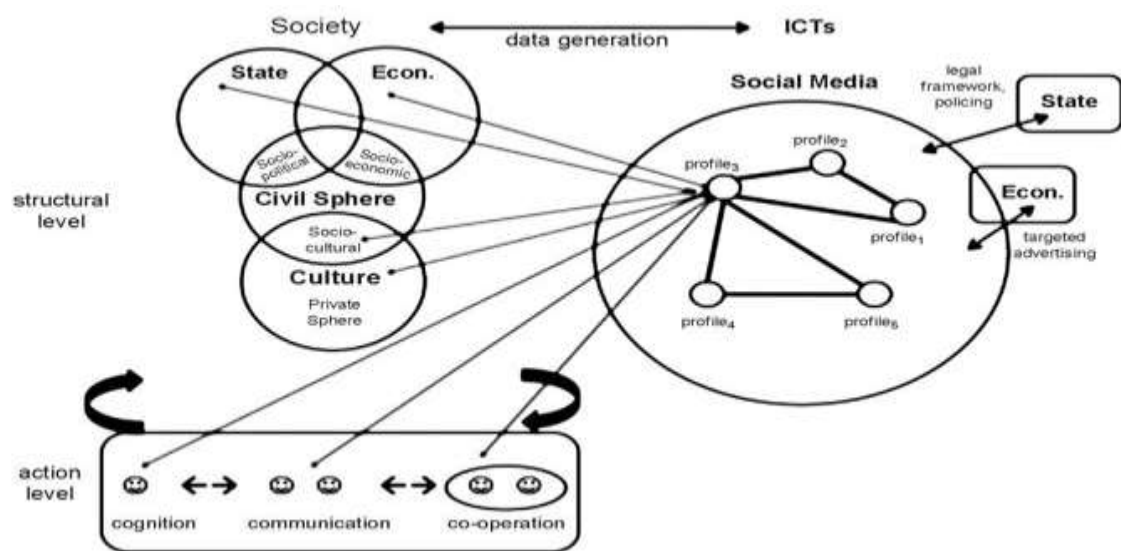
Figure 2.1: The Process of Media Communication
Source: Trottier and Fuchs (2015)

2.2 Social Media and Voter Mobilization

The usage of social media for purposes of voter mobilization is one of the key areas that this study sought to analyze. Therefore, this subsection presents vital literature on the significance of the new media networking sites for political mobilization. Obholzer & Daniel (2016) points out that social media and politics are fundamental factors that are on the rise because of the rising numbers as a result of the association of the use of the digital platforms for political campaigns. Digital political campaigns

are also rampant in the European parliaments. As the online networking sites provide an avenue for influencing voting and spreading agenda due to the close contacts with the electorate.

Social media provides a cheaper means of political marketing as it majorly relies on the internet in comparison to the physical campaigns. For instance, social media offers alternative opportunities in comparison to the traditional methods of political campaigning such as the use of billboards, advertisements on the mainstream media, printing posters and touring countrywide. Castells and Sey (2004) reveals that the use of the internet in the mobilization of voters' produces a positive impact. However, there is very scanty documentation as to how social media influences voter mobilization in developing countries such as Kenya. This study thus analyzes the contribution of the new media in the marshaling of young voters in Kenya.

For the United Kingdoms' case, Ward et al. (2003) indicate that 38% of the websites of political parties offered an opportunity for visitors to become members of the party through the virtual platform. However, there is a missing link on the use of the online platform by politicians to interact with the public in rural areas of African countries. In the case of political campaigns in the U.S, Drunkman, Kifer, and Parkin (2010) analyzed the perception that a political campaign by an aspirant is driven towards negativity by the use of the internet. Their study focused on the United States congressional campaigns of 2006, 2004, and 2002. The study indicated that the incumbency was highly accessible based on the voters' choice the foundation of the inquiry was that the electorate bases their decisions on subsets of considerations while paying little attention to campaign rhetoric. However, this study does not give the

details as to whether other factors like political interests contribute to political participation.

For the case of mobilization of funds for political campaigns, Van Natta (2000) points out that in 2000 John McCain raised 2.7 million U.S dollars in after clinching the New Hampshire primaries. While Learmonth (2009) notes that Barack Obamas 2008 presidential campaign raised US$500 million, a fund drive aided by the "My Barak Obama" webpage and the 35,000 groups on Facebook, and 1800 YouTube videos. Moreover, US$690 million of the US$1.1 billion of the Obamas 2012 presidential campaign was generated through online contributions based on Green (2012), Mason & Tanfani, (2012) analysis. However, these studies fail to provide an in-depth analysis of other factors such as individual and voters interests that led to the mobilization of the political funds.

Significant inroads have been made in the political processes through the internet usage. For instance, Vergeer, Heermans, and Sams's (2011) study on the influence of micro-blogging point out that through the internet there is increased interactivity and visibility between the citizens and politicians through the use of the internet. There are mixed conclusions, for instance, the case Netherlands 2009 European parliamentary elections, the contestants who intensified their Twitter blogging towards the end of Election Day garnered more votes. However, there was extensive use of micro-blogging by candidates from unsuccessful parties. Vergeer, Heermans, and Sams (2011) study support the notion that micro-blogging on Twitter is a defective political campaign tool. The inquiry reveals a positive relationship between the number of individuals that follow politicians on Twitter and the outcome of the votes.

On offline political participation, Vergeer, Heermans, and Sams (2011) study support the development of the new media as it could play a critical role in the expansion of offline networks. However, their findings indicate that not all votes were through the online networks hence a need for further analysis of other factors such as offline political networks. Moreover, Vergeer, Heermans, and Sams study failed to respond to the influence of micro-blogging on political party membership that is a fundamental aspect of political participation.

Communication scholars and political scientists urge politicians to use the new media as a medium for campaign and tap its benefits of engaging the electorate as the users of this platform are more likely to fund the campaign or vote for the candidate (Utz, 2009; Kim & Geidner, 2008). In the case of Kenya, *ASkMartha* was a social media platform that the NARC-Kenya presidential candidate used every Thursday during the 2013 political campaigns to communicate to her supporters and potential voters. There was significant coverage and commentary on the social media on the presidential debate organized by the Media Owners Association. The public had an opportunity to engage one another on social media during the presidential debate. The second presidential debate went viral on Tweeter and trended worldwide. Despite Martha Karua being vocal on social media in comparison to the other presidential aspirants, she didn't win the presidential contest due to the votes garnered. Martha Karua's case formed a critical example for this study in comparison to Barrak's Obama win in the United States. It is significant to point out that the available literature on the social networking sites and political mobilization tends to generalize the age of the population. However, this study analyzed the influence of social media on the political marshaling of Kenya's young people of below 35 years.

2.2.1 Social Media and Virtual Political Participation

An analysis of the effects of digital media on political participation reveals varied views. In Yang and Dehart (2016) work, there are conflicting and mixed results of studies done on the usage of the new media sites and the online political engagement (Yang and Dehart, 2016). The study by Carlisle & Patton (2013) revealed that political interest is the significant and only predictor of an individual's political engagement on social media. Mihailidis' (2014) study of higher education students indicated that the new media platforms are rarely used for political purposes. However, the political expression on these sites is a significant predictor of online political engagement (Gilde Zúñiga, Molyneux, and Zheng, 2014).

Social media usage is linked to political participation and civic engagement in the contemporary research literature on politics and the new media (Yang and Dehart, 2016). Kim and Geider (2008) pointed out that the use of online social networks led to 5.8% of the voting probability by the youth. Through the use of social network sites, there is a positive prediction of three virtual online political activities that include forwarding a political link or email, signing a web petition or an email, and posting political messages on the blog (Baumgartner and Morris, 2010).

An analysis of the Pew survey of 2008 identifies the use of blogs and social network sites as two major predictors of virtual political engagement (Kim and Chen, 2012). Gainous, Marlowe, and Wagner (2013) after analyzing the same study arrived at a similar conclusion that virtual political participation could be stimulated by online social participation. There seems to be no agreement among the researchers on the activeness of an individual on social media and its reflection on the person's level of political participation (Piechota, 2011). Moreover, participation in a political

discussion is less popular in the search for information related to politics. Educated people tend to actively get political information and participate in politics (Piechota, 2011).

2.2.2 Youths and Political Participation

It is imperative to address the involvement of the youths in politics as this was a key area in this study. An analysis of the use of social media for political purposes reveals a significant contribution of social media in political participation. For instance, Leighley (1995) and Saha et al., (2005) studies on political participation among young people focused on the political party's membership, voter turnout, and enrolment. These studies point out that digital media to a large extent reinforces traditional structures, barriers of participation and opportunities, development of new forms of political belonging, and informal or individualized identity (Harris et al., 2010). In developed countries, there are indicators of a decline in some forms of political engagement (Collin, 2015).

In the United Kingdom, studies of the youth's attitudes and behaviors found lower levels of political loyalty and participation in political parties. While the lower numbers of the youth define electoral participation as a civic responsibility or voting (Pattie et al., 2004 and Park, 1998). Previous studies found that socioeconomic factors specifically, education and income influence individuals' decisions on whether to vote or not (Lewis-Beck and Rice 1992; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980).

The dominant view of these studies is a cohort of young people who do not care about democracy or politics. It can be concluded that the youth group of the 21 years old in 2000 turned away from formal institutions and processes such as elections and political parties. However, these groups of youth are attracted to take actions on

matters of their interest, such as participating in fundraising for a cause as the scholars concluded that this was "a political generation" (Pirie and Worchester, 1998). The youth were skeptical of the politicians and the governments however they were supportive of elections and the democratic process (Henn et al., 2002). The youth in some parts of democracies are disillusioned with unresponsive political systems and officials (Henn et al, 2002). The youth are most likely to be engaged in searching for political information on virtual sites as compared to engaging in offline activities (Gennaro and Dutton, 2006). Therefore, it could be concluded that social media sites would assist the youths to be engage in politics.

A study by Gennro and Dutton (2006) indicated that the new media sites such as Twitter are the most likely tools for engagement for any person who is conversant with them. Therefore, this could suggest that the usage of the new media might enhance political participation amongst the proficient users who may not have interests in politics. Although, the available literature is in the UK at Oxford University and the findings are based on the respondents of university students. It presents significant information that was used in analyzing the influence of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth.

Existing literature on the usage of digital media in political participation discusses details with regard to how this type of media has contributed to political participation. However, little attention is given to the economic, level of education, and the cultural backgrounds of social media users. Therefore, these are areas that this study analyses in the context of the influence of social media and political participation among Kenya's youth.

2.3 Gains and Setbacks for using Social Media for Political Purposes

The literature on the views of social media skeptics forms a significant part in the understanding of the influence of the usage of the new media in political participation. Allison (2012) analyzes the usage of social media and political participation from a skeptical perspective. He points out that the early 2000s and the late 1990s saw the emergence the first wave of studies on the usage of the internet and political engagement. These groups of skeptics were of the opinion that the usage of social media like any other forms of media with time will be an integral part of people's daily routine. Therefore, they argued that of the internet will have very little impact on political participation. Moreover, the internet would not have any effects on people's interest or changes as it is a neutral medium of communication.

The skeptics' argued that the usage of the internet posed a weak influence on the political attitudes and therefore, these habits will be short lived hence it can only be used to reinforce the existing ones. For instance the group of individuals that were active on the online platform was also politically active offline. However the group that was not concerned with politics was also not interested with the online political participation platform (Bimber, 1999; shah et al., 2001).

The skeptics' believed that the digital platforms for participation were impulsive and fleeting as the online speech received lower value compared to the offline speech (Allison, 2012). The study findings from this group of scholars indicated that the younger population is more conversant with the digital platforms in comparison to the adult population. According to the skeptics, the disproportionate number is as a result of increased usage of internet by young people as a political resource (Allison, 2012).

Bimber (1999) was skeptical in his study on the use of the digital platform as he concluded that the entire population is not equally familiar with using the internet for political purposes. Moreover, not all government officials have accessibility to technology. Therefore, the study revealed that there was inadequate information to conclude that the political behaviors of the internet users were affected (Allison, 2012). However, Shah et al (2001) study revealed a decrease in social capital due to the impersonal and the text-based nature of the internet. A person's desire to participate is social arena is closely linked to social capital. The internet acts as medium of social capital hence this important aspect is lost rather than gained. Shah et al (2001) study indicated that internet users with interests in civics tend to be attracted to offline and offline platforms, however, for the ones with interest in online civic information are less likely to be attracted to the offline expressions (Shah et al, 2001).

The third wave of internet consumers consists of a different class of scholars of both the utopians and skeptics that emerged towards the end of 2000s they were interested with the effects of the new media. For the skeptics, the quality of political participation was more important than the quantity. To the skeptics the online and the traditional offline political participation was less meaningful and effective compared to the quality of the discourse, news and information (Allison, 2012).

Baumgartner and Morris (2010), study concluded that meaningful online participation was unlikely to be achieved than offline participation. Moreover, that participation on the digital platform is not indicative but a fleet intention for participating online. Further, this study revealed that reactionary and uninformative political messages where shared on the Myspace and Facebook platforms hence the young people using

the traditional media were inclined to participate in politics compared with their counterparts using social media.

The study revealed a missing link between the usage of social media and political knowledge despite social media recording higher levels of civic engagement among the users compared to the non-users. Therefore, this study concluded that increased offline civic engagement could not be directly linked to the social capital gained through the usage of the new media. However, the negative findings on the social media usage and civic engagements lead to the categorization of this study as skeptic (Pasek et al., 2009). The skeptics' argued that "the new media will be part of the human life but will have not any significant effect on the interests or the behavior of the users". Moreover, the internet does not alter behaviors and interests, however, it can enhance political activities (Gibson et al., 2005). The study revealed that the use of the internet was effectively used by groups that were typically less active or purely not active inactive in offline politics.

Gibson et al., (2005) study was based on expanded traditional conceptions of political participation that included, sending an email to government officials, donating for a political cause and joining a political group, signing an online political petition, and discussing political information. The expansion of the traditional conceptions served a two-fold purpose. For instance, it acknowledged the multi-faceted operations the use of the internet affects the development of new alternatives for political participation, secondly, it provides the basis for the conceptualizing the usage of the internet for politically related engagements (Allison, 2012).

Two schools of thought had a significant influence on the advancement of discussion and understanding the effects of the usage of the internet on political engagement.

Moreover, the scholarly community criticized and eventually rejected the normalization thesis. The strength of the skeptics lies in the notion of accessibility of the technology however this argument became less significant as the accessibility of the internet expanded. On the other hand, the utopians concluded that the usage internet was correlated to the increase in political participation (Allison, 2012).

There is a change in political behavior as the emerging political practices are on individual lifestyles and personal choice, hence a political paradigm that has disruptive connection power of social media at its core (Calder, 2013). Therefore, the traditional thoughts of political action and participation are challenged. There is an opening up of a technologically mediated environment by the use of the internet that has enabled the paradigm shift that has reconfigured politics (Loader and Mercea; Dahlberg, 2001).

For one to critique and understand the broader claims for development of political engagement in a community, it is critically significant to interrogate the nature of political participation through social media practices (Fenton & Barassi, 2011). Scholars of social change since the years 1960s and 1970s focused on the transformation of a society that had shifted from the industrialized to a one defined by the flow of information due to the advancement of communication technology (Calder, 2013).

The young people have embraced social media hence making it part and parcel of their life. Political party membership, voting, donation of money, and time are important acts of politics. However, in the 21st century, there are many changes in the political scene and the traditional political actions among the young people are being replaced by the modern political practices (Delli Carpini 2004; Jenkins 2006; Zukin et

al 2006; Putnam 2000; Harris, Wyn, Younes 2007). Hong and Nadler (2012) point out that political events affected many individuals who responded positively to political aspirants. Political parties in Germany, Poland, France, Germany, and Great Britain that were involved in the European parliamentary elections used the internet and features of web 2.0 to enable their supporters to communicate directly with their party leaders and also get feedback directly (Lilleker et al., 2011). The available literature examined the role of the internet and social media in developed economies in urban areas however, there is scanty documentation on rural areas in developing economies. However, the current study sought to examine the usage of the new media in the political spectrum in the urban and rural areas in Kenya.

2.3.1 Social Media Utopians, the Internet and Political Participation

This sub-section analyses literature on the usage of the new media, and the internet based on the utopians' views on political engagement. The views of the new media utopians were important in the understanding of the influence of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth. A second group of social media utopians emerged to critic the skeptics' thoughts on the relationship of political participation and the use of the internet (Allison, 2012). This school of thought criticized the skeptics' view the existing political behaviors were reinforced by the internet. However, to them the internet is a type of media that enhances political participation rather than a tool for reinforcement. The skeptics' and the utopians arguments set the standards for the examination of the linkage between political participation and usage of the internet.

The social media utopians went a step further to include alternative behaviors like protests and political campaigns that are not within a scope of simple political

participation, moreover, political speech formed part of their analysis (Gibson 2005; Gennaro & Dutton 2006; Wellman et al 2005). Social media utopians present different conclusions concerning political engagement and the use of the new media. This school of thought considers the Skeptics' notion on the effect of the use of social media on political participation as a weaker base. However, the utopians emphasized need for quality of political participation based on intensive research. Some scholars in this school of thought concluded that increased offline political participation is directly linked to the use of new media for political reasons (Allison, 2012).

In the analysis of the relationship between political engagement and the use of new media, Vitalk et al (2011) study on the college students engaged in using the internet supported the utopians thoughts. The study revealed a positive relationship between the usages of the new media on political participation. Moreover, social media users tend to be attracted to online political participation after seeing their friends using the platform for the same reasons. Therefore, the study concluded that political participation increases visa vie the engagement of users in political activities on Faceebook (Vitak et al, 2011).

The study by Park et al. (2009) revealed that the levels of political participation were directly linked the usage of social media. Moreover, online political searching and political action correlated with the usage of the new media. Active users of social media recorded higher levels of political participation both online and offline. However, their study was restricted to a particular group of young people who share similar characteristics. For the current study, young people from below the age of 35 from urban and rural areas in Kenya with different educational backgrounds formed the target population. For the case of political participation among the youth,

Abdulrauf, Hamid, and Ishak (2015) point out that, informed and knowledgeable youths engage in politics. Therefore, the new media has a critical role in politics. Despite their study being inclined to a particular group of young people, its findings played a critical role in informing the current study.

The press related issues, protection of the minority, and accessibility to the judicial system are some of the policy related issues that bothers a government in democracy. For instance, Shore (2014) notes that economic, social and political aspects are among the jey issues embodied in policy satisfaction. Therefore, a democratic government ought to listen to the voices of the young people, pursue policies that improve the lives of the youth as policy satisfaction is key value of democracy.

The new media links the government and the public (Johnson & Kaye, 2014). Moreover, Valenzuela, Kim & Gil de Zuniga (2012), argued that the new media can be used as a tool for political activities that affect policy. Therefore, youth participation in communication regarding policy concerns and preferences to policymakers and vice versa Potgieter, (2013), Verba et al., (1995) indicates that social media is significant in policy satisfaction.

Political interest motivates us to devote significant energy and time to political engagement. Political interest enables the public to acquire information that can enable them select political alternatives (O'Neil, 2006). Therefore, political interests drive political engagement (Hur & Kwon, 2014; Carsile & Patton, 2013; Shepper, 2012). Utopians acknowledged social capital as a sociological element to a group behavior (Allison, 2012). For utopians, social capital is a catalyst for members of a social group to engage activities that generates a positive responses. Moreover, it is

through political and civic participation activities that lead to the development of social capital.).

The users of the internet who used the internet for reading political related issues or engaged virtually were inclined to it. However, the ones who were active in online political discussions and online political organizations were likely to be involved in the offline political activities. Offline political attraction would then reinforce the virtual social capital and political statements that led to political participation (Wellman et al., 2005). However, the study did not specify the type of population engaged in using social media for political purposes.

2.3.2 Political Participation in the Contemporary World

This subsection presents reviewed literature on political engagement from the contemporary world perspective. Aristotelis (1997) pointed out that a citizen is part of the society rather than a citizen because he comes from a particular area. He argued that the citizen is a person that shares the holding of a public office and administration of justice. The modern city councils and law courts are equivalent to the *polis*, assemblies of citizens where decisions are made, and every citizen is expected to serve a specific term as the assemblies have rotational membership (Aristotelis, 1997).

Aristotlies (1997) argued that when the public is given the opportunity to participate in governance, then the government will also work at its best. In contemporary politics, political participation involves the activities that the citizens engage in politics that includes, for example, working with other people on political issues, demonstrating, boycotting, petitioning, writing or calling officials, giving money to a

candidate or cause, and voting in elections. Political participation is an activity with intentions to influencing the government's actions directly or indirectly (Kaase, 2011).

Direct influence involves the disruption of the implementation and making of the public policy, while indirect is influencing the selection of individuals mandated to formulate the policies. The engagement of institutional, collectively, or individual players is a consistent feature of any type of socio-political processes and structures, including the nation-states (Kaase, 2011). The definition of political participation differs from scholars. Huntington and Nelson refer to political engagement as an activity by private citizens that aims at influencing government decision-making processes (Huntington and Nelson, 1976).

Verba and others defined political engagement as activities that have an effect or intentions of influencing the government's actions directly or indirectly by affecting the implementation or making of public policies or indirectly by influencing the selection of office bearers engaged in policy making (Verba et al., 1995). Few scholars like Milbrath (1965) define political participation as political activities and involvement to support a regime as participation. Political participation includes reading about politics, while under the dominant definitions it is not inclusive because it doesn't have direct influence of other people.

Other scholars have restricted their studies of political engagement to voluntary activities, as defined "by voluntary activity" meaning that participation where no one is forced to volunteer and that is not obligatory- and receives a token financial compensation or no pay (Verba et al., 1995). A comparativist such as Breslin, Harrop, and Hague pointed out that political engagement is an activity by people who formally intends to influence the decisions taken or who governs. For instance, in a

liberal democracy, a person might choose to be involved in politics or not through different channels and to a specific extent.

For a significant number of individuals, formal participation is more demanding acts like belonging to a party and voting at national elections. However, less conventional participation by promotional groups and social movements demonstrate an increased interest in political issues. Some non-democratic regimes have some sort of participation. For instance, autocratic states require the public' engagement in a regimented demonstration to support the governments while the least façade of participation is from other non-democratic regimes. However, often the process is manipulated to support rather than threaten the existing regime (Verba et al., 1995).

The voluntary nature of a citizen's political participation refers to any individual who doesn't want to participate in politics will abstain in democratic societies. Therefore, several scholars refer to political involvement as an individual's psychological predisposition for political actions. Modernization paradigms by Russell Dalton, Ronald Inglehart, and Daniel Bell and others explain the long-term developments in political participation. These theorists suggest that the familiar social trends such as the educational opportunities, the growth of the service sector, and the rising standards of prospects by post-industrial societies have contributed to an advanced style of citizenry politics in western democracies.

Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) note that individuals engage in politics because of incentives offered and political choices, voluntary associations, trade unions, and churches, media, political parties have a vital role in activating citizen participation and not because of who they are. Some individuals actively engage in public life

within particular contexts than others. Civic awareness and cognitive skills, education is a key predictors of participation at the individual level.

The resources of civic skills, money, and time, derived from associational membership, occupation, enable the individuals who are predisposed to participate. Motivation is significant for individuals to actively participate in public affairs. Motivational attitudes could be effective, and the attitudes are about the emotional sense of civic involvement, for instance, if individuals vote based patriotism or duty (Norris, 2002). Most people do not engage in political activities because nobody has asked them (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995).

To understand political engagement, the emphasis is on mobilization and recruitment. A critical aspect of the mobilization and recruitment process frequently interacts with individual resources. Previous studies indicate that political mobilization organizational strategies are selective. For instance, mobilization action tends to aim at people who can respond positively (Rosenstone, Hansen 1993). Factors that encourage political participation like individual values and attitudes are critical. Trust among the public is a fundamental basis for participation and democracy.

Studies on the values of the world indicate that the lower a social trust, the less a democratic system. Moreover, political activity is stimulated by satisfaction with democracy. Post material values encourage political participation, in democracies of the USA, Italy, Canada, Australia, Austria, and Argentina was above 25% in the late 1990s while lowest in Slovakia, Israel, India, Hungary, and Estonia (below 5%) (Newton and Van Death, 2005). The available literature on political participation presents important information that was significant in the analysis of the influence of the new media on political participation among Kenya's youth.

2.3.3 Social Media Proliferation in the Contemporary Political Scene

The literature on the proliferation of the new media in contemporary politics provides a significant platform for understanding the significance of social media usage in political participation. Therefore, this section critically analyses the factors that contribute to the usage social media as an alternative medium of communication and source of political information for the political interest groups like the politicians and the public among others. This analysis is significant to the policymakers as it sets precedence to an independent understanding of the importance and contribution of the internet and the new media to the political scene and other issues of life in the contemporary world. It also sets a foundation for comparing the traditional forms of communication and the social media.

Abdulrauf, Hamid, and Ishak (2015) point out that, before the development of the new media, the traditional forms of media such as the press, print and broadcasting media were seen as adequate and beneficial in the conduct of democratic politics and public opinion. However, in the past the psychological and demographic factors were used for determine political participation. However, currently, studies indicate that online political participation has been necessitated through social media (Abdulrauf, Hamid, and Ishak, 2015).

It is important to note that the speed of social media, ease of access, the interactive quality and the large number of users form a platform that can easily be used globally as a medium political for political engagement. According to Howard and Parks (2012), naturally social media is referred to as "beyond a particular proprietary tool that has social content". Commonly, social media is described based on the specific applications like YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter. Fuchs, Boersma,

Albrechtslund, Sandoval (2011) points out that the internet has transformed to a system of communication and community building from an information system. Therefore, the development of social media has resulted to turning of the internet into its original framework that involved exchange and cooperation rather than information consumption and retrieval (Dijk, 2012).

Howard and Parks (2012), noted that social media is defined in three major parts. First, as a tool that is used for production and distribution of content hence it is an information infrastructure. Secondly, a digital content that takes cultural products, ideas and personal messages. And finally, the industries, organizations and people that are both consumers and producers of the digital contents. However, Dijk (2012) provides a direct definition of social media as the "internet applications that allows the sharing of things". Although these studies describe social media based on their fundamental characteristics, they are crucial aspects of analyzing the factors that contribute to political participation in the contemporary world that partly relies on technology.

The contemporary world has had its fair share in the advancements of technology. For instance, Vanner Bush in his 1945's essay on "As We, May Think" pointed noted that a collective memory inform of "Memex" needed to be developed. It is critical to point out that the memex system as proposed by Vanner Bush would be critical in facilitating and documenting the powers of human thoughts by organizing and storing information. Harvey (2014) noted that the essay is often cited as the stepping stone for suggesting the main components of social media. Doung Brown and David Rolley in 1974 at the University of Illions were the first persons to develop a chat room before the invention of the internet.

It is crucial to point out that the British military and the community as a demonstration of their technological prowess enabled Queen Elizabeth of Britain to send an email over ARPANET hence she become the first head of state to use this form of technology. The trend continued as Walter Mondole the potential Vice President of Jimmy Cater by the presidential hopeful in 1976 used email to plan for their campaign event (Harvey, 2014). In 1999, the White House started using the internet and it first went online in 1993-94. Although Harvey (2014) documents the advancement of technology, it draws the road map for social media usage for political reasons, an important aspect of the current research aimed to analyze. "The Daily Show" hosted by John Stewart a famous satirical television, a source of young and older views became famous due to it's criticism of the mainstream news and the politicians.

In 1999, the online credit contributions became legit for the presidential candidates as the Federal Commission ruled in favor of the Federal matching funds. The court rulings set a presidency for Senator John McCain presidential campaign that raised over 6 million dollars through the online platform. The advancement's for the usage of the internet for political purposes took center stage in 2000 as John Marshalls founded the "Talking Point Memo" a first political website (Harvey, 2014).

In 2002, more than a million users were attracted to use Friendster as social networking site after its inception in the same year. Linkedin was developed in the same year as one of the new media's professional site. The new media took centered stage in December 2002 when Trent Lott then the Majority Leader of the US Senate had to resign after the racial remarks he made during the 100th birthday celebrations of Senator's Storm went viral. A number of bloggers advanced his racial remarks

through the internet while the mainstream media remained silent. Based on Senator Trent Lott repercussions, the event has severally been cited as a significant advancement in the digital world that reflects the bloggers political power (Harvey, 2014). In 2001 Myspace, one of the social networking sites began its operation, and within its first month, more than one million people had started using it.

Garret (2010) notes that through the internet, information spreads fast, and rumors are easily spread and reach a vast audience. Moreover, there is an extensive increase in the usage of the new media in elections and campaigns. Data from the Associated Press revealed a significant increase of the number of Facebook users from 2004 to 2012. For instance, there were one million registered users by the end of 2004, the end of 2006 recorded 12 million users, 100 million in the year 2008, and by September 2012, the number had jumped to one billion (Press, 2012). Although the Associated Press presents data on the number of users on the new media networking sites, it sets a foundation for discussion on the significance of the new media usage by young Kenyans, and the magnitude of the social networking sites users.

It is critical to note that Twitter had almost the same trend in 2008. It had one million users and by the year 2012 (Arrington, 2008). However, the number rose to 500 million by 2012 (O'Carroll, 2012). Twitter became a popular social media platform, a social network site characterized by the use of tweets that are effective methods of communication for modern generations. The usage of Twitter for political reasons involves the frequency of retweeting, tweeting, and the operationalization of Facebook for political use through discussions on political topics. Yang and Dehart (2016) point out that the previous studies reveal online political expressions of civic talks as predictors of offline and online political participation. The civic talk formed

one of a significant factor that this study relied on while examining the factors that contribute to online political engagement visa vie the offline participation among Kenya's youth.

Concerning the development of the first social media site that became popular among the youth across the globe, it is crucial to point out that in 2004, a few elite college students had an access to the Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook.com site a social networking site that is currently accessible across the globe. "Filckr" and "Digg" were also developed as internet hosting and photo sharing platform, and social news sharing platform respectively. Greater milestones were made in the usage of the internet, for instance, approximately 901 million people were using Facebook by 2012 and 1.97 billion approximately 30% of the world population were using the internet in 2010. In 2007, Tumblr, a new media networking site was founded, it main features were photo-sharing, and short-form blogging. In the same year, the Change.com web page was launched as a political digital site that ended up attracting more than 20 million users by 2012.

In 2012, Nate Silver developed the FiveThirtyEight.com platform that became famous in the same year as an Electoral College blog. The platform was significant as it predicted the outcome of 49 of the 59 states of the US presidential elections by combining and weighing the polling data. YouTube, one of the a key social media platform for sharing videos on the internet was developed in 2005 by Chad Hrley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim. Michelle Makin also came up with the HotAir.com that became a significant political website in 2005. It is important to note that social networking sites to articulate their views, manage and maintain their social networks,

and make connections with other users a key feature that was significant to the current study.

Although the Social media networks were oriented towards connecting the users with a shared interest, for example, MySpace.com, Friendster.com, whose original goal was to foster romantic relationships while Facebook was popular among college students (Ellison, 2009). However, it is critical to point out that the proliferation of the new media has provided an avenue for multiple information and discussion. It has ended up providing a platform for democratic participation and more informed citizenry. However, there are challenges faced, such as misinformation and disinformation that end up undermining democratic discussions and information an area that formed the basis for analysis on the achievements and setbacks Kenya's youth face while using the new media sites for political reasons.

The new media provides a strategic platform for public opinion and advancement of forums for interest groups. For instance, McQuail (2005) points out that the new media provides a platform for political discourse and public opinion and encourages the engagement of the politicians and active users of social media. Although McQuail's study analyses the significance of social media on public opinions, it also provided literature that was important to this study on the advancement of online social movements, enhancement of democracy, civil society, access to political information , exchange of ideas and political participation through the use of social media.

It is critical to point out that information and communication in the modern era are affordable and easy to access social media. Burgee & Bruns (2012) point out that social media can make people from different parts of the world to relate in a way that

they are physically in the same proximity, access information, opinion, trust, and affinity. Additionally, social media users tend to be more interested in visiting networking platforms and engage in a discourse that affirms their current thoughts and believes (Tumasjan et al., 2012). Castells (2005) reveals that there is a new social morphology developed due to the networked organizations brought about by new technologies that expanded in the entire social structure. Therefore, the network society is a result of the advanced communications and technologies that are on different levels of interactions within communities (Castells, 2009).

Dijk (2012) points out that social network has been under the academics radar for a long time moreover these networks influence people's social lives as they are permanent systems of society. However, based on the literature devoted to the usage of the new media sites in politics, this study indicates the use of the new media sites across different countries has benefits and disadvantages. The political public sphere includes groups of people who take political actions and media that criticize, monitor the state and the social movements. It is important to point out a number of scholars from the available literature present an analysis of the power behind the mass protests and social media usage. Therefore, this information was significant to this study in analyzing other political factors such as mobilization of voters and holding of virtual political campaigns.

According to Fulya SEN (2012), social media has resulted from a contested terrain, pro-democracy, and national liberation movements, and a class struggle in a new formation has emerged. The 'radical democracy' is advanced by the internet force, compared to the mass media, therefore, it is ideal for political participation based on its deliberative nature as observed by many internet practitioners, researchers, and

internet-democracy commentators. Therefore, the internet is seen as a tool that helps marginalized groups. For example, those groups that is associated with discourses that are excluded from the mainstreams of public sphere. Therefore, they end up developing their link-ups, deliberative forums and contest dominant practices and meanings. However, Fulya SEN, the study fails to explain the reasons why the political class has not been excluded by the mainstream media and, are popular on the social media platform a quest that this study sought to critically analyze. The political class plays a significant role in the political discourse hence medium of communication such as the traditional media rely on them to make the news.

It is important to point out that there is an increase in information that is politically relevant to social media, especially Facebook. It is from Facebook that politicians get opportunities that enable them to be in contact with the public without limitations. Westling (2007) points out that through Facebook, the public can share opinions, engage, and participate in political processes freely. The increase in people using social media has significantly increased the number of politicians using these platforms (Smith, 2009).

According to Munson & Resnick (2009), political discussions are less frequent in spaces where people are connected for non-political reasons. However, when it occurs in political discourse, it may be closer to deliberate ideals. They also argued that, when people decide to group themselves for non-political reasons, they will always come up with opinions that appeal to other group members who do not fully share their political outlooks (Munson & Resnick, 2009). The internet is a fundamental tool for political campaigns, political parties, and politicians however, it is not founded on the evidence of participatory politics and inclusiveness.

Based on the available literature, studies provide counter-arguments; for instance, Web 2.0 is lauded as an opportunity that energizes political participation by providing a platform where voters can interact with political parties. Despite a significant number of studies pointing at the increasing numbers of users for the new media and the interconnectivity among the population through social media uasage, there is inadequate information on the domination of other users in expressing political opinions despite having active social media pages an area that this study sought to fill the gap. Therefore, this research points out, the interest of an individual in politics determines the levels of contributions towards political discourse.

2.3.4 Social Media and Politics in the American Context

This subsection discusses the usage of the new media for political purposes in America. An examination of social media usage of the new media in politics from an international perspective is critical for Kenya as it forms the basis for comparisons. From an American perspective, the Pew Research Centre study of the year 2000 indicated that 18% of Americans received news about elections online as compared to the 4% of the US 1996 election (Pew Research Center, 2000). About 10% of Americans used the internet to acquire information related to political campaigns; however, the principal source of campaign news remained to be the television (Pew Research Center, 2003). Several cases that were widely shared online were of politicians losing their positions due to their stories that were shared on the new media networking sites. For instance, in 2006, a video of a young Indian man referred to as "Macaca" by Senator George Allen went viral and destroyed the senator's re-election.

An outcry by the public in 2011 over Antony Weiner a US Representative who used Twitter to send sexually suggestive photographs resigned from his position. Weiner

contested for the New York City mayoral position and became fifth in the 2013 elections when the dirty.com Website released his sexing messages and pictures that damaged his candidacy. On the 7th November Election Day, more than 30 million tweets on the US presidential elections were sent, forming the most tweeted event in the history-social media. Moreover, President Obama's clip embracing his wife Michelle received more than 400,000 shares of 3.23 million shares (Harvey, 2014).

Smartphones have necessitated access to political information through the new media and internet. For the case of the US, the Pew survey of December 2010 revealed that 26% of adult Americans used their mobile phones to either participate or receive information (Pew Research Center, 2012). For instance, 6% posted information on their social media status page concerning their polling station on Election Day, 14% informed others that they have already voted during the 2010 medium elections (Pew Research Center, 2012). Moreover, in January 2011, the number of American adults who used the internet for political purposes grew to 73%, 22% use social networking sites for political campaigns. The adults using the internet were most likely to engage in offline errands, hence a contradiction of the stereotyping people of people who use the internet as isolated loners (Pew Research Center, 2012).

In June 2012, the Pew Research Center released a study that indicated that approximately over one-third of the new media users pointed out that social networking sites were significant for political activity. For instance, 36% of the respondents revealed that social media sites are critical in keeping up with political news. 25% of the respondents were of the view that the new media aided in the discussion of politics and 26% for the recruitment of people to political causes. Moreover, the Pew report of October 2012 indicated that 60% of the American adults

used social networking sites and two-thirds of these users used them for civic or political activities (Pew Research Center, 2012).

In its November 2012 report, Pew indicated that over half (55%) of the registered American voters had watched at least a political video online during the election period (Pew Research Center, 2012). The available literature indicates that internet users in the US politically engage through social media hence the new media is critical in influencing offline political participation such as voting behavior or intent and situational political involvement. Kim & Khang (2014) points out that political uses of blogs and online social networks especially in political discussions were directly related to the US digital political participation. The phenomenal growth of the new media sites has led to the rise of online political participation by US citizens (Yang and Dehart, 2016).

The America's Life Project and the Pew Internet indicated that for the US 2008 elections most of the adults (55%) were either engaged in the political process, os stayed informed by using the internet (Smith, 2009). In the subsequent years, the same organization revealed that, during the US midterm elections of 2010, 73% of the 54% of the US adults using the internet accessed political information or news or engaged politically online, lastly, 35% of the users of the social networking sites representing 22% of online adults either involved in the political campaigns or visited this platforms for the sake of being informed on politics (Smith, 2011). A recent survey by Pew indicated that 66% of the new media users, a figure representing about 39% of the adults in US either involved themselves in close to eight political or civic activities (Rainie, Smith, Schlozman, Brady, & Verba, 2012). However, these studies are of developed democracies such as the US. Therefore, the studies do not reflect the

real picture of the use of the new media in developing democracies such as Kenya a gap that this current study sought to fill.

The use of social media to predict election results has risks and drawbacks by the end of 2011, only 11% of Twitter users in the US were adults (Gayo-Avello, 2011). Therefore, it is an indication that the total number of the electorate using this mode of communication was much lower to represent a sample of the voters. In the year 2004, over 60 million Americans (almost one-third of the entire population) reported seeing a political documentary of Pew Research Center study of January 2005 however, only 16% and 7% read a book on politics and attended campaigns respectively.

In 2004, Howard Dean, the Democratic presidential candidate, raised $25 million for his political campaign hence demonstrating that it was possible to fundraise through the social media platform (Hyun and Kim, 2015). However, the study findings in October 2004 by Pew Research Center indicates that the internet plays a minor role in political campaigns compared to the amount of money which was spent on the ads on the television at $ 330 million compared to $ 2.66 million on the internet between the January and August 2004 (Pew Research Center, 2004).

The available literature has focused on social media sites where information posted on it is open to the public. For instance, a person with an account on Twitter or Facebook can access published information by other users on their pages. However, researchers seem to over-rely on the open type of social media while ignoring closed types such as WhatsApp, where only members of a particular group can access information on those platforms as areas that this study sought for answers. The Pew survey of 2000 indicated that 18% of Americans were getting news about elections online as compared to the four percent of the US 1996 election (Pew Research Center, 2000).

The Pew Research Centre in March 2005 released its report indicating that out of the 67% percent Americans who used the internet, 37% of the adult's population used the internet in specific circumstances to get information and news about politics, volunteer for a political campaign, and contribute to political candidates and discuss issues by email (Bode et al., 2014).

The Pew survey of September 2006 revealed that 26 million American that is 19% of adult internet consumer received political information on the upcoming elections through the internet while in its January 2007 report a 23% of the American adults using the internet forwarded political videos or commentaries. Its April 2009 survey indicated that more than 55% of the American adults became involved in politics, used the internet to share political content and information on the 2008 elections (Pew Research Center, 2009).

The 79% of the House candidates and 85% of the Senate candidates used the online systems and had maintained websites respectively during the 2006 US midterm elections. Therefore, registering an increase from 55% and 61% in 2000 and 2002 respectively to 74% in 2004 (Williams and Gulati, 2006). The general public (20%) acknowledged receiving campaign information directly from the candidates and accessing the politicians' websites. In 2002, Facebook displayed the number of supporters and the following the political candidates had garnered after developing the congressional and gubernatorial pages (Williams and Gulati, 2006). The advancement led to an attraction of more than 1.5 million Facebook users to be connected directly to a political aspirant or political groups. A key example is the 12,038 Hilary Clinton's registered supporters on Facebook topping as majority among other political aspirants using the same online platform (Williams and Gulati, 2006).

The usage of the internet during this election marked it as a mainstream campaign tool in US politics.

A demonstration of the significance of the social media usage in influencing the political system came into play during the 2008 US general elections and the presidential primaries. For instance, Wolley and Limperos (2008), noted that the usage of the new media became a critical medium for political campaign during this electioneering period. Valenzuela (2009) affirms that social media became vital in the 2008 US elections as a significant number of aspirants rushed to grab supporters among the bulging number of social media users. However, Facebook became the most preferred site for the 2008 US elections for the frontrunners in comparison to other types of digital platforms. For instance, all the presidential candidates have a Facebook page. Hillary Clinton, John McCanin, Mike Huckabee and Barack Obama had a presence on Facebook (Aronson, 2012). "My Barrak Obama" was a critical online site portrayed one of the successful political campaigns on the social media platform. This online page was an improvement of the Howard Dean campaign that had new features that would allow Obama's supporters organize physical rallies and donate funds. The Obama's campaign strategy that incorporated the new media builds a strong voting bloc among the youths and formed a foundation for voter registration and fundraising.

2.3.5 Social Media and Politics in the African Context

This section analyses the usage of the new media in the African context. It, therefore, sets the precedence for the critical examination of the usage of the new media based on African countries in a continent that hosts Kenya. Malleus (2014) points out that the different types of social networking sites have been used in political outreach and

organizing. The sites are co-opted by citizen journalists and mainstream media. Moreover provided a platform where people debate issues, and a means to circumvent government censorship. Social media use in politics in this area has torn down the silos of political information and blurred national borders of this region. Activists, politicians, parties, political movements use social media to reach more people beyond those who support their party or cause and seek to gain more support. This study attempted to find out the contribution of the usage of new media in informing the young Kenyans on political matters.

The literature reviewed in this work reveals that the new media has a significant role in political communication. A scholar such as Malleus (2014) indicates that social networking sites plays a vital role in political outreach through the dissemination of information that reaches a population that is not active in politics and attracting them into political activism. A case in point is in 2011, where young people in Egypt were galvanized to go to streets and protest by calls for action through messages from popular bloggers and Facebook.

Similarly, the new media had an important role in politics in North Africa in the 21centry (Malleus, 2014). For the 2012 presidential elections, for the political parties and the aspirants were present on the platform during the two rounds. It is after they had realized the efficacy of communication through the new media networking sites to the general public and their supporters. The two Egyptian run-off candidates, Ahmed Shafik and Mohamed Morsi maintained their presence on Facebook in the 2012 elections. Smaller political parties in Tunisia used Facebook for training poll observers and recruiting supporters (Malleus, 2014).

In the south of Algeria, as pointed out by Biswas and Sipes (2014), the organizations of youth activism on economic and social justice were enabled in part through the usage of social networking sites. For instance, most of the Algerian cities in March 2013 experienced protests when citizens demanded equitable distribution of wealth. These events were necessitated through social media coverage. The mobilization of supporters is also part of political organizing. In Libya, activists who were unable to access the controlled media or running away from the army during the fight against the 2011 revolution decided to mobilize and inform their supporters by the use of the new media sites.

The popular uprisings experienced in Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, and Tunisia are examples of the demonstration of the use of the new media networking sites in politics in North Africa. Biswas and Sipes (2014) point out that Twitter and Facebook are among the most preferred forms of social media sites used as a medium for the citizens of these countries to gather in the virtual space and speak out. The physical gathering at Tahrir Square in Cairo during the Egyptian revolution is an example of the offline political demonstration translated from a virtual space. After the revolts, politicians in North Africa recognized that social media was fundamental in communicating their political information.

Biswas and Sipes (2014) note that after the fall of President Hosni Mubarak and the end of the uprisings, the Egyptian military started to use Facebook to communicate to the Egyptians, a move that indicates the significance of the new media in political outreach. The new media became a vital tool for communication in Libya's and Syria's revolutions. The government of the two countries controlled media therefore it was difficult for activists to pass across their messages` (Biswas and Sipes, 2014).

According to Freedom of Press (2011), the revolution in Libya paved the way for media penetration as the Libyan media was one of the tightest states controlled in the world. The government of Syria controlled and owned news agencies, newspapers, radios, and television. Moreover, it controlled the flow of information and barred criticism of the head of state and close relatives, barred privately owned media from airing political news and content, blocked the opposition and websites accessed globally (Albanesius, 2011).

For the case of Syria, bloggers and journalists were threats to the government. A number of them had to leave the country, and those who remained risked physical attacks (Syria Profile, 2012). The international audience depended on the information on the Syrian revolt from two types of journalists; the local citizens that became videographers and documented government and movement responses; and foreign journalists who entered the country illegally (Zein, 2012). These journalists heavily relied on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook to disseminate the information.

In Moldova, In April 2009, activists used the new media networking sites such as LiveJournal, Twitter, and Facebook to plan and execute protests against their government. The death of Neda Agha-Soltan in June, an Iranian protester was captured on a cell phone, and the video rapidly circulated across the world through Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter hence circumventing Iranian censorship (Ho, 2011). The Philippines faced mass demonstrations in January 2001 against President Joseph Estrada. A large crowd gathered within a few hours and into millions within a few days through forwarded text messages.

It is critical to point out that the usage of the new social networking sites faces a hurdle of challenges. For instance, governments regarded as authoritarian have

censored the use of social media whenever they feel threatened. For examples, the Chinese government among other governments limited the accessibility of social media as a precaution towards political revolutions that had rocked the contemporary world such as the resent Arab uprisings (Ho, 2011). Moreover, the Iranian presidential elections resulted to a blackout of Facebook as the government temporarily blocked its access due to the intensive use of this site by the opposition aspirants for campaigns (Bazzi, 2009). Before the Arab uprisings, social media was used for communication during the 2009 Iran's "Green Revolution", the Moldova civil uprising in 2009, the Burma "Saffron Revolution" in 2007 and the 2004 and 2005 Ukranian's "Orange Revolution (Goldstein, 2007; Glaser, 2007; Barry, 2009). However, the fundamental question is how the growing democracies have and democratic governments enhanced the use of the new media networking sites for its citizens. Therefore, this is one of the key areas that this study focused on how Kenya's government has enabled accessibility of the internet and the new media in the country.

It is important to note that advancement and innovation in telephony technology are quite important for the new media usage for political communication. For instance, the use of mobile phones to advance political activism was successfully used by Nosamo Movement in South Korea and the Philippines People Power II Movement (Qiu, 2008). Tunisian president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali was abdicated on 14th January 2011 after Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire. The event was captured by an amateur and posted on YouTube and access by a significant number of people who had mobile phones. Therefore, social media is a contributing factor to political changes during post-revolution, during-and pre-revolution cycles (Aouragh, 2012). The above studies have examined social media's aspect of political activism. The

available literature emphasizes political revolutions that have captured worldwide attention. However, scholars seem to have done little on political activism that involves purely virtual protests other than the physical revolt that involved marching on the streets. Thus the current study analyses how social media has contributed to political activism in Kenya. The available studies share similar findings. However, there is an exclusion of the youth in the rural areas in this research domain. The current study focused on young people in both urban and rural Kenya who are active in the political process.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the cognitive engagement developed by Ronald F. Inglehart in 1977 and Technological determinism theory as advanced by McQuail in 2005.

2.4.1 Cognitive Engagement Theory

This study was guided by the cognitive engagement theory assumption that citizens' participation in politics depends on the satisfaction with the government's agenda and government policies (Bimber, 2001). The theory proposes that political participation depend the availability of political information, knowledge on what is happening in the political scenes and education (Conroy, Feezell &Guerrerro, 2012). Therefore, the level of knowledge depends on the education level of the citizens. The interest of the citizens in politics increases on the basis of the uptake of information that is readily accessible at a lesser cost (Asher, Caylor & Neigel, 2018).

To Abdulrauf, Hamid, and Ishak, (2015) "cognitive engagement is the extent to which individuals are willing to learn about politics that eventually participate in it". Moreover, cognitive engagement is an effort that young people to persistently invest

in seeking political engement (Charles, 2010). Ronald F. Inglehart coined the cognitive enagement paradigm in 1977 (Alaminos & Panalva, 2012; Dalton, 1984). The theory of cognitive mobilization meant that political participation was affected by the learned youth who were intensified the accessibility of information (Inglehart, 1977). The main aurgement of the cognitive engagement theory is that political participation results from political interst, policy satisfaction, access to information, political knowledge, and an individual's education (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004).

Political participation that takes on the internet is referred to as online participation. Non-conventional digital modes of participation also known as non-institutional or non-electrol forms for the last decade have been on a rise (Shore, 2014). Social media consist of several features that can be used for online political participation such as wall posting, messages, and instant messaging that are direct method while the indirect ways such as status and posting notes (Warren, & Sulaiman & Jafar 2014; Vitak et al., 2011).

The young people political culture consists of social media and hence a a relationship between youth political participation and Cognitive Engagement Theory, therefore, factors such as policy satisfaction, political interest, political information, and knowledge can be used to describe youth engagement on social media and online political participation (Olabamiji, 2014). Despite CET being propounded in the year 2006, there is a renewed interest due to reduced costs of accessing political information due to the coming up of improved technology such as social media (Dalton, 2006).

Political participation was directly related to an individual's access to political knowledge, political interest, and access to information (Charles, 2010). Additionally,

there was a connection between youth policy satisfaction and political participation (Vincente and Novo, 2014). Moreover, during the US 2008 elections, 22% of social media users used the platform to for political information especially to find information about a political candidate, 29% to check on their friend's political affiliations and 40% were using social media to find out their friends' political interests (Rene, 2008).

2.4.2 Technological Determinism Theory

The main argument of the proponents of Technological Determinism theory is that technological development shapes the society. Therefore, society adjusts and adopts the new innovations and technologies. For instance, the contemporary information society arises due to new technologies, advancement of innovations, and their political and social implications. Society technology drives the social structure and cultural values.

The core argument of the technological determinism theory is that the cultural values and the social structures development are driven by the society's technology. The theory focuses on showing that technical development, technology or media are key drivers of social change. McQuail (2005) presented the following assumptions of the technological determinism theory;

i.   Communication technology is at the heart of any given society.

ii.   Change is driven by technology in all forms of media industries.

iii.   The contents, uses and forms of communication dectates the type of technology.

iv.   Social change is influenced by the application of technology and the sequence of invention.

v.   Social revolutions are engendered by communication revolutions.

vi.   The old bases of power are undermined by the new media.

The paradigm states that when there is the development of new systems of technology, the society or the culture immediately changes to reflect the senses that are required to engage the new technologies. It further posits that for every introduction of new technological equipments, the society will shift towards adopting the innovation. Therefore, the members of the society will rush for the new technology and dispose of the old.

The theory is based on the assumption that new technology affects people's status in society. The purpose of using technological equipment by the members of a society is for them to either sustain their culture or embrace other cultures. The theory provides an insight into social media usage and internet in the modern times. In relation to the advantages of using social media and the internet, such as ease of communication, this has seen tremendous growth users, especially among the youth. According to Tufts University (2015), the internet recorded approximately 1.3 billion active users on a monthly basis as per June 2014. This theory informed this study as it reflects the acceptance of the new media and its usage in the modern world. Critics of technological determinism theory points out that it do not explain the process of technological innovation. Man invents, creates and deploys media technologies. Therefore, there is a control factor that sets the parameters for the consumption of these technologies. Morover, critics point out the most important aspects are political and social issues rather than the technical features. Control and access, choice, skill, style, modes of use, circumstances of production are critical apects that critics of this theory emphasis.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was informed by the cognitive mobilization theorythat argues that political participation is affected by the learned youth who tend to have an increased access to information (Inglehart, 1977). The core argument of the cognitive engagement theory is that political participation is the product of political interest, policy satisfaction, accesss to information and political knowledge (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004). The theory of technolocal determinisim was also crtical in the development of this conceptual framework. This theory argues that the cultural values and the social structures development are as a result of a society's technology. The paradigm focuses on showing that technical development, technology or media, is a key aspect of social change. Therefore, this study was guided by a conceptual framework as presented in figure 2.2.

The framework was developed by the researcher in an attempt of describing the relationship between the independent, dependent, and intervening variables. Therefore, the framework assumes that the independent variables are the use of social media, level of education; level of political awareness; level of political interests; and level of education while the dependent variable is political participation. In this case the access to social media, the level of political awareness, political interests, education and gender affects political participation and vice versa. For instance, the level of political awareness, political interests and education in this case contribute to the youth's engagement in the political process. When the young people have access to social media then there is a tendency of using the platform to communicate and consume political information. Therefore, social media acts as a medium for political participation. In this case political participation depends on availability and

accessibility of social media. Any interference with social media will definitely affects the levels of political participation. The intervening variables include government policies, internet accessibility, and availability of political information. Intervening variables affect levels of political participation and the use of social media. In this case, government policies may either provide an enabling environment or scare the users of social media which in turn affects the levels of political participation and vice versa. Likewise, availability of political information and accessibility to the internet and social media are critical intervening variables.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES   **DEPENDENT VARIABLES**
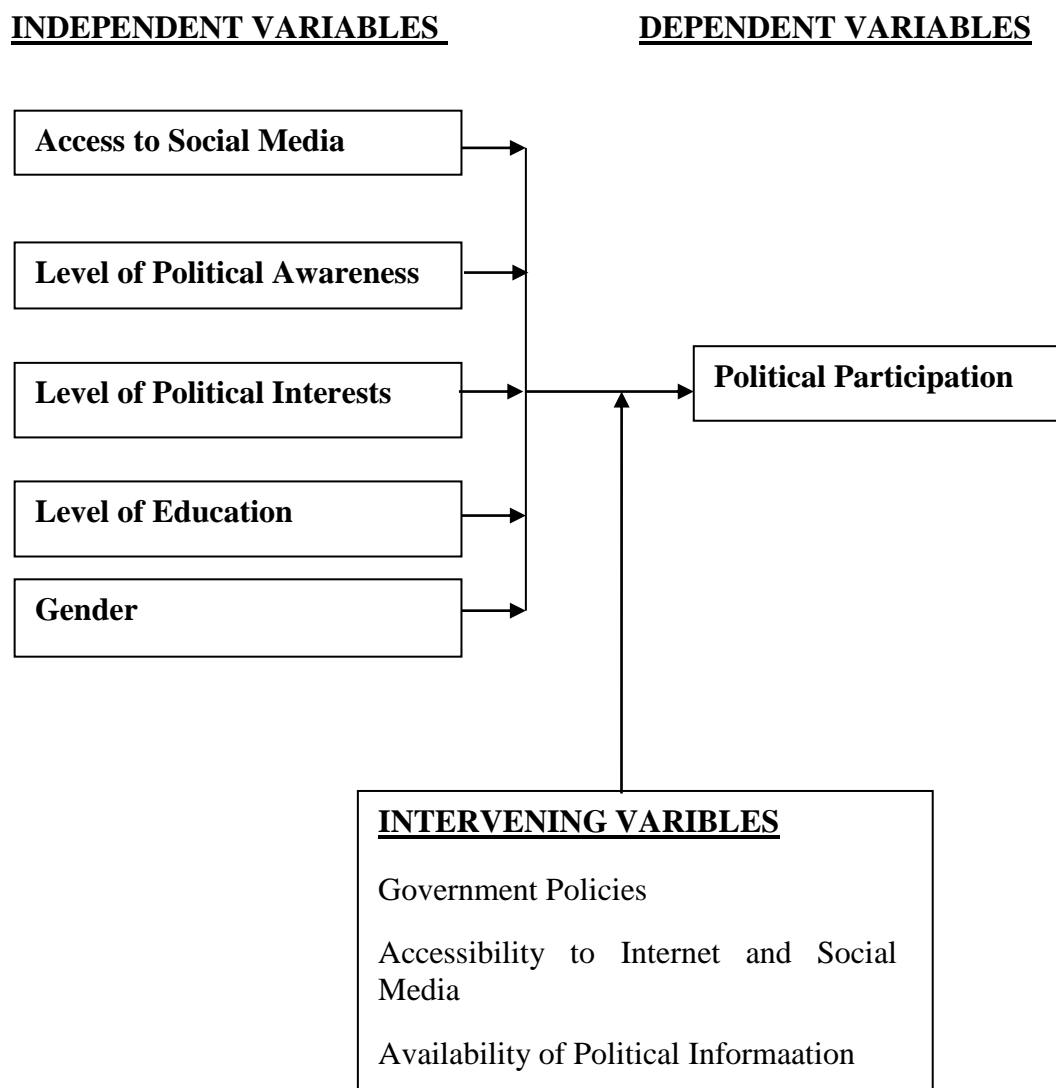
 Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework
Source: Researcher, 2018

2.6 Summary and Knowledge Gap

Chapter two presented a literature review analyzed in three broad thematic areas. First, it discusses social media and political awareness with a main focus on social capital and political participation; social media and mainstream media; and the process of media communication. From this section, the literature reviewed revealed that a significant number of scholars have recently paid attention to the new media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube. Moreover, social media has captured the attention of many scholars. The new media has developed a platform, especially among the youth, to engage in interpersonal communication (Wills &Reeves, 2009). These networking sites allow its users to articulate and present themselves on social media, make connections, and maintain them with other users. Secondly, this chapter provided a detailed analysis of social media and voter mobilization with a view on social media and political participation; and the youths and political participation. Third, it discussed the gains and setbacks of using social media for political purposes. The key subsections in this area include an examination of literature on social media utopians, the internet, and political participation; political participation in the modern world; social media proliferation in the contemporary political scene with a focus on American and African contexts. Lastly, it concluded with a detailed description of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. From the reviewed literature, a significant number of studies analyzed the usage of social media from an angle of political revolution and demonstrations with an emphasis on the Arab World and the Middle East. Moreover, mobilization of voters in the United States formed the centre stage of a large number of studies.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a methodological position that was adopted for the study. It consists of the description of the area of study, research design, research philosophy, target population, sampling design, data collection methods and instruments, procedures for data collection, and data processing strategies. The study relied on secondary and primary data, primary sources included focused group discussion, oral interviews and questionnaires. While secondary data was derived from journals, government documentaries, conference proceedings, newspapers, annual reports, published surveys, and other published and unpublished materials.

3.1 The Study Area

This study was done in both Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties. Nairobi City County represented the urban youths while Kakamega County the rural youths. A detailed description of the two counties is as described below.

3.1.1 Nairobi City County

Nairobi City County is among the 47 counties of Kenya. Appendix VI (Map of the Study Area) for Nairobi County indicates that the County hosts the capital city of Kenya and borders Machakos County to the East, Kajiado on the south, and Kiambu County on the West and North. This county consists of nine sub-counties in this county which include; Westlands, Langata, Dagoretti, Njiru, Emabakasi, Makadara, Kasarani, Kamukunji, and Starehe (Nairobi county integrated development plan, 2014). It also consists of 17 constituencies which consist of Mathare, Starehe, Kamukunji, Makadara, Embakasi Central, Embakasi South, Embakasi West,

Emabakasi East, Emabakasi North, Ruaraka, Kasarani, Roysambu, Kibra, Langata, Dagoretti South, Dagoretti North, and Westlands.

The population of the county stood at 4,397,073 residents that include 2,192,452 male, 2,204,316 female, and 245 intersex, hence a population distribution of 49.86% male, 50.13% female, and less than 1% for the intersex (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019). The total registered voters are 2,250,853 where 1,096,371 are female while 1,154,482 are male. 186,285 female and 206,560 male are of the age 18 to 24 years, 448,310 female and 510,677 male of 25 to 35 years, 219,936 female and 296,091 male of 36 to 45 years, 96,651 female and 56,426 male of 46 to 55 years and over 55 years included 56,426 females and 145,189 male registered voters (IEBC, 2017).

3.1.2 Kakamega County

Appendix VI (Map of the Study Area) for Kakamega County indicates that the County is part of the four Counties in the western region. It borders Vihiga County to the south, Siaya and Busia County to the West, Nandi County to the east, Uasin Gishu to the North East, Trans-Nzoia, and Bugoma Busia to the north. The county covers an area of approximately 3050.3 km2. The county consists of 12 constituencies which include; Ikolomani, Shinyalu, Khwisero, Butere, Matungu, Mumias East, Mumias West, Navakholo, Lurambi, Malava, Likuyani and Lugari.

The county population stood at 1,867,579 people, where 897,133 are male while 970,406 are female and 40 intersex hence a population distribution of 48% male, 51.9% female, and less than 1% for the intersex (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019). The total registered voters are 743,736 where 341,994 are female and

401,742 male. From the registered voters 51,522 are the female aged 18 to 24 years while 63,788 are male of the same age group, for the age group (25 to 35 years) 120, 700 are female while 112,354 are male.70, 431 females and 71,156 males are of the age (36 to 45 years), 52,409 females and 83,264 males are the ages (46 to 55 years) and over 55years include 46,932 female and 71,180 male population (IEBC, 2017).

3.2 Research Design

The study was conducted through a mixed method research design where active and non-active social media users who are registered as voters were targeted from both the Nairobi city and Kakamega Counties. Tashakkori and Creswell, (2007) explains that a mixed method design allows the researcher to collect and analyze data, integrate findings and draw inferences using quantitative and qualitative approaches. This type of design enables adequate information hence the research problem can be analysed on a wider perspective. It assits in maximizing reliability and minimizes bias of the data collected and analyzed. In this case the mixed methods design provided an opportunity for considering different aspects of the study problem and provided a room for generation of maximum information. Moreover, this type of design permited measuring instruments that was fairly objective, reliable and valid. Therefore, this type of research design is valuable for assessing opinions and trends. It involves the collection of data from respondents who are selected to represent a larger population. T/his design was selected for the study because the researcher sought to examine opinions and trends on the usage of the new media for political participation purposes by the Kenyan youth.

3.3 Research Philosophy

This study was aligned to the pragmatist school of thought that postulates that researchers should use methodological or philosophical approaches that suits a particular research problem under investigation. Maxcy, 2003 points out that pragmatism embraces plurality of methods and as a research paradigm and its philosophical foundations are grounded in the historical contributions of the philosophy of pragmatism. Moreover, Creswell and Clark, 2011 notes that this paradigm employ formal or informal rhetoric. Pragmatists accept that there can be single or multiple realities that can be empirically studied, however, they refuse to be involved in metaphysical concepts such as reality and truth. Pragmatism is often associated with the mixed method design an approach that this study adopted. In this case the emphasis is on the consequences of the study questions rather than the methods.

3.4 Target Population of the Study

This study targeted youths registered as voters from Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties. The target population was drawn from four Constituencies two from Nairobi City County while the rest from Kakamega County. The selection of the counties was based on the population size, number of constutiencies and electrol wards. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census Nairobi City County has a population of over 4, 397,073 inhabitants. It has seventeen (17) constituencies which are divided into 85 wards hence leading other counties. Kakamega County has a population size of 1,867,579 inhabitants, it is has twelve (12) constituencies divided into 60 electrol wards hence leading the rural counties.

3.4.1 Target Population: Nairobi City County

The target population for Nairobi City County was drawn from the Starehe constituency that has the highest number of registered voters (166,397) in Nairobi County while Embakasi North has the least (104,253) voters. Table 3.1 shows a detailed distribution of registered voters per gender and age and constituency from Nairobi City County.

Table 3.1 Registered Voters per Constituency: Nairobi City County

Constituency	18 to 24 years		25 to 35 years		Above 36 years		Number of Voters
	Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	
Westlands	10,681	13,208	25,717	33,231	33,731	36,150	**152,718**
Dagoretti North	11,934	13,785	27,195	32,049	32,766	29,485	**147,214**
Dagoretti South	9,145	9,447	21,978	21,928	23,339	21,402	**107,239**
Langata	9,961	12,963	22,643	28,695	29,573	28,737	**132,572**
Kibra	9,636	11,178	21,246	25,641	25,546	25,029	**118,276**
Roysambu	13,722	11,976	34,592	30,696	31,408	25,188	**147,582**
Kasarani	13,997	12,891	31,574	28,840	32,532	26,867	**146,701**
Ruaraka	12,102	12,636	24,314	28,437	19,304	19,508	**116,301**
Embakasi South	12,448	15,050	31,978	44,147	21,178	25,513	**150,314**
Embakasi North	9,400	9,214	22,836	21,742	22,719	18,342	**104,253**
Embakasi Central	11,903	11,347	30,541	28,325	27,786	22,089	**131,991**
Embakasi East	12,150	13,286	30,098	32,909	27,588	24,709	**140,740**
Embakasi West	10,855	9,921	29,158	25,897	27,785	23,066	**126,682**
Makadara	10,021	10,832	24,644	27,050	27,455	26,046	**126,048**
Kamukuji	8,208	12,126	20,406	32,582	21,758	25,186	**120,266**
Starehe	10,265	15,540	26,022	41,976	34,399	38,195	**166,397**
Mathare	9,857	11,160	23,368	26,532	22,909	21,733	**115,559**
TOTAL	**186,285**	**206,560**	**448,310**	**510,677**	**461,776**	**437,245**	**2,250,853**

Source: IEBC, 2017

From the 3.1 above, Starehe Constituency has the highest number of registered voters at 166, 397 voters while Embakasi has the least 104,253. Therefore, the voters from the two constituencies formed the target population of this study.

3.4.2 Target Population: Kakamega County

The target population for Kakamega County was drawn from Malava Constituency that has the highest number of registered voters (82,136) in Mumias East has the least (45,380) voters. Table 3.2 shows a detailed distribution of registered voters per gender and age and constituency from Kakamega County.

Table 3.2: Registered Voters per Constituency: Kakamega County

Constituency	18 to 24 years		25 to 35 years		Above 36 years		Number of Voters
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Lugari	5,677	7,202	12,083	11,318	**18,202**	**22,519**	**77,001**
Likuyani	4,875	6,077	9,590	9,108	**15,465**	**18,196**	**63,311**
Malava	4,697	6,670	13,854	13,337	**18,378**	**25,200**	**82,136**
Lurambi	6,006	7,247	13,935	14,327	**17,654**	**20,868**	**80,037**
Navakholo	3,551	4,657	8,917	8,502	**11,799**	**16,194**	**53,620**
Mumias West	3,402	3,998	8,348	7589	**10,772**	**13,383**	**47,492**
Mumias East	3,590	4,191	8,196	7,208	**9,647**	**12,548**	**45,380**
Matungu	4,549	5,754	10,042	9,521	**14,016**	**17,846**	**61,728**
Butere	4,106	4,717	10,281	8,544	**14,767**	**20,541**	**62,956**
Khwisero	2,896	3,371	7,684	6,086	**11,237**	**17,646**	**48,920**
Shinyalu	4,532	5,600	10,678	10,201	**16,642**	**23,603**	**71,256**
Ikolomani	3,641	4,304	7,092	6,613	**11,193**	**17,056**	**49,899**
TOTAL	**51,522**	**63,788**	**120,700**	**112,354**	**169,772**	**225,600**	**743,736**

Source: IEBC, 2017

From the 3.2 above, Malava Constituency has the highest number of registered voters at 82,136 voters while Mumias East has the least 45,380. Therefore, the voters from the two constituencies formed the target population of this study.

3.4.3 Target Population: Nairobi City County and Kakamega County

Table 3.3 below presents a summary of the target population for Nairobi City County

and Kakamega County based on the detailed presentation on table 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.3: Target Population: Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties

Constituency	18 to 24 years		25 to 35 years		Above 36 years		Target Population
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Nairobi City							
Starehe	10,265	15,540	26,022	41,976	34,399	38,195	**166,397**
Embakasi North	9,400	9,214	22,836	21,742	22,719	18,342	**104,253**
Kakamega County							
Malava	4,697	6,670	13,854	13,337	**18,378**	**25,200**	**82,136**
Mumias East	3,590	4,191	8,196	7,208	**9,647**	**12,548**	**45,380**
TOTAL	**27,952**	**35,615**	**70,908**	**84,263**	**85,143**	**94,285**	**398,166**

Source: IEBC, 2017

Table 3.3 above presents the target population for this study from both Nairobi and

Kakamega Counties. Therefore, 398,166 voters of over 18 years formed the target

population for this study as indicated in the table above.

3.4.4 Target Population for the Key Informants

The target population for the key respondents in this study included the Engagement

and Support Officer- Ushahidi Kenya, Programs Operations Director Inuka Kenya Ni

SiSi, Director, Multimedia Services-Communication Authority of Kenya, and

Director Research and Development from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries

Commission (IEBC). Table 3.4 presents the target population for the key informants

as shown below.

Table 3.4: Target Population for the Key Informants

Institution	Position	Target population
Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK)	Director Multimedia Services	01
IEBC	Director of Research and Development	01
Inuka Kenya Ni SiSi	Operations Director	01
Ushahidi Kenya	Engagement and Support Officer	01
TOTAL		**04**

Source: Researcher, 2018

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size of this study included 600 respondents 410 from Nairobi City County, 190 from Kakamega County and four key informants were included in this study.

3.5.1 Sample Size

Israel (1992) argues that apart from the population size and the purpose of the study, an appropriate sample size would be determined based on three criterions. This criterion includes; the degree of variability, the levels or risks or confidence, and the level of precision in the attributes being measured (Miaoulis and Michener, 1976). A sampling error is also referred to as the level of precision (Israel, 1992). This study used a sampling error of a range $\pm$ **10%.** According to Israel (1992), the risk of confidence level is based on the ideas encompassed under the Central Limit Theorem.

The main idea behind the Central Limit Theorem is that when a population of a study is repeatedly sampled, the average value of the attribute obtained by those samples are distributed normally about the true value, with some samples having a higher value

and some obtaining a lower score than the true population value. This study applies the use 95% confidence level as Israel (1992) argues that in a normal distribution, approximately 95% of the sample values are within two standard deviations of the true population value.

The degree of variability in the attributes that are being measured refers to the distribution of the attributes within the population (Israel, 1992). The more the heterogeneous a population, the larger the sample size required to obtain a given level of precision while the more homogeneous (less variable) a population, the smaller the sample size (Israel, 1992). Therefore, this study adopts a smaller sample size as it focuses on youth who tend to share the same attributes. A proportion of **.5** is used as it indicates the maximum variability in a population, it is often used in determining a more conservative sample size, for instance, the sample size may be larger if the true variability of the population attribute was used (Israel, 1992). The study used Yamane's (1967) formula to calculate the sample size. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where **n** is the sample size,
N is the population size,
and **e** is the level of precision.

The sample size of this study was 600 respondents drawn from four constituencies from Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties. Table 3.5 presents the sample size distribution among the two counties. For the case of Nairobi city county, the sample population is 70 female and 69 male of the age of (18-24) years, 68 female and 76 male of between (25-35) years and 67 female and 60 male of 36 years and above hence a sample population of 410 respondents. The sample population for Kakamega

County consisted of 30 female and 31 male population of the age (18-24) years, 32 female and 24 male of (25-35) years and 33 female and 40 male of above 36 years leading to a sample population of 190 respondents. The sample size was grouped into different ages so as to ensure equal representation from the study population.

Table 3.5: Sample Size

Constituency	18 to 24 years		25 to 35 years		Above 36 years		Sample Size
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Nairobi City							
Starehe	37	43	36	50	40	41	**247**
Embakasi North	33	26	32	26	27	19	**163**
Total	**70**	**69**	**68**	**76**	**67**	**60**	**410**
Kakamega County							
Malava	17	19	20	16	22	27	**121**
Mumias East	13	12	12	08	11	13	**69**
Total	**30**	**31**	**32**	**24**	**33**	**40**	**190**
TOTAL	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**600**

Source: Researcher, 2018

3.5.2 Sampling Procedures

The researcher used purposive sampling to select Engagement and Support Officer of Ushahidi Kenya, Programs Operations Director of Inuka Kenya Ni SiSi, Director Multimedia Services from the Communication Authority of Kenya, and Director Research and Development of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).

Stratified sampling was used to select the youth population as they were divided per age, county, and constituency. The researcher then used snowball sampling to select the participants. Snowball sampling was criticial for this study as it assisted in selecting the intial respondents for the tareget population. Through snowball sampling, the initial youth groups and youths with the desired characteristics were

identified using purposeful sampling techniques and a few identified subjects named respondents who have the required characteristics until the reseacher had the number of the cases required.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The study used primary sources that included focus group discussions, structured oral interviews, and questionnaires. While secondary data was derived from journals, government documentaries, conference proceedings, newspapers, annual reports, published surveys, and other published and unpublished materials. The subsections below discuss the details of the methods that were used in this study.

3.6.1 Documentary Sources of Data

The study used secondary data from journals, government documentaries, conference proceedings, newspapers, annual reports, published surveys, and other published and unpublished materials. Government documentaries such as the Communication Authority of Kenya- Sector Statistics Report per quota were vital to the study. This report provided information on the levels of the internet, mobile phone penetration among other crucial information that was significant for this study.

The study also used the Government of Kenya investigative reports and parliamentary committee reports such as the Government of Kenya Report of Parliamentary Select Committee that investigated the Ethnic Clashes in Western and other parts of Kenya (1992) among others. Election Observation reports from both local and international observers were vital in this study. The study used the European Union Elections Observation Mission reports on Kenya's elections. These publications were important in providing information on citizen participation in the electoral process.

The study also referred to Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) quarterly, reports, and the Safaricom Limited Annual reports. Safaricom is the largest mobile communication company in Kenya, holding a large percentage of mobile and internet market share. Social media statistical reports such as Facebook Reports and Pew research Center publications brought to light on the use of social media in the country.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from the sampled youth. This data collection instrument had a combination of open-ended and close-ended questions to be able to capture both the quantitative and qualitative data. Closed-ended questions were used to help in standardizing and quantifying responses while open-ended which ensure that in-depth data that is detailed and explorative of all aspects of the variables under the study. This method was used because the target population consisted of literate persons who can read and write. Moreover, it offers considerable advantages in administration as they present an even stimulus potentially to large numbers of people simultaneously and provide the investigation with an easy accumulation of data.

Questionnaires give respondents the freedom to express their views and make suggestions (Gay, 1992). Moreover, its anonymous property helps produce more candid answers. The reseacher distributed 550 questionnaires among the respondents from Starehe, Embakasi North, Malava, and Mumias East Constituencies however at total 332 questionnaires were return hence a return rate of 60.36%.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions

This study used focus group discussion to gauge, explore in-depth the beliefs, perceptions, and, opinions of the participants. Focus group discussions consist of

discussions that are carefully planned and designed to obtain information on the participants' beliefs and perceptions in a defined area of interest (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

In Conducting Focus Group discussion, the process involved the selection of participants' moderators, preparation, and conducting the discussions. The discussion sessions were held at a comfortable venue for purposes of recording and discussions, therefore, the researcher opted for conference rooms that offered the best location for this exercise. The focus group discussion sessions lasted for at least two hours. Malhotra, (2001) points out that two to four hours are the standard time for a focus group session. The discussions were recorded on an audio device that the reseacher had to review during data analysis.

The reseacher employed the use of moderators for this study. Moderators played an important role in the discussions, for instance, they ensured that all participants had an opportunity to contribute towards the topic. They also made the respondents open up and interact freely after the creation of rapport. Through the use of moderators, there was a flow of discussions through the question and answer sessions on both the specific and general questions.

The reseacher developed a focus group discussion guide, a tool that ensured that the scope of the inquiry was well covered during the discussion sessions. Moreover, this tool was important while tackling the most critical questions of the study. The major purpose of a focus group discussion is to get responses spontaneously therefore listening attentively is very crucial in this approach (Zikmind, D'alessandro, Winzar, Lowe and Babin, 2013).

3.6.4 Interviews

The study used structured oral interviews. This is a type of interview that offers greater freedom and flexibility to both the interviewees and the interviewer in terms of organizing, planning, and implementing the interview questions and the contents (Gubrium and Holstein (2002). This study used Interview schedules to guide the interviews which were conducted among the key informants. The interview guides contained items covering all the objectives of the study for instance it gathered information on the effects of social media on political awareness, voter mobilization, and activism. In conducting the interviews, the reseacher established an appropriate environment through which the interviewee would feel more at ease hence be open.

The reseacher considered the following key issues as proposed by Barbour and Schostak (2005), for instance, the maintenance of the value, trust, and meaning of the interview. Moreover, the reseacher maintain the respondent's motivation by keeping boredom at bay, as suggested by (Berg, 2007). The reseacher ensured motivation through avoiding personal and demographic questions such as income and age respectively. The reseacher had to take time to unravel the investigated phenomenon, Schostack (2002) notes that this section should take at least thirty minutes. The respondents were given a chance at the end of the interview session to ask questions or bring up comments.

3.7 Reliability and validity of Data Collection Instruments

This study ensured the reliability of the research instruments through the use of a spilt-Halt technique of reliability testing. The piloted questionnaires were grouped into two halves, and a correlation coefficient was computed using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula where accepted a reliability coefficient of more than 0.65. A

minimum correlation coefficient of 0.65 is recommended as it indicates that the instrument is reliable (Kiess and Bloomquist, 1985).

To ensure validity the questionnaires were pre-tested through a pilot study a month early before the commencement of the research. The participants in the piloted inquiry did not participate in the final study. The researcher used Research experts and academic supervisors to determine the authenticity of the research instruments. The findings were then be modified to remove ambiguity.

3.8 Data Analysis

This study undertook an extensive critical assessment of both the secondary and primary sources. Primary sources included structured oral interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires. While secondary data was derived from academic journals, government documentaries, conference proceedings, newspapers, annual reports, published surveys, and other published and unpublished materials. Therefore, qualitative data was analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis based on implications and meaning emanating from collected and documented data. Quantitative data was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics that included percentages. Qualitative data was presented thematically while quantitative data on tables and graphs.

Table 3.6 Data Analysis

Research objective	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Data analysis procedure
Social media and political awareness	Social media	political awareness	Descriptive statistics
Social media and voter mobilization	Social media	Voter mobilization	Descriptive statistics
Social media and political activism	Social media	political activism	Descriptive statistics

Source: Researcher, 2018

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained informed consent and ensured that the respondents participated in the study voluntarily. Confidentiality of the subjects was ensured through anonymity and privacy. The researcher was open and honest to the respondents by disclosing information concerning the benefits and the purpose of the study. The researcher had to obtain a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) before embarking on the study. Reported to County Directors of Education and County Commissioners for Kakamega County and Nairobi City County, hence, adhered to the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 on conducting research in Kenya.

3.10 Limitations to the Study

The researcher faced some challenges regarding the methodology. The researcher had indented to meet and interview members of the Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association (KYPA), however it was practically impossible as the reseacher did not receive invitations based on the requests previously made. Secondly, a request to have an interview with the Cabinet Secretary and the Principal Secretary of Information and Communication was literary declined due to their other official commitments. Moreover, some of the letters of request for interviews went unanswered in some organizations despite making follow-ups.

Despite the mentioned challenges, this study received significant responses from key respondents such as officials from government institutions such as IEBC, Communication Authority of Kenya, and civil society hence maintaining the quality of the study. Lastly, mobilizing the youths into focus groups was a challenging task as some could view it as a less important activity as it was voluntary to participate with

no benefits attached. However, the researcher was able to access a significant number of young people who participated in this study as respondents after explaining to them the significance of this study.

3.11 Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter has presented a methodological position adopted for this inquiry. It consists of the description of the area of study, research design, research philosophy, target population, sampling design, data collection methods and instruments, procedures for data collection, and data processing strategies. The study relied on both primary and secondary data. Primary sources included structured oral interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires. While secondary data derived from journals, government documentaries, conference proceedings, newspapers, annual reports, published surveys, and other published and unpublished materials. Chapter four will present an anlyses of the effects of social media on political awereness.

CHAPTER FOUR

EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL AWARENESS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the first research question, which sought to assess the effects of social media on political awareness among Kenya's youth. To this study, political awareness means having knowledge and understanding of the state of affairs of the political realm. Zaller (1992) defines political awareness as the level to which an individual pays attention to politics and understand its content. It is important to point out that the analysis of political awareness in relation to the exposure of young people to political information through information communication technologies was significant in understanding the influence of social media on political participation.

Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley (2004) points out that the core argument of the cognitive engagement theory is that political participation is the product of political knowledge, access to information, policy satisfaction, political interest, and an individual's education, therefore, this paradigm plays a critical role in informing this study.

This objective is analyzed thematically in this order: First, Internet connectivity, mobile phone penetration, social media, and political information. Secondly, it focuses on age and consumption of social media; third, social media, gender, and political participation; lastly, education, and consumption of social media.

4.1 Internet Connectivity, Mobile Phone Penetration, Social Media and Political Information

This theme aimed to examine the level of exposure of young adults to the internet, mobile phones, social media, and political information. The key question in this

section is how has the access to the internet, mobile phones, and social media contributed to knowledge and understanding of politics among Kenya's youth? It is important to note that political awareness is among the fundamental factors that lead to political participation. Polat (2005) points out that every consumer of information on the internet is also a producer of information on this platform. Therefore, the internet increases opportunities for rising sources and volumes of information. Polat (2005) argues that a more informed population on what is taking place in the political realm may potentially participate in politics based on the implications of their lives (Polat, 2005).

The cognitive engagement theory, one of the paradigms that guide this study is relevant in this section based on its argument that political participation depends on knowledge of political happenings, education, and availability of information (Conroy, Feezell &Guerrerro, 2012). An inquiry on the level of internet connectivity in Kenya was significant for this study, as it not only aided in understanding the communication infrastructure of the country, but also the accessibility of the internet and social media by the urban and rural populations. Therefore, the fundamental question here is how the accessibility of the internet and social media has influenced political participation among young Kenyans?

It is important to point out that Kenya's technological infrastructure is enabled by the government and non-state actors such as private investments. The government has improved access to broadband internet in remote areas through the "digital villages" program. The fiber-optic cable was laid in the country to enhance accessibility to faster internet connections at a reduced cost while connecting the country to the rest of the world. The process began in 2009 when the cable connecting the rest of the

world landed on the coastal city of Mombasa (Nyabuga and Booker, 2013). An indication of the commitment from the government and other key players in the ICT sector towards enabling the public access and generate information on a broad spectrum hence the promotion of the rights on the freedom of expression as anchored on the 2010 Kenya's Constitution.

Mobile phone connectivity across the country is necessitated by increased penetration of the 3G and 4G network and the four undersea fiber-optic cables. Many Kenyans are using the web hence an indication of a desire for information. Projections indicate that the country will consume one billion gigabytes per year by 2022 (Nendo, 2019). The internet market in Kenya faces an increasingly upward trend, projections indicate that the market revenues for the country will double to $ billion by 2022 from the $ 1.1 billion in 2018. Kenya has earned the name "Silicon Savannah" because of its robust mobile, technology, and internet ecosystem. Table 4.1 below presents Kenya's Internet/Data Subscription.

Table 4.1: Data Subscription

Data Subscriptions	Oct-Dec 18	Jul-Sep 18	Quarterly Variation (%)
Mobile Data Subscriptions	45,333,942	41,854,706	8.3
Terrestrial Wireless Data Subscribers	58,864	59,380	-0.9
Satellite Data Subscribers	1,547	1,391	11.2
Fixed DSL Data Subscribers	976	1,181	17.4
Fixed Fibre Optic Data Subscribers	175,824	156,932	12.0
Fixed Cable Modem Subscribers	126,808	123,487	2.7
Other Fixed Data Subscribers (i.e Radio)	7,479	7,426	0.7
Total Internet Subscriptions	**45,705,440**	**42,204,503**	**8.3**

Source: Communication Authority of Kenya, 2018

The above data from the Communication Authority of Kenya for the quarter (October-December 2018) indicates a rise in internet connectivity from 42, 204, 5003 subscriptions to 45,705,440 hence registering a quarterly variation of 8.3%. The rising numbers of internet subscriptions is a key pointer to the desire for information and communication by the public. Therefore, it is an indication of the rise in the uptake and publication of information and news on the online platform. Although the publications on the internet could be from different fields such as economics and social aspects and others, politics forms part of this news. Therefore, the internet becomes one of the vital sources of political news for the public that is inclusive of the young Kenyans. To enrich this study, I went further and analyzed detailed data on the internet subscription in the country shown in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Kenya's Internet Subscription

USER GROUPS	NUMBER OF USERS	%
People who access the internet	25,683,800	53.99
People who access the internet daily	18,899,400	39.73
People who use a smartphone	20,837,800	43.81
People who use a computer	10,176,600	21.39
People who use a tablet	3,392,200	7.13
People who use one screen- a computer, smartphone, or tablet	16,476,400	34.64
People who use two screens-computer, smartphone, or tablet	5,815,200	12.22
People who use three screens-computer, smartphone, and tablet	1,938,400	4.07
People who access the internet at least as often via smartphone and a computer	31,014,400	65.20

Source: Nendo, 2019

Table 4.2 presents updated data from Nendo Kenya that indicates that close to 53.99% of Kenya's population access the internet, and more than 43.9% access the internet via smartphones. It is an indication that a significant number of Kenyans have access to online information and other benefits at the disposal of the internet. The explanation of the youth accessibility to political information in Kenya could be partly explained by Browing arguments. Browing (1996) argues that the internet necessitates an expanded communication capacity, hence more frequent acts of political participation. According to Groper (1996), more citizens might participate in politics due to new channels of communication, such as social media and email. Groper's argument is related to the technological determinism theory that argues the society is influenced and shaped by technological development, a crucial argument that guides the current study.

The findings on Tables 4.1 and 4.2 indicate that more than 50% of Kenyans have access to the internet and its benefits. It is through the internet that social media users can access social networking sites. During the focus group discussion, a young man from Starehe Constituency notes that:

> *The internet and social media have revolutionalized the access to information and communication to the rest of the world. I can communicate with many people using social media. It is cheaper compared to voice call services provided by the telecommunication service providers.*

The above voice presents a clear indication on the contribution of social media on communication among the urban youths. The internet is attractive to particular segments of society as the youth, those who are bound by age, illness, lack of social skills, and disability. It enables communication irrespective of proximity, either temporal or spatial. The internet supports the expressive forms of political

participation as it enhances citizens to develop websites and broadcast their political opinions (Polat, 2005). Moreover, it enhances group dialogue or many-to-many communication hence increasing communication capacity.

4.1.1 Mobile Phone Penetration in Kenya

Mobile phones have revolutionized communication not only in Kenya but also across the world. Through the use of these gadgets, young people can access the internet and social media sites. Therefore, an analysis of the level of mobile phone penetration in the country was significant as this data aided in addressing the level of political awareness and how social media has influenced political participation among Kenya's youth. Figure 4.1 below presents the Mobile Subscriptions.
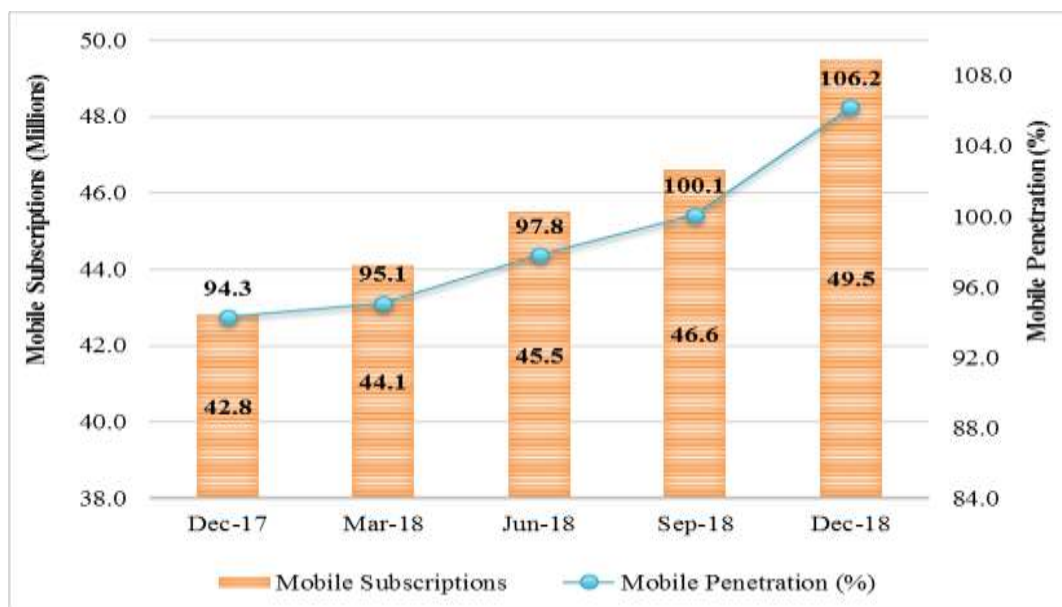
Figure 4.1 Mobile Phone Subscriptions

Source: Communication Authority of Kenya, 2018

From the above data in figure 4.1, the Communication Authority of Kenya (CA) registered 49.5 million active mobile phone subscriptions hence recording a 63.4%

increase from December 2017. However, the multiple SIM card ownership could have led to more than 100 percent penetration. The findings established that an increase in mobile phone usage in Kenya, a pointer to the desire for information and communication among the users. The "mobile-only" is a phrase used to describe Africa based on the primacy of this device.

The significant touchpoint of the Africa cell phone industry is the mobile phones of all sizes and shapes that are spreading all over the continent. It is essential to point out that Kenya has undergone several technological advancements in the wireless telephony industry. The country has gone through a transition of mobile phones from the basics and features to the current smartphones (Nendo, 2019). The basic phones were popular in Kenya's telephony market from 2000 to 2010. These phones were limited to the primary function of texting and calling. However, it is crucial to note that this type of phone played a fundamental role in communication during the 2007/08 post-election violence. The second key respondent to this study revealed that;

> *That there is a destruction of social media space between every 18-30 months, the use of SMS was to advance political massages from 2007 to 2008, Facebook in 2009, Twitter from 2011-2012, while in 2017 the Whatsup platform.*

This implies that the social media sites undergoe improvement periodically to enable the users to maximize the usage of these platforms. For the Kenya's 2007/08 post election violence, SMS provided an alternative means of receiving information updates on what was happening across the country as the government banned the live broadcasting of news. An indication that mobile phones are critical gaurgets that can be used to spread information that can either impact postivitely or negatively the political scenes. However, the types of the phones play a significant role in dissermination of targeted information. The pioneer primary phones included brands

such as Sagem, Sony-Ericsson, Motorola, and Siemens (Nendo, 2019). However, these phones could not access the internet. The features phones can access the internet on the 2G, and 3G versions of the internet have a component of social media and the text-based internet experience. These phones are popular among Kenya's emerging consumers of the internet. Recently, Kenya has experienced a boom in the smartphone industry.

The Smartphones forms 98% of Kenya's market are full-screen devices running Google's Android operating systems. It is important to point out that the convergence of radio, television, and the internet on mobile platforms is connected directly to the increase in news diversity. The urban-based media organizations are reaping the benefits from these trends. Community outlets such as Getto Radio, Radio Mang'elete, Pamoja Radio broadcast through digital technologies. Listeners can call and discuss issues of concern through the use of mobile phones. Discussions on political issues is significant to both the listeners and the participants as it would result in the understanding of politics taking place within the country hence igniting participation in the electoral system either by voting or through activism and other issues.

It is significant to point out that the increased use of social media and internet tools are a result of tariff rebalancing for fixed operators and the affordability of mobile services. The Export Processing Zone Authority (2005) points out that the media liberation reforms have led to a paradigm shift in the telecommunication industry. Gaber (1988) argued that media dominates other sources of information. It is important to note that Social media, the internet, print media, radio, and television play a significant role in the dissemination of political information. However, a high volume of information is disseminated rapidly and cheaply through the internet and

social media compared to the traditional media (Polat, 2005). The second key respondent from civil society during the interview pointed out that:

> *Social media has reduced the barriers that existed in communicating with a large number of people. Especially in cases and scenarios where the information came from authority and was disseminated to people lower in the chain. With social media, we see now that the information flow has become multi-directional. Information flows from both the governed and from the people in authority. That's why it has become much easier to keep the leaders in office accountable. Communication has become easier with things like geographical barriers been overridden. Kenyans are now able to communicate from anywhere provided they have handsets.*

This implies that the usage of social media and the internet and its benefits is at the disposal of the young Kenyans. Internet users can send information to multiple recipients at no extra cost. The consumers enjoy affordable services and products due to price reduction because of the heightened competition within the market segments.

The day's headlines appear as breaking news on the cell phone provided the consumers have access to premium SMS service or mobile data. Before the crack of dawn, the consumers of the e-newspaper would receive a digital version of the day's newspaper, in contrast to the actual purchase of the newspaper by the customer. Moreover, one need not tune on the radio to receive top-of-the-hour news as the public can currently receive the headlines on the smartphone.

Kahne, Middaugh, and Allen (2014) point out that the rise of participatory politics with a focus on the new media and the youth concluded that social media usage opened a space for individuals to receive information and communicate with large audiences and an enabling platform for participation in political activities. A respondent from Malava Constituency pointed out that;

> *I have relied on political updates on online Apps such as the Opera news. Therefore, I get breaking stories on whatever is happening*

nationally and internationally. The use of social media and the internet has become part and parcel of life.

From the above response, it is a clear indication indication that Kenya's youth are accessising political information through the online platforms. The number of Kenyans accessing digital news is on the rise. Media houses such as the standard, the Nation, KBC, and Citizen have developed news websites where online users can access political updates. The mobile news outlets are accessible to young people with little disposable income as the access costs are affordable due to the stiff competition in the mobile service market. Asher, Caylor & Neigel (2018) explaining the cognitive engagement theory points out that the interest of the citizens in politics increases based on the uptake of information that is readily accessible at a lesser cost. The cost of digital news in Kenya could explain the level of uptake of the information. For instance, the subscription fee for the digital newspaper ranges from Kshs.10 per day, a price that a significant number of Kenyans can afford. The rise of the consumption of digital news became competitive after a market acceleration caused by the purchase of Zain "a mobile phone service provider" by the Indian company "Airtel" in late 2010.

The findings of this study support the available literature that focused on mobile political participation. These studies indicated a positive association of informational use of social media with political engagement (Neumayer & Stald, 2014; Campbell & Kwak, 2010; Martin, 2015). There has been an increase in the use of short text messages (SMS) during political campaigns on mobile platforms alongside the adoption of social media and the internet (Sahual-Cohen, 2019). The penetration of smartphones has facilitated this phenomenon (Sahual-Cohen, 2019).

4.1.1.1 Electronic Devices Used to Access Social Media in Kenya

This study sought to find out the types of devices used for accessing social media networks as this information was significant in addressing the youth levels of exposure to the internet. The findings are presented in figure 4.2 below.
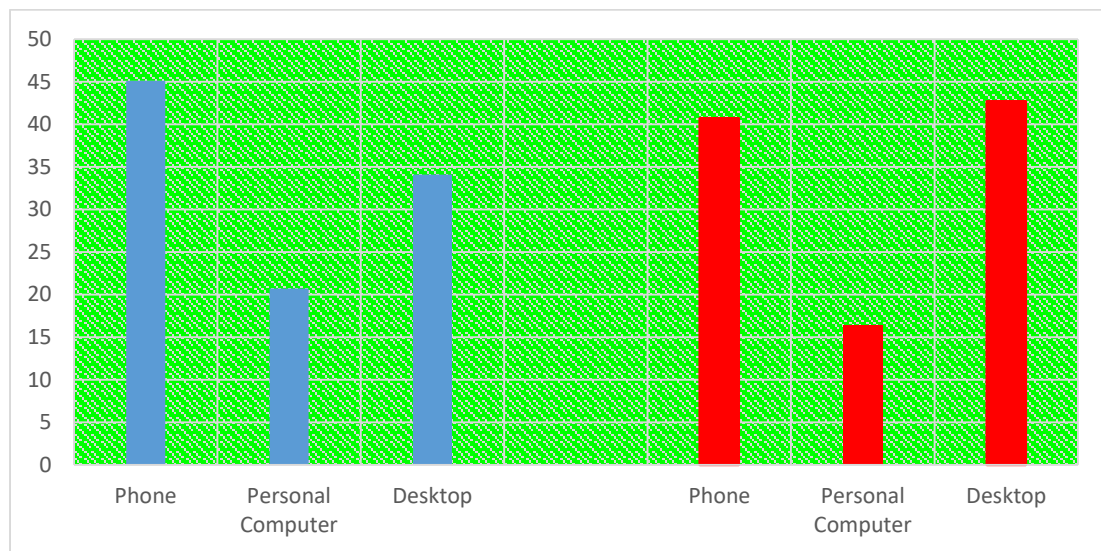
Figure 4.2: Devices Used in Accessing Social Media by Respondents
Source: Field Data, 2018

Key

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

The finding above in figure 4.2 indicates that 79(45.1%) of the respondents from Nairobi County used mobile phones to access social media, 34(20.7%) personal computers, and 57 (34.1%) desktop computers. For Kakamega County, 68(40.7%) used mobile phones, 27(16.4%) personal computers, and 71(42.7%) desktop computers in the cyber cafes. The variations in the findings of these two counties could attribute to the fact that the respondents from Kakamega County would opt to use the cyber cafes due to the region's internet coverage (85% mobile phone coverage) and the cost of smartphones.

It is crucial to point out that the cost factor plays a significant role in the accessibility of electronic devices such as smartphones and computers. In the Kenyan market, smartphones retail with as little as Ksh. 3000 and as much as Ksh. 180,000. These phones are popular as they have Wi-Fi connectivity features, processing power, and multi-tasking capabilities. The mobile phone service providers in Kenya have occasionally partnered with the original manufacturers of these devices hence lowering the prices of these devices. In 2011 Safaricom sold approximately 300,000 IDEOS mobile phones in Kenya courtesy of its partnership with Huawei, while the "Kaduda Smart" become popular in 2016 through the Telkom Kenya, a rebrand of Orange Kenya.

A young lady from Embakasi North Constituency ascertains to the ownership of a mobile phone;

> *I own a mobile phone that is among the cheapest phones in the market. I am unemployed, and I can't afford expensive smartphones. However, my phone can not access the internet. I prefer to use cyber cafes in case a need arises that forces me to use the internet.*

This is a clear indication that the type of gargets of communication used and its prices play a critical role in the political information received. Yearly, the prices of these devices continue to go down as they increased the processing and computing capacities. Therefore, the ordinary Kenyans have the opportunity to benefit from new possibilities offered by digitalization and the market forces. The uptake of such facilities was accelerated by campaigns by mobile subscribers such as Safaricom, Airtel, and Telcom as they offered affordable access to entertainment and news sites (Nyabuga and Booker, 2013). Figure 4.3 below indicates the Safaricom mobile phone network coverage in Nairobi City County.
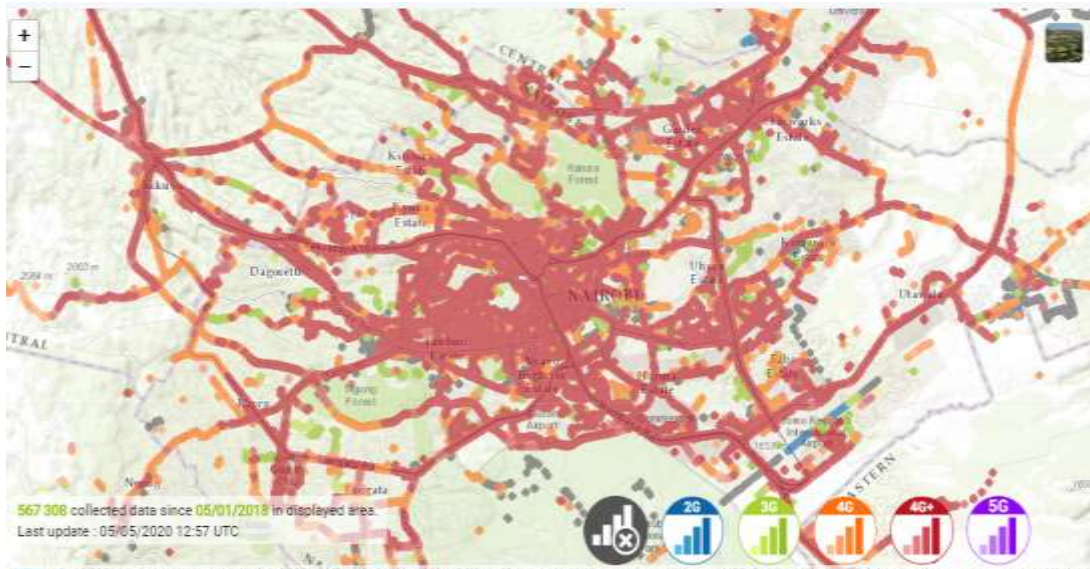
Figure 4.3 Mobile Phone Network Coverage- Nairobi City County
Source: Nperf (2018)

From figure 4.3 above, a significant part of Nairobi County is covered by 4G, 3G, and 2G. However, the 4G+ covers a large area of the County. Therefore, this is an indication that the region has access to faster and reliable internet that supports social network sites. Figure 4.4 below indicates the Safaricom mobile phone network coverage in Kakamega County.

Figure 4.4 Mobile Phone Network Coverage-Kakamega County
Source: Nperf (2018)

From figure 4.4 above, the Safaricom 4G+, 4G, 3G, and 2G network covers some parts of the region. This coverage could explain the level of usage of social media in this region. From figures 4.3 and 4.4 on mobile phone network coverage, there is a network coverage disparity between Nairobi and Kakamega County. A significant area of Nairobi City County is covered by 4G+, 4G, and 3G networks. It is important to note that these types of networks support the use of social media applications.

4.1.2 Accessibility of Social Media in Kenya

This study sought to determine the level of exposure of young adults to social media sites. It is important to note that active users of the internet and social networking sites would be exposed to political information hence affecting their level of political awareness. Social media users increase their tenacity and legitimize themselves by producing political messages (Halpern, Valenzuela, and Katz, 2017). Social media may boost its user's capacity to operate jointly and independently when it regulates networks as a concerted participant (Letcher, 2018). To analyze the above quest the study sought to find out the types of Social Networking Sites used in Kenya.

Social media include social networking sites such for example Xing, LinkedIn, Facebook, and blogging platforms such as Blogger, WordPress, SMS based messaging platforms, such as WeChat, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, websites of news media and Social news aggregation sites like Tuko News, Huffingtonpost, Buzzfeed, wiki-based. knowledge-sharing sites such as Wikipedia, community media sites, for example, Dailymotion, YouTube, Flickr, Snapchat, Instagram, location-based social networks for example Foursquare, user reviews like the Amazom.com, Yelp, websites by traditional news organizations, newsgroup, social question and answer sites, mailing lists and forums for example Ouora.

In the questionnaire, the respondents were supposed to indicate the social media networking sites they had an active account. Figure 4.5 presents the findings on the types of Social Media Networking platforms where the respondents had active accounts.
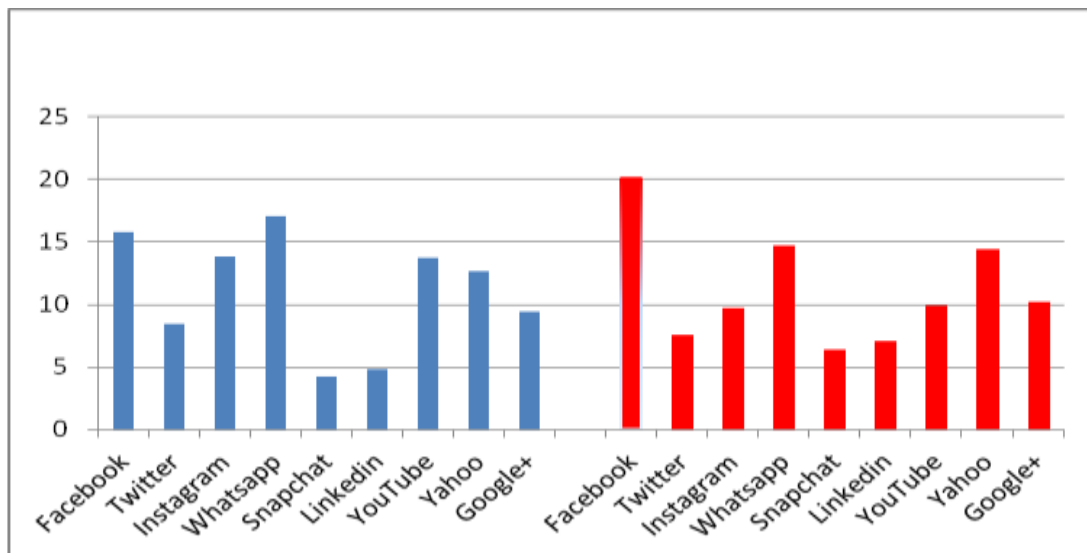
Figure 4.5: Social Media Networking Sites Used by Respondents
Source: Field Data, 2018

Key

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

The figure above indicates the active social networking sites used by the respondents. From Nairobi City County 26(15.7%) of the respondents had active accounts on Facebook, 13(8.4%) Twitter, 22(13.8%) Instagram, 28(17%) Whatsapp, 7(4.23%) Snapchat, 8(4.7%) Linkedin, 22(13.6%) YouTube, 20(12.6%) Yahoo and 16(9.4%) Google +. For Kakamega County, 33(20%) of the respondents had active Facebook accounts, 12(7.5%) Twitter, 16(9.69%) Instagram, 24(14.6%) Whatsapp, 10(6.3%) Snapchat, 11(7%) Linkedin, 16(9.9%) YouTube, 24(14.4%) Yahoo and 17(10.1%) Google +. The variations could be attributed to the features of the different social

media sites. The development of the new media can be traced from Tim O'Reilly 2005 "Web 2.0". The coining of the term "Web 2.0" resulted because of the challenges faced by internet providing companies that had collapsed. Hence there is a need for the development of a new economic strategy (O'Reilly, 2006). This strategy sought to restore confidence in the industry due to the hurdles this company faced in the dot-com era. Social Network Sites (SNS) such as Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, Google+, and LinkedIn are amongst the popular Web 2.0 technologies (Click and Petit, 2010).

In the mid-1990s, there were widespread personal computers. Services like newsgroups, chat rooms, and instant messaging are attractions that made people start using the World Wide Web (Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004). Web 2.0 is a second generation of the World Wide Web (www) that focuses on the ability of people to share information and collaborate online in contrast with the first generations where the users could only obtain information (O'Reilly, 2006). Lewis (2006) notes that initially before the Web 2.0 technologies were invented, the internet acted as a source of information and knowledge (Lewis, 2006).

The development of social networking sites in the mid 2000's led to a revolution in the internet industry (Agre, 2002). For instance, the new media sites introduced new features on the virtual system such as virtual groups, making new friends, reviewing and ranking content, virtual voting and surveying and sharing of pictures and videos (Lilleker and Jackson, 2012). It is important to note that among other social networking sites, Facebook has remained more prevalent among the young people. The platform was developed in 2004 and it has remained popular as users can post pictures, videos, share links and connect with others. Political information sharing and mobilization are among the key things that the electorate has benefited from

Facebook. The "Election Pulse" an innovative feature introduced by Facebok in 2006 enabled a significant number of politicians to share their agendas to the virtual political groups. Political campaigning on Facebook can boost a politician's electoral success (Aronson, 2012).

It is crucial to point out that Facebook is one of the largest social network sites in Kenya, and the second most visited website of over 8.5 million Kenyans visit the site monthly. Most of the Kenyans (over 98%) on Facebook use mobile phones to connect and use the service. A young respondent from Mumias East Constituency during the focus group discussion pointed out that;

> *I have been using Facebook since 2010. It is one of my preferred social networking sites. I have been able to connect with the rest of the world through Facebook. I have met many friends and read the information on politics. Facebook is popular among young people because of its features such as uploading pictures, communicating privately with friends through messenger, and access to the information posted on Facebook pages of other users.*

This shows that the youth have preference on the type of social media sites, and are attracted to political information on these platforms. Twitter a social networking site has become common virtual platform for political related issues since its inception in August 2006.Twitter has a unique level of impact and influence. For instance, this social network site is mentioned by dominant radio and television stations during the news broadcasts. The breaking news updates are frequently shared on this platform, journalists, politicians, and newsmakers severally visit this site.

It is significant to point out that through twitter, the supporters of a candidate can easily voice their support of the political candidate with friends by liking their twitter pages, reading, and commenting on the candidate updates (Shmuitz, 2010). The first

key respondent for this study from civil society during the in-depth oral interview revealed that;

> *Social media influenced political participation from 2014- 2015 as political opposition dominated the platform during this period. The Kenyans on Twitter (antigovernment movement) were the most powerful group.*

The above voice presents a significant implication of the use of social media for polical and social movements' formations in Kenya. It is important to point out that the Kenyans on Twitter or # KOT a group of "Twitter users in Kenya who have distinguished themselves globally as a powerful force to be reckoned with" (Nendo, 2019). The group commented more frequently on current affairs, sports, humor, politics, human rights, and civil society, and other issues.

The Kenyans on Twitter have several occasions turned trending topics into discussions on mainstream media and matters of national importance. Pieces of texts, video, humorous images spread rapidly on Kenya's internet, the conversations are not limited to their originating social media sites but gets a second life as they circulate widely on the social media platforms. Most of this information is from Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter, then spreads to other platforms such as the Whatsapp (Nendo, 2019).

A blog is a type of social network that an individual maintains and uses as an outlet of publishing descriptions of events, commentary, and editorials (Aronson, 2012). Visitors of these sites get an opportunity to leave comments on the published issues which the author of the blog responds to the user's concerns. The use of blogs for political purposes has recently become popular, shaping news cycles and broken news stories (Aronson, 2012). A respondent from Embakasi North Constituency points out that;

> *I have been blogging for the last six years. Blogging is my passion, and it is through social media that I have been able to learn how to blog. This field is attractive as you can earn money as well as express your opinions online. During the electioneering year, you can be hired by a political aspirant to blog on his behalf.*

From the above observation, it is evident that the youthful Kenyan's have been lured to working for political aspirants through the online platforms, a critical aspect that shapes youth political participation. Political campaigns have been affected by political blogs by the shaping of the media agenda. A political blog can publicize a political Agenda that will quickly be picked up by the mainstream media. YouTube was founded in the year 2005; it currently attracts over 190 million visitors per month across the world (Williams and Gulati, 2007). Through the YouTube platform, a person can share original videos online videos worldwide through the use of the web.

YouTube has played a significant role in attracting votes, fundraising, advertisement, budgeting, and execution of political campaigns (Aronson, 2012). It is crucial to point out that Google is one of the most visited sites in Kenya and globally. The site is a search engine that enables internet users to access several experiences, services, and products. Google operates Android, a mobile operating system of more than 98% of the smartphones in Kenya. The company commands a 96% market share in Kenya's searches industry (Nendo, 2019). This study went further and sought for the types of social media platforms used nationally among them Kenya's youth. Therefore, figure 4.6 below categorizes the types of Social Networking Sites used in Kenya.

Social media		Percentage
Facebook		88.5%
Twitter		27.9%
WhatsApp		88.6%
Instagram		39.0%
Snapchat		9.0%
YouTube		51.2%
LinkedIn		9.3%
Google+		41.3%
Yahoo		18.6%
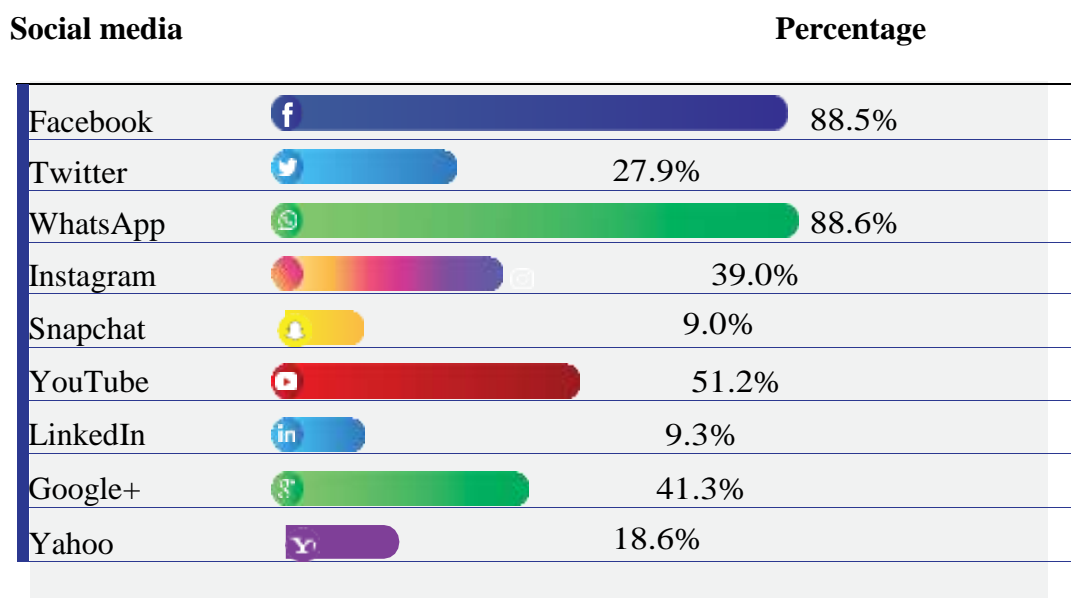
Figure 4.6: Types of Social Networking Sites in Kenya
Source: SIMElab Africa, 2019

The figure above indicates the use of nine different types of social media platforms by Kenyans. For instance, WhatsApp (88.6%) is commonly used by Kenyans, followed by Facebook (88.5%), YouTube (51.2%), and Google + (41.3%). The least popular are LinkedIn (9.3%) and Snapchat (9.0%).

The findings in Figures 4.5 and 4.6 revealed a significant use of social media sites by Kenya's youth. Social media has emerged as a tool for the delivery of information to people through the internet. It has grown to become the most effective form of media because of its broad reach and easy to access by people of all ages. Social media is associated with the use of an interactive web where communication is easily accessible.

Social media and blogging platforms have turned out to alternative sources of news and information. On several occasions, the mainstream media has used this platform to gather and air their stories. This platform has emerged as a vital tool for connecting

with society. It is for this reason that governments and politicians use it to engage with citizens on matters of the election (MacNamara, Sakinofsky & Beattie, 2012).

Kenya's government severally has used social networking sites to respond and communicate public concerns. This study establishes that the use of digital technologies and social media continues to grow due to the increase in internet and mobile penetration. It is important to point out that key inroads in digital transformation in Kenya were during the early years of the NARC government. For this regime, key priorities were on reviving the economy, liberation of the information, and the telecommunications industry.

The liberation of media had an impact on organizing, mobilizing, financing, and deterring political and electoral violence in the country. There are 6.1 million Kenyans on Facebook as per the Facebook report, 2.2 million active on Twitter every month (SIMElab Africa, 2019). One million use the Twitter platform daily. An estimated 10 million Kenyans are on WhatsApp, a platform that plays a significant role for a person to person communication.

Occasionally, the information shared WhatsApp often finds its way on other platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. It is estimated that there are 1.5 million Linkedin and three million Instagram users in Kenya. The fourth key respondent for this study from the civil society pointed out that;

> *The current social media platform "WhatsApp" is considered as a powerful tool based on its open and closed nature. For instance, messages are shared among group members on various spaces such as family, friends, religious groups, and events specific groups that have not been disrupted.*

This shows that the advanced forms of social media sites tend to provide adequate space for the advancement of both political and social intentions. The new media and the internet have enabled the rise in information consumption in comparison to the past century (Goldstein and Rotich, 2007).

It is important to point out that Kenyans enjoy the access of information via the print media, television, and radio. Political information can be found on the search engines and social media from verified and unverified sources. Consumers of this information access it through multiple screens such as the mobile phone, television, tablet, desktop computer, or laptop.

> *Social Media has revolutionized how individuals, communities, and organizations create, share, and consume information. Social networks have also helped people to communicate, breaking down the geographical barriers which restricted instant communication thus permitting successful social media-facilitated collaboration (SIMElab, 2019).*

This means that social media has revolutionalsed communication and the follow of political information hence removing barriers to political participation. There is a shift from the initial broadcasting of mass media due to its design of relaying general interest news to a broad audience and a niche of narrowcast discrete users (Stroud, 2011). The youth can receive political information that is centered on their interests from mass media and social media hence affecting their level of political awareness. A symbolic relationship exists between social media and mass media (Owen, 2018). For instance, the reporting strategies by the traditional media have been incorporated social media through the distribution of information both on the old and new communication platforms. Therefore, there seems to be a reliance on social media by the Kenyan journalists to meet the demand for content. Moreover, social media popularizes its content and gains legitimacy through its reliance on the mass media.

This study revealed that Kenya's political system is immensely affected by social media. Traditional media, such as television, radio, and newspaper coexist with the social media that is continuously expanding in innovative ways. Social media has affected the political-media system (Owen, 2018). The traditional media has an intrinsic feature that allows the editorial teams to refine news before its dissemination to the public. However, the social media information can be relayed directly to the users without intervention leading to unpredictability and instability in the process of political communication.

This study would be incomplete without a review of the historical advancements of media in Kenya. A focus on Kenya's media under the colonial government, post-independence, one-party state, and the liberation of the country's media sector is significant to the quest for the contribution of social media to political awareness. It is important to point out that the current state of media in Kenya is a product of the recent local and global technological, cultural, economic, social, and political forces as well as the country's colonial legacy.

The domination of media by political elites started long before Kenya become independent. This study relied on documentaries as one of its sources of data. For instance, this study traces the history of Kenya's media under the colonial government through various published articles and journals. The history of Kenya's media is tied to both the economic and political interests of the white settlers and the colonial government (Oriare and Mshindi, 2008).

There was a need for close supervision and control of the press by the authorities as the colonial government viewed it as a potential threat. Initially, the dissemination of official information to the citizenry, especially the settlers were through the white-

owned press (Oriare et al., 2010). However, to address the political realities, the draconian laws such as the 1906 Newspapers Ordinance were adopted by the colonial government. Generally, the analysis of Loughran's (2010) publication revealed that for many years the African Oral tradition witnessed the stories, history, and cultural norms passed down from one generation to the other.

The age of the written word was marked in Kenya by the establishment of Kenya's printing press in 1895 (Loughran, 2010). The demand for the written word increased as many Kenyans became more literate and exposed to education. A look at the cognitive engagement theory a paradigm guiding this study is relevant at this point. One of its argument, as advanced by (Inglehart, 1977), is that a more informed and educated society will participate in politics to show their satisfaction with the government policies. Therefore this theory can be used to explain Kenya's political events of the 1920s. For instance, in the early 1920s, the colonial policies such as racial segregation were opposed by an emerging nationalist press. The fear arose in the colonial government on a thriving and free nationalist press that advocated the objectives of the independence movement (Durrani, 2006).

In the early 1920s, the colonial policies such as racial segregation were opposed by an emerging nationalist press. The fear arose in the colonial government due to a thriving and free nationalist press that advocated the objectives of the independence movement (Durrani, 2006).To control the allegedly seditious nationalist publications such as Inoororia Agikuyu, African Leader, Uhuru wa Mwafrika, Sauti ya Mwafrika among others, the colonial government repealed the Newspaper Ordinance in 1950 and enacted the Emergency Order in Council in 1939 and the Penal Code in 1930 (Durrani, 2006).

The government intensified propaganda against the nationalist publications and went further to ban them after the Mau Mau uprising and the declaration of a State of Emergency in 1952. The lifting the Emergency ban, Kenya's independence was inevitable as the government grew more conciliatory towards the media. For the first time, the colonial government-sponsored district newspapers such as Ramogi in Dholuo, Thome in Kamba, and Kikuyu weekly kihoto, moreover, it allowed for the publications of newspapers affiliated to the local political associations (Durrani, 2006).

From the analysis of Loughran's (2010) article, this study revealed that the British settlers and the Missionaries introduced the modern media in Kenya. Rev. Robert Stegall of the Church Missionary Society in 1895 published the *Taveta Chronicle* (Loughran, 2010), the paper was circulated among the Europeans. In 1899 the *Uganda Mail* and the *Leader* of the British East Africa Company were published in Mombasa (Loughran, 2010). The settlers and the missionaries relied on these papers to get information from home (England). Secondly, during this era, media was used to legitimize the rights of the colonial masters in ruling the country. Lastly, the settlers in different parts of Kenya used media as a medium for social communication.

In 1928, the missionaries and the settlers started using it for the same objectives as the papers (Durrani, 2006). It is important to point out that there is a close link between the history of radio in Kenya, the economic and political interests of the colonial and post-colonial governments. Before Kenya received her independence, the colonial government developed the radio because of the commitment by Her Majesty to give Kenya independence, the 1952 Emergency, the Mau Mau rebellion, and the nationalist movement.

In Kenya's media history, 1927 marks the advent of transmission of information through the radio by the East African Broadcasting Corporation (EABC). EABC became the first radio station in the country as it relayed the BBC news to the colonies (Githaiga, 2011). In 1928, the first English Radio Broadcasting serving the Asians and the whites went on air. However, it is during the Second World War that marked a turning point in Kenya's radio broadcasting sector as the first radio broadcasts for Africans went on air. Later, in 1953 radio programs in Arabic, Kamba, Luhya, Nandi, Kikuyu and Luo started being broadcasted by the African Broadcasting Service (ABS).

In 1959, the Kenya Broadcasting Service (KBS) was established based on the recommendations by the 1954 commission which was set up to look into the country's future broadcasts (Githaiga, 2011). It is important to point out that this move was based on the colonial government's aim of media censorship and heightened propaganda against the independence movement and the Mau Mau. To succeed in the government-controlled KBS, the private Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) was formed in 1961. It was in 1962 when television was first introduced in Kenya. It covered a radius of only 15 miles, and transmissions were from a farmhouse in Limuru. Later, some sections of the media were owned by the Asians for business purposes as they focused on legitimizing their second place to the whites in Kenya. Later the Africans ventured into the ownership of the media with the sole purpose of using media to put across their demand for equality, justice, and freedom (Durrani, 2006).

The indigenous press was used to build and cement political organizations by the aspiring political leaders after the Second World War. It was important for the

realization of independence goals due to agitation nature (Durrani, 2006). In summary, Kenya's media under the colonial government was highly suppressed, and for a long time, it served the political elites during this era that included the Whites and Asians. Despite the colonial government giving some opportunities for the Kenyans to receive news in vernacular languages, broadcasts continue to be done under the close watch of the government.

The earlier forms of mass communication impeded active political participation (Fulya SEN (2012). Access of information was limited hence discouraged a deliberative dialogue within the public sphere. The traditional forms of media enabled the dissemination of information concerning public events to the government, politicians, and the public (Fulya SEN, 2012). Therefore, society was not able to critique the information. The flow of information was predominantly unidirectional or vertical. Moreover, the commercialization of this market resulted in the neglect of democratic communication functions between the leaders and the public, organizations, and institutions within the mass media (Fulya SEN, 2012).

Before the new media emerged, the earlier media of broadcasting and press were seen as beneficial and adequate for the sentiment of public opinion and the conduct of politics that were democratic in the public sphere (Fulya SEN, 2012). This study established similar patterns as the colonial rule in terms of media development and ownership continued after Kenya's independence in 1963. The electronic media was under the full control of the government in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and management of a Minister appointed by the Head of State (Ochilo, 1993). The Kenya News Agency and the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation were the other departments. At this point, electronic media was a government communication

organ fully controlled under the government to ensure stability, peace, and national unity (Abuoga and Mutere, 1988).

Electronic media served as a medium for education, information, and entertainment (Ogola, 2011). It is important to point out that Kenya's government under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta after the country's independence was aware of the power that is vested in media (Ogola, 2011). Therefore, there was an attempt to control the media for propaganda as their predecessors. The political and ideological rivalries, as well as national unity and development, influenced media policy in this era (Ogola, 2011). The government preferred a co-opted media that promotes nation-building and development rather than an independent or foreign-owned media that could lead to discontent (Oriare and Mshindi, 2008).

In 1964 KBC was nationalized renamed to the Voice of Kenya (VOK) and managed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Oriare and Mshindi, 2008). An Official Secrets Act was enacted in 1968 to address the leaks of government's vital information that made it vulnerable to political pressure. Media exposed the fallout and the subsequent rivalry between the Jomo Kenyatta and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, then the vice president. The government went further and banned Pan African Magazine, its mouthpiece due to the fear of internal criticism (Oriare and Mshindi, 2008).

It is important to point out that, in this era, the state retained a tight grip over the media form the 1970s and 80s. Development in Kenya was radically influenced by the popular agitation for globalization, economic and political liberation, and the economic recession that led to the International Monetary Funds (IMF) structural

adjustment programs and the attempted military coup of 1982 due to the intense political rivalry (Oriare et al., 2010).

President Moi's position towards mass media was hardened by the eight-hour battle for the control of the microphone at KBC during the 1982 coup (Oriare et al., 2010). This led to the clamping down of critical press as the government restricted political freedom. Over 20 publications were banned between 1988 and 1990, they included the Nairobi Law Monthly, Development Agenda, Financial Review, and Beyond. The foreign press was not spared from the crackdown as the queue-voting fiasco led to the deportation of a British journalist in December 1988 (Ochilo, 1993). The local media was barred from publishing news by the foreign wire services. The Voice of Kenya (VOK) was renamed back to the KBC as mouthpiece of the government, and a parastatal through the 1989 Act of Parliament.

Kenya became the first country in Africa to establish a privately owned community radio (the Homa Bay community Radio set up in the western part of Kenya in 1982) (Oriare and Mshindi, 2008). This radio station was initiated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Kenya's government however, the station enjoyed autonomy from the government voice. The station focused on the coverage of matters related to the communities that resided on the shores of Lake Victoria. However, this radio station could later be shut down by the government for broadcasting issues that were related to the attempted coup of 1982 (Oriare et al., 2010).

4.2 Social Media, Age, Gender, and Political Politics

The age of an individual is significant in the consumption level of social media. Therefore, this study sought to find out the age of the respondents. The findings are

significant to the policymakers and other players that are concerned with matters related to social media and politics. The age factor is an important aspect of informing the levels of social media use concerning political awareness. The age and gender status of respondents were derived from a specific question on the questionnaire where the respondent was to indicate the age and gender. Figure 4.7 below presents the findings concerning the age of the respondents.
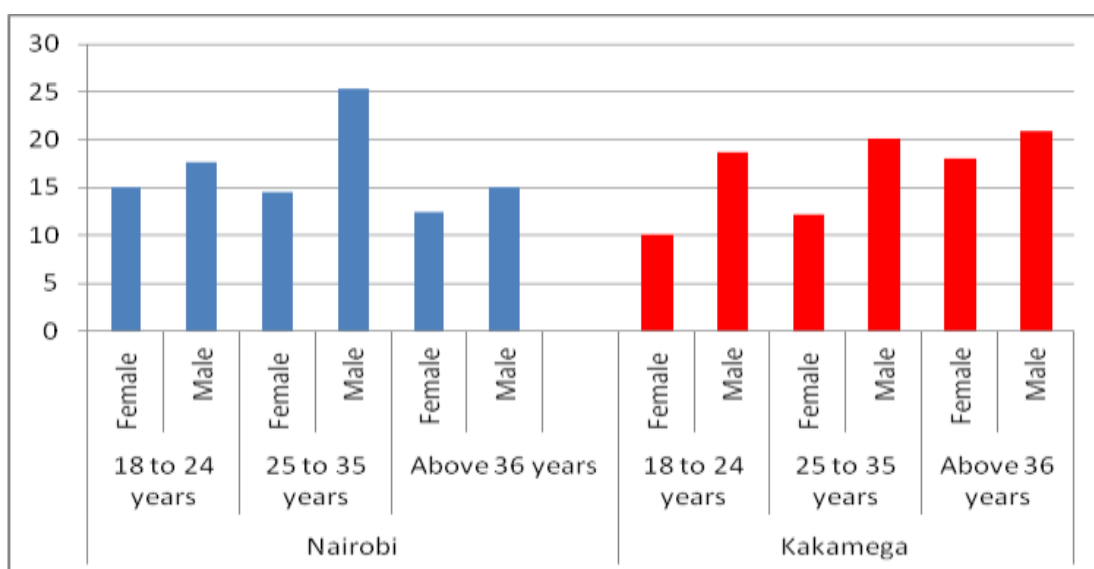
Figure 4.7: Age and Gender of the Respondents
Source: Field Data, 2018

Key

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

The above data illustrates that the age of the respondents 54(32.64%) from Nairobi City County were between the age of 18-24, 66(39.89%) of 25-35 years, and 45(27.46%) were above 36 years. From Kakamega County, 48(28.77%) represented the age of 18-24 while 53(32.37%) were in the bracket of 25-35 years and 65(38.84%) above 36 years. This study focused on youth between the ages of 18-35 years. The

study was guided by the 2010 Kenya's Constitution definition of the term youth. A youth is defined "as a person between the age of 18-35".

The age of the respondents is fundamental to addressing the question of the use of social media for political purposes. It is important to point out that the growth of the internet and social media provides a wider platform for the public to access political information and news. These forms of media are currently preferred especially by people under the age of 50 (Shear and Gottfried, 2017). Lenhart et al., (2010) study pointed out that younger citizen are more prolific users of digital media than the older generation.

This study went further and discussed the duration of time spent on social media networking sites based on the users' age in Kenya. The time spent on the Social Media Networking Sites by age was fundamental to this study as it assisted in informing the level of exposure to social media. Figure 4.8 below presents nationwide data concerning the duration spent on social media by age.
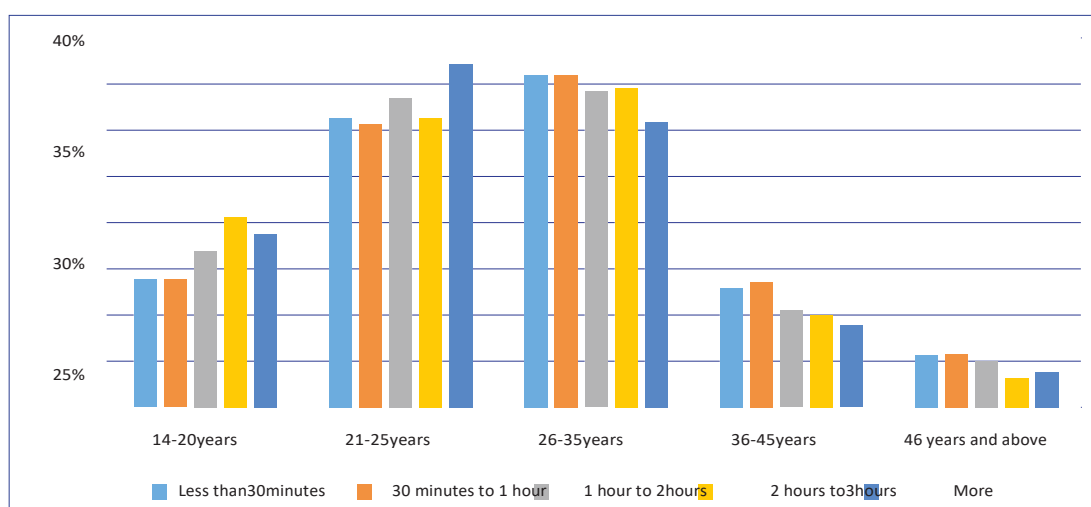
Figure 4.8: Time Spent on Social Media by Age
Source: SIMElab Africa, 2019

The findings on the figure above indicate that most Kenyans the age of (21-35 years) spent more than three hours across the various social media platforms. However, Kenyans of 46 years above spent the least amount of time. Shaul-Cohen (2019) noted that age is among the significant factors that affect online political participation. The younger population can be encouraged to engage in political participation through the internet as the new technologies are extensively used by the younger population (Schlozman et al., 2010).

Shaul-Cohen (2019) points out that online social media platform- such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn- highlight the internets ability to recruit young people who extensively use social networks but are less engaged in political participation, such individuals are of the age group of 18-29 years (Shaul-Cohen, 2019)

In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The gender factor is a fundamental aspect that informed this study. From the findings as indicated in figure 4.7 above, respondents from Nairobi City County were 25(15%) female of the age between (18-25) years, 23(14%) between (25-35), and 22(13%) were above 36 years. For the male respondents, 28(17%) were between the age of (18-24), 42(25%) between (25-35) years, and 27(16%) above 36 years. For Kakamega County, 18(11%) of the respondents were female between the age of (18-24), 20(12%) between (25-35) years, and 30(18%) above 36 years. The male respondents for Kakamega county were 30(18%) of the age between (18-24) years, 33(20%) between (25-35) years, and 35(21%) above 36 years. This study went further and sought for the duration of time spent on social media networking sites based on gender. Data from SIMElab Africa (2019) indicated that 70% of men and 55% of women spent

more than 3 hours on social media on a typical day. The Findings are as indicated in figure 4.9 below
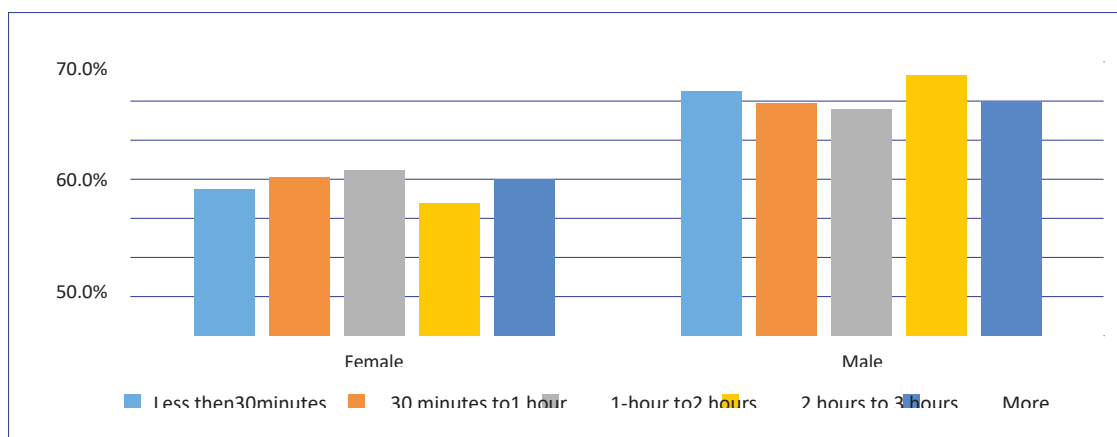
Figure 4.9: Duration Spent on Social Media by Gender
Source: SIMElab Africa, 2019

From the figure above, a significant number of the male Kenyan youths spent more between 2 to 3 hours on social media in comparison to the female Kenyan youths. It is important to point out that gender issues were significant to this study as both young women and men play a critical role in the use of social media for political purposes. Men show high interest and involvement in politics than women, however, in democratic countries the level of women participation in elections is almost equal to men (Protney, Niemi, & Eichenberg, 2009; Karp & Banducci, 2008; Coffe & Bolzendahl, 2010).

The number of Kenyan male youths contesting for elective positions outweighs their female counterparts. In 2017, a total of 3,787 young men contested for elective seats across the country in comparison to 321 young women. One youth was elected as a Governor and 5 (11%) of the Deputy Governors elected in 2017 included 4 males and 1 female youth. 11% of the elected Senators were young men elected from 66 contestants cleared by I.E.B.C (Youth Agenda, 2017). Four youths were nominated to

the Senate in 2017, a lower number compared to 2013 where 8 young women formed part of the 16 nominated senators (Youth Agenda, 2017).

Eight percent of the elected members of parliament in 2017, consists of 2 young women and 21 men. However, only 1 of the 12 nominated members was a youth. The number of youths nominated in 2013 to the National Assembly stood at 5. The county assembly positions attracted a significant number of youths in 2017. For instance, 3693 (29.65%) aspirants were below the age of 35 years. 303 (23%) youths were elected on the 8th August 2017elections. Moreover, 118 (17.37%) youths consisting of 54 men and 64 women were nominated (Youth Agenda, 2017).

The youth were not left out for the positions of the county assembly speakers. For instance, 4 (8.51%) young men speakers were elected in Wajir, Elgeyo Marakwet, and Nyamira counties. Eleven young Deputy Speakers were elected, which included two female Deputy Speakers from Kirinyaga and Tharaka Nithi Counties. The total number of youths elected countrywide stood at 338 (11.55%) and 223 (27.77%) nominated. However, 2017 recorded the lowest representation compared to 2013 (Youth Agenda, 2017).

Gender issues first took center stage in Kenyan politics in 1992 as previously politics was considered as a game for men other than women. Very few women participated in politics 1960s and 1970s however some people interpreted the move as an aberration. The 1970 parliament had only one women member of parliament, a position held by Hon. Grace Onyango. The number rose to three in 1974 consisting of Hon. Grace Onyanyo reelected for the second term, Hon. Chelagat Mutai of Eldoret North and Hon Dr. Julia Auma Ojiambo representing Busia Central (The National Assembly of Kenya, 2017).

1n 1988, the number of parliamentary seats increased from 158 to 188 elected, 12 nominated, and two ex-officio members. The 6th parliament (1988-1992) saw two women elected, and the third nominated, they included Hon. Dr. Grace Ogot- served in the fifth parliament, Hon. Agnes Ndetei representing Kibwezi, and Hon. Nyiva Mwendwa was nominated by President Moi (The National Assembly of Kenya, 2017). In 2007, the number of Women Member of Parliament increased to 21 (15 elected and six nominated members).

The formation of a bi-cameral parliament in 2013 increased the National Assembly to 350 seats that include 290 elected members representing constituencies, 47 elected senators, 16 nominated women members, four members representing the youth, women, and persons with disabilities, and the speaker an ex-officio member (The National Assembly of Kenya, 2017). In 2017, the number of elected women members representing a single constituency rose to 23. Currently, women account for 23% of the Senate and the National Assembly a figure inclusive of the reserved positions for women representatives (National Democratic Institute, 2018).

In comparison to the previous elections, 29% more women participated in the 2007 elections the largest number ever recorded in Kenya's history. Currently, women hold 172 of the 1,883 elected seats in comparison to the 145 after the 2013 elections (National Democratic Institute, 2018). Gender has been brought in the forefront of Kenyan politics towards the late 1990s due to various factors (Kameri-Mbote, 2016).

The activities of women organizations are considered as one of the factors that led to gender issues to the fore of Kenyan politics after the opening up of the political space in the early 1990s. The Gender Forum, the Women Political Caucus, and the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) among other women organizations

played an important role in ensuring the participation of Kenyan women in politics (Anyango, Alupo & Opoku, 2018). Through these organizations, women were sensitized on the need of participating in politics as this was one of the ways that would ensure their influence on public affairs. From the 1980s gender become an important electoral matter as more women started to vie for political seats.

There has been a significant increase in the number of women candidates elected to the parliament. For instance, since 1992 the number of women elected to the parliament has increased significantly. The patriarchal values could have played a critical role in the 1969 elections as the first women were elected to parliament from an urban constituency. However, from the six women who contested only one was from the rural constituency. The number of women participating in politics has increased tremendously as from 1997, women have come up to contest for presidency such as Charity Ngilu through the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1997 where she came fifth garnering 469,807 votes (7.7%) of the total votes cast and Martha Karua through National Rainbow Coalition-Kenya (NARC) in 2013 elections became sixth with 43,881 votes.

The National Council of Christians of Kenya (NCCK) and the Catholic Church among other faith-based organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) played a critical role in enhancing women participation in politics through civic education about gender equality (Gender Forum, 2013). Before the 2002 elections, several donors such as the Department for International Development (DFID) sponsored political programs such as Engendering the Political Process (EPP) that led to a considerably high level of voter awareness among the general public. More so, has led to an

increase in the number of women who vied for political seats in the 2002 elections (Gender Forum, 2013).

The aggressive media campaigns that supported voter and civic education is attributed to the greater involvement of women in elections. Through media, the public was sensitized on the need of voting into power the party of choice, the need to contest in elections, perform civic duties, civil and political rights. Moreover, the media helped in fostering the growth of the discursive realm on matters related to national and international concerns as the political debates were done in a free and open manner (Hyden and Leslie, 2003). The electorate made judgments on the performance of their government as media exposed the failures and the weaknesses of the incumbent party.

The 11th parliament had a representation of only 20 percent of women parliamentarians of the total number of the members of the National assembly and Senate. For instance, out of the 290 constituency seats, only 16 were won by the women during the 2013 elections. None of the women contestants were elected to a gubernatorial position. Political, financial, cultural barriers and the lack of legal framework hindered participation in elections (Gender Forum, 2013).

It is important to point out that since the 2013 elections several political gains on women representation have been made. For instance, in 2017, three women won the gubernatorial seat and another three for the Senate despite the elections contest being dominated by their male counterparts. In comparison to the previous elections, 29 percent more won contested representing the largest number in Kenya's history of women political representation at all levels of the government (National Democratic Institute, 2018).

Currently, women hold 179 elected seats from 145 after the 2013 elections of the 1,883 elected seats. There are three women Senators, three governors, however, one passed on leaving one governer and seven deputy governors, twenty-three Members of National Assembly (MNA), five nominated, 47 Women Members of National Assembly (WMNA), 96 MCAs elected, and 650 nominated (National Democratic Institute, 2018). However, the number is below the one-third threshold as per the requirements of Kenya's 2010 constitution.

Several state and non-state actors that included the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP), the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), political parties, and the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) took a center stage in ensuring that the number of women participating in elections increases based on the outcome of the 2013 elections. The measures taken by these organizations were to ensure that state agencies comply with the genders laws, the motivation of women to participate in the electoral contest, enhancing the visibility of the women, identifying and training women, and sensitizing the communities on the significance of women in politics (National Democratic Institute, 2018). However, the political will both in the political parties and at the legislative level of reducing the obstacles that hindered women's participation in politics remained low.

There was the tendency of ignoring court orders served to the legislature concerning the two-thirds gender rule. Currently, women continue to face several challenges in their quest to contest for political seats. This challenge ranges from political factors, economic and cultural factors including the patriarchal structures and gender stereotyping across society, lack of financial resources, and inadequate support from the political parties, especially during the party primaries. It can be noted that

gatekeepers such as political parties could be reluctant in supporting the women (National Democratic Institute, (NDI), 2018).

Article 27 (8) of the Bill of Rights in the 2010 Kenya Constitution provides that; " The State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender". Despite the establishment of the gender quota, its implementation has been unsuccessful as it has not seen the light of the day at the parliament's floor. Therefore, slow down the progress for women in politics due to the legislative challenges (Kameri-Mbote, 2016). Women face challenges during political campaigns such as harassment, violence, and intimidation. Moreover, women in the political arena could find life to be uncomfortable and difficult due to the widespread of the utilization of psychological abuse.

The successful women in politics have not been spared from violence while in office. For instance, violence rocked the County Assembly of Nairobi when the Speaker-Beatrice Elachi was thrown out of office by a vote of confidence. Her comeback to the office was chaotic as the police had to intervene and disperse the rowdy youths and Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) by the use of teargas canisters. The violence led to damage of property however, the House Speaker remained firm and chaired one of the proceedings after the restoration of calm within the chambers.

4.3 Motivation for Social Media Usage

The study went further and determined the motivation behind the use of social media. Figure 4.10 below presents the findings on motivation for using social media.
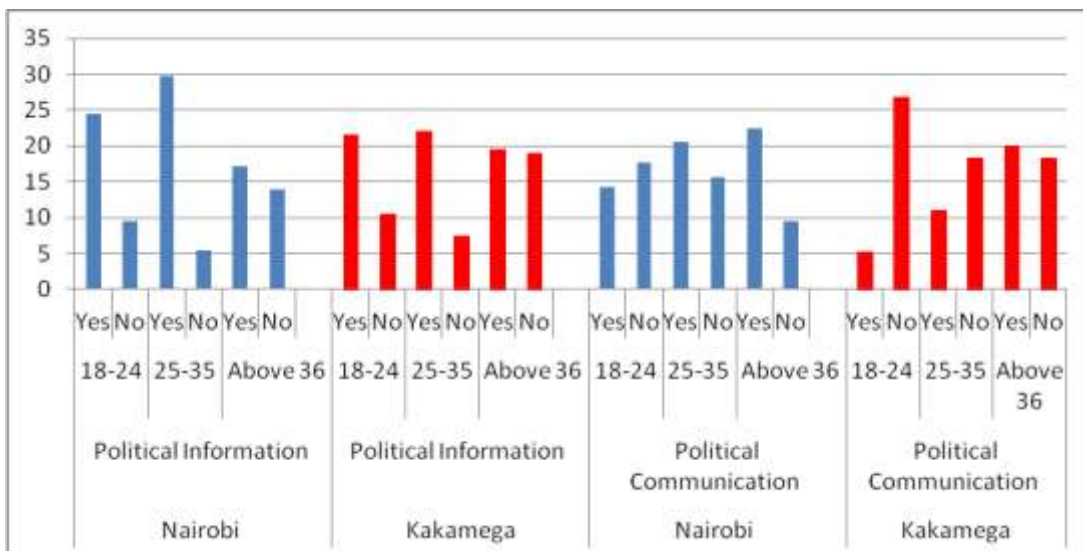
Figure 4.10 Motivation for Using Social Media
Source: Field Data, 2018

<u>Key</u>

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

From the figure above 49(29.75%) of respondents of the age between (25-35) from Nairobi County and 37(22.52%) from Kakamega County indicated that they use social media for acquiring political information. 33(20%) of the respondents of the age between (25-35) years from Nairobi County and 18(11.05%) from Kakamega County indicated that they were motivated to use social media as it enabled them to communicate directly with politicians.

Schlozman et al., (2010) points out that individuals above age 50 are more prevalent in participating in elections while the youth prefer other forms of political participation such as signing petitions and protest participation (Martin, 2012). Young adults are more likely to engage in online political searches and activities (Gennaro and Dutton, 2006). Therefore, new media technologies help young people to engage politically.

According to Gennro and Dutton (2006), social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook are the likely tools for engagement for any person who is conversant with these technologies. Therefore, social media might spur political awareness amongst the proficient users who are not otherwise interested in politics. Technological determinism theory is derived from the notion that technology is the initiator of society's transformation. Therefore, it is based on the assumption that any social changes are controlled by technological development, media, and communication.

Owen (2018) points out that there is a significant alteration by the new media on citizen engagement, communication by politicians, and how government institutions operate and how elections are contested. There is a new media environment that continues to expand, dynamic, and sometimes unpredictable, hence having serious consequences in politics and governance (Owen, 2018).

4.4 Social Media, Level of Education, and Economic Status

This study sought to determine the level of education of the respondents as the findings were important in explaining the contribution of social media to political awareness. Figure 4.12 presents the findings on the level of Education of respondents.
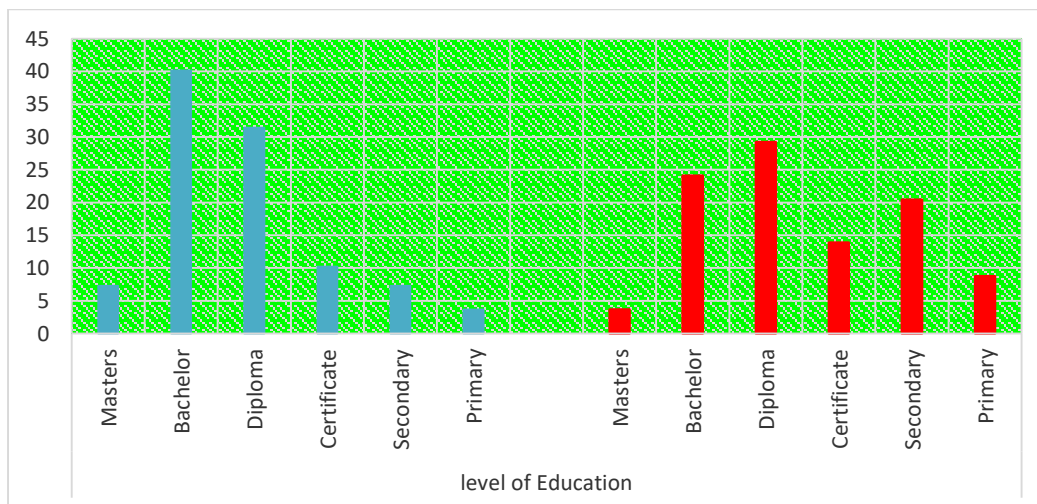
Figure 4.11: Level of Education of Respondents
Source: Field Data, 2018

<u>**Key**</u>

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

From figure 4.12 above, 12(7.2%) of the respondents from Nairobi City County had a master's degree as their highest level of education, 67(40.1%) bachelor's degree, 52(31.3%) diploma, 17(10.2%) certificate, 13(7.6%) secondary and 6(3.6%) primary level. For Kakamega County respondents from Malava and Mumias East constituency cumulatively, 6(3.5%) were graduates with master's degree as their highest level of education, 41(24.7%) bachelor's degree, 48(29.1%) diploma, 23(13.7%) certificate, 33(20.3%) secondary, and 14(8.7%) primary level. Education affects political participation, where highly educated persons tend to participate more in politics than the latter, they participate in the online spheres as well as outside the internet (Verba et al., 1995; Campbell, 2006; Walter & Rosenberger, 2007).

The study went further and sought on the types of social networking sites used by Kenyan youths based on the educational level. The findings are as presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Use of Social Networking Sites by Education in Kenya

Social Media Type	Primary School Graduate	High School Graduate	College Level	Undergraduate (first-degree graduate)	Graduate & (MA Ph.D.) level
Facebook	8.5%	34.5%	39.4%	14.7%	3.0%
Twitter	4.7%	18.2%	38.5%	32.1%	6.4%
WhatsApp	7.1%	31.4%	40.6%	17.5%	3.5%
Instagram	4.4%	26.8%	40.4%	25.0%	3.5%
Snapchat	6.3%	26.3%	40.0%	22.5%	5.0%
YouTube	6.7%	32.3%	39.1%	18.8%	3.2%
LinkedIn	3.4%	6.9%	33.3%	36.8%	19.5%
Email	2.8%	19.5%	43.1%	28.0%	6.6%
Google plus	7.1%	26.6%	43.4%	19.0%	3.8%
Yahoo	2.3%	18.2%	46.0%	27.3%	6.3%

Source, SIMElab Africa, 2019

Table 4.3 above present's data from the SIMElab on the use of social networking sites based on the education level, 39.4% of college-level youths use Facebook, 38.5% Twitter, 40.6% WhatsApp, 40.4% Instagram, 40% Snapchat, 39.1% YouTube, 33.3% LinkedIn and 43.1% Email. However, graduates at Masters and Ph.D. levels use the least, for instance, 3.0% use Twitter, 3.5% WhatsApp, 3.5% Instagram, and 5% Snapchat, 3.2% YouTube. For Primary Graduates 2.8% Email and 8.5% Twitter.

This study went further and investigated the spun of time spent by Kenya's youth on social media based on their educational level. Table 4.4 below presents findings on the duration of social media usage by education level.

Table 4.4: Duration of Using Social Media by Level of Education

Duration	Primary School	High School	College	Undergraduate	Graduate
Less than 30 Minutes	6%	28%	38%	23%	4%
30 minutes - 1 Hour	6%	32%	40%	18%	4%
1 Hour - 2 Hours	6%	30%	42%	18%	4%
2 Hours - 3 Hours	7%	30%	44%	16%	4%
More than 3 Hours	5%	32%	41%	19%	4%

Source: SIMElab Africa, 2019

Table 4.4 above presents data on the duration of using media based on the level of education, 41% of the youth with college education use more than 3 hours daily on social media, 32% high school, 19% undergraduate, 5% primary, and 4%, graduates. Political knowledge can be acquired from interpersonal interaction and family social networks, however; most of it is acquired from social media (Wells & Dudash, 2007).

There is a relationship between political knowledge and education among people who are exposed to the media. The frequent access to information is related to political participation as it increases the political knowledge which motivates participation (Shaker, 2009; Valenzuela, 2013). Media is a major channel that facilitates political participation (Banducci et al., 2009; Pasek, Kenski, Romer & Jamieson, 2006). The findings of this study conform to the assumption of the cognitive engagement theory that the interest of the citizens in politics increases based on the uptake of information that is readily accessible at a lesser cost (Asher, Caylor & Neigel, 2018).

The uptake and availability of political information are considerably high among the youth in Kenya. This study went further and determined the economic status of the respondents as the findings are important in explaining the contribution of social

media to political awareness. Figure 4.12 presents the findings on the economic status of the respondents.
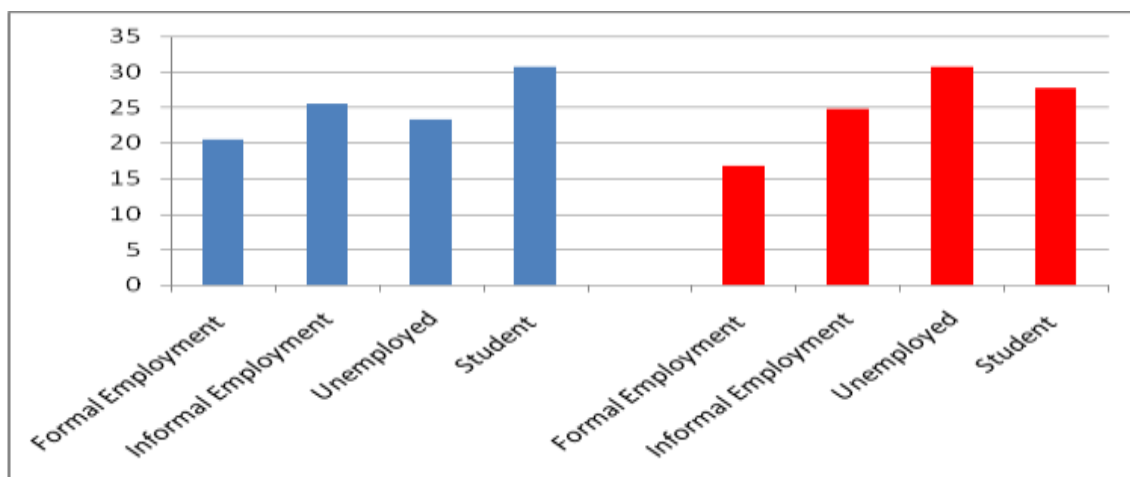
Figure 4.12 Economic Status of Respondents
Source: Field Data, 2018

<u>Key</u>
■ Nairobi County
■ Kakamega County

Figure 4.12 above presents the findings on the economic status of the respondents. 34(20.43%) and 42(25.54%) are from formal and informal employment respectively from Nairobi City County. 39(23.35%) were unemployed while 51(30.65%) students from the same County. For Kakamega County, 28(16.78%) and 41(24.81%) were in formal and informal employment respectively, while 50(30.65%) were unemployed and 46(27.73%) were students.

Gil de Zuniga, et al., (2010) points out that research revealed that there is a positive effect on the tendency to participate in politics and a sense of political efficacy on people who access social media networks. Additionally, Wallsten (2010), points out that social media has resulted in the creation of the ability of more voices to be heard based on the diversity of the content disseminated through social media. The informed

and knowledgeable youths are the ones that participate in politics, therefore, social media plays an important role in politics (Abdulrauf, Hamid and Ishak, 2015).

Social media has an impact on public awareness, therefore, providing an appropriate venue for them to participate in the political process and social media impacts the share of votes (Mascaro and Goggins, 2010; Vitak et al., 2011). Social media plays a critical role in creating knowledge and awareness about rights and a need for political engagement for the people.

4.5 Conclusion of Chapter Four

Chapter four analyzed the study findings on the effects of social media on political awareness among Kenya's youths. The analysis was done thematically in the following order; first, it discussed the levels of internet connectivity, mobile phone penetration, and accessibility to social media and electronic devices used to access social media in Kenya. Secondly, it analyzed social media usage in comparison to age, gender, and political participation; thirdly, an analysis of motivation for social media usage; and lastly, social media usage, the level of education, and economic status of the respondents.

From the analysis and discussions, it is clear that social media has affected political efficacy and hence a desire for young Kenyans to participate in politics. Gil de Zuniga et al. (2010) argues that social media has carried over the realm of politics and government more generally. Through social media, the communication dynamics are altered between the public, journalists, and political leaders hence this platform has become a pervasive force in politics. Therefore, social media has opened has led to a broad avenue for instantaneous political debate and discourse.

The theory of technological determinism conforms to the findings of this chapter through its one assumption that when there is the development of new systems of technology, the society or the culture immediately changes to reflect the senses needed to use the new technology. It further posits that with every introduction of new technological equipment, the members of a society will change and adapt that technology. Therefore, the community will rush for advanced technology and dispose of the old (McQuail, 2005).

Different types of social media platforms are in use for political outreach and engagement. Moreover, they are co-opted by citizen journalists and mainstream media, hence providing a platform where people debate issues and circumvent government censorship. Social media use in politics in this area has torn down the silos of political information and blurred national borders of this region. Activists, politicians, parties, political movements use social media to reach more people beyond those who support their party or cause and seek to gain more support.

In this chapter, this study concludes that social media has opened an engagement space in the Kenyan political system where the youth with interest in politics and the disinterested receive political information. It has also ensured that the public officials are subjected to greater scrutiny when the established press joins forces with the average population. The ordinary youth can bring into prominence the events and issues that might be outside the purview of the mainstream journalists.

It is indispensable to point out that Kenyans enjoy the accessibility of information on social media and the internet, platforms dominated by urban and rural youths. It is crucial to point out that the accessibility of political information is fundamental to political awareness. Information is one of the vital components of decision making.

Therefore, news and information are integral aspects that might affect political decision making as they increase the likelihood of political participation. Chapter five analyzes the effects of social media on political mobilization on Kenya's youths.

CHAPTER FIVE

EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ELECTORAL MOBILIZATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the second research question. The research question responded to how social media has affected mobilization of young voters in Kenya. Electoral mobilization is a significant factor that contributes to political participation. Therefore, the fundamental question in this chapter was how social media had affected the electoral mobilization process and political engagement as a whole. The findings are analyzed thematically in the following order; social media and mobilization of the electorate; Social media as a forum for political parties and voters' engagement; and Social media and political campaigns in Kenya. A two-way approach, being mobilized to vote, participate in elections, mobilizing others to vote, or in activism.

5.1 Social Media and Mobilization of the Electorate

An examination of how social media has been used by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) in reaching out to the public is significant in understanding the effects of social media on the mobilization of young voters. Individuals receiving online election news and the internet are significantly more likely to vote in an election (Tolbert and Mcneal, 2003). Voters learn from different forms of media, including televised debates, television, and newspaper (Weaver, 1996). Media reinforces voting intentions and political interest, learning from the media, voting, and political interest brace each other (Weaver, 1996).

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 established the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) as the electoral body in the country. The electoral

body is created based on the provisions of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Act 2011. One of its key mandates is to conduct elections and referenda (Kenya's Constitution, 2010). IEBC is an independent institution, and it is not subjected to any control or directions by any authority or person in the performance of its functions but subjects only to the law and Kenya's Constitution. Kenyans enjoy political rights based on the provision of Kenya's Constitution. They have a right to join and participate in the affairs of a political party, be a candidate, and when voted in, they have a right to hold a public office. The Election Campaign Financing Act, 2013 provides for the laws that regulate and manage the expenditures and accountability of election campaign funds during elections and referendum.

Kenyans have to vote by secret ballot in an election or referendum and have the right to be registered as a voter (Kenya's Constitution, 2010). It is the responsibility of IEBC to ensure that Kenyans enjoy their fundamental political rights as explained above. Kenya's electoral system is governed by the 2010 Constitution of Kenya; the Elections Act, 2011, and Elections Offences Act, 2016; the Political Parties Act, 2011, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Act, 2011, the Elections Campaign Financing Act, 2013, and the Leadership and Integrity Act, 2012.

A mention of the laws that govern the conduct of the electoral system in this section is crucial as it provides for the ground for further analysis of the effects of social media on electoral mobilization. The Elections Act (2011) sets out the regulations on the conduct of the elections. The laws provided are for all levels of elective positions, from the Head of State to the Members of the County Assembly. It also stipulates the conduct of referenda and provides the elections dispute resolutions. The Elections Offenses Act (2016) specifies election offenses and the punishments that an election

offender receives like imprisonment, prosecution, disqualification, or warned. Examples of election offenses include voting more than once, double registration, campaigning on the voting day, buying or selling of voters cards, obstruction, and prevention, or barring a person from voting. The Political Parties Act (2011) regulates the formation and the operation of political parties in the country. It stipulates the resolution of disputes within the political parties and also provides for the accounting and funding of the political parties. It is also through this Act that the office of the Registrar of Political Parties is created, an independent office that regulates political parties and ensures that they comply with the law.

Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) provides the National values and principles that are to be observed during elections. These values include accountability, transparency, integrity, and good governance. Therefore, the electoral system needs to be subjected to the following principles; that persons with disabilities must be fairly represented, citizens given the freedom to exercise their political rights, and not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender (Kenya's Constitution, 2010).

The electoral system has to comply with the principle of a free and fair election, and the electoral process has to be administered in an accountable, efficient, neutral, and impartial and be accurate and transparent. Moreover, elections must be conducted by an independent body, free from violence, intimidation, improper influence or corruption; and by secret ballot (Kenya's Constitution, 2010). Article 88 (4) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) assigns (IEBC) the responsibility of continuously register the citizens as voters, revise the voters' role regularly, and provide voter

education. Therefore, to provide these essential services to the public, the electoral body needs to inform and educate the public on the electoral processes.

It is crucial to point out that how elections are managed determines both the outcome and the quality of elections. IEBC uses different modes of communication to pass across information to the public. IEBC uses both the mainstream, print, and social media to convey its messages. Therefore, the following subsections 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and 5.1.3 analyses how IEBC has used social media and discusses its effects on the mobilization of the youth.

5.1.1 Social Media as a Forum for Electoral Engagement

IEBC mobilizes the electorate for voter registration and polling exercises. IEBC acknowledged the use of social media during the 2017 general elections. An analysis of the IEBC post-election evaluation report of 2017 elections indicated that;

> *IEBC was actively present on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. These platforms provided an alternative avenue of engagement with the online community. Any online inquiries were promptly responded to, and feedback from media stakeholders revealed that the Commissions' Twitter handle was a news source, and media houses would pick news items from the post since the Commission Twitter handle is verified thus credible.*

The above information from IEBC clearly illustrates that social media can be an essential tool to support the mobilization of the electorate to participate in the electoral process. IEBC confirms the use of social media sites to communicate and engage with the public on electoral issues within its jurisdiction.

As discussed in chapter four, social media sites in Kenya are dominated by young users. When it comes to the use of social media for exposure to news, the young citizens top the list (Newman et al., 2017; Gottfried & Shearer, 2016). Therefore, through the dissemination of information by IEBC on media accessed by a significant

number of young people indicate that a large number receives electoral massages. Hence, young people can make rational decisions that will enable them to register as voters and participate in polling.

This study noted that the use of media for political purposes continues to rise. For instance, online political campaigns are used to influence people to support specific politicians (MacNamara, Sakinofsky & Beattie, 2012). Disengaged citizens and the youth can easily be encouraged to engage in democratic participation. The online social network allows users to control and contribute to the content and make contacts with other users (Williams and Gulati, 2007). According to Lenhart (2015), young people use social media for different purposes.

The possibility of personalizing the news on social media platforms is higher, and it could result in a narrower information site (Thornson & Wells, 2015). However, Fletcher & Nielsen (2017) point out that the horizon of young adults might broaden due to inadvertent exposure to information from their network. Recent reports Newman et al. (2017), Mitchell, Gottfried, & Matsa (2015) indicate that it is from social media that young adults receive political information.

A young man from Mumias East Constituency during the focus group discussion explained the significance of social media in political participation when he argued that;

> *I have been using social media to acquire information about what is happening in the political realm. The platform will assist me in the learning process on how to campaign and the type of message to use while engaging the electorate. I am interested in politics because I aspire to vie for elective positions in the coming future.*

This implies that social media has provided a space for the youth to acquire political information, learn, engage and be attracted to political leadership hence participate

fully in politics. It is critical to point out that social media users received electoral information from IEBC through different ways such as by random exposure to the content shared by the electoral body or by subscribing to the messages from IEBC. Direct political communication is an essential feature of the social networking sites that includes personalized advertising or regular newsfeed post from political actors (Bimber, 2014).

The use of social media by IEBC is a fundamental gesture towards encouraging young adults to participate in the electoral process. Ohme (2019) points out that social media platforms form a special place of information exposure in terms of the characteristics of information exposed to and access to political information. The differences in the content and access distinguish social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook from traditional online sources or offline media such as party websites, political blogs, and news websites.

The study findings on the use of social media during the non-election period in Kenya support the literature on other studies. Research has indicated a possibility of the strong mobilizing influence of the use of social media on political participation in non-election times (Xenos et al., 2014; Vissers & Stolle, 2014; Theocharis & Quintellier, 2016; Tang & Lee, 2013; Kahne et al., 2013; Ekström & Shehata, 2016) and on campaign participation (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Holt et al., 2013). To analyze the usage of social media by the electorate in accessing political information this study relied on data from the Google trends and statistics as shown in figure 5.1 below.
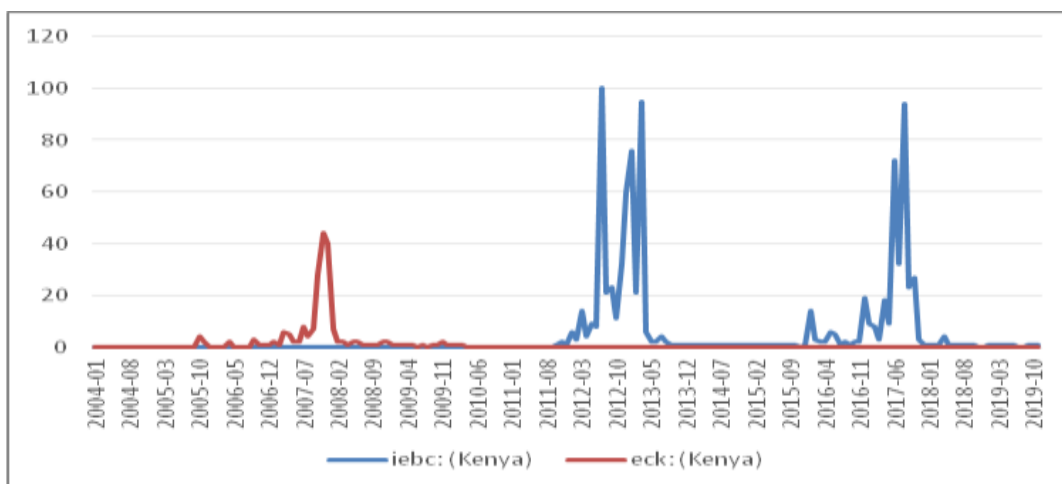
Figure 5.1: Social Media as a Source of Electoral Information
Source: Google Trends, 2019

From the data on figure 5.1 above, Kenyans relied on the internet to find out information published on the commission's website during the electioneering period. The search for information published by ECK on Google Search was at its peak in November and December 2007 at an index volume of (44) and (40) respectively, a period when Kenya went for her elections on 27th December 2007 under the management of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK).

Similar trends were registered in March 2013 and August 2017 at an index volume of (95) and (94) respectively, months when Kenya held her general elections organized by the IEBC after the electoral reforms that led to the removal of ECK. However, different results registered during the repeat of presidential elections on 26th October 2017. Data from the Google trends indicated a significant drop in the number of online users who sought information on the Electoral's Commission website. It could be attributed to the uncompetitive elections due to the boycott of elections by Raila Odinga, a key presidential candidate who purported that the elections had been rigged hence there was no need for his supporters to participate in an election that is not free

and fair. This election became a one-man show as supporters of Uhuru Kenyatta participated in the voting exercise that the opposition boycotted.

The proponents of Technological Determinism theory argue that society is influenced and shaped by technological development. Therefore, society has to adjust and adapt to new technologies and innovations. Google is one of the most visited sites in Kenya and globally. The site is a search engine that enables internet users to access experiences, services, and products. Google operates Android, a mobile operating system of more than 98% of the smartphones in Kenya. Moreover, the company commands a 96% market share in Kenya's searches industry (Nendo, 2019).

Over 4.5 billion searches are done across the globe daily. Google has onboard software that enables it to a computer and classifies information in-terms on Google trends based on the information sought on its platform. For instance, sports' betting was one of the leading search queries in 2018 as most of the users sought for the term "Sportpesa". Moreover, Sportpesa held this position from 2016 to 2018. However, news and information concerning Kenya took the leading stage followed by Facebook from 2010 to 2015, as most of the people would tend to seek more information concerning the country and social networking services (Nendo, 2019).

In comparison to Kenya's neighbors in 2018, the "download" followed by "video" formed the most popular topics in Tanzania as in East Africa, this country is considered as the region's visual capital due to its popular use of Instagram and YouTube. In Uganda, the query "Uganda", followed by "news" and "live score" dominated the Uganda Google search platform, hence similar desire of results and information on sports betting both in Kenya and Uganda (Nendo, 2019). A young

lady from Embakasi North Constituency attests to the use of social media in the search for political information She notes that;

> *I use social media to seek development information about my Constituency. I have been a member of the Dagoretti South Forum on Facebook since the 2013 elections.*

The above voice is a clear indication of the trust for political information through the social media platforms. Young adults are more likely to engage in online political searches and activities (Gennaro and Dutton, 2006). Therefore, new media technologies would help young people to engage politically. It is important to note that during the opposition boycott, social media played a vital role in the dissemination of political information. The NASA supporters waged online attacks on media stations and journalists who were considered as biased (Oruko, 2017). The boycott came after the nullification of the presidential results. Screenshots on WhatsApp concerning the IEBC meeting and internal memos went viral, however, some of them were dismissed as fake news by the commissioners as some of the mainstream media journalists tried to verify the information that was circulating on the internet.

Media dominates other sources of information. Social media, the internet, print media, radio, and television play a significant role in the dissemination of political messages (Gaber (1988). However, a high volume of messages is disseminated rapidly and cheaply through the internet compared to the traditional media (Polat, 2005). Therefore, internet users can send information to multiple recipients at no extra cost. This study established that during the electioneering period, most of the Kenyans tend to be geared towards the use of electronic media to seek information concerning elections.

Based on data from Google, the Google trends indicate that the search for information about the electoral bodies is at its peak during the electioneering years and months. The level of Kenyans' login and registering new accounts of these platforms was high during this time. The online setting could be more politically diverse in comparison to the face-to-face (Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic, 2015). Therefore, becoming important is disseminating political information to the marginalized groups (Bekafigo & McBride, 2013).

The cognitive engagement theory explains the significance of social media usage for mobilization by the IEBC and the uptake of the mobilization information by the youths. The cognitive engagement theory states that a highly knowledgeable public would participate in politics (Bimber, 2001). Moreover, it argues that the citizens would gain more knowledge and interest in politics if the information is readily available at a lesser cost (Asher, Caylor & Neigel, 2012). Gill de Zuniga, Molyneux & Zheng (2014) points out that there is an increase in political participation based on the easy availability and accessibility of online information. Calenda and Meijer (2009) further argued that political participation tends to increase based on the availability of online news channels and political messages.

5.1.2 Social Media as a Facilitator of Voter Education

To analyze the influence of social media on political participation among Kenya's young people it was significant to examine how this type of media has affected voter education in the country. It is important to note that voter education is a fundamental factor that informs political participation. Voter education is one of the critical functions of the IEBC in this exercise that the public gets educated on matters related to elections and polling. The citizenry becomes aware and knowledgeable of how the

electoral system functions, how they are supposed to participate in this critical exercise, such as the significance of voter registration, the location of voter registration, requirements for registration, and how to cast a vote. IEBC 2017 post-election evaluation report, points out that;

> *Voter education is for empowering citizens with relevant information, knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enable them to exercise their democratic and civic duties. Implementation of voter education should be supported by voter education materials that are clear and simple, address all the phases of the electoral cycle. The voter education content should be inclusive and target various groupings such as the youth, professionals, illiterate, elderly, women, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), minorities, and the marginalized.*

From the above description, IEBC points out the significance of voter education as a crucial exercise to the entire public, inclusive of special groups such as the youth, women, and people living with disabilities. To ensure effective outreach of voter education for meaningful electoral participation ahead of the 2017 general elections, IEBC worked in partnership with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) through the Kenya Electoral Assistance Program (KEAP) (Chianese, 2018). Through the collaborative efforts, a robust voter education effort was organized by the IFES' strategic communication specialists, researchers and the IEBC's Education and Partnerships department, and IEBC's Communication department (Chianese, 2018).

The collaborative efforts led to the massive use of digital outreach, motivational and educational voter ads, and the rollout of the Youth Vote (YVote) activation campaign. The aim of the vote digital media and face-to-face outreach initiative was to motivate young people to participate actively in a peaceful electoral process (IFES, 2017). The campaign was done before the 8th August 2017 election through youth education and engagement (IFES, 2017). The above case is a critical example of how information

and communication technology is used in the country to ensure that the public specifically the young voters are mobilized to participate in the political process. Therefore, social media and other digital applications act as enabling factors for voter mobilization.

To reach out to many potential voters the collaboration was designed based on voter registration, socioeconomic, and census data. Chianese (2018) points out that the youth of the age 18-29 formed the largest population eligible for voter registration as they were the least registered. Moreover, they were among the poorest population living in low income and high-density areas. To explain the digital media tools used to reach out to many young people for voter registration, Chianese (2018) points out as follows;

> *A variety of digital tools were used, such as Google AdWords search and display. Digital banners; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube ads; graphics and videos; third party social media platforms; Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram analytics; paid channel management; content production; digital public relations; social listening; and landing pages. Segmented audiences were targeted with digital and social media ads based on geography, demographics, and psychographics (interests and user behaviors).*

The above information portrays the significance of the use of social media sites in reaching out to a magnitude population of young people. IFES (2017) reported that the aim of the outreach campaign was on spreading get-out-the-vote messaging and educating the youth voters so that the youth could make informed choices. Moreover, it focused on reducing the demographic apprehension about being the first-time voter, increase the number of voter turnout among the youth and the young people to take active roles in governance IFES (2017).

IEFS projected that over 1.1 million people were reached through the digital campaign and over 100,000 nationwide through door-to-door and face-to-face

activation, comprehensive digital engagement, and interactive voter education games (IFES, 2017). Social media and the internet provide a virtual space for young people to discuss politics through online accounts, pages, and groups. People can express the multiple aspects of their personalities through networked technologies such as social media (Papacharissi, 2012). As social media enables them to maintain connections with a large number of groups, people can create an audience or a face for each social group they interact with (Goffman, 1959).

Table 5.1 below indicates a comparison of voter turnout in the 2017 and 2013 presidential elections for 10 counties based on the IEBC 2018 post-election evaluation report.

Table: 5.1 Voter Registration and Turnout for 2013 and 2017

No.	County Name	Registered Voters		Improvement %	
		2017	2013	2017	
1	NAIROBI CITY	2,251,929	1,732,288	29.9%	
2	KIAMBU	1,181,076	863,199	36.8%	
3	NAKURU	949,971	696,594	36.3%	
4	KAKAMEGA	743,929	568,151	30.9%	
5	MERU	702,776	489,590	43.5%	
6	MACHAKOS	620,363	445,421	39.2%	
7	MURANG'A	587,222	453,725	29.4%	
8	MOMBASA	580,644	413,069	40.5%	
9	BUNGOMA	559,866	412,018	35.8%	
10	KISII	546,682	413,161	32.3%	

Source: IEBC, 2018

This study revealed an improvement in voter registration of 2017 general elections in comparison to the previous elections. For instance, table 5.1 above indicates an

improvement in both voter registrations in the 10 counties. Despite, the use of social media, mainstream and print media affecting voter turnout, other factors come into play. Wanyande (2006) points out that during the one-party regime, the levels of voter turnout were lower in comparison to the multiparty elections.

The voter turnout of 1992 was considerably high (5,400,324 of valid votes cast out of the 7,900,000 registered voters) (68.35% of voter turnout) as there was excitement due to the return of multiparty politics after 30 years of one-party authoritarian rule and an intensive battle from the pro-democracy forces. Moreover, the electorate had hoped for free and fair elections hence a large turnout during polls was an expression of the newly won freedom (Wanyande, 2006).

In 1997, the voters came out in large numbers (6,096,479 of valid votes cast out of the 9,000,000 registered voters) (67.73% of voter turnout) to vote out the KANU regime that was blamed for poor governance and the worsening economy. Moreover, the electorate had been assured of free and fair elections as the Interparty Parliamentary Group (IPPG) had successfully negotiated for the constitutional amendments on the conduct of elections (Wanyande, 2006).

The 2002 elections also experienced a high voter turnout, 5,861,904 of valid votes were cast out of the 10,451,150 registered voters, 56.08% of voter turnout as the opposition had united to remove KANU from power. In this case, the opposition unity could also explain the high voter turnout as it encouraged the electorate to participate in the polls. Moreover, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) had been previously signed by the leading politicians on the formation of the coalition government and the distribution of cabinet positions (Kadima, and Owuor, 2006).

The unity pact had been drawn from several major ethnic communities. The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was formed as the two major political groupings came together, namely, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK). Kadima and Owuor (2006) point out that considerable interests and excitements rose due to the MoU that proposed power-sharing arrangements on the regional representation that had provided that for the share of 50% of cabinet positions. Moreover, a new position of a prime minister and curtailing the Head of State power through the enactment of a new constitution was part of the pact (Kadima, and Owuor, 2006).

5.1.3 Social Media as a Facilitator of Voter Registration

An examination of the contribution of social media on voter registration was vital to this study as this exercise is significant in an electoral system. Voter registration can also be used to measure the level of political participation hence a key aspect in measuring the influence of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth. Voter registration is another significant responsibility of the IEBC as early discussed. Therefore, this study went further and examined the use of social media by the commission as a tool of education and mobilization for voter registration. IEBC stress the importance of voter registration through its 2017 post-election evaluation report when it points out as follows;

> *Voter registration establishes the eligibility of individuals to vote in an election or a referendum. If conducted well, voter registration confers legitimacy on the process. The legitimacy of an entire electoral process is dependent on the credibility of the voter registration process. The registration process and the outcome should be accurate, sustainable, and acceptable to citizens and political stakeholders.*

Based on the above description, it is a clear indication that the voter registration process is vital in the elections cycle. The exercise enables a Kenyan citizen of 18

years and above to vote in the general or by-elections. An individual needs to register as a voter before participating in casting a vote.

The Elections Act (2011) provides for the registration of voters and the determination of the registration questions. The conduct of both elections and referenda; and election offenses and resolution of election disputes. The Act provides the right to voting for all Kenyans provided they have attained the age of 18 years and registered as voters. The register of voters comprises of;

> *A poll register in respect of every polling station; ward register in respect of every ward; constituency register in respect of every constituency; county register in respect of every county, and a register of voter residing outside Kenya (Elections Act, 2011).*

Kenya applies the use of a continuous voter registration process, where the commission continues to update the existing register of voters IEBC. However, voter registration can either be periodically when a new register is prepared for a specific election. The commission continuously updates its register through the rectification of the particulars of the voters by deleting the names of the voters declared incompetent, names of the deceased, effecting transfers of registered voters, and regularly adding the names of the eligible voters (IEBC, 2013).

It is critical to point out that voter registration in Kenya has gone through various reforms over time since its inception. The registration of voters in Kenya can be traced back to 1962. A voter registration drive was done to compile a new register for elections of members to a new Lower and Upper House of Legislature; new Regional Assemblies and Local Government Authorities (The Kenya Gazette, 23rd November 1962).

Kenyan citizens who wanted to register as voters were required to visit the registration office or his assistant. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the executive arm of government-appointed electoral officers and entrusted them to enlist eligible voters in a black book. However, due to the various challenges faced with this kind of system, 1992 saw the formation of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) formed as an independent body that was mandated to conduct both voter registration and election (IEBC, 2013).

The voter register was compiled by the ECK in 1996 within three months through the use of the Optical Mark Reader (Scanners) and the Optical Recognition (OMR) forms. However, this register was discarded for being incomplete and inaccurate following the disputed presidential results that also led to the disbandment of the E.C.K. A fresh voter registration drive was done in 2010 where 12.5 million voters where registered in two months by the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) that was formed in 2009 to replace the ECK (IEBC, 2013).

Voter registration in 2010 was done by the use of OMR and the Electronic Voter Registration (EVR) technology. IEBC was then formed after the promulgation of the new Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and mandated to carry out continuous voter registration. IEBC registered 14,388,781 voters within 30days through a fresh voter registration by the use of the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) technology. The commission opted to use this type of technology based on its efficiency and effectiveness (IEBC, 2013).

It is crucial to point out that the 2017 August elections and October fresh presidential elections were vital to this study as a mass of voter population was exposed to social media and the internet. Dominant conversations on social media during the 2017

elections period were amplified through the coverage of the mainstream media. Therefore, it is critical to point out that the Kenya 2017 election was a key driver for engagement on social media. The traditional, internet and social media can increase voter participation by stimulating interest in elections and providing information to the public to make informed voting decisions (Tolbert and Mcneal, 2003).

The mass voter registration in 2017 can be explained by the cognitive engagement theory's assumption that political participation depends on the knowledge about political happenings, education, and availability of information (Conroy, Feezell & Guerrerro, 2012). During the mass voter registration by IEBC in January 2017, many Kenyans received calls from their chiefs as they tried to find out if they had registered as voters. Chiefs are in the second-lowest public service delivery unit as they represent the national government locally as administrative officers (The Republic of Kenya, 2013).

The Chiefs fall under the State Department for Interior & Citizens Services in the Ministry of Interior Coordination and the National Government. Their duties involve the provision of alternative dispute resolution locally, assisting in the application and distribution of national identification documents and other documentation, and communicating the National government policies (Mwangi and Njuguna 2017). It emerged that the people who received the phone calls were from the strongholds of the Jubilee party like Kisii, North Rift, and Central Kenya. Voter registration was significant to the government as it had described it as a national priority (Daily Nation, 2017).

Respondents from Stahere and Embakasi North Constituencies in Nairobi County and others from Mumias East and Malava confirmed receiving SMS from political parties,

aspirants, or IEBC informing them to register and voters or participate in the elections. For instance, a respondent from Starehe Constituency notes that;

> *I received campaign SMS from politicians requesting a vote both in 2013 and 2017. Moreover, I belong to a WhatsApp political group where aspirants could send campaign messages.*

The above shows that the youth received targeted political information through various forms of political information with an aim of engaging them in the electrole process. For instance, to support the voter details verification exercise, IEBC used the short Message Service (SMS) where members of the public verified their details through the shortcode (70000) (IEBC, 2018). By October 2017, a total of 6,048,007 registered voters and verified their registration details through this platform. Table 5.2 below indicates a breakdown of the number of voters who utilized the SMS service from June to October 2017.

Table 5.2: Number of Voters who utilized the SMS Service

Month	SMS Queries	%
June 2017	259,729	4.29%
July 2017	871,074	14.40%
August 2017	4,268,463	70.58%
September 2017	44,893	0.75%
October 2017	603,848	9.98%
Total	**6,048,007**	**100**

Source: IEBC, 2018

Table 5.3 below shows the number of registered voters of the age between 18-35 years in Nairobi City and Kakamega counties in 2017.

Table 5.3: Registered Voters Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties

County	(18-24)years		(25-35)years	
	Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
Nairobi City	186,285	206,560	448,310	510,677
Kakamega	51,522	63,788	120,700	112,354
TOTAL	**237,807**	**270,348**	**569,010**	**623,031**

Source: IEBC, 2017

Table 5.3 indicates the total number of registered voters of the age 18-35 years from Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties. There are a few conclusions drawn from this data. As with the case of voter registration, the number of registered voters for both genders and both age for Nairobi City County outweighs Kakamega County. It could be attributed to the population factor. Nairobi City County hosts the Capital City of Kenya therefore a significant number of young people would migrate from rural to the capital to seek greener pastures. Based on the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing census, Nairobi City County has a total population of 4,397,073 people, and Kakamega has 1,867,579 (KNBS, 2019).

I had an opportunity of interviewing a senior government officer, a Key respondent for this study. From the oral interview at his office in Nairobi, on the trend of voter registration among the youth in Kenya, he points out the following;

> *The trend in voter registration can be answered by the proportion of the youth registered to vote in 2013 and 2017. In 2013, the youths were 46% and in 2017 were 51%. Therefore there was a rise in the number of young people who registered and projected to vote. The highest change amongst the registered youth is in the age group 26–35 years that increased from 15% in 2013 to 33.41% in 2017. The proportion of registered voters amongst the age group of 18–25 years with the total registered voters did not change significantly, as it is currently at 17.14% from 17% in 2013. The high number can be attributed to the youth who turned eighteen years, growing awareness for the need to participate in politics especially in devolved governance, improved communication, and voter education*

through social media platforms, political persuasion, and improved access to identification cards.

This study established that a significant number of the young people registered as voters after receiving information on voter registration from social media, Radio, Television, print media, from friends, and IEBC peer educators.

Kaiser (2014) points out that social media plays a crucial role in the field of voter education. Young voters are particularly active on social networks therefore the Election Management Boards (EMBs) need social networking sites to reach out to voters. Kaiser (2014) goes further and notes that voters can effectively exercise their voting rights by being well informed through social media. Voter turnout can increase as media can provide the electorate with sufficient information to feel that they can make an informed decision (Tolbert and Mcneal, 2003). Table 5.4 below presents the total number of youths that were registered during the 2013 and 2017 elections.

Table 5.4: Registered Youth Voters for 2013 and 2017 General Elections

Year	Age bracket	Registered Voters	Percentage (%)
2013	Youth	6,802,655	46%
	Others	7,985,726	54%
2016	Youth	10,001,826	51%
	Others	9,609,597	49%
2013	26-35	2,218,257	15%
	Others	12,570,124	85%
2016	26-35	6,552,176	33.41%
	Others	13,059,247	66.59%

Source: IEBC, 2018

On the questionnaire, the respondents were required to indicate if they received information on social media concerning voter registration during the 2017 voter registration exercise. The responses are as indicated in figure 5.2 below.
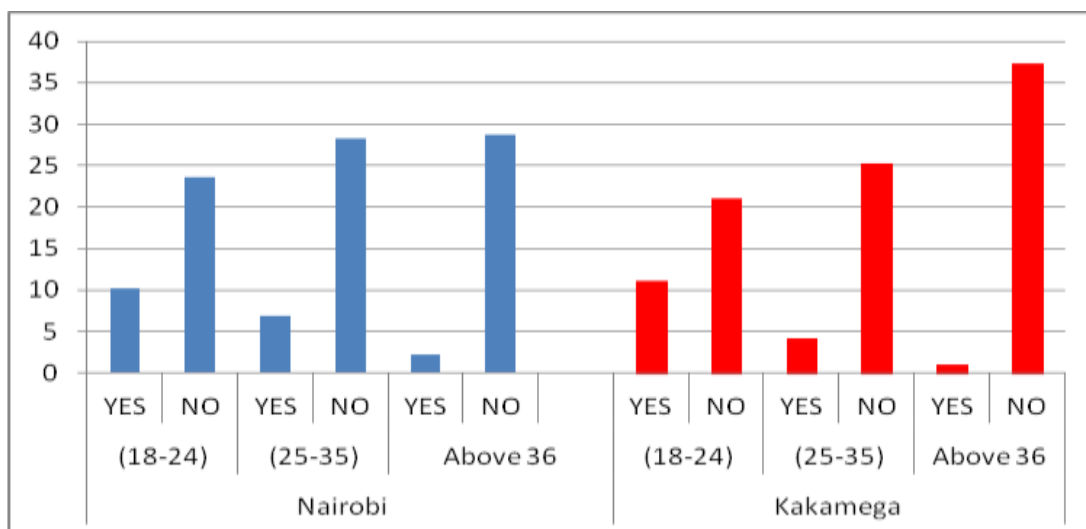
Figure 5.2: Social Media and Voter Registration
Source: Field Data, 2018

<u>Key</u>

🟦 Nairobi County

🟥 Kakamega County

Figure 5.2 above presents the findings on social media as a source of voter registration during the 2017 elections. From the findings above, 17(10.24%) respondents from Nairobi City County, and 18(11%) from Kakamega County between the age of (18-24) years were registered as voters after receiving voter registration information on social media. Park et al. (2009) points out that through information seeking on social media there is increased political participation. Morover, Abdulrauf, Hamid, and Ishak (2015) note that, informed and knowledgeable youths participate in politics. Therefore, social media plays an important role in politics. Howover, there other factors like political interest that contributes electrole

engegament. During focus group discussion with the youth from Malava Constituency in Kakamega County one of them indicated as follows:

> *We rely on information from the local radio stations such as Murembe FM (vernacular radio) to receive vital information. Sometimes the local leaders such as the village elders, chiefs, and politicians furnish us with information concerning voter registration. I also received voter registration information from the IEBC peer educators.*

The above voice indicates that despite social media providing a fundamental source of political information among the Kenya's youth the mainstream media remains a critical source of political information. According to International IDEA (2006), the social networking sites necessitated by social media and combined by the traditional media can play a critical role in ensuring that an election management body can be able to educate the public on the electoral process and its mandates. Therefore, when the stakeholders understand the roles and the functions of the electoral body, it leads to higher perceptions of its effectiveness and integrity.

To promote openness, transparency, information sharing, responsible coverage, and media relations during the 2017 general elections, IEBC used social media and electronic platforms, press conferences, direct interviews, and statements to engage with the members of the fourth estate (IEBC, 2018). IEBC accredited more than 4000 local and international journalists. Moreover, it offered an online portal that eased the accreditation process. Seven hundred local and international journalists accessed the National Tallying main auditorium during the 2017 elections (IEBC, 2018).

5.2 Social Media as a Forum for Political Parties and Voters Engagement

This study revealed that the use of social media has enhanced engagement of the Kenya's youth in political parties' affairs. It is important to note that social media plays a critical role in political parties' communication systems in their bid for

membership recruitment, mobilization, and party communication. This study went further and sought to analyze the level of youth membership in political parties and online political forums.

To examine the levels of political party membership the respondents from Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties were requested to indicate on the questionnaire their status of membership in political parties. Figure 5.3 below presents the findings on the respondents' membership in political parties.
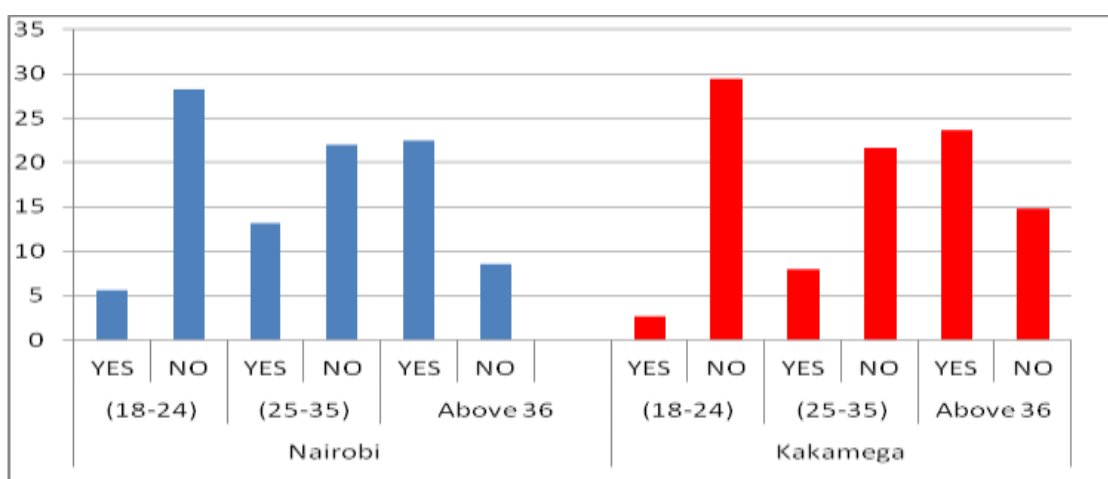
Figure 5.3: Political Parties Membership
Source: Field Data, 2018

Key

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

From figure 5.3 above, 9(5.6%) of the respondents between the age of (18-24) years and 22(13.17%) between (25-35) years from Nairobi City County. 4(2.63%) respondents between the age of (18-29), 13(7.89%) of (25-35) years were from Kakamega County indicated that they were bonified members of political parties. However, high numbers were registered in the membership in virtual political forums as presented in the figure below.

Figure 5.4 below indicates the respondent's subscription to online political forums affiliated to political parties and ethnic communities.
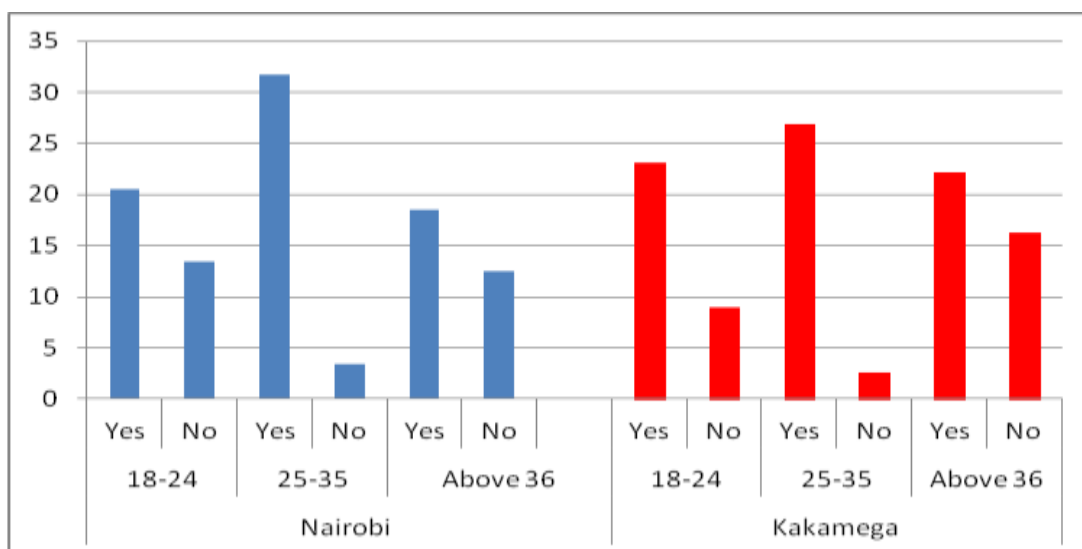
Figure 5.4: Online Political Forum Membership
Source: Field Data, 2018

<u>Key</u>

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

Figure 5.4 indicates the level of membership of the respondents from Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties on the online political forums. Nairobi City County 53(32%) of the respondents between the age of (25-35) years and 45(27%) of the same age group from Kakamega County indicated they were members of an online political forum.

Based on the study findings from figure 5.4 and 5.5, this study revealed that the online political forums have a significant subscription by online users. Polat (2005) points out that the internet has the potential of enhancing political communication and participation for other modes of participation such as contacting elected representatives electronically, information aggregation such as electronic surveys and opinion polls.

Issue-based groups can converge online-based on an opportunity necessitated by the internet. These communities could benefit from information support and capacity building from other like-minded people, hence encouraging political participation. People with similar concerns can come together online other people would articulate their views due to anonymity hence a more enlighten exchange of political information (Papacharissi, 2002).

A respondent from Starehe Constituency confirms the use of social media as a means of engagement with politicians when she points out that;

> *It is only through Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp that I have been able to engage directly with politicians specifically during the electioneering years. Social media is the only platform where you don't need an appointment to communicate directly to a politician.*

This implies that social media has provided a space for the young people to communicate directly with the politicians, a key precipitate for political participation. Users of social media can freely create a relationship with official institutions and express their opinions more freely and openly due to the ease of using social media that have spawned and an explosion of grassroots participation (Rojas H & Gil de Zúñiga H, 2010; Gil de Zúñiga H. 2012). Therefore, social media and the internet provide new avenues for political participation as well as media consumption.

Social media and internet users develop the confidence to express themselves in different ways due to repeated performance online (Ostman, 2012). For instance, young people develop strategies on how to confront different audiences as they confront multiple audiences in a networked world as they desire to express their views (Davis's, 2011). The second respondent from the civil society during the face to face interview observed that ;

There is a general increase in the number of youths participating in politics. With the introduction of social media, the young Kenyans have been sensitized about voting and why their participation counts. Through social media usage, the young people have learned about activities that they can participate in politically and how to engage with their leaders. Some of the leaders have Twitter and Instagram accounts that are easily accessible to the youth.

The above voice presnts clear information on the contribution of social media on youth political participation. However, one of the factors that led to a significant difference in numbers of members in political parties and online political forums could be attributed to the financial challenges as one has to subscribe financially to a political party through membership registration and contributions. Moreover, the interest in becoming members of a political party is could be low among young people.

Joining an online political forum is free of charge hence any person can choose the forum to be attached. However, this study found that the respondents were affiliated with online political groups based on their ethnic backgrounds. Respondents from Kakamega County were attached to Amani National Congress (ANC), ODM, FORD Kenya online forums, and region-based forums such as Kakamega Youth Forum. The same trend was registered by the respondents from Nairobi who were attached to Jubilee and ODM online forums.

It is crucial to point out that ethnicity plays an essential role in Kenya's party politics. The alignment of political parties with the ethnic communities has its roots from the conversion of the colonial political movements that were ethnic-based to the first political parties in Kenya (Jeffrey, 2006). The ethic organizations and associations came to form KANU and KADU in 1960. KANU had significant support from the

Kamba, Kikuyu, and Luo political organizations while KADU from the Luhya, Kalenjin, and Maasai tribal welfare associations.

It is during the dying years of the colonial rule when the first political parties were formed in Kenya. By then, KANU and KADU were the dominant political parties in the country. KANU was able to retain power from the first elections that it won from 1963 to 2002 when it lost to the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). To date, party politics continue to be influenced by ethnicity. During elections, the influence is visible as a political aspirant leading a political party receives overwhelming support from an ethnic group the person comes from (Kisaka and Nyadera, 2019).

Political parties tend to be aligned to tribes as a strategy for bargaining for political power (Kisaka and Nyadera, 2019). For example, ethnic communities used their political parties to bargain for the power-sharing formula that led to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that formed the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). The Luhya used Ford Kenya while Luo's used LDP and other NARC members.

It is evident that since the restoration of multiparty politics Kenyans tend to vote based on their ethnic lines based on the political parties they subscribe to (Jeffrey, 2006). All Luo MPs were voted in through the FORD Kenya party in 1992 which was by then led by OdingaOginga. The same move was replicated during the 1997 elections as the National Development Party (NDP) led by Raila Odinga become a route to the parliament for the Luo MPs. After a fierce battle between Raila Odinga and the Late WamalwaKijana on the leadership of the FORD Kenya party, the party became aligned to the Bukusu community as WamalwaKijana become its leader after the demise of Odinga Oginga (Jeffrey, 2006).

A significant number of Bukusu aspirants found their way to the parliament through this party. On the other hand, Mwai Kibaki received overwhelming support from Central Province through his Democratic Party (DP). However, in 2002 elections took a different dimension as the MoU between the different political parties took the center stage (Jeffrey, 2006). The member parties (identify the member parties) were willing to support one candidate based on the power-sharing agreement. Therefore, Mwai Kibaki was selected as the flag bearer for the coalition as he could easily woe the masses for the opposition.

A similar trend of political party ethnicisation took center stage in other political parties such as KANU, where the majority of the Kalenjin community in the Rift Valley voted for Uhuru Kenyatta for the presidency as he was the favorite candidate for President Moi (Kisaka and Nyadera, 2019). Moreover, Kiambu district overwhelms voted for Uhuru Kenyatta as he hailed from this area. Similar trends were exhibited in other regions such as Kisii where all the Kisii MPs won elections through the FORD PEOPLE party that was headed by Simeon Nyachae who was also one of the presidential contestants in these elections.

Oyugi (1997) points out that a significant number of Kenyans believe that tribalism is deeply rooted in the Kenyan body politic. However, due to its emotive force, these people become reluctant to make it a subject of discussion across the ethnic boundaries (Oyugi, 1997). Ethnicity affects both the elections outcomes and voter behavior especially in the presidential and parliamentary elections majorly in urban constituencies and the settled areas. Since the return of multiparty politics in 1992, major ethnic groups in Kenya have supported and voted for a presidential aspirant from their tribe. The basis of this behavior is on believing that having a president from

one's community leads to the probability of attracting more resources for development.

Wanyande (2006) points out that only a few individuals benefit from patronage politics other than the entire president's community. On several occasions when a senior public servant who is not from the president's tribe loses a job, the dismissal is interpreted as a loss of presidential patronage, loss to the access of development resources, or punishment to the entire tribe. Since Kenya attained her independence in 1963, it has conducted its presidential, parliamentary and local government elections on a span of five years based on her constitutional requirements. Kenya has held 12 presidential, parliamentary, and local elections since 1963. However, on several occasions, by-elections were held because of the loss of a Member of Parliament (MP) or a Member of the County Assembly (MCA) seat.

In 1966, several MPs resigned from the ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) to form the Kenya Peoples Union (KPU) (Wanyande, 2006). Therefore, the country had to conduct a "Little General Election". The defections were led by then the Vice-President Jaramogi Odinga. It is critical to point out that in the era of a one-party regime, the political aspirants were sponsored by the ruling party. Their nominations were conducted and controlled by a few political elites who ensured that politicians who were acceptable to the regime, nominated and later elected. Therefore, the nomination and elections of a candidate to parliament were by powerful politicians as the voters did not have much influence (Winder, 1993). For instance, some constituencies faced a widespread belief of elections rigging in favor of some political candidates linked to the political elites.

Wanyande (2006) points out that election had turned out to be a formality done every after five years based on three key issues. First, elections become a basis for facilitating the ruling political elites' bid to consolidate and confine them in power. The candidates considered to be attached to the ruling elite enjoyed an upper hand in clinching the parliamentary positions as they were allowed to represent the people. The presidential elections were restricted to one aspirant where the party's leader would automatically be the party's presidential candidate. Therefore, this could explain the reason as to why the first President of the Republic of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta was elected unopposed until his demise in 1978.

Secondly, the one-party elections were used by the political leaders to claim legitimacy. A government would tend to gain legitimacy both locally and internationally irrespective of the formula is used to ascend to power (Wanyande, 2006). Third, the pre-established politicians wanted to show how the country was democratic based on the elections done after the five years cycle. It is crucial to point out that the voters could not determine the quality of leadership under the one-party regime due to undemocratic elections. For instance, an example of voter's voice was undermined was in 1983 and 1988, when the KANU government refused to allow Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and the former KPU colleagues to participate in these two contests. These politicians were barred based on being disloyal to the ruling government despite highly regarded in their constituencies.

It is important to point out that individual politicians influence the voting behavior, Raila Odinga is regarded as the political Kingpin of Luo Nyanza, and this could explain the reasons as to why all the 18 MPs from the18 parliamentary constituencies in Luo Nyanza won their seat is 2002 through the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)

which was by then under his leadership (Kisaka and Nyadera, 2019). KANU a party that had ruled the country for close to forty years under the leadership of the Former President Moi, a Kalenjin had all the Kalenjin MPs finding their way to parliament through this political party.

The choices of the electorate in the rural constituency are shaped by an individual's influence, religion, and clan besides ethnicity. A political aspirant may tend to influence the votes through religious affiliation or clan especially where a clan or religion dominates. However, it could be a bit difficult to find out the intention of a political contestant especially on the alignment towards religion as this is usually a secret of the aspirant. The former MP for Ungenya constituency the Late Archbishop Stephen Ondiek received overwhelming support from the Legio Maria sect as he was their leader. On several occasions, a combination of ethnicity, clannism, and religion has played a critical role in Kenya's politics. Several MPs from the Luo Nyanza made it to parliament through the support of Raila Odinga just as his father Odinga Oginga based on their influence in this region (Kisaka and Nyadera, 2019).

5.2.1 Social Media as a Platform for Political Dialogue

This study sought to determine the level of the respondents' participation in online political forums. The respondents were required to indicate on the questionnaire on how frequent they are involved in discussions on the online political forums. The findings are as presented in figure 5.5 below.
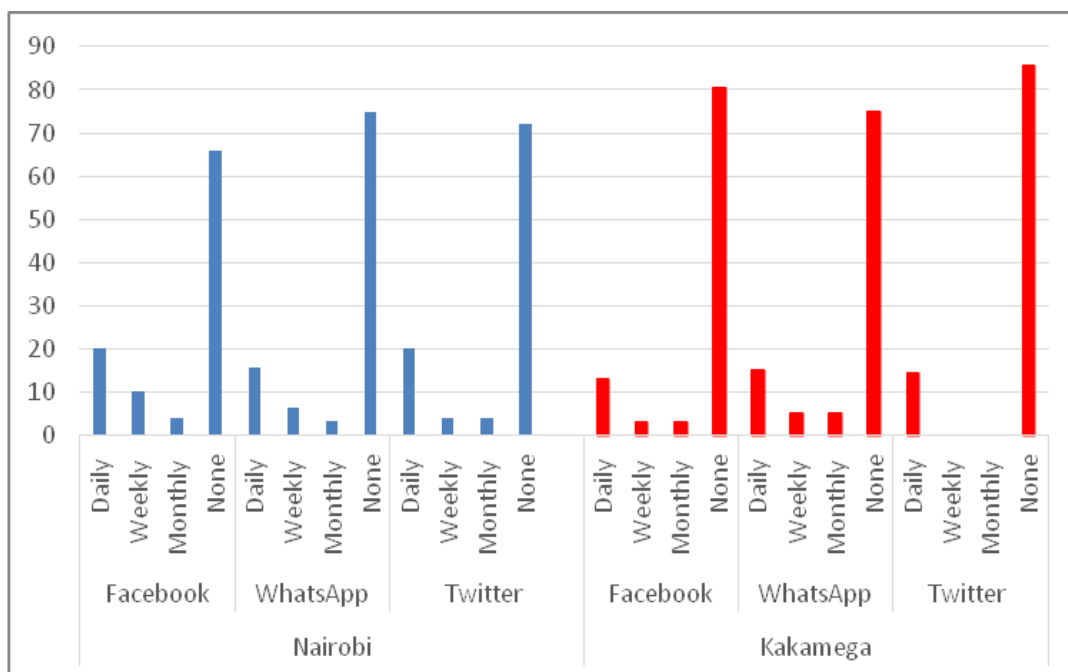
Figure 5.5: Discussion on Online Political Forums
Source: Field Data, 2018

<u>**Key**</u>

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

From the data on figure 5.5 above, 33(20%) of the respondents from Nairobi City County engaged in discussions daily on Facebook, 33(20%) on Twitter, and 26(15.62%) on WhatsApp while from Kakamega County 21(12.9%) engaged daily on Facebook, 24(14.28%) on Twitter and 25(15%) on WhatsApp. However, a significant number of 110(66%) of the respondents from Nairobi City County was not involved in a political discussion despite having accounts on Facebook, 125(75%) on WhatsApp, 120(72%) and Twitter respectively. For the respondents from Kakamega county, 134(80.64%) were not involved in any political discussion on forums on Facebook, 125(75%) on WhatsApp, and 139(83.7%) on Twitter.

This study revealed that there are disparities in the levels of participation in online political forums. On the question of disparities between Nairobi and Kakamega

Counties in the use of social media for political purposes, the fourth key respondent from the civil society points out that;

> *One of the challenges facing the rural youth in the use of social media is the affordability of smartphones and mobile internet.*

This is a clear indication that affordability of the mobile phones play a critical role in accessissing and benefiting from the usage of social media. However, it is important to point out that social media sites are significant in the formation of virtual groups that provide team efficacy, social bonding, and a sense of reality all convertible into offline political operation (Letcher, 2018). Several informational uses of different types of media have indicated to direct, and indirect political participation such as the mobile communication technologies (Campbell &Kwak, 1996), the internet (Shah, 2005), television (Norris, 1996), and newspapers leads to participation (McLeod et al., 1999). Therefore, other media such as social media would also lead to political participation. Voters acquire information about the candidates' positions (Chaffee and Kaihan, 1997) and candidates' traits (Weaver et al., 1981). Direct political participation is categorized into unconventional and conventional participation (Barnes Kaase et al., 1979). Conventional forms of participation involve party membership, voting in referendums and elections, activities in other political organization trade union affinities, non-governmental organizations, and interest groups. Striking and demonstrating are activities considered as unconventional, however, they might be conventional if organized by conventional interest groups.

Indirect political participation is a voluntary engagement in social networks or activities with political implications but without clearly defined political aims or political interests (Fuchs, 1984). Therefore, the main intentions for participation are thus not political. The motivation in these instances can be the wish for self-

fulfillment or solidarity with others (Fromm, 1998). It can take place in informal networks like formal or neighborhood associations, cultural projects, sports, social initiatives, and charity clubs.

Wilhelm (1998) argues that the internet enables a more enlightened deliberation in comparison to face-to-face communication. This is because, in face-to-face communication, participants might be required to respond immediately as opposed to the online users who might arrive at a more considered judgment after reflecting and crafting their views.

This study revealed that despite a significant number of young people being affiliated to online political forums, a significant number do not participate in political discussions on these platforms. It could be attributed to the social media policies and lack of interest in the topics being discussed on these forums.

One of the sampled respondents during a focus group discussion from Starehe Constituency points out that;

> *I am a young unemployed person and aspires to contest for a political seat in the future. Therefore, I have a fear that anything I write on social media might be used against me in the future. Therefore, I do not comment on any topic on social media. However, I am a member of several political platforms on social media and an active member of the political party I am afflicted.*

The above voice indicates the frastractions that the young people might face when using social media for political purposes. Warren (2002) points out that a more informed population about politics might lead to absentee participation based on frustrations. The public has a greater capacity and wishes to express political demand. However, the belief that it is not worth to participate in the political system may hamper political participation.

The third key respondent from the civil society argued that:

> *A new generation of young people is on a rise that wants the older generation (the most active group of the social media to existing the platform "social media dynamos" due to their messages shared.*

This indicates that the reduction of morale could be attributed to a decrease in confidence in the political system. It is important to note that the internet provides a condition for political participation through the provision of information that is accessible to everyone. This study went further and examined how political parties have used social media in mobilizing the electorate during membership recruitment drives. The study findings indicated that political parties have significantly used social media platforms to reach out to young voters to register as members and support the parties' agenda. Party politics shape election outcomes and electoral behavior (Wanyande, 2006). The old constitution required that all political aspirants had to be affiliated to a specific political party, however, the 2010 constitution has a provision for the independent candidates.

There are requirements that political parties have to meet to be registered and recognized in Kenya. For a party to be registered it needs to have at least 1,000 registered voters in at least 24 counties as spelled out in section 7 of the Political Parties Act (2011).Among other requirements, political parties are required to be inclusive of the marginalized groups, minorities, both genders, ethnic diversity, and have a regional balance. The political parties began to conduct mass registration of members following the introduction of this law in 2012. However, membership registration drives were through strategic tactics as the recruiters could collect voters' personal information such as phone numbers.

The registration process involved the collection of data such as names, phone numbers, polling station, constituency, ward, county, gender, and date of birth. The political party membership registration drive was motivated by the need of political parties to comply with the membership threshold as per the requirements of the political parties Act. For instance, it is a requirement under section 28 of the Political Parties Act of Kenya (2011), that before the nomination of a candidate by a political party, the parties have to present the membership list to the registrar of political parties.

In 2016, the Jubilee party was formed after the merger of twelve political parties. The party later launched a digital membership drive where both party workers and aspirants used electronic smartcards to register members (Jubilee Party, 2017). The smartcards consisted of voter details such as the name, phone numbers, polling station, and identity card number. The party implemented the use of these cards during its primaries with an aim of ensuring that the nominations conducted were acceptable and, to avoid fallout among the eleven parties that had been merged. However, the cards came with a cost as members of the party were required to pay a fee of Ksh. 20 per card. However, various challenges were faced in this process as the aspirants and parliamentarians bought the cards in bulk then proceeded for the membership recruitment drive (Team, 2017).

There were several claims of the system being prone to buying of voters as the poor aspirants could not afford to buy the cards in bulk compared to their well-off counterparts (Ndwiga, 2017). Moreover, aspirants were not assured of the security of the system as its procurement was opaque. The direct linkage of this system to the Registrar of Political Parties database raised the opposition eyebrows as they felt that

this could be a plot of rigging election by the use of digital means (Ochieng', 2017). However, the system was later abandoned and was not used in the Jubilees party primaries. Aspirants among other leaders played a significant role during the membership drives in 2017 for both Jubilee and ODM.

The Jubilee party had to mobilize its key members to attend the national delegates' conference in Nairobi to approve the political merger and initiate a nationwide drive for membership registration (Ongiri, 2017). In February 2017, the National Super Alliance (NASA) was formed from the Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD). The alliance was not registered as as as the member parties remained independent. It is important to point out that ODM which was a constituent party carried out a membership drive by the use of a mobile app where 3 million members were registered (Ongiri, 2017).

Volunteers, grassroots party officials, and party aspirants used this mobile app to register members on behalf of the party. The app was developed in a way that the collection of registration fees could be done through mobile money. A code would then be generated and used to activate the membership cards for the new members (Ongiri, 2017). These members could then receive confirmation feedback through an SMS concerning their registration.

It is important to point out that many politically inactive people were surprised at how aspirants and politicians obtained their details such as the phone numbers and names. Moreover, many people were shocked when they found out that their names appeared on the membership lists of political parties without their consent as the Registrar of Political Parties published the political parties list online as required by-laws (Wamathai, 2017).

5.3 Social Media and Political Campaigns in Kenya

This study revealed that the use of social media has enhanced youth participation in political campaigns. The respondents to this study were required to indicate on the questionnaire if they used social media as a source of political updates during the 2017 general elections. The findings are as indicated in Figure 5.6 below.
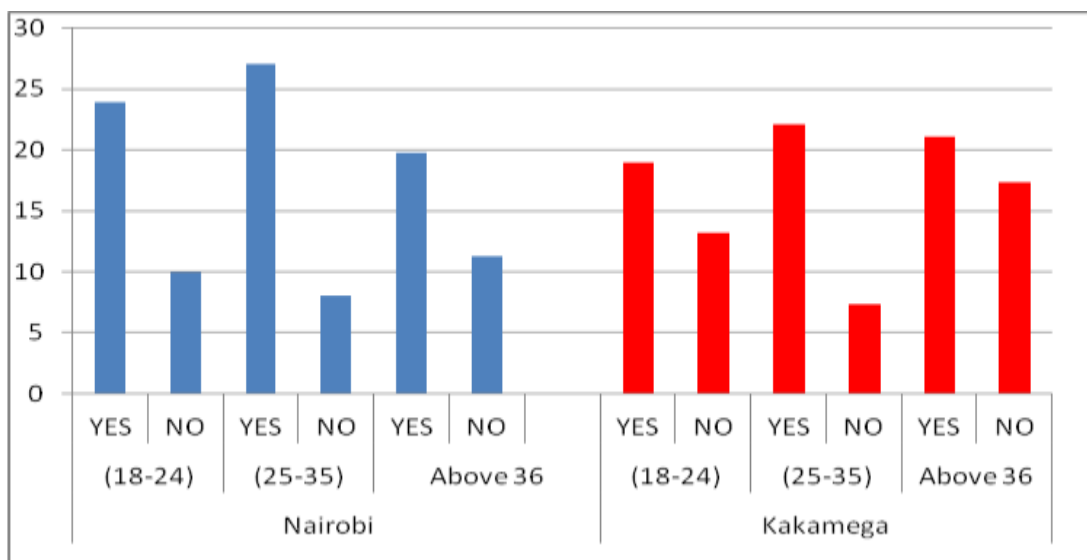
Figure 5.6: Usage of Social Media in 2017 General Elections
Source: Field Data, 2018

Key

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

Figure 5.6 above indicates that 45(27%) and 37(22%) of the respondents of the age (25-35) from Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties respectively received political updates through social media from political parties, politicians, and their supporters during the 2017 campaigns. From this data, it can be concluded that a significant number of respondents actively used social media to acquire political information during the 2017 general elections. The young people have been involved in both

online and offline political campaigns. the main reason is that social media is a significant tool in political campaigns as it is widely used by aspirants and political parties.

Shaul-Cohen (2019) points out that one way of promoting political participation is to develop a political campaign: a series of actions taken by an aspirant or a party to persuade the electorate to vote for them. These findings support the available literature that deals with political mobilization (Valenzuela et al., 2018; Vaccari, 2017). These studies indicated a positive correlation between the exposures to calls for mobilization online with political engagement. In times of elections, the internet facilitates a conversation among potential voters and politicians. Moreover, it expands the ways the public can participate (Segesten & Bossetta, 2017; McNeal & Bryan, 2015).

Some of the propaganda tactics that candidates and campaign managers use regularly include uploading clips to YouTube, publishing banners, and contacting potential voters (McNeal & Bryan, 2015). The 2017 general elections saw a massive use of social media by the political class. Kenyan politicians had contracted information and communication Gurus to manage their social media accounts. The electorate received personalized messages on their private massaging apps while Facebook was full of paid political adverts. Moreover, other content creators, social media influencers, journalists, and public relations companies were contracted to make graphics and memes for social media circulation (Keter, 2017).

Political parties contracted publicity consultants to ensure they are active online. NASA sought the services of Aristotle Inc. while the Jubilee party procured the services of Cambridge Analytica a data mining company (Keter, 2017). The role of

Cambridge Analytica in Kenya's politics came into the public limelight after its exposition by the local media. The individuals associated with the company's activities in the country were exposed through Instagram, however, the company denied its involvement in Kenya's politics. Two foreigners working for the NASA team under Aristotle Inc. were also deported by the government before the August elections (Wanga, 2017).

The chances of being exposed to direct communication with political actors through the use of social media increases during an election campaign, through target advertising, being inadvertently exposed to political information shared or following their updates intentionally (Bimber, 2014; Bodó et al., 2017). Political actors bypass journalistic filters when direct communication is used. Therefore, more directed political information is compared to the more balanced information from the legacy news media (Bruns, 2011).

Foot & Schneider (2006) notes that connecting and mobilizing voters are the key online activities that politicians target more in comparison to other information on social media. Citizens will be strongly mobilized to participate in campaign-related activities as a result of higher political engagement due to direct political communication.

Young people worked for political parties as volunteer campaigners and, were involved in creating content and disseminating it through media, vlogs, and blogs. Some of these volunteers were later co-opted into party structures such as agents and campaigners. Some of the political parties formed campaign structures that worked on a hierarchical structure where WhatsApp groups were used for coordination and communication in constituencies and county levels (Wanga, 2017). Through these

groups, videos, pictures, quotes, and memes from political parties would be easily circulated. This content could then find its way to other social networking sites of other groups. On several occasions, one could be added to these platforms without their consent.

The content of the distributed information could be heard offline through the mainstream media such as on the television and radio broadcasts, and from social networks for those who were not on social media. New content was produced daily as the online campaigns become vibrant throughout the electioneering period. Sometimes hashtags created on Twitter would be hijacked by other social networking sites. This hashtags would, in turn, be converted to memes that would be amplified through the Telegram channels, political party groups, and private WhatsApp. Occasionally, the content would leave little room for the moderate voices as it was highly polarized (Keter, 2017). A young man from Malava Constituency attests to the use of social media for campaigning purposes;

> *I was engaged in political campaigns in 2017. The WhatsApp platform was a piece of significant machinery for our campaign strategy. We encouraged people to join our political party and aspirants WhatsApp groups. We could communicate to the members, receive feedback, and also plan for political rallies.*

This implies that the youth are attracted to political engagement through the use of social media platforms. Ohme (2019) points out that political engagement would increase based on the exposure to political information with campaign topics through the use of social media. Therefore, the engagement with political information during the political campaigns would be a significant prerequisite for citizens' campaign participation (Jacob, 2019).

The findings of this study support previous studies that have found the use of social media during election time having mobilizing effects on for the general population as well as the young citizens (Ha et al., 2013; Holt et al., 2013; Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). To determine the level of social media usage and analysis of nationwide use of the internet was significant to this study as it helps to understand the significance of using social media during political campaigns.

This study revealed that there is a significant amount of traffic on the internet as the internet users seek to find out more information about the key political aspirants in the country. Therefore, this study relied on information from Google trends that indicated how the three presidential aspirants (Raila Odinga, Uhuru Kenyatta, and Mwai Kibaki) trended online from January 2004 to October 2019. The findings are as indicated in figure 5.7 below.
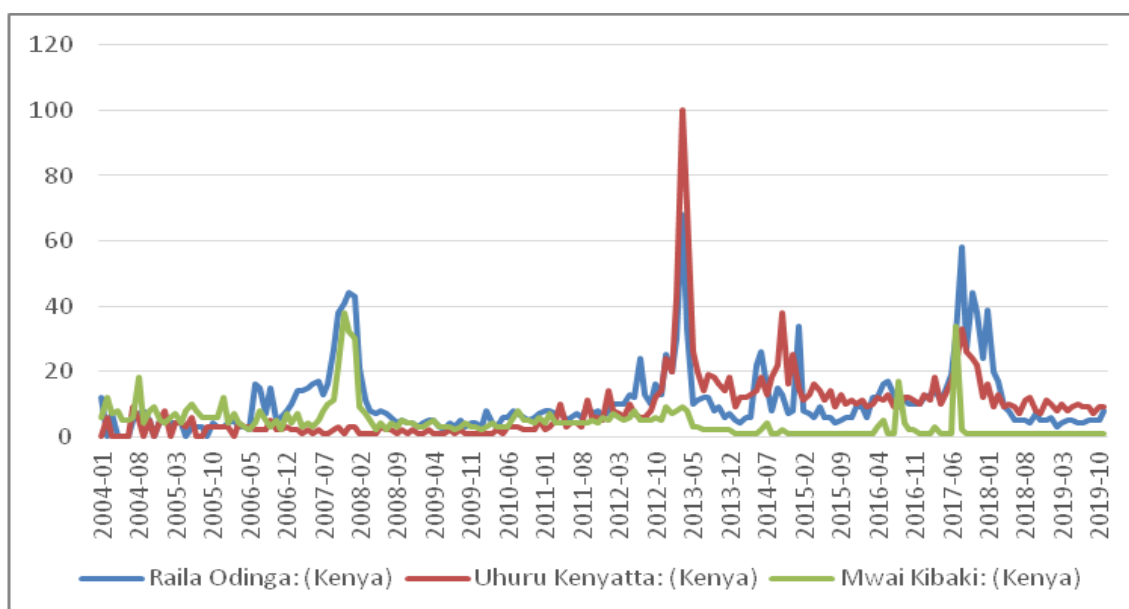
Figure 5.7: Google Trends on Key Political Aspirants
Source: Google Trend, 2019

Figure 5.7 above presents the findings on how Google Search engine was used nationwide to seek information on the Key political personalities in Kenya's politics.

This study revealed the thirst for information on key political aspirants. The spikes on the search volume index in Google trends were registered during the electioneering years (2007, 2013, and 2017) as presented in the figure above. These findings are a key indicator of the usage of online platforms to acquire political information.

The findings on the search volume index in Google trends indicated spikes during the December 2007 general elections, an index of (44) of Google users used the search engine to sought information on Raila Odinga and (32) Mwai Kibaki. The two were key presidential contestants during the 2007 elections. The Google trends in March 2013 during the general elections, Uhuru Kenyatta recorded a spike at an index of (100) the highest value on the search index volume index Google trends. This is an indication that many internet users sought information on Uhuru Kenyatta who was one of the presidential aspirants. Raila Odinga came first and Mwai Kibaki followed with a search volume index of (58) and (9). Mwai Kibaki trailed on the Google trends because he was not contesting in these elections. Spikes on the Google search engine were also registered in August 2017 at an index of (58) for Raila Odinga and (33) Uhuru Kenyatta. The two personalities were the main contestants during this election.

This study established that during the electioneering period a significant number of the Kenyans streamed into social media networks. For instance, data from the Google trends registered traffic on login on their social media pages a month before, during, and after elections as shown in figure 5.8 below.
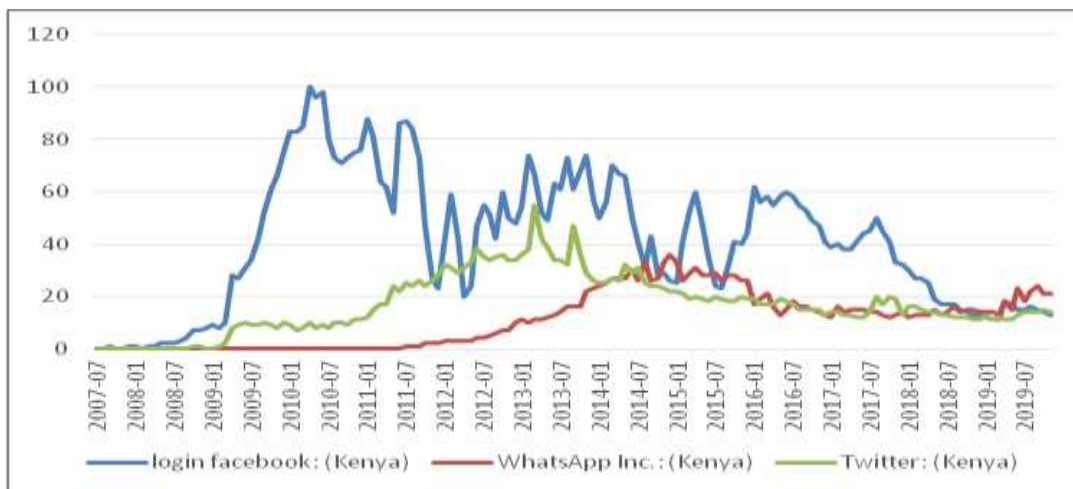
Figure 5.8: Social Media Logins/downloads
Source: Google Trends, 2019

From the data in figure 5.8 above a significant number of Kenyans streamed into their social media pages a month before, during, and after the general elections. Facebook registered the highest index (100) April 2010. The Facebook user logins and downloads were at its peak as this could be attributed to the constitutional referendum which was held on 4th August the same year. Similar trends were registered in February an index of (74) March in 2013 due to the general election held on 4th March 2013. The general elections that were held on 8th August 2017 and the fresh presidential elections on 26th October 2017 registered similar trends.

Twitter login and downloads registered similar patterns on the same years and months for instance February it registered an index of (55) in March 2013, (20) August 2017, and (18) in November the same year. The Whatsapp registered an index of (11) in March in 2013, (14) in August 2017, and (13) in November. The logins and downloads of WhatsApp were lower compared to the other. The low numbers could be attributed to a new form of social media platform that had been introduced in the market, hence many people might have not familiarized themselves.

This study went further and examined the geo-location where Kenyans accessed social media platforms. Figure 5.9 below indicates the geo-locations where Kenyans accessed social media platforms.
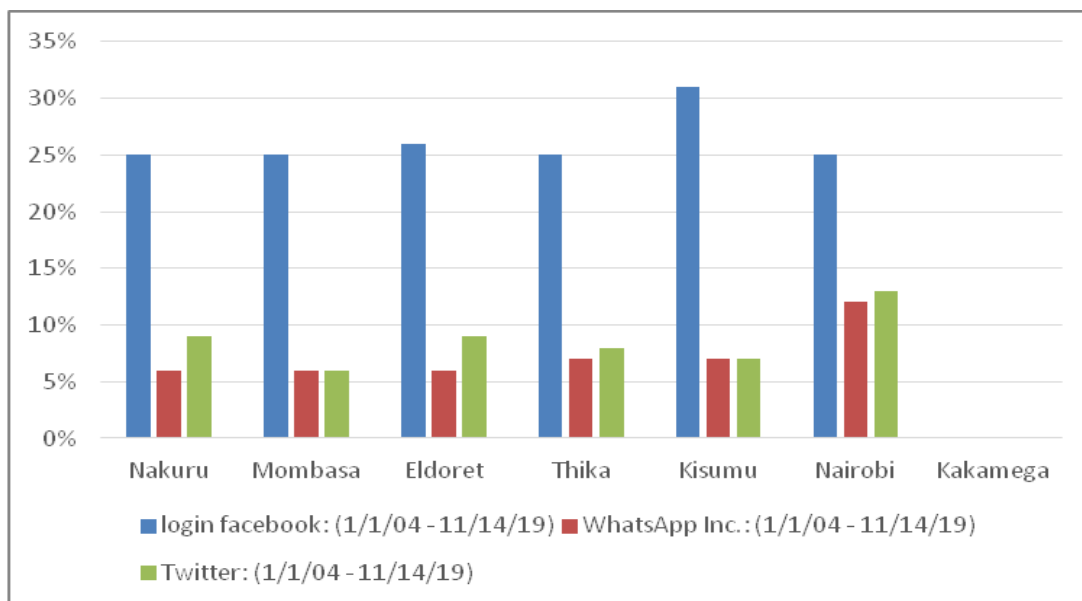
Figure 5.9: Geo-location of the Use of Social Media Platforms
Source: Google Trends, 2019

From figure 5.9 above, from 2004-2019 Kisumu City registered an index (31) on the search index volume index Google trends of Facebook users, Nairobi City County registered an index volume of (13) users on Twitter (13), and (12) on WhatsApp. However, Kakamega registered the lowest index (0) on the three platforms as this county could not register a significant number that could be captured by the search index volume index on Google trends.

The above findings in figure 5.10 revealed that regions that are considered to vote as a bloc for a particular presidential and political party registered high usage of social media during the electioneering period. It is important to point out that social media played a crucial role in the 2017 political campaigns. Skoric et al., (2012) noted that Social media plays a critical role in creating knowledge and awareness about rights

and a need for political engagement. Social media affects the political and social learning of the netizens especially the young people (Khan & Shahbaz, 2015).

A significant number of Kenyan voters in urban areas received personalized text messages through both private messaging apps and SMS from the political aspirants' requesting for their votes. The aspirants had coordinated communication such as communicating through Telegram and WhatsApp channels. In the course of the campaigns, it was a common practice for aspirants to collect the voter details and phone numbers from the public.

During an interview with a Senior Officer from one of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Kenya, a key respondent for this study points out that;

> *To some extent, campaigning has been made easier through social media. Communicating about rallies and political events has also been made easier through social media. Leaders and those running in the office are also kept accountable through social media.*

This shows that social media has revolutionlised political engagement, and shaped how citizens conduct checks and balances on the government. Political intelligence was significant for the contestants hence the supporters and staff joined various groups for the sole purpose of collecting intelligence (Wamathai, 2017). Occasionally, Voters could receive messages as campaigns intensified after the political parties' primaries. The messages varied consisted of the pleas for votes, religious inspirations, and manifestos, campaign schedules for individual candidates, and political parties. People could receive messages either on a daily or a weekly basis.

This study analyzed the usage of social media in influencing votes'. Respondents were asked to indicate on the questionnaire if they voted for a political aspirant after

receiving information from social media. The findings were presented in figure 5.10. below,
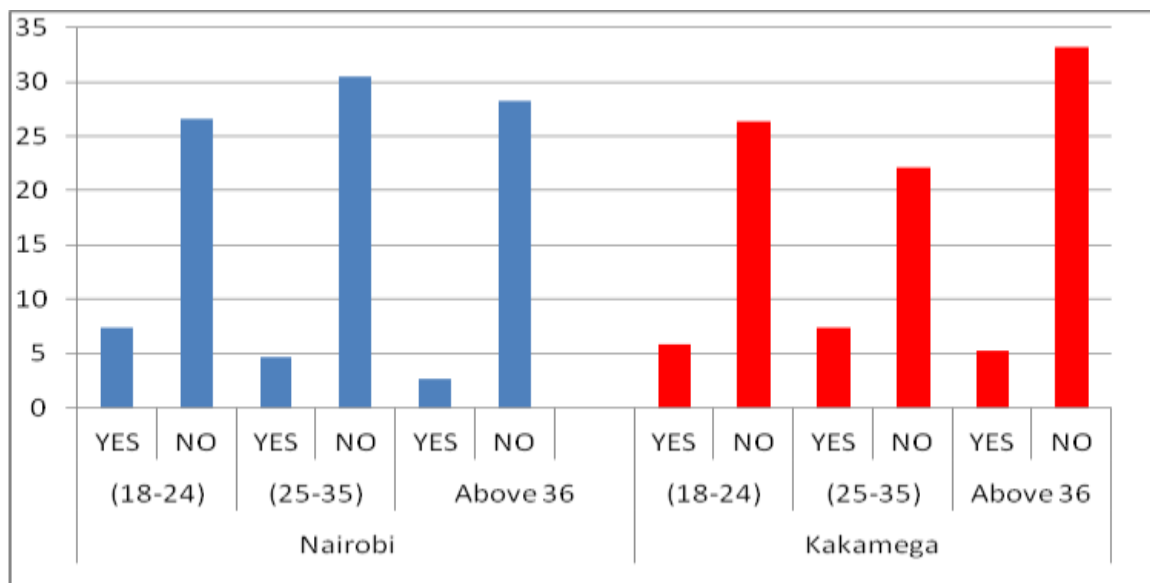
Figure 5.10: Vote for Politicians that are Active on Social Media
Source: Field Data, 2018

<u>Key</u>

◼ Nairobi County

◼ Kakamega County

The findings from figure 5.10 above indicate that 25(15.33%) of the respondents of the age (18-24) years from Nairobi City County and 23(14.1%) between the age (25-35) from Kakamega County indicated that they voted for their preferred candidate after receiving information on social media. However, a significant number of the respondents, from Nairobi and Kakamega counties respectively, could have been influenced by attending political campaigns, receiving information on mainstream media, influenced by peers and ideologies. From these findings, it can be concluded that the activeness of a political aspirant on social media does not necessarily translate to votes. It is important to point out that both the candidates and politicians during the 2017 elections diversified from the use of paid advertisements, radios, television, and

billboards to more personalized and targeted approaches. It included television talk shows, social networking sites, presenter and host mentions. Initially, the Government Advertising Agency (GAA) was established to provide the government with its newspaper and provide a centralized government communication system in 2015(PSCU, 2017).

Through this government agency, journalists were engaged in their capacity. It is from this point that government programs such as "the government delivers, delivery.go.ke" broadcasted through the online and mainstream media which the aim of showcasing government projects under the Uhuruto administration. Uhuru Kenyatta live-streamed on his message to the Kenyans through Facebook and allowed the nation to interact through the social media platform (PSCU, 2017).

The production and promotion of the political content for the 2017 election was a step up from the 2013 elections (Oruko, 2017). The campaigns on social media networking sites were designed in such a way they become compatible with the Kenyan community. For example, communication on these platforms was informed by the existing social-cultural structures such as the uses of humor, story-telling, sensationalism, sermons, songs, and religion among others. The popular hashtags during 2017 elections were #ElectionBOycotteKe, #YouCantKillUSAll, #VifarangaVyaKompyuta, #JudicialCapture, #UhuruChallenge, #NasaFlagbearer.

5.4 Conclusion of Chapter Five

This chapter presented the findings and discussed the second research question. The research question responded to the effects of social media on electoral mobilization. The findings were analyzed thematically in the following order; social media and mobilization of the electorate with subthemes on social media as a forum for electoral

engagement, a facilitator of voter education and registration; Social media as a forum for political parties and voters' engagement with a subtheme on political dialogue; and Social media as an avenue for political campaigns.

In the discussion, it is clear that social media has revolutionized communication in the electoral system in Kenya from traditional to digital. The electoral body (IEBC) has picked up the use of social media based on its advantages such as the wider young population, quick feedback, and a cheaper form of communication among other aspects. From the analysis of the findings, the electoral commission has used social media sites and the internet to communicate to the public, receive feedback, provide voter education, and mobilize especially young voters for voter registration and participation in the electoral process through voting among other key aspects.

It is important to point out that not only IEBC, but also the political parties, the civil society, and other players in the electoral process have had a better share of the use of social media to advance their political interests. The use of social media by political parties has provided a space for the young population on these media sites to engage in party politics. Political parties play a significant role in advancing political participation, therefore, the young people have an opportunity of engaging directly with these organizations hence gaining interest, understand and gain knowledge of the affairs in the political realm.

Social media has also been used by political parties during campaigns. From the study findings, a significant number of the respondents were engaged in online political forums in comparison to being bonified members of the parties through registration. The study revealed that social media platforms have enhanced political dialogue among the electorate and the politicians. Social media has enhanced political

campaigns. The young people can communicate to the aspirants and receive feedback promptly.

The voice of civil society is critical in advancing political participation. From the discussion, it is important to point out that social media has provided a platform for civil society to amplify its concerns and advance its interests on matters related to the governance of the country. Therefore, the large population of young people using these digital applications has an opportunity to engage with civil society through political dialogue. In conclusion, social media has affected political mobilization positively and to a lower extent negatively. Chapter six will discuss the achievements and challenges faced by young people when using social media for political purposes in Kenya.

CHAPTER SIX

GAINS AND SETBACKS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE IN POLITICS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the third research question. It, therefore, sets to laybare the gains and setbacks faced by the Kenya's youth when using social media platforms for political purposes. This discussion is significant in examining the influence of social media on political participation among Kenya's youth. It is important to point out that despite the prospects related to the use of social media in political engagement there are drawbacks that young people face. In this chapter, the findings are analyzed thematically in the following order; first, it begins by discussing the effects of social media on political activism while pinpointing out challenges faced by the youth. Secondly, it analyses the extent to which social media enhances political expression among the youth. Thirdly, it examines the contribution of social media on social movements in Kenya. Fourth, the chapter evaluates the influence of social media on political protests, and fifth social media contribution to electoral violence in Kenya. Lastly, it discusses the institutional framework, constitutional and legal provisions on the use of social media in Kenya.

6.1 Social Media as an Avenue for Political Activism

This section analyzes the effects of social media on political activism. On a positive note, this study established that social media has significantly contributed to the advancement of virtual political activism in Kenya. This is a fact established by asking in the questionnaire on the level of participation in offline and online political activism. The key question in this study was how social media has affected the levels of political activism among Kenya's youth? The findings revealed a significant

involvement of the respondents in offline activism as compared to online political activism. From figure 6.1, it is evident that there are significant disparities in the use of social media for activism among the respondents from Nairobi City County and Kakamega County. Moreover, disparities were registered on the levels of activism for both online and offline in the two counties. On the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to state their level of participation in offline and online political activism. The findings were as presented in Figures 6.1 below.
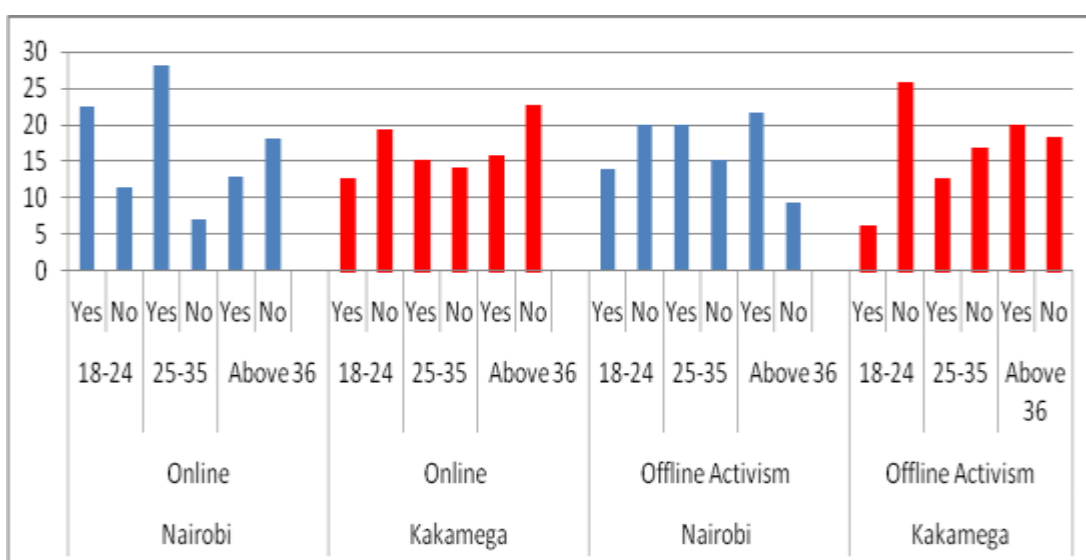
Figure 6.1: Involvement in Offline and Online Activism
Source: Field Data, 2018

Key

■ Nairobi County

■ Kakamega County

In an attempt to determine the level of respondents' involvement in online political activism, the study findings indicated that 47(28.04%) and 25(15.26%) respondents of the age of (25-35) years from Nairobi City County and Kakamega County respectively indicated that they would participate in online political activism. When asked about offline political activism, 33(20%) of the respondents of the age group of

(25-35) years from Nairobi City County and 21(12.63%) from Kakamega County indicated that they would participate in offline political activism.

From the study findings as summarized above in figure 6.1, there is a clear indication that a significant number of respondents from Nairobi City and Kakamega County would prefer to participate in online activism as opposed to offline political activism. Nam (2012) argued that the internet strengthens offline political participation and encourages engagement into politics by its users hence a dual effect of the internet on participation in politics and provision of information (Nam, 2012). It takes significant efforts to organize and execute offline activism. Moreover, it is cheaper to execute online political activism. Information trickles quickly, compared to offline activism that needs to be covered and broadcasted by the mainstream media.

Quick feedback can be received from government authorities and actions taken. Through online activism, a wider audience can be covered hence immense feedback and support. Political participation has taken new online forms with the advent of social media and the rise of the internet (Gil de Zúñiga, Copeland, & Bimber, 2014). People can express dissatisfaction with government policies by commenting on online collective actions against certain policies, comment on government officials' official pages. They can also share opinions about current state of affairs and politics hence pursue their political online goals (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014).

Cyberactivism is "the act of using the internet to advance a political cause that is difficult to advance offline" (Howard, 2011). Cyber activists tell stories of their frustrations on social or political realities, interpret situations on the ground through visual and textual messages to push certain political outcomes, this can lead to a mix of arguments, attacks, and counter-arguments (Howard, 2011).

The findings support available literature of other studies done in the same area. Harvey (2014) points out that digital technologies and social media are revolutionizing the way people communicate, interact, and live. They have led to the unprecedented expansion in reach and expansion of contemporary activism through the development of low-cost digital networks, reliable, with high speed that transformation the trans-boundary social networks (Harvey, 2014).

Social media require significantly less physical effort, money, and time and are constantly updated in comparison to the production cycle for television and which are comparatively costly and involves delays (Best & Krueger, 2005). People create new forms of political participation, by generating original content while accessing online versions of offline content (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). When people consume news, they are more likely to be exposed to dissimilar political views (Mutz, 2002).

The use of the internet as a source of political news has significantly increased the openness and the diversity of information (Gimmler, 2001). The internet and social media users have more opportunities for political expression as they are likely to be exposed to political news that floods the social media platforms of up-to-minute information (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). In Countries with a restricted media environment, the public finds other alternative forms of media to engage with political issues (Jihan K. Raoof et al., 2013). Social media can be considered as an indicator of increased political awareness (Smeltzer and Keddy, 2010).

In Malaysia, the opposition supporters used social media as an alternative to express their political opinions. Since the advent of ICT, there was a revolution in Malaysia in the mid-1990s. Moreover, an increased number of political candidates in the

opposition parties who embraced the use of social media for political parties after the Obama's win of the 2008 US elections (Smeltzer and Keddy, 2010).

The 18th and 19th century public spheres of the bourgeois in Germany, France, and England developed as platforms of cultural critique that arose from the reading societies that focused on literary books such as novels among other related materials. However, political critique arose from the cultural critique as these groups turned their focus to public concerns which included the freedom of opinion and the fight of policies of censorship (Fulya SEN, 2012). This arena is a neutral space that plays a critical role in providing a platform for private individuals who come together to discuss issues of common concern in a rational and freeway.

There is a decay of the rational-critical discourse through the media and hence leading to the decline of the public sphere (Fulya SEN, 2012). This study revealed that, through social media, young Kenyans receive activism information that is often translated into offline activism. Social media sites are significantly used in the formation of virtual groups that provide team efficacy, social bonding, and a sense of reality all convertible into offline political operation (Letcher, 2018).

Social media networks play an important role as tools for the harmonization of shared action and information transfer (Jost et al., 2018). The first key respondent from the civil Society during a face to face interview at his office in Nairobi pointed out that;

> *Social media is the most powerful tool for political activism, for instance, it was used for organizing the "Occupy Parliament" demonstrations with fewer physical meetings. Other demonstrations such as "My Dress My Choice" were organized through social networking sites. The Garissa University memorial was held due to the influence of social media.*

This implies that social media provides an efficient medium for the rapid transmission of information about political developments and planned events. Hence social media facilitates the movements' organizers in organizing protest activities (Jost et al., 2018). Studies indicate a likelihood of people being encouraged by multiple sources in one's social network, there is a possibility of behaving in a certain way (Harkins & Petty).

Familiarity with promotional statements increases the probability of those statements to be judged as true and valid (Begg, Anas, & Farinacci, 1992). Therefore, social media and internet users exposed frequently on information about protests are more likely to take part in the political action. It is important to point out that the "Occupy Parliament" protest was one of the successful protests organized by the civil societies in Kenya through the use of social media. Protestors marched on the streets of Nairobi on Tuesday 14 May 2013. A dozen of piglets and Pigs engraved with some of the Members of Parliament were released outside the parliament gate.

The animals licked blood spilled by the demonstrators, portraying the greediness of the lawmakers. The genesis of the demonstrations was when the MPs sought to increase their salaries to about $ 10,000 contrary to the $6,300 that had been recommended by the Salaries and Remuneration Commission. In 2011, the Kenyan doctors went on strike and were able to air their grievances through their online movement known as *the Peremende movement* which was also used to mount pressure of the Minister who was in charge of Medical services so that their grievances could be addressed (iHub, 2013). Twitter was used to mobilize other members and update them on the strike and industrial action. There are incidents when Kenyans used social media sites to agitate for their rights and put pressure on the government so that it can take necessary action, for example, *the Bring Zack*

Home campaign was a non-political campaign which the social media was used to raise funds towards building a hospital which was to deal with spinal injuries (iHub, 2013).

The government of Kenya through the Commission for Administrative Justice (CAJ) also known as Ombudsman launched a social media platform. The page was for engaging the public and receiving complaints against the government as they also receive uncensored feedback from the public on their performance. The Chief Justice of the Republic of Kenya would actively participate in twitter by receiving and responding to issues and complaints raised by the public concerning the judiciary.

6.2 Social Media and Political Expression

This study revealed that social media has partly enhanced political expression among Kenyan's urban and rural youths'. This is a fact established by asking in the questionnaire on the level of the use of social media in expressing political views. The study findings are as indicated in figure 6.2 below.
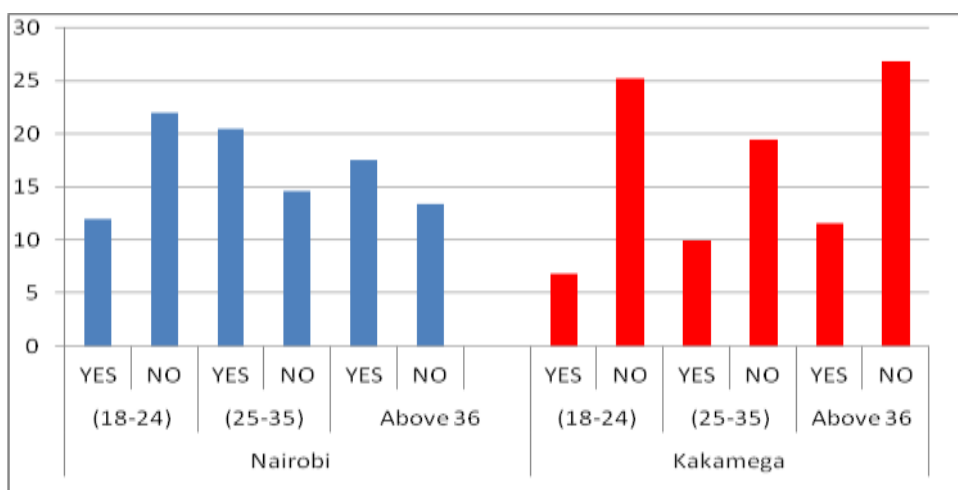
Figure 6.2: Social Media and Political Expression
Source: Field Data, 2018
Key
■ Nairobi County
■ Kakamega County

In an attempt to find out the level of social media usage by the respondents in expressing political opinions 34(20.48%) of respondents of the age (25-35) years and 17(10%) of the same age from Nairobi City County and Kakamega County respectively would use social media to express their political opinions. The findings indicated a significant low uptake of social media in expressing political views by the respondents in the two Counties.

Although social media has played a significant in providing virtual space for political activism, there are several challenges faced. Fear of victimization is one of the setbacks that this study found out. On several occasions, vocal activists have found themselves on the wrong hand with the government and politicians. Boniface Mwangi an activist and Robert Alai a blogger among others on several occasions have been arrested and prosecuted for some of their utterances that seem to attack the political class.

The third key respondent from the civil society pointed out the disparities of the use of social media for political purposes in the two counties, he points out that;

> *Based on Kakamega County's social economic and political consequences, the fear of intimidation is high among the youth using social media for political purposes. However, the youth in Nairobi county using social media for the same purpose are more vocal.*

From the above voice, it is important to point out that despite the benefits related to the use of social media for political activism and expression, several challenges that can be faced. In Kenya, the legitimate types of information that are restricted includes advocacy of religious, racial, or national hatred that constitutes to violence, hostility or violence (to protect the rights of others, such as the right to life; Public and direct incitement to commit genocide (to protect the rights of others), defamation (to protect the rights and reputation of others against unwarranted attacks). Hate speech (to

protect the rights of the affected communities) and child pornography (to protect the rights of the children) (BAKE, 2018).

One of the major challenges social media users face is with regard to hate speech. It is important to point out that despite the regulatory interventions by the internet companies and the government, some individuals have propagated inflammatory messages and ingeniously identify loopholes to exploit. For instance, it has been proved impossible to flag all hateful content on this site, even though content moderators are used on Facebook as over 2,000 dialects and languages are used on this site (BAKE, 2018). Many posts have been left unflagged due to the disproportions between the users reporting illegal content versus the sheer number of users on this platform.

Some users post unsavory comments and threats as they hide behind anonymous profiles after registering fake accounts hence making it difficult to prosecute. The lack of the appropriate technology to rein online hate speech, minimal or lack the political will and low competence are some of the challenges that are faced in curbing online hate speech. The authorities made several investigations, arrests, and detentions over the propagation of hate speech (BAKE, 2018).

Content manipulation and misinformation are among the challenges that social media users face. Social media is the dominant source of fake news stories as described by the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE, 2018). In the 2017 elections season, there was overt disinformation and online manipulation was common as social media enable opinion influences to proliferate. It is important to point out that in comparison to other social networking sites, WhatsApp played a major role in the mass distribution of fake stories. WhatsApp is much more intimate, simple, fast, and

pervasive as compared to other social networks in Kenya such as Twitter or Facebook.

From the interview with the fourth respondent from the civil society argued that:

> *From 2016-2017, the WhatsApp a social networking site was one of the "dangerous" platforms that were used for spreading propaganda sent by the "Cambridge Analytica". The group sharing feature of this platform was significant in the targeting messaging by Cambridge Analytica.*

This implies that despite the immesence benefits of social media usage on political participation, it have negatve implications. The impact of political expression may be amplified through social media through its interactive features that allow its user to share expressions with many users simultaneously (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). Messages and images can be viewed instantly by the global audiences at minimal costs hence a transformation of the expressive potential of the average citizen (Lupia & Sin, 2003).

Social media is believed to display political expression in a spirited condition and a more accessible format because of its user-friendly platform that cultivates its users' political consciousness in their daily practices (Geoff et al., 2012). People might take to real-world actions with the aid of opportunities for expression such as online expression opportunities (Elin, 2003). Huckfeldt & Sprague (1995) points out that there is a significant relationship between political talk and political action.

It is important to single out that in a modern democracy, access to accurate information is significant as it enables a person to make an informed choice, therefore, where this is not guaranteed or otherwise absent, it might result in skewed results and undue influence over elections. Therefore, the government decided to

regulate the spread of falsehoods as the popularity of social media continued to rise as a source of news.

6.3 Social Media and Social Movements in Kenya

This study revealed that social media played an important role in enhancing the formation, solidification, and operations of the social movements in Kenya. Every consumer of the information on the internet is also a producer of information on this platform (Polat, 2005). The internet increases opportunities for increasing sources and volumes of information. A more informed population on what is taking place in the political realm may potentially participate more based on the implications for their lives (Polat, 2005). The second key respondent during an in-depth oral interview pointed out that;

> *The civil society through Maskani Mashinani came into place to assist in the development of a political discourse platform that had been dominated by political activism. The civil society through the "Maskani ya Taifa Initiative" formed a rebellion against propaganda and political posturing and dilute hate online to push for justice and not the ICC. Maskani ya Taifa was a re-battle as it used facebook in 2014. In 2014, the loudest voice on social media was the government and the politicians. The voices of the individuals could not be heard during this time, but with the coming up with an organized institution in the space (social media) then the users of social media become confident.*

This means that social media plays a critical role in countering propaganda. The Maskani ya Taifa initiative present a good example of the power behind social media in advancing the civil society's agenda. This virtual initiative played a critical role in the fight against propaganda and instigated by the politicians and some government machinery. Social media and microblogging websites have enhanced the accessibility of realtime accounts of protest behavior achieved and documented (Jost et al., 2018).

Social networks, especially the friendship networks transmit or mediate the informational and motivational effects of social media (Paluk, 2011). Users who are centrally placed in the social network hence well connected to other connected users are most effective in spreading protest information compared to the ones who record the greatest number of followers (Jost et al., 2018). Social media users increase their tenacity and legitimize themselves by producing political messages (Halpern, Valenzuela, and Katz, 2017).

Social media may boost its user's capacity to operate jointly and independently when it regulates networks as a concerted participant (Letcher, 2018). The development of political attitudes is closely linked to friendship networks. Contemporary social movements use these forms of technology as tools of mobilization, communication, and access to other forms of media that serve as a target and means of political and social protest (Halpern, Valenzuela, and Katz, 2017). Mobile phones, the internet, and the World Wide Web are intertwined with social media.

Social movements' activists and organizations have developed websites that are linked to their Twitter and Facebook pages. On these websites, they can invite people to like social media pages, functions of many social media sites are linked to email and a significant number of people use mobile phones to access social media. It is important to note that social movements play a critical role in political activism. The second key respondent went forward and stressed the importance of civil society in promoting the voices of an individual activist through social media as he observed that;

> *It is through the Maskani ya Taifa Initiative that the most vocal people of social media become confidents. For instance, this initiative enables individuals to engage in political discourse/ engage politically/ issue-based conversations. There were very few political pages and political handles on social media on the Kenyan*

> *space from 2013 to 2015. However, a lot has changed as Kenya's have started to embrace social media such as the Kenyans on Twitter (KOT). One of the most popular handles during this period was # baba when you were away.*

This implies that social media motivates its users to engage in politics. For motivational and instrumental reasons, information transmitted through social media networks is extremely useful as it helps individuals to figure out how they can acquire additional encouragement, support, and information (Jost et al., 2018). For instance, information that a person acquires on social media has already undergone through a chain of valued members of the social network who either agree or disagree, moreover, "stamp approved" the information. Therefore, this can be a motivational aspect that can lead to enhancing political interests.

The information from social media is already "retweeted", "shared", favorite, and liked by other members in the social network hence the information comes from respected, trusted and liked sources (Ackland, 2013).

6.4 Social Media and Political Protests in Kenya

This study revealed that social media has enabled protesters to organize and execute political protests. Vital information to the coordination of protest activities spreads efficiently and quickly through social media platforms (Jost et al., 2018). The information could include legal support, medical services, violence, turnout, and police presence. In 2016, the Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD) called for countrywide protests against the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). The protests took place from 25th April 2016 to 6th June 2016. The public protests were meant to apply pressure so that the commission disbanded on grounds that it had failed in its mandate of ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections.

CORD claimed that based on national consensus the commission could not be trusted to oversee credible and transparent elections. However, those who were opposed to this move by CORD maintained that a due process should be followed based on the provisions of the constitution. CORD organized the public protests across the country on 25th April, 16th, 23rd, and June 6th, 2016. On 1st June the party held a rally in Nairobi, where CORD leaders and their supports marched on the streets bearing twigs and chanting anti-IEBC slogans to pressurize the disbandment of IEBC (IPOA, 2017).

On several occasions, the demonstrations turned chaotic due to the confrontation of demonstrators, and the police officers deployed to disperse the demonstrators. This would result in injuries and deaths due to the use of excessive force on demonstrators by the police (IPOA, 2017). Consequently, the police officers were injured by the demonstrators when repulsing by the use of crude weapons and stones. A series of anti-IEBC demonstrations took place in major towns of Nairobi City County, Kisumu, Kakamega, Homa Bay, Migori, and Siaya counties ahead of the repeat of the Presidential Election in October 2017.

Social media channels transmit motivational and emotional messages that support and oppose political activity (Jost et al., 2018). Social media users played an important role in the determination of images of police violence against the demonstrators, hence leading to international outrage. However, concerned Kenyans used the platform to call for the cessation of the protests as they could harm the country's economy. Social media provides an alternative means of broadcasting that are not covered by the official media sources hence, it plays a vital role in spreading basic information (Lotan et al., 2011).

The basis of the demonstrations was on the calls by the National Super Alliance (NASA) leaders for reforms on the IEBC (KNCHR, 2017). Article 37 of Kenya's Constitution of 2010 guarantees the right to assemble, demonstrate, picket, and present petitions to the public authorities, however, the demonstrators should be peaceful and unarmed. The demonstrations sometimes turned violent resulting in the destruction of property. IEBC found itself under perpetual scrutiny by online campaigns (Keter, 2017). It all started after the January 2017 negotiated electoral reform package that emanated from the widely publicized protests.

The networked population gains an enhanced ability to undertake collective action as the communication landscape becomes more participatory, more complex, and denser leading to more opportunities to engage in public speech and greater access to information (Shirky, 2011). However, the use of social media would be dissidents as government authorities get extraordinary opportunities for detecting and surpassing protest activities (Jost et al., 2018). For instance, the Chinese government developed a technological system that enables it to identify and quash attempts to organize demonstrations and assemblies while monitoring public opinion by simultaneously allowing the criticism of the government, moreover, the Chinese government has become a worldwide leader in internet censorship (King, Pan, & Roberts, 2013).

Some governments have enacted policies that restrict the use of the internet and social media. Singapore came up with policies that put restrictions on the use of social media from 2008 to 2011 parliamentary elections, a move prompted by the use of social networks (Skoric et al., 2012). Some parts of the world have faced political revolutions that scholars point to social media as a facilitator. The spread of political protests across the world in cities (including Missouri, Ferguson, Los Angeles, Hong

Kong, New York, Athens, Madrid, Tripoli, Cairo Anakara, Instanbul, Kiev, and Moscow) is linked to the use of social media (Jost et al., 2018). Social media played an important role in changing people's viewpoints which in turn promoted revolutions against non-democratic governments (Shaheen, 2008).

Egypt's case presents an example in Africa where political activists used social media to facilitate a successful political revolution. The religious, minorities, and liberal groups took advantage of the spread of the internet in Egypt to express their dissatisfaction against Hosni Mubarak's regime. Before the internet was censored in entire Egypt, some bloggers were arrested for targeting the government however, online activism was the first form of online political participation in the form of blogs and then later Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012).

The first political bloggers were mainly connecting with others, it was the first time in the history of modern Egypt when political activists and the youth were able to participate in political discussions across the social networks (Osman & Samei, 2012). In 2011, young people in Egypt were galvanized to go to streets and protest through calls of action which were heard through messages from popular bloggers and Facebook. "Kifaya" an anti-Mubarak movement organized by Egyptian intellectuals was the first political movement in Egypt to use social media to mobilize protestors (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [CEIP], 2010). The agenda of this political movement was to end Hosni Mubarak's rule.

The opposition activists in the blogosphere of Egypt become part of the movement (Lim, 2012). The internet-based social networks provided a platform for information transmission to many people hence a spark of the revolution (Osman, Amr & Samei,

Marwa, 2012). It is important to point out that this study would be incomplete without a trace of political activism in Kenya's history that led to protests.

6.5 Social Media and Electoral Violence in Kenya

This study sought to examine the effects of social media on the mobilization of young voters. Despite the positive implications of the use of social media on political participation as discussed in the previous sections, the study also revealed the darkest side of the use of this type of media in politics. It is important to point out that social media has also been used to communicate and distribute information that has triggered electoral violence in Kenya. The 2007 post-election violence was significant to this study as they took place a year after the advent of social media in Kenya.

It is important to point out that the 2007 elections could be considered as the hotly contested in her elections history. The Independent Review Commission (IREC) points out that Kenyans might never know the aspirant who carried the day in this election. However, Mwai Kibaki of the Party for National Unity (PNU) was declared the winner by the disbanded and defunct Electoral Commission of Kenya.

Mwai Kibaki had garnered 46 percent of the total vote's casts in favor of the presidential elections, followed closely by Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) with 44 percent and Kalonzo Musyoka of ODM-Kenya with 9%. However, for the parliamentary seats, ODM had the majority seats -99 (47.59%), followed by PNU-43 (20.67%), ODM-Kenya -16 (7.69%), KANU-14 (6.73%), Safina-5 (2.4%), and the remaining 28 (13.46%) seats were shared among other political parties (Halakhe, 2013). Therefore, ODM was way ahead in terms of the parliamentary seats won, however, it can be noted that this election was closely contested between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga.

There was relative peace during the 2002 elections and however, the conflict drivers remained well-established as the 2007 elections approached. The promised post-electoral power-sharing deal failed to materialize as the Rainbow Coalition collapsed a few months after clinching power. The breakup led of a merger of LDP and KANU (however, KANU did not dissolve) to form Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) a combination of the Kalenjin and Luo constituencies formed an opposition team that prepared itself for a political battle with the Party of National Unity (PNU) led by Mwai Kibaki (Halakhe, 2013).

Peace prevailed on Election Day, December 27. The Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) continued to announce the constituencies' results as they received from the field. There was the indication that there was no definitive winner, however, Raila Odinga held a strong lead a day after the actual polling. The gap between the two leading presidential contests narrowed and the delay by ECK to name the winner resulted in suspicions of fraud. And the press conference held by Odinga on 30th December claiming that the ECK was doctoring results hence there was a need for a recount. However, Mwai Kibaki was announced as by the electoral commission on the same evening and he was sworn in an hour after the announcement (Dercon and Gutierrez-Remero, 2010).

Violence erupted in the opposition strongholds within the final moments. Rift valley, Kisumu in Nyanza province, and Nairobi's slum of Kibera were highly affected. At least five of Kenya's eight provinces were under unrest immediately after the announcement of the presidential vote count. The violence seemed to be spontaneous based on the anger from the opposition supporters concerning the stolen elections,

however, it emerged that the violence had been planned based on the ethnic line (Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, 2009).

The perceived PNU supporters who included the Kikuyu, Kamba, and Kisii ethnic groups were attacked by the Kalenjin ODM supporters in Eldoret. For self-defense, the Kikuyu youths organized themselves in the so-called "defense forces" (Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, 2009). Therefore, counter attacks targeting the ODM supporters were carried out by the Mungiki sect- a criminal organization formed in the 1980s alongside the militias in the slums of Nairobi, Nakuru, and Naivasha (Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, 2009).

As the conflict evolved, three forms of violence mutated (Khadiagala, 2008). For instance, one of the forms was the spontaneous and disorganized protests, secondly, the organized militia activity started in Rift Valley and spread to the Central Province. The excessive use of force to contain the initial spontaneous protests by the government security forces formed the other type of violence largely in Nyanza province. The violence in the Rift valley led to the destruction, loss of lives, and displacement of people as ethnic violence broke out where the Kikuyu and afflicted communities of Kamba and Kisii were attacked by the Kalenjin. In Nairobi and Naivasha slums violence erupted as revenge attacks were carried out by the *Mungiki*a pre-dominantly Kikuyu criminal gang. The violence led to the displacement of more than 650,000 people and 1,200 people lost their lives (CIPEV, 2008).

The international and regional actors' responded quickly to save the country from more destruction. An African Union (AU) Panel of Eminent African Personalities backed by the international community was formed and chaired by the former UN

Secretary-General Kofi Annan to steer the mediation process. It is at this point when the political elites who were thwarting the mediation risked being sanctioned as well as travel ban from the bilateral donors (CIPEV, 2008). The violence finally ended on February 28 after nearly 40 days of peace talks. The conflicting parties signed an "Agreement on the Principles of Partnership of the Coalition Government".

The two parties agreed to resolve the political crisis, address the humanitarian situation, and end violence. A Government of National Unity was formed through the passage of a National Accord and Reconciliation Act (2008). Raila Odinga assumed a new position of the Prime Minister while Kibaki remained the President. Under Agenda 4 of the National Accord, the parties agreed to examine the long-term underlying drivers of conflict. It resulted in the formation of the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission, the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (the Waki Commission), and the Independent Review Commission on the 2007 Elections (the Kriegler Commission) (The National Reconciliation Act, 2008).

6.5.1 Social Media as a Facilitator of Post Election Violence

The effects of digital technology in propelling violence can be demonstrated by Kenya's 2007-2008 post-election violence. It is important to note that the traditional media was used to spread divisive and hateful language as documented by many organizations (KNCHR 2008; EU 2008; Benesh, 2014 Comninos 2013; Fox-Penner 2012).

The traditional media played a significant role in the inflammation of violence during and after elections based on the Waki Report on the 2007/08 post-election violence (CIPEV 2008). The situation can be explained by the arguments as advanced by Veblen's theory of technological determinism. Veblen argues that society has to adjust

and adapt to new technologies and innovations. However, the negative consequences of technological development are the result of poor use by the people and not the very nature of technology.

The KNCHR indicated that radio, TV, newspapers, leaflets, newsletters, emails, blogs, Unsolicited, and solicited SMS played a role in the spread of the 2007 violence (KNCHR, 2008). It is important to point out that the mainstream media sources were heavily criticized for not maintaining the required standards of professionalism as they failed to be sensitive to the information they broadcasted (Abdi and Deane 2008). The vernacular radio stations were criticized for incitement and biases to certain political leaders that would turn to hate directed to ethnic communities and political rivals (Rambaud 2008; Gustafsson 2016).

Throughout the campaigns incendiary speeches of different forms were prominent. Inflammatory statements were made against individuals, the contesting parties, and against the ethnic groups that were affiliated to these parties. It is important to point out that political massages were widely disseminated through vernacular radio, email, SMS, posters, flyers, and public speeches (Waki Commission, 2008). Individuals could make unregulated hateful statements through the call-in shows. There were claims that some religious leaders used their pulpits to convey messages that amounted to incitement and hate speech (Waki Commission, 2008).

Social media has so far been used by some of the political leaders to carry out ethnic mobilization of voters and spread propaganda, sometimes spewing incitement and hate speech (Kamwaria et al., 2015). The occurrence of the 2007/08 post-election violence was attributed to an increase of hateful remarks on different types of media including social media (CIPEV, 2008). There was a ban on live broadcasts shortly

after Kibaki was proclaimed the winner on the 30th of December 2007. Due to news blackouts, text messages became the primary means of communication where Kenyans could update each other on the fallout and outcome of the election.

Some used the SMS platform to incite others to attack communities while others stirred emotions regarding the alleged stealing of votes (Odinga, 2013). It is important to point out that the hostile and tense atmosphere was partly contributed by the hate speech on social media sites (IHub, 2013). *Mashada* a popular community forum had to shut down the webpage in January 2008 due to the violent and hateful speeches that were posted on this page (Hersman, 2008).

Kenyans went on polls once again on March 4, 2013. The presidential race was highly contested in comparison to 2007. The battle narrowed down to the two political heavyweights Odinga and Kenyatta in a race of eight candidates. Jubilee coalition had been formed by Kenyatta and William Ruto in December 2012, a merger between Kalenjin's and Kikuyu's' tribes that were at war during the 2007-08 violence. The risk of electoral violence was high despite the ambitious atrocity prevention agenda that had been done during the inter-election period. 86% of the registered voters participated in the polls hence becoming one of the largest turnouts in history (International Crisis Group, 2013).

Despite some challenges such as the unprecedented number of rejected votes, the elections were deemed to be free, fair, and credible based on the analysis by the international observers (International Crisis Group, 2013). There was a breakdown of electronic transmission of results due to the lack of cellular coverage at some polling station, however, the integrity of the polling process was not compromised as the

IEBC had reverted to the use of the manual tallying system (International Crisis Group, 2013).

The 2013 elections marked an important political event in Kenya's politics as in was done under the guidance of the 2010 constitution. Kenya's electoral system and the process was transformed through the introduction of the devolved system of governance that created the office of the Women's representatives, Members of the County Assembly, Members of Parliament, Senators, Governors, and President. The creation of new political offices led to increased political competition. It is important to point out that social media was used at unprecedented levels during these elections. Popular sites on Twitter and Facebook were used by aspirants for the national and county seats to mobilize support (Smith 2012, Ndela 2016).

Political parties used social media for party organization and communication to its supporters (Odinga, 2013). The public had an opportunity to ask questions directly to the presidential aspirants through Facebook, SMS, and Twitter during the Presidential debate of 2013. During the tallying process, social media was used as a source of information on political developments. Political parties continued to rely heavily on social media to deliver the news.

Kenya experienced a tense political atmosphere during the 2013 election period due to the post-election violence of 2007/08 while the Jubilee presidential candidate and his running mate were facing the crimes against humanity charges at the ICC (Odinga, 2013). Moreover, it was a tense mood when a petition process challenging the presidential results was announced by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). The election period was largely peaceful despite the tension. However, few isolated incidences of unrest and violence were reported from some

parts of Kisumu and Nairobi that experienced violence after the announcement of the results of the presidential petition, Wajir, Marsabit, and Mombasa had unrest cases during the elections day (EU EOM 2013).

IEBC declared Kenyatta and Ruto as the winners of the 2013 elections on 9th March as they had garnered 50.07% of the valid votes cast. The duo missed a run-off by 8000 votes. However, many had anticipated a run-off, but the joining of forces between Kenyatta and Rutto ensured the requisite support. Odinga challenged the election results through legal means after receiving 43% of the total votes. Odinga took the battle to the Supreme Court of Kenya instead of the streets. He accepted the verdict of the court as the court upheld the outcome of the election (EU EOM 2013).

The international community lauded the 2013 elections a success as mass violence had been avoided. It is important to point out that social media was used by the state and non-state actors to send massive national peace massages, hence one of the factors that contributed to a predominantly peaceful election. On the elections day, 99,000 police officers were deployed to help avert unrest, moreover, before the election, the state had mapped out the potential hotspots. The fear of prosecution deterred politicians from engaging or organizing violence as the cases of Uhuru Kenyatta, William Ruto, and Joshua Sang were at the ICC (EU EOM, 2013).

The reformed judiciary played an important role in ensuring that peace prevailed during this period, for instance, a large percentage of Kenya's population indicated that they had trust in the judiciary based on the IPSOS polls. Moreover, Raila Odinga, the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) presidential candidate had indicated that he had confidence with the Judiciary. Odinga, while challenging the credibility of the elections pointed out that "It has happened again just like in 2007

but this time we have an independent judiciary" (EU EOM, 2013) a statement that ensured peace among his supporters. The speedy conclusion of the presidential election petition that was rendered by the Supreme Court within 14days as required by the constitution may have contributed towards easing the tension.

6.5.2 Social Media as a Precipitator of Political Hatred

This study revealed that the internet was a major avenue for political aspirants and their parties during the 2017 elections. Websites were set up, social media managers and bloggers were employed by the aspirants and political parties to counter rivals and constantly send campaign messages. A respondent from Embakasi North Constituency attested to the contribution of social media to political hatred. For instance, one of them pointed out that;

> *I have social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. I am also a member of the various political forum however, some of the members on these forums have divergent political views. Occasionally, people tend to comment on others' opinions with words that I think are not appropriate. They seem to fight one another a move that makes me angry too.*

This shows that the young people dominate the usage of social media usage. The use of social media platforms for political endeavors such as campaigning is much cheaper and a politician can easily use it to reach the electorate (Williams and Gulati, 2007). Social media has played an important role in political outreach through the dissemination of information that reaches a population that is not active in politics and attracting them into political activism.

In the run-up to the August presidential election, the Jubilee party contracted the services of a global data mining company, Cambridge Analytica (Keter, 2017). Cambridge Analytica was known for buying commercial consumer datasets and

trawling Facebook to identify persuadable voters whom it then bombards with social media adverts and posts. Similar to the 2007 and 2013 elections, there was the circulation of intimidation and hatred messages circulating on the SMS and social media platforms.

The spread of inciting messages and hate speech spread rapidly on WhatsApp as some people had shared pictures of leaflets that were circulated on different places and place them on this social platform. The 12th September 2017 violence at the Jumuiya Hotel in Kisumu presented an important example in explaining the role of social media in the mobilization of electoral violence. On this date, a group of women from the Nyanza Women of Faith Network organization were attacked by rowdy youths at Jumuiya Hotel in Kisumu. The faith-based meeting had attracted about 160 participants drown across the Nyanza region. According to the organizers, the meeting was meant to strategize on how to avoid the recurrence of violence during the 2017 elections and to recap the past post-elections incidences (KNCHR, 2017). The details of the event were circulated on social media, rumors moved around both online and offline indicating that the Jubilee women at this event were planning to give an advantage to the Jubilee Party by buying identification cards from the participants.

Amid the claims of voter bribery, the youths allegedly allied to NASA stormed the event and forcefully harassed and evicted the participants. The youths had also threatened to burn down the hotel if the management could deny them access to the venue (KNCHR, 2017). The scene turned chaotic and police were called in the quale the violence. At end of the chaos, the hotel properties were looted and destroyed and some of the participants were injured.

Towards the 2017 elections, the political party nominations of 2017 were fraught with irregularities lack of coordination at the tallying centers, destruction of voting materials, intimidation and harassment, use of violence and bribery, and targeted attack meted against marginalized and minority groups such as women aspirants (KNCHR, 2017). There are instances of violence as reported by the KNCHR where some aspirants were threatened by their opponents by the use of firearms, intimidation, alleged abductions, attempted rape, and rivalry during rallies (KNCHR, 2017).

The violence and chaos could be attributed to the increased competition brought about by an increase in the number of elected political offices owing to devolution. 15,082 candidates with 3,752 independent candidates were cleared by the IEBC to contest during the 2017 elections hence recording the highest number of aspirants in Kenya's political history. Violence was experienced in parts of UasinGishu, Nairobi, Migori, Kisumu, and Meru due to the stiff contestation for the seats of governor and MCA (South and CHRIPS 2017). Unresolved local tensions were likely to flare up as the political campaigns at the county level could take clan and ethnic-based dimensions (Reliefweb 2017).

It is important to point out that Kenya had previously faced electoral violence before the 2007/08 post-election violence that brought the country to a standstill. The first Key respondent for the study from civil society during the in-depth interview observed that:

> *Kenyan's fought physically during the post elations violence in 2007-2008. However, the 2013 post-election violence was a cyberwar fought on Facebook, while in 2017 the cyberspace war was on both Twitter and WhatsApp.*

From the above observation, it is evident that social media to some extent has become a tool of political violence. It is important to point out that the 1992 elections formed the most competitive elections in Kenya's political history after redefining the Kenyan politics and election. The country moved from a single-party to a multiparty state following the repeal of section 2A of Kenya's Constitution (Wairuri 2017). The political competition, ethnic mobilization of voters during the elections, and underlying socioeconomic and political grievances precipitated the occurrence of the violence (Wairuri 2017).

The politically instigated ethnic clashes characterized the run-up to the 1992 elections. Violence broke out after the Luos living in the Meteitei farm in Tinderet in Nandi District in the Rift valley were attacked by the Kalenjin "Warriors" in the pretense of a land dispute. The violence took a political and ethnic dimension as the victims reported that the attackers had vowed to drive out the opponents of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and non-Kalenjins out of Rift Valley (GoK 1992; HRW 1993).

The Gusii, Luhya, Kikuyu, and Luo communities were the main targets. These communities were considered as opposition supporters and outsiders to the region, the attackers were sponsored by the ruling party and some of the Maasai politicians (GoK 1992; HRW 1993). This violence lasted from 1991 and 1993, it led to the displacement of approximately 300,000 people and 1,500 deaths in different parts of Rift Valley, Nyanza, and Western Provinces (KHRC 2001).

The ethnic clashes that rocked the country in 1992, 1997, and 2007 elections demonstrate the power of ethnicity in Kenyan elections. In 1992 the Maasai and Kalenjin communities evicted the Luhya, Luo, and Kikuyu communities from some

parts of the Rift valley. The evictions were instigated by the claims that the Kalenjin and the Maasai communities were the rightful owners of the land occupied by these communities. However, these claims were strategically planned political to ensure that members of these communities are locked out from participating in the general elections (KHRC 2001).

The Rift Valley was a stronghold of the KANU party and the home of the President, while the evicted communities were considered as strong supporters of the opposition. The KANU regime had to ensure that President Moi clinches the 25 percent of votes cast in this province hence a need to disenfranchise the opposition supporters. The IED Report on 1997 Elections indicates that at least 300,000 Kenyans were displaced during these clashes and a significant number failed to participate in the elections (KHRC 2001). The Luo and Kikuyu communities residing in the coast province were evicted in the run-up to the 1997 elections as the region was considered as a KANU stronghold (KHRC 2001). The regime hardliners instigated the attacks however, the army was barred from intervening 1997 elections (KHRC 2001).

The 1997 general election was characterized by violence in the late 1997 clashes erupted along the borders of Kisii, Migori, Trans Mara, and Gucha Districts involving the Masaai, Luo, and the Kisii that left thousands displaced and villages charred. The violence belied a new political calculus that focused on displacing communities that were thought to be sympathetic to the opposition, however, the clashes were masked as cases of rampant cattle rustling. More than 300,000 people were displaced and 1,500 left dead (Kagwanja, 2001).

This study noted that the organized gangs played a significant role in fueling political violence visa vie ethnicity. The proliferation of organized gangs is one of the major

factors that cause political jitters during the elections in the country. In Kenya, the advent of the organized gangs could be traced from the formation of a youth wing by KANU, a political party that held in power from 1963 to 2002 (NCIC, 2018). The youth wing morphed into a group that could be used by the elite politicians to disenfranchise the perceived opposition leaning tribes in KANU strongholds through the use of violence and harassment. This practice became common with the introduction of multiparty politics in Kenya in the 1990s.

The opposition politicians had to mobilize their gangs leading to the formation of gangs that were mobilized around the ethic identities. The gangs included the Chinkororo (Kisii); the Kalenjin Warriors (Kalenjin); Baghdad Boys and the Taliban (Luo); Mungiki (Kikuyu); Angola Musumbiji (Luhya); Kaya Bombo (Coastal Mijikenda); and the Sabaot Land Defense Forces, and SLDF (Sabaot) (NCIC, 2018). It is important to point out that the organized gangs in Kenya remain one of the key features of the country's political life. Despite the efforts put in place by the government to flash out these groups, the groups tend to disappear and reemerge especially during the elections cycle.

The government moved with force to ban the listed organized gangs in 2002, 2010, and 2016. For instance, the government intensified a crackdown of the Mungiki gang in July 2007 following the extortion and brutal murders in Nairobi and Central regions. A worse scenario was during the 2007-08 disputed elections when more than 1200 people were killed and more than 650,000 displaced. A report by the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) indicated that to a large extent the violence was organized and executed by criminal gangs supported by politicians (NCIC, 2018).

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) points out that despite the Interior Ministry banned a total of 90 organized crimes nationally in 2016, however, a total of 116 new gangs have so far participated in political violence in 15 counties (NCIC, 2016). Therefore, this is an indication of the rapid proliferation of these gangs. Moreover, the gangs have ended up using other tactics such as rebranding, for example, Mungiki rebranded into Kwekwe in Muranga County, Gaza in Nairobi and Quails in Kiambu County while SLDF into the 40 brothers.

Despite the ban on this types of groups in the country by the Interior Ministry, the NCIC report reveals that some are in operation under the patronage of some politicians such gangs like the China Squad, Super Power, Boston Boys, Kabuchai Defense Force, Confirm, Wakali Wao and the Gaza (NCIC, 2016). Despite the gangs' involvement in criminal and violent activities, they enjoy the support from government officials, communities, and political patrons. Some politicians perceive politics as a lucrative job other than a service to the citizens hence leading to the thriving of criminal gangs (NCIC, 2016).

Ethnicization of politics further exacerbates the formation of these groups as it is one of the features that is associated with political competition in weak democracies. The leading political parties in Kenya draws support from ethnic alliances, therefore, many local and national politicians have to sort the help of youth vigilantes and militias to undermine their electoral opponents and enforcement of party support. The gangs receive support from the politicians inform of providing for the office space, buying and fueling motorbikes, providing alcohol and drugs, buying food from them, purchasing weapons, facilitating transport and meetings, providing training, and more so paying them wages and salaries.

Some politicians have ended up facilitating the economic status of these criminal gangs such as allocating them market stalls and offering them control of bus parks (NCIC, 2016). Some of the gang members are employed such workers of some the community-based organizations, *Jua Kali* (open-air craftsmen) traders, taxi drivers, touts, and *bodaboda* (motorbike taxi) sector. Membership of the organized gangs was not only drawn from the destitute but the economically stable people from the formal and informal sectors. The ex-servicemen and ex-convicts also find their way into these gangs.

It is estimated that nearly 10,000 inmates are released from jail on an annual basis (NCIC, 2016). Therefore, a person who finds it difficult to be integrated back to the community ends up in these gangs. Moreover, some of the ex-police and ex-military officers engage in political violence based on their skills and experiences. It is important to note that this study could not be complete without a mention of the background of violence and coercion in Africa.

Decolonization swept Africa from the 1950s through to the 1970s. The deep political instability of political instability that often accompanies independence could not be masked. The common meanings of changing power became violence and coercion. Therefore, the continent's political landscape became littered with coups, counter-coups, and aborted coups. Several changes regarding democratization in Africa were witnessed during the post-Cold War period.

The number of African countries holding democratic elections grew from 7 to 40 percent, from the 1990s to 2010s hence, a good example of the growth of participatory politics in Africa (Bekoe, 2010). For instance, for the past two decades, Africa's political paradigm focused on the accountability of the political leaders and

the domestic legitimacy that is largely linked to how the leader attained and maintains power. However, in some cases, the elections management organs have manipulated elections to ensure dynastic successions or legitimize autocratic regimes on the continent.

According to Bekoe (2010), approximately 20 to 25 percent of elections in Africa are plunged into violence. Thousands have lost their lives, displaced and property destroyed. Examples of high profile political electoral crises include Zimbabwe (2000-2008), Kenya (2007-2008), and Cote d'Ivoire (2010-2011). It is important to point out that people's faith in democratic processes can be eroded by electoral violence. Moreover, electoral violence tends to reoccur in countries that have a history of this type of violence a good example is the case of Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe.

6.5.3 Social Media as an Avenue for Countering Violence

This study revealed that despite the use of social media in disseminating information that could trigger electoral violence, the platform has also been used to promote peace, national cohesion, and integration in Kenya. It is important to point out that social media has played a critical role in the advancement of peace messages by civil society. The civil society shared peace and cohesion messages after the 2007/2008 post-election violence. Social media can be used to forecast and document electoral violence. For example, early warning systems can be developed to prevent violence through the use of social media (Brabham, 2013).

Stakeholders can evade or protect conflict as these systems allow for micro-level responses to conflict. Crowdsourcing is a model that uses online communities to solve problems (Brabham, 2013) a technology that was widely used during the run-up to the 2017 elections and the 2007/08 post-election violence. This model allowed the

sharing of both videos and photos, documenting and reporting violent incidences after the polls. Therefore, security actors were able to track and analyze flashpoints, social divides, and structural tensions (iHub, 2013). Moreover, it created a platform where people could volunteer by providing help and information (Caldwell, 2013).

In 2008, the Ushahidi platform was created for the sole purpose of documenting post-election violence. The platform could be used for violence prevention as it was improved in 2013 to collect data on a mass scale (Comninos, 2013). A real-time data on the happenings all over the country inclusive of the polling station was necessitated by the use of SMS-delivered web postings, Twitter, and Facebook. The information included individual experiences such as vote-buying, cases of violence, and voter bribery. Ushahidi provided coverage for areas where journalists were unable to access (Ndela, 2016).

In 2017, Ushahidi partnered with youth and peace networks and the civil organizations that were involved in initiatives and activities that spread peace messages through the messaging as a mechanism. Local information on the electoral process was crowdsourced through *Uchaguzi* an election monitoring system developed by Ushahidi (Yanning, 2012). Uchaguzi platform is a convergence point for monitors, CSOs, and other networks that report cases of mobilization of violence and incitement and shares the information with the IEBC. An early warning and response system to a conflict are done through the analysis of information sent by the users through SMS to the Uchaguzi platform. Information is quickly relayed to the concerned authorities for quick action. Uchaguzi has a toll-free number (201666) where people can report incidences in areas that are not adequately covered by the internet.

The Uwiano platform for peace has been an important platform for documenting evidence of electoral and political violence since 2010. The platform consists of violence instigation in video, voice, images, and text and online tracking tools for retrieving evidence, reporting, and tracking hate speech that could cause incitement and violence (Communication Initiative Network, 2010).

Through a toll-free SMS shortcode 6397, people were able to send messages of violence-related situations or potential violence (Communication Initiative Network, 2010). The relayed information was received on Peace Net and at the National Steering Committee (NSC) on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management. The messages could then be classified and coded, incitement to violence, positive, threat, or informative. The senders of the messages could then be called by the team members involved to verify the messages, as well as a rapid response or emergency action, would be taken by the concerned authorities (Communication Initiative Network, 2010).

The Umati monitoring project was developed in 2016 for sourcing speech that could incite violence and hatred. A team of iHub researchers searched and monitored Facebook pages, newspaper comments, Tweets, and Kenyan blogs and other sites and classified the information. They produced a database of such speech on the guidelines developed by Susan Bensech (Benesch, 2014; iHub, 2013). Out of the sampled 792 online statements, 28 % was considered as containing "dangerous speech" (iHub, 2013).

Cases of increased "dangerous speech" were on a rise as elections drew closer as reported by Umati. There was an increase in inflammatory statements after polling as the country waited for the court ruling on the election results dispute (iHub, 2013).

Different applications were used by Umati, hence advantageous in monitoring the violence. The geographical location of each trend was depicted by the help of Google Maps on the Twitter Trendsmaps model (iHub, 2013).

An Open Status Search tool enabled Umati to monitor violence as it unfolded. The tool allowed for keyword searches of public conversations on Facebook (iHub, 2013). "I have no tribe" is a website developed in 1998 by the founder of *Mashada* a popular community forum. This website was developed because of the inability to control the spread of hateful messages on the *Mashada* platform. "I have no tribe" site was used for spreading massages that encouraged peace and unity among Kenyans. Benesch argued that the website was used to experiment with a speech intended or counter-speech to diminish violence amidst an outbreak of both (Benesch, 2014).

The "Nipe Ukweli" site was formed by the members of Umati among other experts to reduce dangerous speech and refute false rumors online (Benesch, 2014). "Una Hakika" (Are you Sure?) is a mobile phone-based information service that was developed by the iHub Research and the Sentinel Project for reporting, acting to check and contain rumors. 200 trained volunteers community ambassadors were sent to 16 villages, the Una Hakika subscribers would talk directly to them concerning rumors, and they could also use voice calls or text messages. The local authorities could then receive reports on impending or actual violence.

The *Una Hakika* team established relationships with local authorities, religious leaders, community leaders, and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) within the location (Alliance for Building Peace, 2017). The verification of the rumors was done by experts in this filed. Facebook users through Facebook pages like the "Kenya Elections 2013" and Elections I witness Kenya" would then share witness

accounts and experiences of elections conduct (Ndela, 2016). Social media sites permitted both sharing and uploading videos of violence that could lead to public attention hence preventing its escalation (Ndela, 2016). WhatsApp was instrumental in sharing information, pictures, and videos during volatile and crises in parts of the country.

6.6 Institutional, legal and Regulatory Provisions on the use of Information and Communication and Technology in Kenya

It is important to point out that this study would be incomplete without a mention of the institutional, legal, and regulatory frameworks that govern the use of information and communication technology. An analysis of the institutional, legal, and regulatory provisions on the use of ICT in Kenya was significant to this study as it contributed to the understanding of the state of social media usage in the country. It also helps in unearthing the challenges faced and achievements that the public gains based on the regulatory measures the government has enacted with regard to the use of social media.

Therefore, this subsection is significant as it sets the grounds for the analysis of the legal grounding of the use of social media in Kenya. An examination of the institutional framework reveals that the use of ICT in Kenya has been enabled through The Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology, Innovation, and Youth Affairs. This ministry has the mandate to formulate, administer, manage, and develop the Information, Broadcasting, and Communication policy. It is also in charge of disseminating public information through the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), involvement in capacity building of mass media and ICT, development, and administration of ICT standards. Moreover, it operates under the State Department of

ICT and Innovation and the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunications formed through Executive Order No. 1/2016 (Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, 2020). From the oral interview with a Senior Government Official at the Communication Authority of Kenya, the official pointed out that;

> *There have been significant advancements in the communication sector. This sector covers a wide spectrum especially with the advent of social media, a platform that is widely used by young people in Kenya. Further, the authority has to collaborate with several players in the communication sector so that it can be able to meet its objects. The Communication Authority of Kenya (CA) works hand in hand with mobile phone service providers such as Safaricom, Airtel, and Telcom Kenya among other providers such as the internet who furnish it with data concerning mobile telephone connectivity and use in the country. Therefore, this is a significant advancement in Kenya's communication industry.*

This shows that the government of Kenya is committed towards providing an enabling environement for technological advancement. The ICT ministry works hand in hand with the regulator, the Communication Authority of Kenya, the National Communication Secretariat (NCS), and the ICT Authority (ICTA). The ICT Authority is mandated with the function of developing and managing the usage of ICT in government ministries and agencies. While the NCS does research and advises the government on policies that pertain to ICT. Draft legislation and policies for parliament and executive consideration emanates from NCS. Other independent organizations that support this ministries mandate include the Konza Technopolis Development Authority, the Kenya Year Book, Media Council of Kenya, Postal Corporation of Kenya, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, and the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication.

The ICT sector in Kenya is governed by the national policy that came into operation in 2016 (Kenya, 2016). However, this policy was updated from the 2006 policy (Kenya, 2006). The policy was updated to ensure its compatibility with the vision 2030 and the 2010 constitution. Moreover, the new developments and the convergence of the ICT technologies contributed towards its review (Kenya, 2016). This policy is guided by; the recognition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); protection of privacy and security; promotion of national cohesion; adherence to international standards; stimulation of competition and innovation; promotion of universal service and open access; recognition of technological change and convergence; lastly, adherence to the constitutional values (Ndung'u, Lewis and Mothobi, 2019).

On the constitutional provisions, Kenya enacted a new constitution in 2010, a constitution that has contributed to significant changes to the country's political system of governance. For instance, this new dispensation not only introduced a new system of public finance but expanded the rights and fundamental freedoms among other changes (ICT Authority, 2014). It is important to note that ICT can be used as a tool to enable the achievement of the objectives of the Constitution, such as enabling an effective Government, democracy through citizen participation, provision of an effective method for public service, and an informed citizen. More specifically, Article 35 of the Constitution, on ensuring the public access information and the correctness of information held by the state; Article 6 (3) on the equal distribution of public services regardless of the Kenyan citizens' domicile; Article 232 on the quality service delivery by the public service among other articles' such as transparency and accountability of public officers.

It is critical to point out that media and political reforms have resulted in the development of the media industry in Kenya hence, the liberation of media in Kenya from political elites and stringent government-controlled to a new era of access and dissemination of political information. The free flow of information is anchored by the new constitution promulgated in August 2010 (Mitullah, 2013). The freedom of media is considered as a right and fundamental freedom. The independence of electronic, print and other types of media is guaranteed under section 34 of the new Kenya's constitution. However, this freedom does not extend to the advocacy of hatred, hate speech, incitement to violence, and an expression of propaganda for war (Nyabuga and Booker, 2013).

In the late 1990s, accessibility of information through the digital and social media focused on making connectivity affordable and ensuring the availability of mobile networks and mobile devices. However, currently, the focus is on the management of megabytes, storage capacity, battery life, and the mobile device. Smartphones continue to capture greater amounts of human attention and time. Therefore, the smartphone can be described as a passport to navigate the world of information oversupply and the internet (Nendo, 2019).

The democratization of media in the 1990s and digital migration in 2015 led to an increase in information and news publishers and sources (Mitullah, 2013). The number of television stations increased from 14 to 68 due to the digital migration in Kenya. The country has over 9 newspapers and 173 licensed radio stations. It is important to point out that most of the television stations have devoted some space for political analysis such as constitutional issues on how they affect the citizens, government, and the country.

The democratic space in Kenya was widened through the political agitations that were supported by the mainstream media and led by the clergy, lawyers, and the political class. The repeal of section 2A of the Constitution and the introduction of plural politics led to the liberation of the media and communication sector (Mitullah, 2013). The scope of political and press freedom widened due to the introduction of multiparty politics in 1991 as it resulted in the proliferation of independent magazines and newspapers such as the Economic Review and Finance (Mutunga, 1999).

The government was forced to review the media laws due to the pressure from civil society and donors alongside the economic demands. Since then, many private entities including the radio stations have been licensed after the liberation of the airwaves (Orao, 2009). It is important to point out that between 2000 and 2007 there was a massive development in the media sector due to the boom of information and communication technology (ICT), the expansion of TV stations in major towns, and the proliferation of ethnic language FM stations across the country.

In 2009, the KBC Act enabled KBC "to assume the government functions of producing and broadcasting programs or parts of programs by television or sound". The broadcasting house was required by law to undertake public services and provide impartial and independent services of information, entertainment, and education in either English or Kiswahili or any other languages (KBC Act 2009, Article 8(1)a). The national broadcasting house has a wider reach however several factors have eroded its market share.

KBC lost a significant audience as it was seen as supporting the political elite and the government. Kenyans had access to several radio and television stations. KBC was financed and run by the government hence there could be the influence and

interference in decision making and politicization in terms of pro-establishment content (Orao, 2009). KBC serves as a key provider of the current affairs programs and serves different organs of the government.

The live parliamentary debates are streamed through this station as stipulated by the KBC Act. KBC also shares the signals with other television stations. For instance, it covers live government events as well as presidential events then shares with other television stations (Mitullah, 2013). The parliamentary debates are rebroadcasted in the week by television stations such as Citizen, KTN, and NTV. These television stations have dedicated good periods for analyzing religious, economic, and political events. Late 1989 was the advent of a gradual liberation of Kenya's broadcasting sector (Mitullah, 2013).

Kenya Television Network (KTN), a privately-owned Kenya television was licensed too to broadcast in Nairobi. The Stella graphics Ltd (STV) was licensed in 1990, while the Capital FM in 1995 became the first private FM station, followed by the Metro FM in 1996 established by KBC to provide entertainment on a commercial basis. However, it is important to note that both the radio and TV stations such as STV which offered little news coverage and the radios focusing on entertainment and music did so to avoid rubbing the political elite the wrong way.

Safaricom was awarded a mobile operator license in 1999, a year after the policy, and the legal changes hence becoming the first mobile operator in the country. The management of the company was replaced by Vodafone Group PLC that bought a 40 percent stake. In February 2000 Vivendi of France in partnership with Kencell communication was awarded a GSM licensed hence becoming the first private firm to be licensed and second GSM operator (Equity 2014). The Mobile Pay Limited,

Zioncell Kenya Limited, and Finserve Africa Limited were licensed to compete in the Kenyan ICT market by CA as mobile virtual network operators in April 2014 (CA 2014; Safaricom 2014).

This study revealed that despite a significant number of young people affiliated with online political forums, a significant number do not participate in political discussions on these platforms. An aspect attributed to the social media policies and lack of interest in the topics being discussed on these forums. One of the sampled respondents during a focus group discussion from Starehe Constituency pointed out that;

> *I am a young man, not employed, and aspires to participate in a political seat in the future. Anything you write on social media might be used against you in the future. Therefore, I do not comment on any topic on social media, however, I am a member of several political platforms on social media. I am also an active member of the political party I am afflicted too.*

This is an indication of frastraion possed by social media usage by the young people. Warren (2002) pointed out that a more informed population about politics might lead to absentee participation based on frustrations. The public has a greater capacity and wishes to express political demand. However, the belief that it is not worth to participate in the political system may hamper political participation.

The above finding drives me to analyze Kenya's regulatory framework. The key question here is how this framework has affected the use of digital platforms in Kenya? ICT falls under legislation such as the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) Act 1988, the Science and Technology Act (Cap.250) of 1977, and the Kenya Communication Act (KCA) of 1998 an at that was amended to the Kenya Information and Communications (Amendment) Act, 2013 (no.41A). The Act provides for the

creation of the Communication Authority of Kenya and is responsible for the Information and Communication Technology in the Country.

The Kenya Information and Communication Act (2013) plays a vital role in the use and management of media in Kenya. It is important to point out that this act was enacted in 1998, amended in 2013, and currently in it tabled in the parliament for another amendment. The Kenya Information and Communication (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was tabled in the parliament in October 2019 for its first reading. The bill seeks to introduce regulations on the use of social media in Kenya hence dubbed "the Social Media Bill". The proposed amendments seek to introduce restrictions on firms offering telecommunication services not to offer other services. The bill also introduces regulations on the usage of social media in the country. The Bill proposes the regulation of bloggers through mandatory licensing by the Communication Authority of Kenya, it has raised a public outcry. For instance, Mwathe and Syekei (2019), point out that the Bill is ambiguous and wide. Blogging under this Bill includes the collection, writing, and editing and presentation of news articles or news on the social media site. Therefore, this definition is too wide that ordinary social media users of Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube might become culprits (Mwathe and Syekei, 2019).

A social media operator in Kenya will be required to have a physical office in Kenya and will be required to obtain a social media license. The Bill introduces several obligations to the users for instance, they need to ensure that the content does not intimidate the recipients of the content it must be unbiased and accurate. Moreover, the group administrators of social media groups are required to approve the content

before publication and instigate the approval of members of the group. It is critical to point out that contravening of the requirements of the Bill becomes an offense.

It is important to note that the enactment of the Kenya Communications Act (1998) led to changes in the management of the Kenya communication sector. For instance, it led to the splitting of the Kenya Postal and Telecommunication Company (KPTC) into the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) currently, the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK), and Telkom Kenya (Souter and Kerrets 2012). A policy advisory board was formed under the banner of the National Communication Authority. At this point that Telkom Kenya received exclusive rights over internet connectivity (Souter and Kerrets 2012).

On Cybersecurity, It is important to point out that Kenya has been faced with the cybersecurity menace, for instance, in 2017 the country lost about USD 210 million through illegal SIM card swaps, phishing, and credit card fraud (Serianu, 2018). The government developed a national cybersecurity strategy to address the challenges and facilitate the adoption of e-commerce. This strategy focused on enhancing Kenya's cybersecurity to facilitate the prosperity, safety, and growth of the country. To develop a workforce to address cybersecurity needs and to raise awareness; to provide national cybersecurity goals objectives and vision and coordinate the cybersecurity initiative at the national level; and lastly, to foster the sharing of information and collaboration among the stakeholders with an aim of enabling information sharing environment (Kenya,2014).

The cybersecurity strategy and its goals set the basis for a number of draft regulations that included the Electronic Certification and Doman Name Administration Regulations; Electronic Transactions Regulations, 2016; and the Cybersecurity

Regulations, 2016. Collectively, these regulations and the cybersecurity bill, 2016 imposed a series of regulatory obligations upon operators and ISPs and created a number of internet-based offenses, however, they were criticized for insufficiently considering public debate and scrutiny, Article 19 was one of the organization in the forefront in the criticism of the proposed laws (Article 19, 2016). It is crucial to point out that Odero (2016) the Bill was later withdrawn in the same year however it resurfaced in 2018 as the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act, 2018. The Act has so far been criticized and opposed by academicians and journalists (Muendo, 2018).

The cybercrime Act 2018, E-transaction Act, the Data protection, and the Access to Information Act are critical laws that the government enforces to ensure the protection of its citizens' vital information. The eTransaction Act provides a guiding framework and promotes the use of eCommerce. The Access to Information Act describes the framework where citizens can access information promptly from the government agencies either through demand or requests. The Data Protection Act protects the public data from abuse especially in light of the massive digitalization of information by businesses and the government. Digitalized information of the citizens such as mobile subscription information, land, and health records among others can be abused hence a need for laws. This Acts stipulates the framework with regard to the collection, storage, usage, and dissemination of citizens' information without the infringement of their privacy. Poor governance, the loss of citizens' privacy, and lack of transparency might result due to the anticipated digital gains hence these laws are significant.

On 16th May 2018, Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta assent the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crimes Act, 2018 into law. The objective of this Act is to facilitate

international cooperation on matters related to computer and cybercrime, facilitate the detection, investigation, prosecution, and punish cybercriminals, prevention of unlawful use of computer systems, and the protection of confidentiality and integrity of the computer systems. Although this law sought to provide cybersecurity to the public, it received a fair share of criticisms and legal battles. For instance, before its ascent, it was criticized by various organizations such as the Centre to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Article 19 Eastern Africa, the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE), and the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet). These organizations pointed out that a significant number of sections of this law were detrimental to Kenyan citizens' digital rights. For instance, law infringed the freedom of expression, opinion, speech, access to information online, and the privacy of individuals (CIPESA, 2019).

The Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE) filled a constitutional petition No. 206 of 2018 challenging the constitutionality of the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crime Act, 2018, two weeks after it passing. The basis of the petition was that the Act threatened, infringed, and violated the fundamental freedoms in the Bill of rights in the 2010 Kenya's Constitution. Areas cited were the freedom of media, human dignity; freedom of belief and opinion; right to equality and freedom from discrimination; academic freedom of scientific research and freedom of artistic creativity; freedom of artistic creativity, and the violation of the right to privacy (CIPESA, 2019). The enactment of the Bill was also challenged on the grounds of not following the National Assembly Standing Orders and not satisfactory meeting the requirements of public participation under Articles 10 and 118 of the Constitution.

The petition led to the suspension of a significant number of sections pending the hearing of the case (CIPESA, 2019).

6.7 Conclusion of Chapter Six

This chapter sought to analyze the achievements and setbacks related to the use of social media. It analyzed and discussed findings of the third research question. The discussion was presented thematically in the following order; social media as an avenue for political activism; social media and political expression; social media and social movements in Kenya. Social media and political protests in Kenya; social media and electoral violence in Kenya with a focus on post-election violence, political hatred; and social as an avenue for countering violence; Lastly, it discussed the Institutional, legal and Regulatory Provisions on the use of Information and Communication and Technology in Kenya.

The study findings of the first theme revealed that social media has provided a platform where young people can advance political activism. The findings indicate that a significant number of young people are attracted to online political activism as opposed to offline activism. It is important to note that the costs, time, and efforts used for advancing political activism are affordable in online activism in comparison to offline activism. Moreover, through social media activists would receive quick feedback, variety views, and attraction of a wider population of participants both nationally and internationally.

It is crucial to point out that the "Occupy Parliament" "My Dress, My Choice" protests, and the Garissa University memorial were among the key events that the civil organizations among other interested parties successfully organized through the use of social media. Social media has provided a virtual platform where young people

can express their political opinions. Therefore, it is a vital tool that contributes to the advancement of political dialogue.

Formation, solidification, and operations of social movements in Kenya have been partly advanced through social media. The Maskani ya Taifa, social networks, and The Kenyans on Twitter (KOT) one of the most active and solid online activism groups that have advanced online protests through the use of Twitter. Moreover, the study findings indicated that social media and the internet has been used to counter-violence. For example, the *Ushahidi* platform was used to document post-election violence, *uchaguzi* an election monitoring system, *Uwiano* platform for peace recorded evidence of electoral and political violence since 2010. The *Umati* forum is a monitoring project developed in 2016 for sourcing speech that could incite violence and hatred. "I have no tribe" through *Mashada* platform used to spread messages that encouraged peace and unity among the Kenyans. The *"Nipe Ukweli"* was formed to reduce dangerous speech and refute false rumors online, the *Una Hakika* and "Kenya Elections 2013" and "Elections I witness Kenya" Facebook pages played a significant role in promoting peace, cohesion, countering violence.

Although social media has significant attributes that have contributed to the advancement of political participation in areas of activism, political dialogue among others, it has had a fair share of setbacks. For instance, it leads to the advancement of fear through victimization, fake news, hate speech, content manipulation. Propping up of organized criminal gangs and militias, moreover, it has been used to promote cybercrime. Ethinicization and ethnic violence are some of the vices that social media has been used to advance through the transmission of motivational, emotional messages, political hatred. It is important to point out that through the advancement of

these social vices have partly contributed to violent political protests during the electioneering years. Key examples are the 2013 and 2016 anti-IEBC demonstrations in Nairobi, Kisumu, Kakamega, Homa Bay, Migori, and Siaya.

This study points out that the government of Kenya has made strides in regulating the ICT sector however, some laws such as the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act, 2018 and the Kenya Information and Communication (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that seeks to introduce stiffer restrictions on the use of social media in Kenya might posse challenges to the widely used media by the young Kenyans.

Based on the findings, this chapter concludes that indeed to a larger extent Kenya's youths to a certain extent have achieved immensely through the use of social media in politics. However, they have been faced with a number of challenges as discussed above. The next chapter deals with the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings, conclusion, and recommendations. The chapter is organized in line with the research questions and the main results of each research question. First, it lays out a detailed summary and conclusion of the discussion of the first research question on the effects of social media on political awareness among young people. Secondly, it reveals the outcomes of the second research question on the effects of social media on the mobilization of youthful voters. Thirdly, it sets forth the findings on the gains and setbacks of social media usage in politics among Kenyan youths. Lastly, it outlines the recommendations of the study with a focus on policy and proposes areas for further studies.

7.1 Effects of Social Media on Political Awareness

The first research question focused on assessing the effects of social media on political awareness among Kenya's youth. The findings were analyzed thematically in this order: First, Internet connectivity, mobile phone penetration, social media, and political information. Secondly, it focuses on age and consumption of social media, third, social media, gender, and political participation, and lastly, education and consumption of social media. The biodata of the respondents that include age, gender, education level, and economic status of the respondents was examined.

7.1.1 Internet Connectivity, Mobile Phone Penetration, Social Media and Political Information

This theme aimed to examine the level of exposure of young adults to the internet, mobile phone, social media, and political information. The findings indicated that more than 50% of Kenyans have access to the internet and its benefits. It is through the internet that social media users can access social networking sites. The internet is attractive to different groups in a society such as the youth, those bound by age, inadequate social skills, illness, and disability. Through social media irrespective of promixity temporal or spatial communication is enabled. The internet supports the expressive forms of political participation as it enables citizens to develop websites and broadcast their political opinions (Polat, 2005). Moreover, it enhances group dialogue or many-to-many communication hence increasing communication capacity.

This study points out that Kenya's technological infrastructure has been enhanced by the government and telecommunication players among other stakeholders. Kenya's government has enabled access to broadband internet in remote parts of the county through the "digital villages" program. Moreover, the fiber-optic cable was laid throughout the country to enhance access to faster internet connections at a reduced cost while connecting the country to the rest of the world. The mainstream media has also resorted to live streaming and publishing political news among others on their online platforms. Therefore, active users of the internet and more so the social networking sites would be exposed to this political information which in the long run contributes to the level of their political awareness.

This study examined the level of mobile phone penetration in the country as this data was significant in addressing the level of political awareness among the youth. This

study establishes that the desire for information by mobile phone users is advanced by the increase in mobile phone penetration. Moreover, the convergence of radio, television, and the internet on mobile platforms is directly linked to the increase in news diversity. The mobile news outlets can be easily accessed by young people with little disposable income based on the lowered access costs due to the stiff competition in the mobile phone market.

This study sought to analyse the types of devices used for accessing social media networking sites as this information was important in addressing the level of youth exposure to the internet. The finding indicated that 79(45.1%) of the respondents from Nairobi County used mobile phones to access social media, 34(20.7%) personal computers, and 57 (34.1%) desktop computers. For Kakamega County, 68(40.7%) used mobile phones, 27(16.4%) personal computers, and 71(42.7%) desktop computers in the cyber cafes. The variations in the findings of these two counties could be attributed to the fact that the respondents from Kakamega County would opt to use the cyber cafes due to the region's internet coverage (85% mobile phone coverage) and the cost of Smartphone.

On the types of electronic devices used to access social media, the study indicated that a significant number of respondents from Nairobi county used mobile phones to access social media while the desktop computer is used by a significant number of respondents from Kakamega County. The variations in the findings of these two counties could be based on the fact that the respondents from Kakamega majority would opt to access the cyber cafes due to the inadequate internet coverage in this region. Moreover, based on its rural setup majority might not be able to afford a Smartphone

This study sought to determine the level of exposure of young adults to social media sites. It is important to note that active users of the internet and social networking sites would be exposed to political information hence affecting their level of political awareness. Social media users increase their tenacity and legitimize themselves by producing political messages (Halpern, Valenzuela, and Katz, 2017). Social media may boost its user's capacity to operate jointly and independently when it regulates networks as a concerted participant (Letcher, 2018).

This study reveals that social media has affected the political-media system. There is the coexistence of traditional media, such as the television, radio, and newspaper core exist with the social media that is continuously expanding innovatively. The new forms of media are hailed as a potential means for breaking away the 'top-down' politics where political issues were made without the grassroots support and negotiation and information flowed vertically. The new forms of mass communication provide a model for the provision of political information where feedback between followers and their leaders are unlimited accessed and accessed by different persons (Fulya SEN, 2012). Social media turned out to be among the preferred forms of media as it is easily and widely accessed by all the age groups.

The youth can receive political information that is centered on their interests from both the mass media and social media hence enhancing their level of political awareness. This study went further sought for the types of social media sites used by the respondents. From the study findings, the Whatsapp platform is popularly used by the respondents from Nairobi City County followed by Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram while Snapchat is the least used site. However, for Kakamega County, the most popular new media platflorm was Facebook, Whatsapp came in second,

followed by Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. The variation of inactive social media accounts in the two county's could be attributed to the connectivity of the internet. For instance, Nairobi County enjoys 100% internet coverage compared to Kakamega County where some parts of the region are not covered fully as some parts rely on the 2G internet that could not support some components of social media as compared to the 3G and 4 G coverage.

On the types of social media sites used, the study findings reveal that Nairobi City County 26(15.7%) of the respondents had active accounts on Facebook, 13(8.4%) Twitter, 22(13.8%) Instagram, 28(17%) Whatsapp, 7(4.23%) Snapchat, 8(4.7%) Linkedin, 22(13.6%) YouTube, 20(12.6%) Yahoo and 16(9.4%) Google +. For Kakamega County, 33(20%) of the respondents had active Facebook accounts, 12(7.5%) Twitter, 16(9.69%) Instagram, 24(14.6%) Whatsapp, 10(6.3%) Snapchat, 11(7%) Linkedin, 16(9.9%) YouTube, 24(14.4%) Yahoo and 17(10.1%) Google +. The variations could be attributed to the features of the different social media sites.

This study revealed that the current state of media in Kenya is a product of the recent local and global technological, cultural, economic, social, and political forces as well as the country's colonial legacy. The traditional forms of media such as the radio, newspapers, and Television enabled the dissemination of political information. However, the follow of information was vertical or unidirectional as there was negligence of democratic comminication responsibilities between the mass media actors, the public and leaders due to the commericialization of the industry.

Social media is hailed as a potential means for breaking away the 'top-down' politics where issues regarding politics are made without the grassroots support and negotiation, and the vertical flow of information. The history of Kenya's media is

closely tied to both the economic and political interests of the white settlers and the colonial government. Media under the colonial government was highly suppressed and for a long time, it served the political elites during this era that included the Whites and Asians. Despite the colonial government giving some opportunities for the Kenyans to receive news in vernacular languages, broadcasts continue to be done under the close watch of the government.

7.1.2 Social Media, Age, Gender, and Politics

The age of an individual is significant in the consumption level of social media. Therefore, this study sought to determine the age of the respondents. The findings are significant to the policymakers and other players that are concerned with matters related to social media and politics. The age factor is an important aspect of informing the levels of social media use concerning political awareness. The age of respondents was derived by a specific question on the questionnaire on the age bracket of the respondent. The study findings indicated 54(32.64%) of the respondents from Nairobi City County were between the age of 18-24, 66(39.89%) of 25-35 years, and 45(27.46%) were above 36 years. From Kakamega County, 48(28.77%) represented the age of 18-24 while 53(32.37%) were in the bracket of 25-35 years and 65(38.84%) above 36 years.

The time spent on the Social Media Networking Sites by age was fundamental to this study as it assisted in informing the level of exposure to social media. The findings indicated that a significant number of Kenya's youth of the age of (21-35 years) spent more than three hours across the various social media platforms. However, Kenyans of 46 years above spent the least amount of time.

In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The gender factor is a fundamental aspect that informed this study. The study findings indicated that 25(15%) of the respondents were female of the age between (18-25) years, 23(14%) age (25-35), and 22(13%) of above 36 years from Nairobi County. For the male 28(17%) were between the age of (18-24), 42(25%) between (25-35) years, and 27(16%) above 36 years. For Kakamega County, 18(11%) of the respondents were female between the age of (18-24), 20(12%) between (25-35) years, and 30(18%) above 36 years. The male respondents for Kakamega county were 30(18%) of the age between (18-24) years, 33(20%) between (25-35) years, and 35(21%) above 36 years. This study went further and sought for the duration of time spent on social media networking sites based on gender. Data from SIMElab Africa (2019) indicated that 70% of men and 55% of women spent more than 3 hours on social media on a typical day.

On gender and elections in Kenya, this study notes that both genders are represented in Kenya's political scene however the number of men surpasses women. However, there is a significant increase in the number of women participating in politics. It is important to point out that since the 2013 elections several political gains in terms of women representation have been made. In 2017, three women won the gubernatorial seat and another three for the Senate despite the elections contest being dominated by their male counterparts.

This study went further and examined the motivation for usage of the new media by the respondents. The study findings indicated that (97%) of the respondents from Nairobi City County and (91%) from Kakamega County used social media for interactions. However, the acquisition of information such as news and political

information followed closely by 95% for Nairobi County and 93% for Kakamega County. It is important to point out that Kenyans enjoy the accessibility of information through the use of social media and the internet, a significant number being the youth both in the urban and rural zones. It is important to point out that the accessibility of political information is fundamental to political awareness.

Information is one of the vital components of decision making. Therefore, both news and information are important aspects that might affect political decision making as they have been found to increase the like hood of participation in politics. This study revealed that through the use of the new media, the youth can receive political information that is centered towards their interests from both the mass media and social media hence enhancing their level of political awareness. The study findings indicated that 49(29.75%) of respondents of the age between (25-35) from Nairobi County and 37(22.52%) from Kakamega County indicated that they use social media for acquiring political information. 33(20%) of the respondents of the age between (25-35) years from Nairobi County and 18(11.05%) from Kakamega County indicated that they were motivated to use social media as it enabled them to communicate directly with politicians.

7.1.3 Social Media and Level of Education, and Economic Status

This study sought to determine the level of education of the respondents as the findings would be important in explaining the contribution of social media to political awareness. The study findings indicated that 12(7.2%) of the respondents from Nairobi City County had a postgraduate degree at the master's level, 67(40.1%) bachelor's degree, 52(31.3%) diploma, 17(10.2%) certificate, 13(7.6%) secondary and 6(3.6%) primary level. For Kakamega County 6(3.5%) had a postgraduate degree at

the master's level, 41(24.7%) bachelor's degree, 48(29.1%) diploma, 23(13.7%) certificate, 33(20.3%) secondary, and 14(8.7%) primary level.

On the level of education and the use of social media, Education, statistics by the SIMElab point out that majority of college-level youths use Facebook (39.4%), Twitter (38.5%), WhatsApp (40.6%), Instagram (40.4%), Snapchat (40%), YouTube (39.1%), LinkedIn (33.3%) and Email (43.1%). However, graduates at Masters and Ph.D. levels use the least in terms of Twitter (3.0%), WhatsApp (3.5%), Instagram (3.5%), and Snapchat (5%) YouTube (3.2%), Primary Graduates Email (2.8 %), Twitter (8.5%).

This study went further and investigated on the time spent by Kenya's youth on social media based on their educational level. From the findings, 41% were youth with college education use more than 3 hours daily on social media, 32% high school, 19% undergraduate, 5% primary, and 4% graduates. The study findings on the economic status of the respondents indicated that 34(20.43%) and 42(25.54%) are informal employment respectively from Nairobi City County. 39(23.35%) were unemployed while 51(30.65%) were students from the same County. For Kakamega County, 2816.78%) and 4124.81%) were in formal and informal employment respectively, while 50(30.65%) were unemployed and 46(27.73%) were students.

7.2 Effects of Social Media on Electoral Mobilization

The second research question responded to how social media has affected electoral mobilization among Kenya's youth. The findings are presented thematically in the following order; social media and mobilization of the electorate; Social media as a forum for political parties and voters' engagement; Social media and political campaigns in Kenya; and Social media and electoral violence in Kenya.

7.2.1 Social Media and Mobilization of the Electorate

An examination of how social media has been used by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) in reaching out to the public is significant in understanding the influence of the usage of new media networking sites on the mobilization of young voters. Individuals with online election news and the internet are significantly more likely to vote in an election (Tolbert and Mcneal, 2003).

It is important to point out that how elections are managed determines both the outcome and the quality of elections. IEBC uses different modes of communication to pass across information to the public. The commission uses both the mainstream, print, and social media to convey its information. This study noted that media usage for political reasons continues to rise. For instance, online political campaigns are used to influence people to support specific politicians (MacNamara, Sakinofsky & Beattie, 2012). Disengaged citizens and the youth can easily be encouraged to engage in democratic participation. The online social network allows users to contribute the contents, make contacts and control the egagments (Williams and Gulati, 2007).

It is important to point out that social media users received electoral information from IEBC through different ways such as by random exposure to the content shared by the commission or by subscribing to the information from IEBC. Direct political communication is a special feature of the social networking sites that includes personalized advertising or regular newsfeed post from political actors (Bimber, 2014).

Kenyans relied on the internet to find out information published on the commission's website during the electioneering period. The search for information published by ECK on Google Search was at its peak in November and December 2007 a period

when Kenya went for her elections on 27th December 2007 under the management of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK). Similar trends were registered in March 2013 and August 2017 months when Kenya held her general elections organized by the IEBC after the electoral reforms that led to the removal of ECK.

Voter education is one of the key functions of the IEBC, it is through this exercise that the public gets educated on matters related to elections and polling. The public becomes aware of how it is supposed to participate in this critical exercise, such as the significance of voter registration, the location of voter registration, requirements for registration, and how to cast a vote. Social media and the internet provide a virtual space for young people to discuss politics through online accounts, pages, and groups. People can express the multiple aspects of their personalities through social media among other networked technologies (Papacharissi, 2012). As social media enables them to maintain connections with a large number of groups, people can create an audience (Goffman, 1959).

On social media and voter registration, the study findings revealed that 17(10.24%) respondents from Nairobi City County and 18(11%) from Kakamega County between the age of (18-24) years were registered as voters after receiving information from social media. This study points out that the Kenya 2017 election was a key driver for engagement on social media.

This study established that most of the young people registered as voters after getting information from other sources of information such as Radio, Television, print media, from friends, and IEBC peer educators. However, social media was critical in the disseminating of information concerning voter registration in Nairobi City County than Kakamega County.

7.2.2 Social Media as a Forum for Political Parties and Voters Engagement

This study revealed that social media usage for political purposes has enhanced engagement of the Kenya's youth in political parties' affairs. It is important to note that social media plays an important role in the political parties' communication system in their bid for membership recruitment, mobilization, and party communication. It is evident 9(5.6%) of the respondents between the age of (18-24) years, and 22(13.17%) between (25-35) years from Nairobi City County, while, 4(2.63%) respondents between the age of (18-29), 13(7.89%) between (25-35) years from Kakamega County indicated that they were bonified members of political parties.

This study determined the level of membership of the respondents on the online Political Forums. The study findings indicate a variation in the number of membership based on the type of social media platform. 53(32%) of the respondents from Nairobi City County of the age of (25-35) years and 45(27%) of the same age group from Kakamega County indicated they were members of an online political forum.

This study sought to determine the level of the respondents' participation in online political forums. Therefore, the respondents were required to indicate on the questionnaire on how frequent they are involved in discussions on the online political forums. The study findings indicated that 33(20%) of the respondents from Nairobi engaged in discussions daily on Facebook, 33(20%) on Twitter, and 26(15.62%) on WhatsApp while from Kakamega County 21(12.9%) engaged daily on Facebook, 24(14.28%) on Twitter and 25(15%) on WhatsApp. However, a significant number of 110(66%) of the respondents from Nairobi City County were not involved in a

political discussion despite having accounts on Facebook, 125(75%) on WhatsApp, 120(72%) on Twitter respectively. While for the respondents from Kakamega county 134(80.64%) were not involved in any political discussion on forums on Facebook 125(75%) on WhatsApp and 139(83.7%) on Twitter.

This study points out that ethnicity affects both the elections outcomes and voter behavior, especially in both the presidential and parliamentary elections majorly in urban constituencies and the settled areas. For example, since the return for multiparty politics in 1992, major ethnic groups in Kenya have supported and voted for a presidential aspirant from their tribe. Clans, Religion, Individual influence in Kenya's Politics have also played an important role in Kenya's elections. For example, the choices of the electorate in the rural constituency are shaped by an individual's influence, religion, and clan besides ethnicity. A political aspirant may tend to influence the votes through religious affiliation or clan especially where the particular clans or religion are the majority in a particular constituency.

7.2.3 Social Media and Political Campaigns in Kenya

This study revealed that social media usage for political purposes has enhanced youth participation in political campaigns. The respondents to this study were required to indicate on the questionnaire if they used the new media as a source of political updates during the 2017 general elections. From the study findings, 45(27%) and 37(22%) of the respondents of the age (25-35) from Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties respectively received political updates through social media from political parties, politicians, and their supporters during the 2017 campaigns. From this data, it can be concluded that a significant number of respondents actively used social media to acquire political information during the 2017 general elections. The young people

have been involved in both online and offline political campaigns. This is because social media is significant in political campaigns as it is widely used by political aspirants and political parties.

Kenya's politicians and major political parties have websites and pages on the major new media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The mainstream media has also resorted to live stream and publish political news among others on their online platforms. Through social media, politicians have been able to break barriers imposed on domestic media by the parties in power (Jihan K. Raoof et al., 2013).

This study revealed the thirst for information on key political aspirants. The spikes on the search volume index in Google trends were registered during the electioneering years (2007, 2013, and 2017) as presented in the figure above. These findings are a key indicator of the usage of online platforms to acquire political information. The findings on the search volume index in Google trends indicated spikes during the December 2007 general elections, an index of (44) of Google users used the search engine to sought information on Raila Odinga and (32) Mwai Kibaki. The two were key presidential contestants during the 2007 elections.

The Google trends in March 2013 during the general elections, Uhuru Kenyatta recorded a spike at an index of (100) the highest value on the search index volume index Google trends. This is an indication that many internet users sought information on Uhuru Kenyatta who was one of the presidential aspirants. Raila Odinga came and Mwai Kibaki followed with a search volume index of (58) and (9). Mwai Kibaki trailed on the Google trends because he was not contesting in these elections. Spikes on the Google search engine were also registered in August 2017 at an index of (58)

for Raila Odinga and (33) Uhuru Kenyatta. The two personalities were the main contestants during this election.

This study revealed that a significant number of Kenyans streamed into their social media pages a month before, during, and after the general elections. Facebook registered the highest index (100) April 2010. The Facebook user logins and downloads were at its peak as this could be attributed to the constitutional referendum which was held on 4th August the same year. Similar trends were registered in February an index of (74) March in 2013 due to the 4th March 2013 general elections. The 8th August 2017 general elections and the 26th October 2017 fresh presidential elections registered similar trends.

Twitter login and downloads registered similar patterns on the same years and months for instance February it registered an index of (55) in March 2013, (20) August 2017, and (18) in November the same year. Whatsapp registered an index of (11) in March in 2013, (14) in August 2017, and (13) in November. The logins and downloads of WhatsApp were lower compared to the other. The low numbers could be attributed to a new form of social media platform that had been introduced in the market, hence many people might have not familiarized themselves.

This study went further and examined the geo-location where Kenyans accessed social media platforms. From 2004-2019 Kisumu City registered an index (31) of the number of users of Facebook, Nairobi City County registered (13) users on Twitter (13), and (12) on WhatsApp at (12). However, Kakamega registered the lowest index (0) on the three platforms as this county could not register a significant number that could be captured by the search index volume index on Google trends. The findings revealed that regions that are considered to vote as a bloc for a particular presidential

and political party registered high usage of social media during the electioneering period.

On the new media's influence on voting, the study findings indicated that 25(15.33%) of the respondents of the age between (18-24) from Nairobi City County and 23(14.1%) between the age (25-35) from Kakamega County indicated that they voted for their preferred candidate after receiving information on social media, however, a significant number of the respondents, from Nairobi and Kakamega counties respectively, could have been influenced by attending political campaigns, receiving information on mainstream media, influenced by peers and ideologies. From these findings, it can be concluded that the activeness of a political aspirant on social media does not necessarily translate to votes.

This study points out that the disengaged citizens and the youths can easily be encouraged to engage themselves in democratic participation. Currently, the young population dominates in the social media usage for political purposes. For this study, the August 2017 elections and October re-run elections were vital for this study as a significant number of voter populations were exposed to social media and the internet.

Dominant conversations during the 2017 elections period were amplified through the coverage of the mainstream media. A significant number of Kenyan voters in urban areas received personalized text messages through both private messaging apps and SMS from the political aspirants' requesting for their votes. The aspirants had coordinated communication such as communicating through Telegram and WhatsApp channels.

7.3 Gains and Setbacks of Social Media Usage in Politics

The third objective examined the achievements and challenges faced by social media users when using the platform for political purposes. The discussion was presented thematically. First, it discusses the contribution of social media on political activism. Secondly, it analyses the extent to which social media has enhanced political expression among the youth. Thirdly, it analyses the contribution of usage of the new media on social movements in Kenya. Fourth, the chapter evaluates the influence of the new media on political protests and the fifth its contribution to electoral violence in Kenya. Lastly, it discusses the institutional framework, constitutional and legal provisions on the use of social media in Kenya.

7.3.1 Social Media as an Avenue for Political Activism

This study sought to examine the effects of the usage of social media on Kenya's youth participation in online and offline political activism. The key question was how has social media affected the levels of online and offline political activism of Kenya's youth? The findings revealed the involvement of the respondents in offline to online political activism. The study findings indicated that 47(28.04%) and 25(15.26%) respondents of the age between (25-35) years from Nairobi City County and Kakamega County respectively indicated that they would participate in online political activism.

When asked about offline political activism, 33(20%) of the respondents of the age group between (25-35) years from Nairobi City County and 21(12.63%) from Kakamega County indicated that they would participate in offline political activism. There were significant disparities in social media usage for activism between the respondents from Nairobi City County and Kakamega County. Moreover, disparities

were registered on the levels of activism for both online and offline in the two counties.

This study revealed that, through social media, young Kenyans receives activism information that is often translated into offline activism. Social media sites are significant in the formation of virtual groups that provide team efficacy, social bonding, and a sense of reality all convertible into offline political operation (Letcher, 2018). The new media networks played a critical role as tools for the harmonization of shared action and information transfer (Jost et al., 2018).

7.3.2 Social Media and Political Expression

This study examined the extent to which social media has enhanced political expression among Kenyan's urban and rural youths'. In an attempt to find out the level of social media usage by the respondents in expressing political opinions 34(20.48%) of respondents of the age of (25-35) years and 17(10%) of the same age from Nairobi City County and Kakamega County respectively would use social media to express their political opinions. The findings indicated a significant low uptake of social media is expressing political views from the respondents in the two counties. One of the major reasons this study found out was the fear of victimization. On several occasions, vocal activists have found themselves on the wrong hand with the government and politicians. Boniface Mwangi an activist and Robert Alai a blogger among others, has, on several occasions been arrested and prosecuted for some of their utterances that seem to attack the political class.

7.3.3 Social Media and Social Movements in Kenya

This study revealed that social media plays an important role in enhancing the formation, solidification, and operations of the social movements in Kenya. Every

consumer of the information on the internet is also a producer of information on this platform (Polat, 2005). The internet increases opportunities for increasing sources and volumes of information.

A more informed population on what is taking place in the political realm may potentially participate more based on the implications for their lives (Polat, 2005). The civil society tapped the use of this platform to advance activism for example through the Maskani ya Taifa Initiative. The Kenyan on Twitter is one of the most active and solid online activism groups that have advanced online protests through the use of Twitter.

7.3.4 Social Media and Political Protests in Kenya

This study revealed that social media has enabled protesters to organize and execute political protests. Vital information to the coordination of protest activities spreads efficiently and quickly through social media platforms (Jost et al., 2018). The information could include legal support, medical services, violence, turnout, and police presence. Social media on several occasions has been used to organize and coordinate protests. For instance, the 2013 and 2016 opposition party demonstrations were amplified through the the usage of the new media. For instance, the pictures of police brutality on demonstrators were posted online hence leading to international condemnation.

7.3.5 Social Media and Electoral Violence in Kenya

This study sought to analyze the effects of social media usage on the mobilization of young voters. Despite the positive implications of social media usage on political participation as discussed in the previous sections, this study also revealed the darkest side of the use of this type of media in politics. It is important to point out that social

media has also been used to communicate and distribute information that has triggered electoral violence in Kenya.

The 2007 post-election violence was significant to this study as they took place a year after the advent of social media in Kenya. The effects of digital technology and social media in propelling violence can be exhibited by the post-election violence of 2007-2008 that almost brought Kenya to her knees. It is important to note that the traditional and social media were used to spread divisive and hateful language as documented by many organizations (KNCHR 2008; EU 2008; Benesh, 2014 Comninos 2013; Fox-Penner 2012). The usage of social and traditional media was critical in the inflammation of violence during and after elections based on the Waki Report on the 2007/08 post-election violence (CIPEV 2008).

This study noted that social media has so far been used by some of the political leaders to carry out ethnic mobilization of voters and spread propaganda, sometimes spewing incitement and hate speech. The occurrence of the 2007/08 post-election violence was attributed to an increase of hateful remarks on different types of media including social media. The information that circulated through social media found its media to the mainstream media hence fueling violence. However, social media was later used for peace messaging and countering hate speech after the escalation of violence. People shared messages on Facebook to counter hatred and incitement and peace tweets.

This study revealed that the internet was a major avenue for political aspirants and their parties during the 2017 elections. Websites were set up, social media managers and bloggers were employed by the aspirants and political parties to counter rivals and constantly send campaign messages. The young people dominate in social media

usage in Kenya. Social media provides a cheaper means for politicians to campaign and reach out the electrorate (Williams and Gulati, 2007). The platform has plays a significant role in political outreach through the transmission of information that reaches a population that is not active in politics and attracting them into political activism.

This study revealed that despite social media being used in disseminating information that could trigger electoral violence, the platform has also been used to promote peace, national cohesion, and integration in Kenya. Social media has been critical in dissemination of peace messages by the civil society. The civil society shared peace and cohesion messages after the 2007/2008 post-election violence. Social media can be used to forecast and document electoral violence. For example, early warning systems can be developed to prevent violence through the use of social media (Brabham, 2013). Stakeholders can evade or protect conflict as these systems allow for micro-level responses to conflict.

7.3.6 Institutional, legal and Regulatory Provisions on the use of Information and Communication and Technology in Kenya

An analysis of the institutional, legal, and regulatory provisions on the use of ICT in Kenya was significant to this study as it contributed to examination of the state of social media usage in the country. It also helps in unearthing the challenges faced and achievements that the public gains based on the regulatory measures the government has enacted with regard to the use of social media. This study points out that the government of Kenya has made strides in regulating the ICT sector however, some laws such as the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act, 2018 and the Kenya Information and Communication (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that seeks to introduce

stiffer restrictions on the use of social media in Kenya might posse challenges to the widely used media by the young Kenyans.

7.4 Conclusion of the Study

This study presents highly accurate findings based on its analysis as demonstrated in chapters four, five, and six. Therefore, this study is accurate and reliable based on the analysis of its objectives concerning the research methodology used as discussed in chapter three.This study has conclusively determined that to a larger extent social media has positively influenced political participation among Kenya's youth. The first objective set out to assesses the effects of social media on political awareness among Kenya's youth regarding Nairobi City and Kakamega Counties. On this objective, this study concluded that social media has positively affected political awereness among the youths from the two counties. Kenyans are currently not restricted to accessing information via the media print, television, and radio. Information is found on the search engines and social media from sources that are verified and unverified in this digital era. Social media and the internet have led to the overabundance of political information as compared to the past century that was characterized by the scarcity of information. The active users of the internet and more so the social networking sites would be exposed to this political information which in the long run will contribute to the level of their political awareness. Therefore, this study concluded that social media affects political awareness on the youth both in Nairobi City and Kakamega counties. However, there are several challenges faced especially by rural youth such as accessibility to the internet and the high costs of smartphones.

The second objective set out to analyze the effects of social media on the mobilization of young voters in Kenya. This study concluded that social media usage has

significantly contributed towards the mobilization of the young electorate from both Kakamega and Nairobi City Counties. Social media has become an alternative form of communication for politicians and their supporters. However, to a certain extent, social media platforms have been used to spread propaganda and fake news. Hate speech and fake news dominates social media platforms, especially during the electioneering period.

The third objective analyzed the achievements and challenges faced by social media users when using the platform for political purposes. This study concluded that young people have immensely benefited politically from the usage of social media however to a lower extent the platforms have provided a fair share of setbacks to the virtual politically active youths. Social media has enhanced the accountability of the political class to the electorate. Kenya has to lead to the formation of virtual watchdog groups. The Kenyans on Twitter are critical in advancing social media usage in political participation. The civil society played a critical role in the advancement of political participation through the new media usage. Most of the youth especially in rural Kenya in comparison to their urban counterparts are afraid of raising their voices against or contribute to political discussions due to unknown repercussions. Laws on hate speech and social media hinder some of the youths in advancing their voices on political matters online. Therefore, a significant number of youths are using social media, however, most of them are interested in social-related issues other than politics. The study concluded that despite an immense contribution of social media on political activism a significant number of the youth do not want to voice their political concerns through the social media platform.

7.5 Recommendations of the study

This study proposes policy recommendations as well as recommendations for further research as presented in the subsections below.

7.5.1 Policy Recommendations

This section presents policy recommendations based on the challenges faced by both the youth in Kakamega and Nairobi City Counties when using social media for political participation. Social media has become an important source of information and a communication tool for young Kenyans. As discussed in chapter four, a significant number of young Kenyans have resorted to communicate through social media to communicate and receive political information. First, based on the study findings, the usage of social media is significant with regard to political awereness. Therefore, there is need for the government and other stakeholders to tap into this area and advance it in enhancing youth political participation.

Secondly, this study concluded that social media plays a fundamental role in mobilization of young electrorate. Therefore, the IEBC, civil society and interested parties in youth political participation can enhance young people engagement through this platforms.

The third objective laid bare the gains and setbacks for social media usage in youth political participation. In this case young people face a number of challenges that can be sorted out through policies. Therefore, first, this study recommends an inclusive review of the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crime Act (2018). All the stakeholders should be included in the amendment of this Act especially the young bloggers and the general public who are among the main beneficiaries of social media. From the

findings of this study, a significant number of young people are not interested in commenting on social media political forums as they are afraid of breaking the laws. Therefore, this study recommends an inclusive regulatory framework that encourages the responsible use of social media other than the one that scares away the users.

Secondly, the proposed amendments of the information and communication Act (2019) discourage the use of social media as per the findings of this study. Social media platforms are important sites for Kenya's youth as they provide an alternative source of information and communication. However, the proposed amendments that seek to introduce laws on the use of social media introduce stringent measures that would discourage the use of these sites. For instance, it will be very expensive for the one to use social media for blogging purposes as you will need a license from the Communication Authority of Kenya and a physical office.

Third, the need to provide a law that protects social media users against victimization from the state and politicians. The politicians need to harness the benefits of social media such as a tool of engaging the electorate. From this study, it is clear that a significant number of social media users especially the youth are afraid of actively participating in online political forums based on the repercussions of their comments. A number of the youths from Kakamega County were unwilling to participate in online political discussions as they feared that their comments on these forums could land them in problems either with the state of the political class.

Fourth, as discussed in the previous chapter, fake news is rampant on social media. At times this type of news finds its way on the mainstream media which is one of the source sources of information in the country. Therefore, there is a need for the government to come up with countermeasures in terms of policies that would enable it

to deal with fake news which sometime could damage the reputation of the country or the political leaders or any Kenyan citizen. Fake news may also pose threats to national security and peace.

Fifth, based on the findings of this study, a significant number of youths are not aware of the laws that govern social media usage in Kenya. However, the conversant rely on rumors that some time is spread online or through peers. Therefore, this study recommends that the government comes up with public sensitization programs that will enable the public to be conversant with the information and communication laws that are in line with the use of social media. An informed public will be in a position to use the social media platforms as required by law and in the long run sanity will be enhanced especially on what should and not be communicated through the social media sites.

Sixth, despite the affordable costs of the internet for urban dwellers, it continues to be expensive for rural people. The finding's of this study reveal that a significant number of the youth from Kakamega County rely on other forms of media such as the use of radio as it tends to be cheaper compared to the use of the internet. Moreover, it also requires the use of smartphones or computers which are more expensive for the rural population. There are some parts of Kakamega County where the rural population has not been fully connected to electricity and also access to the internet has proved to be a challenging task. Therefore, the government and the internet providers need to put more effort into the enhancement of the information and communication infrastructure in rural Kenya. The enhancement of internet hotspots in rural areas could be a milestone in the enhancing of the social media and internet usage rural Kenya.

7.6 Recommendations for Further Research

This study provides a starting point for further investigation in the field of political participation and media usage. Several issues have been featured in the course of my research.

 a) Impact of online Political Forums and Political efficacy.

 b) Studies on how Social media affects the formation and solidification of political party youth leagues.

 c) Influence of Social media on women's political participation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

MOI UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, POLITICAL SCIENCE, AND PUBLIC

ADMINISTRATION

<u>QUESTIONNAIRE</u>

Dear Respondent,

My name is Peter Inganga Buluma, a student at Moi University pursuing a Doctor of philosophy degree of political science and public Administration. This questionnaire is meant to gather data on the **"Impact of social media on political participation among Kenyan youths".** Therefore this study is purely academic hence all information received shall be treated confidential.

INSTRUCTIONS
Please tick/ Mark (X) in the box or space provided
The following section presents Questions on demographic information. Kindly fill in the space provided.

Q1. Gender

Male	
Female	

Q2. AGE *(select your age bracket)*

Age Group	18-20	21-23	24-26	27-29	30-32	33-35
Tick in this space						

Q.3 what is your highest level of education?

Level	PhD	Masters	Undergraduate	Diploma	certificate	(other)
Tick in this space						

Q.4 Are you a registered voter?

Yes	
No	

Q.5 which county have you registered as a voter?

Kakamega	
Nairobi	
Other (indicate)	

Which constituency? (Indicate)

Q.6 Do you have a social media account?

Yes	
No	

Q7. If yes, select the social media platforms where you have an active account.

Social media platform	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Whatsapp
Tick where appropriate (X)				

Q8. How do you access social media? Tick where appropriate (X)

Phone	Personal Computer	cyber

Q9. How frequent do you visit your social media account?
Tick where appropriate (X)

Daily	Weekly	Monthly

Q10. What information do you seek on the social media?
Tick where appropriate (X)

Political news	Sports news	Business news	Others (Indicate)

Q11.If political news, how often do you seek for this information?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly

Q12. Did you vote in the 2007, 2013 or 2017 general elections?

	Yes	No	Not eligible
2017			
2013			
2007			

Q13. Are you on any political forum on social media?

Yes	
No	

Q14. If yes, what motivated you to join the forum?

Q15. What are some of the benefits of being a member of a political forum on social media?

Q16. What challenges are faced while involving yourself in political forums on social media?

This section presents questions on the effects on social media on political awareness
Kindly Mark/Tick (x) on the space provided below next to the question

Q17.What would be most appealing to you when deciding to vote for a certain politician party? (1 is most appealing and 5 is least appealing)

	1	2	3	4	5
Television					
Radio					
Newspaper/Magazines					
Public opinion					
Updates on social media					

Q18. Do you follow political campaigns on social media?

Yes	
No	

Q19. Were the political candidates' profiles or pages on social media helpful in learning more about them during the general elections?

Yes	
No	

Q20. Did you become reliant on social media for political updates during general elections?

Yes	
No	

Q21. What inspired you to vote in general elections?

Political party leader	Political campaigns on social media	Political rallies	Political events	Not voted

Q22. Would you be influenced to vote for a particular candidate and vote for the opposing candidate after reading on social media?

Yes	
No	

Q23. Would you withdraw your support for a particular candidate and vote for the opposing candidate after reading something on social media?

Yes	
No	

Q24. This section presents questions on the effects of social media on voter mobilization
Kindly Mark/Tick (x) on the space provided below next to the question

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	I was registered as voter after getting information on social media		
2.	I voted for a political leader after getting information on social media		

3.	I invited my friends on social media to vote for a political leader.		
4.	Through social media platforms politicians influence the youth to vote.		
5.	The youth vote for politicians who are active on the social media platforms.		

Q25. This section presents questions on effects of social media on political party membership

Are you a member of a political party?

Yes	
No	

Q26. If yes, which political party?

Q27. If yes, do you contribute financially to the party?

Yes	
No	

Q28. Kindly Mark/Tick (x) on the space provided below next to the question to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below.

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	Have you been engaged in political discussions on social media?		
2.	I became a member of the political party through information from social media		
3.	I have invited friends to join my political party through social media.		
4.	I communicate to my political party through social media		
5.	Invited my friends through social media to join a political party.		

Q29. This section presents questions on the effects of social media and political activism

Kindly Mark/Tick (x) on the space provided below next to the question

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	I use social media to express political opinions through the social media platforms		
2.	I communicate to the political leaders I envy through social media		
3.	Through Social media I have become active in politics		
4.	It is difficult to organize political actions such as meetings among others on social media.		
5.	I am involved in political activism		

Appendix II: Questions For Discussion With The Communication Authority Of Kenya Officials

1. What are the current level of internet penetration in (Kenya) Nairobi and Kakamega counties?
2. What is your take on the current trend of the use of social media- based on the regions(Western, coastal), etc
3. What could be the effects of the use of social media on the current communication sphere? Merits and demerits that have been brought about through the use of social media?
4. What is the approximate number of Kenyans using (youth age of 18-35)

   Facebook

   Twitter

   WhatsApp

5. Are there laws that have been put in place to control the use of social media in the country?
6. What could be the effects of these laws on the use of social media?
7. Could you comment on the traffic of political information on the internet (Currently) Nairobi, Kakamega

   During the 2013 and 2017 elections

   Years after the elections

8. What is your take on the censorship of the internet during the electioneering period? Some African countries
9. Could you predict, what is the future trend of the use of social media for political participation in the future?
10. Has the use of internet/ social media affected Kenyans political culture?
11. What is the major motivation for the use of social media compared to other modes of communication?
12. How has your institution contributed to the enhancement of the use of social media?

13. What measures has the institution put in place to protect social media users?

14. What challenges does the country face that is related to the use of social media?

15. How as the institution addressed cybercrime issues?

16. What communication policies do institutions enforce to enhance the use of social media?

17. What are the effects of these policies on the use of social media?

18. What value do social media add in communication in comparison to other forms of media?

19. What is the motivation for the use of social media in comparison with the other types of communication technologies?

20. What is the contribution of mobile phones in political communication

Appendix III: Questions for Discussion with IEBC Officials

Introduction
- The main objective of the study: To establish the impact of social media on political participation among Kenyan youths.
- The study focuses on two counties, Nairobi and Kakamega.
- The interview would take at least 15 minutes
- Request for permission to record the interview proceedings

1. What is the trend (rise or decline) of voter turnout among the youth with a focus on (2007, 2013, 2017) general elections?

2. What could be the main attribute of this trend?

3. What was the voter turnout (youth) in 2013 and 2017 for the youthful voters in; Kakamega and Nairobi City Counties?

4. Has the commission embraced the use of social media as one of the tools for disseminating voter education?

5. What are the challenges attributed to the use of social media for voter education purposes?

6. What is the contribution of mobile phones in political communication

7. What could be the main motivation for the use of social media by the commission to communicate to the public/ the electorate?

8. Has the use of social media affected Kenyans political culture?

9. What could be the main motivation for the use of social media by the commission to communicate to the public/ the electorate?

10. What are the measures put in place by the commission to enhance youth's political participation?

11. What is your view on Kenyan youth participation in elections before and after the advent of social media?

12. What is the contribution of social media on electoral mobilization

13. What are the projections for youth participation in voting and voter registration

14. What are the challenges faced in voter registration

15. What is the impact of social media on electoral management

16. What is the contribution of social media on political dialogue

17. Does the commission use social media to communicate with the electorate? What could be the reasons?

18. What are the advantages of using social media in comparison to other forms of media

19. What are the challenges the commission has faced on the use of social media?

20. How has the use of social media affected voter education?

21. What are the plans for the commission in the use of social media

22. Has the use of social media affected Kenyans political culture?

23. What is the main motivation for the use of social media in comparison with the other types of communication technologies?

Appendix IV: Questions for Discussion with the youth from Kakamega and Nairobi City Counties

My name is Peter Inganga Buluma, a student at Moi University pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in political science and public Administration. I am investigating the effects of social media on political participation among the youths in Kenya.

Instructions

(Provide a Sign-In Sheet to move around the group while doing the introduction)

Review the following

- *Who we are and what we're trying to do*

- *The purpose of the study*

- *Reasons for inviting the participants*

Explanation of the process

- Explain the reasons for using the focus group discussion.

Logistics

- *The focus group will last for about 45 minutes*

- Provide refreshments

Grounds

Involve the participants in suggesting the rules of the group. Ensure that;

- Everyone participates

- The information is confidentially provided

Questions

1. What are your opinions on the effects of social media on political knowledge among the youth?
2. How has social media affected political participation?
3. What is the contribution of social media in voting?
4. What is the effect of social media on political dialogue?
5. What are the effects of social media on the mobilization of young voters?
6. How effective is offline mobilization strategies
7. How effective is social media in political mobilization
8. What are the effects of social media on political campaigns?
9. What are the advantages of social media in political campaigns
10. What are the disadvantages of the use of social media in political campaigns?
11. What is the influence of social media on young political party membership among young people?
12. What is the influence of social media on political activism among the youth?
13. What challenges do you face in political activism
14. Why are the youths involved in political activism
15. Why are other youths not involved in activism
16. What are the advantages of offline political activism
17. Mention the disadvantages of offline political activism
18. What are the advantages of offline political activism
19. What are the disadvantages of political activism
20. What is the contribution of mobile phones in political communication
21. Rate the significance of social media visa vie other forms of media
22. How are the policies of media affecting the use of social media?
23. What suggestions to you posse about social media policies?
24. What suggestions do you make concerning the challenges faced in the use of social media for political purposes

Appendix V: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. PETER INGANGA BULUMA
of MOI UNIVERSITY, 0-30100
ELDORET, has been permitted to conduct
research in Kakamega, Nairobi Counties

on the topic: IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA
ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG
THE KENYAN YOUTHS

for the period ending:
12th October, 2019

Applicant's
Signature

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/24093/25719
Date Of Issue : 12th October, 2018
Fee Recieved :Ksh 2000

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND
INNOVATION ACT, 2013

The Grant of Research Licenses is guided by the Science,
Technology and Innovation (Research Licensing) Regulations, 2014.

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2. The License and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
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NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No **NACOSTI/P/18/24093/25719**

Date **12th October, 2018**

Peter Inganga Buluma
Moi University
P.O Box 3900-30100
ELDORET

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Impact of social media on political participation among the Kenyan Youths"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kakamega and Nairobi Counties** for the period ending 12th October, 2019.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioners and the County **Directors of Education, Kakamega and Nairobi Counties** 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.

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

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Kakamega County.

The County Director of Education
Kakamega County.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION

Telephone: 056 – 30411
Fax   : 056 – 31307
E-mail   : wespropde@yahoo.com
When replying please quote

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
KAKAMEGA COUNTY
P. O. BOX 137 - 50100
KAKAMEGA

REF: KAK/C/GA/29/17 IV/

21st December, 2018

Peter Inganga Buluma
Moi University
P. O. Box 3900 – 30100
ELDORET

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

The above has been granted permission by National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation vide their letter Ref: NACOSTI/P/18/24093/25719 dated 12th October, 2018, to carry out research on **"Impact of social media on political participation among the Kenyan Youths" Kakamega and Nairobi Counties"**, for a period ending **12th October, 2019.**

Please accord him any necessary assistance he may require.

FREDRICK M. KIIRU
CDE/CEB – SECRETARY
KAKAMEGA COUNTY

Republic of Kenya
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION

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

When replying please quote

Ref: RCE/NRB/RESEARCH/1/64/VOL.I

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

Date: 19th October, 2018

Peter Inganga Buluma
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 "*Impact of social media on political participation among the Kenyan Youths
in Kakamega and Nairobi Counties*".

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted for a period ending
12th October, 2019 as indicated in the request letter.

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

JAMES KIMOTHO
FOR: REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION
NAIROBI

Copy to: Director General/CEO
             National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
             NAIROBI

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE PRESIDENCY

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR & CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Office Mobile No: 0707 085260
Email-cckakamega12@yahoo.com

When replying please quote

Ref No: ED/12/1/VOL.IV/49

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
KAKAMEGA COUNTY
P O BOX 43-50100
KAKAMEGA.

Date: 21/12/2018

PETER INGANGA BULUMA
MOI UNIVERSITY
P O BOX 3900-30100
ELDORET

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your authorization vide letter Ref: NACOSTI/P/18/24093/25719 dated 12th October, 2018   by NACOSTI to undertake research on *"impact of social media on political participation among the Youth in Kakamega County"*. I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out the research on the same.
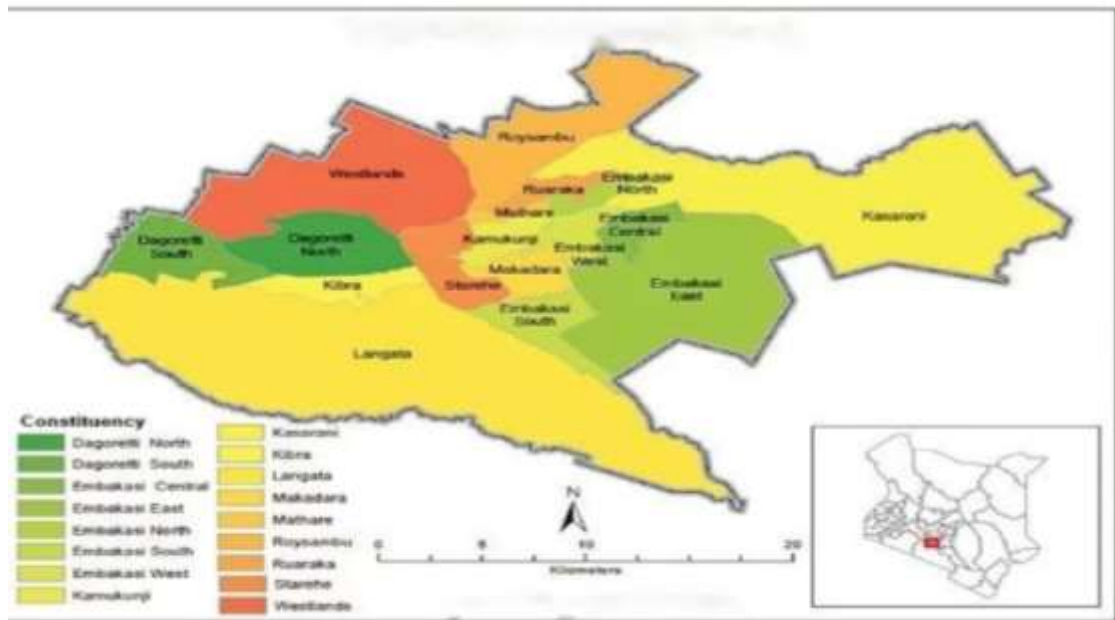
COUNTY COMMISSIONER
KAKAMEGA COUNTY

V. CHERONO
FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
KAKAMEGA COUNTY

Appendix VI: Map of Study Area

Kakamega County
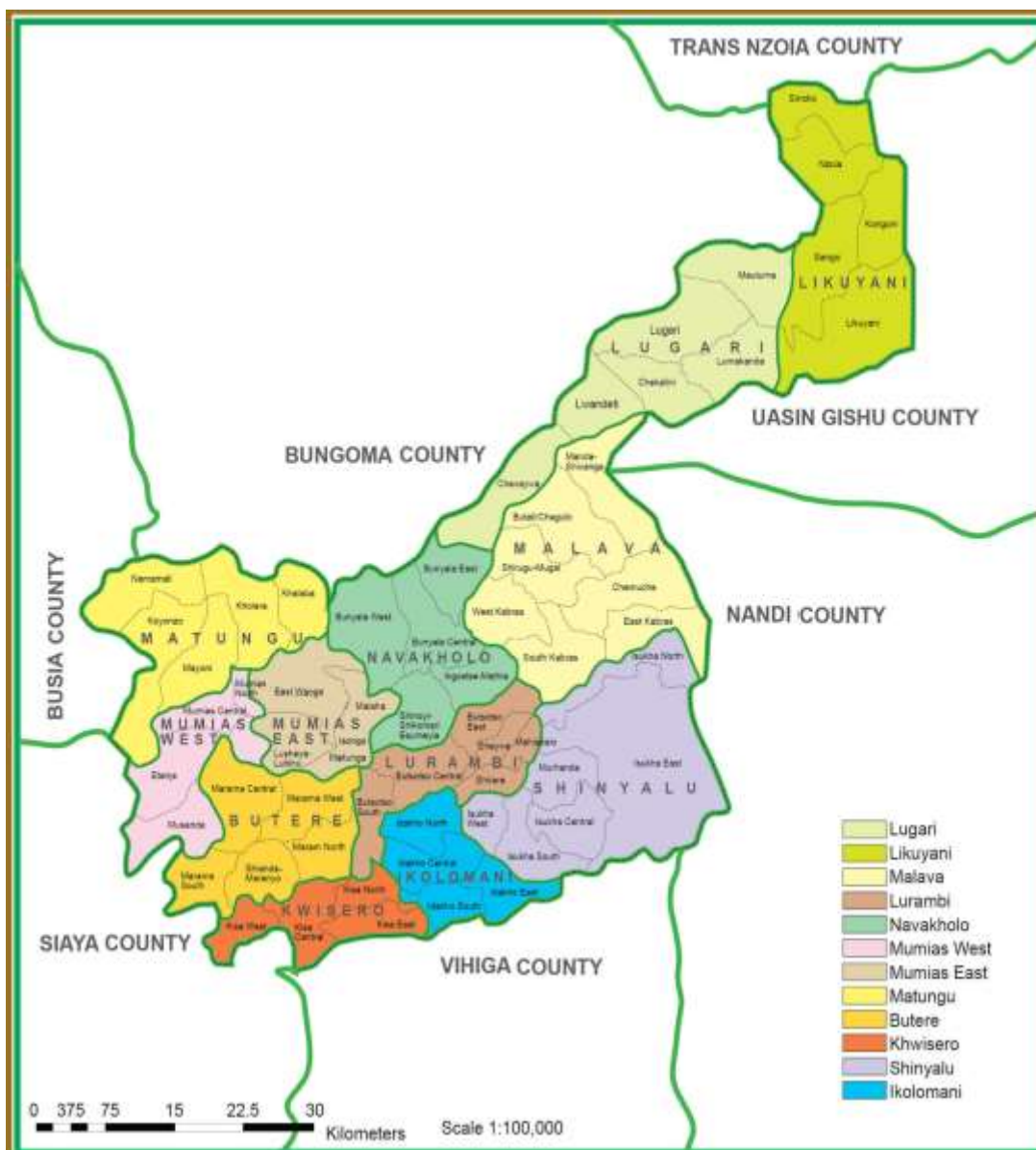
Nairobi County

Appendix VII: Anti-Plagiarism Certificate

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PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE

This certificate is awarded to

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In recognition for passing the University's plagiarism

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