

Social Media Peace Messages Campaigns in Peace Building Since Kenya 2007 Elections

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ABSTRACT: *Social media is considered to contribute to government accountability and transparency, human rights activism, the development of civil society and practices of citizenship. The use of mobile phones and the Internet, for example, allow for news of any inappropriate government actions to quickly reach the public and to be challenged. If you want to liberate a society just give them the internet. The objective of this study Analyze Social Media Peace Messages Campaigns in peace building since 2007 Elections. Kenyan bloggers became a critical part of the information flow in the country, starting from the three-day ban on live broadcasts, when it is reported that the web traffic from within Kenya shot through the roof. The study revealed that during the Kenya 2007 Elections, while the international media only scratched the surface of what was happening, and the traditional media partly resigned to censorship due to fears of repression, the social media offered swifter, more subjective, and more detailed coverage during a fast moving and changing situation this in turn resulted into the main stream media relying on social media sites for information as they quickly gained confidence from the general public. Further findings is that, the use of mobile phones SMSs was very effective in deescalating the violence during Kenya 2007/2008 PEV because people were able to make informed decisions. Other felt that SMSs was used widely to convey peace messages because charges are cheap and reliable. They were also used to share prayers for the Nation and loved ones. Chiefs could update the Communities by forwarding message of peace to many. Findings revealed that during the Kenya 2013 Election, for the first time social media offered an opportunity by allowing Kenyans to question candidates using short mobile phone messages. However during the Kenya 2007 Elections, the social media peace messages campaigns were not a standalone activities. The mainstream media incorporated various social media platforms in peace building. In Kenya, political conflict prevention is made easier by the fact that the violence occurs around elections; the mainstream Media in conjunction with various social media platforms has time to reach out to leaders beforehand, set up programs, test software, and organize networks of trusted reporters which promotes peace. The study recommends promotion of continued efforts that scrutinize Social media behavior is desirable. This is because it is very difficult to verify the authenticity and accuracy of Internet reports, including visual materials. Audiences may not know who, when, where, and under what circumstances a particular photo or video clip was taken. Geo-referencing: Another feature of great importance in contexts of peace building in fragile or conflict-affected situations is the possibility to include GPS coordinates in the data transmitted. GPS coordinates allow to link pieces of information to the exact location where they are reported and software may present this information visually and spatially.*

Key Words: Social Media, Peace, Campaigns, Peace- building

1.0 Introduction

In the Global arena, while the exact significance of the New Media “revolution” for peace-building is still hard to pin down, the use of social networking sites Facebook and Twitter to organize protests in Colombia, Iran and Egypt, and the use of text messages for activist mapping by the Ushahidi website during the post-election violence in Kenya, are promising examples of the possibilities. The greatest potential of social media is their ability in peace-building interventions are more participatory. Radio phone-in shows are ideally suited to spur this dialogue within the safety of anonymity Adam and Schoemaker, (2010). It's in conjunction with this background that this study sought to Analyze Social Media Peace Messages Campaigns in peace building since 2007 Elections.

In Africa for example, millions of finger plucking and poking at touch screen phones, a logging in posting, can bring down a government as they did in Egypt declares, Countemanche (2011). According to Goldstein and Rotich (2009), Kenya has perhaps the richest blogging tradition in sub-Saharan Africa, which made their use even more effective and readily available during the election. Kenyan bloggers became a critical part of the information flow in the country, starting from the three-day ban on live broadcasts Kenya's post-election violence demonstrated the effects that new technology can have. Despite a history of violence associated with elections, these were the first elections where mobile phones and access to vernacular radio stations were widely available.

Shortly after Kibaki was proclaimed winner on December 30th, 2007, the Kenyan internal security minister John Michuki announced the ban of live broadcast, (The Standard 2007). During the media black-out, online networks proved to be the next best option to some Kenyans. A social media platform is known as ‘Ushahidi’ meaning ‘witness’ in Swahili. The Ushahidi platform was developed as a rapid prototype model that enabled individuals to submit reports via SMS or e-mail detailing acts of violence and trouble spots. A Kenyan could send an incident report with location details to a short code number, (Cuman, 2012). Also Sisi Ni Amani programs that are not technology-focused, one of their core projects is a SMS text message subscriber service that provides information about leadership, local news, and provides a neutral source for information during tense periods such as elections (Sisi Ni Amani, 2013). This effort is in direct reaction to the violence in 2007/8, which was facilitated in part by mobile phone communication; Sisi Ni Amani is making an effort to take the same medium and use it to project political information, and knowledge about peace building. Sisi Ni Amani currently runs mobile phone SMS programs across Kenya, and works with national networks such as the National Steering Committee on Peace building and Conflict (NSC) to increase the reach of their programming to as many communities as possible (Okuthe, 2013). When the violence erupted, the leading mobile service providers, Safaricom and Celtel, allowed providers to send messages of peace and unity provided by the service providers themselves. This was after the then Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Safaricom, Michael Joseph, convinced the government not to shut down the SMS. During this time, Safaricom and Celtel called upon citizens to shun violence and keep the peace, (Munyua, 2011).

2.0 Theoretical Framework

The study was based upon the social responsibility theory. Social Judgment Theory is a self-persuasion theory proposed by Carolyn Sherif, Muzafer Sherif, and Carl Hovland (1980), defined by Sherif and Sherif as the perception and evaluation of an idea by comparing it with current attitudes. Social judgment theory is a framework that studies human judgment. The concept was intended to be an explanatory method designed to detail when persuasive messages are most likely to succeed. Attitude change is the fundamental objective of persuasive communication. SJT seeks to specify the conditions under which this change takes place and predict the direction and extent of the attitude change, while attempting to explain how likely a person might be to change his or her opinion, the probable direction of that change, their tolerance toward the opinion of others, and their level of commitment to their position, (Carolyn, and Carl 1980).

Specifically, a listener judges how much the message agrees or disagrees with his or her own attitude, (Schwartz, 2000). Communicated messages through the Media especially through the use of readily available Social Media platforms can make people change an attitude towards others if there was animosity or conflict in the community. Judging from commutated message, people can make informed decisions on how to live together, work together and the best ways on conflicts/animosity reduction. If the communicated message by the Media is rejected by the audience it is therefore calls for a balance between the Media and audience to ensure that the Media are successful in delivering the intended message and on the other hand, the audience are able to receive the message with acceptance.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design which according to Churchill (1991) is appropriate where the study seeks to describe the characteristics of certain groups, estimate the proportion of people who have certain characteristics and make predictions. The research was carried out in selected hotspots where 2007/2008 PEV in Kenya was more prevalent. These are Kibera in Nairobi County, Kibuye in Kisumu County, Flower Farms in Naivasha in Nakuru County, Likoni Town in Kwale County and Kiamba Rural Village Church, in Uasin Gishu County. At least 30% of the total population is representative (Borg and Gall, 2003). Thus, 30% of the accessible population is enough for the sample size. The target population of this study was 30% (200) of online bloggers, websites administrators and population from the members of the public who are daily users of these online platforms. These are Ushahidi, Sisi ni Amani other Social Media platforms such as Face book; Blogs; Twitter and Youtube. Therefore, 60 Social Media users (200x0.3), sampled from the hotspots.

The researcher adopted Convenience Sampling to get information from the respondents from online bloggers, websites administrators and on various Social Media platforms hosts under study and also from the members of the public. The researcher then did convenient sampling where by the selection of the informants was on the first come first served basis. In other words, the volunteers/ first top names given to the researcher were the chosen informants hence cutting off others who wanted to share their views.

4.1 Social Media Commonly Known in Kenya

During focus group discussion, the consensus was that Face book, Twitter, you Tube, Instagram, blogs and Mobile Phone Short Messages Services (SMs) were and are still the most known Social Media used widely in Kenya. The study sought to find out the popularity and strengths of social media as tools of conflict prevention and peace building. It was thus important to look at the penetration and popularity level of the social media platforms amongst the respondents. The study revealed that during Kenya 2007/2008 PEV Mobile Phone Short Messages Services (SMs) was the most popular used with 56%, followed by Face book with 17%, as indicated in Figure 4.1.

During the PEV in Kenya smart phones were not available, so most of us used our mobile phones for texting and calling. We could not share photos through our mobiles. Smses are easy to do and they are cheap compared to browsing in the internet, (Mburu, 10th February, 2017).

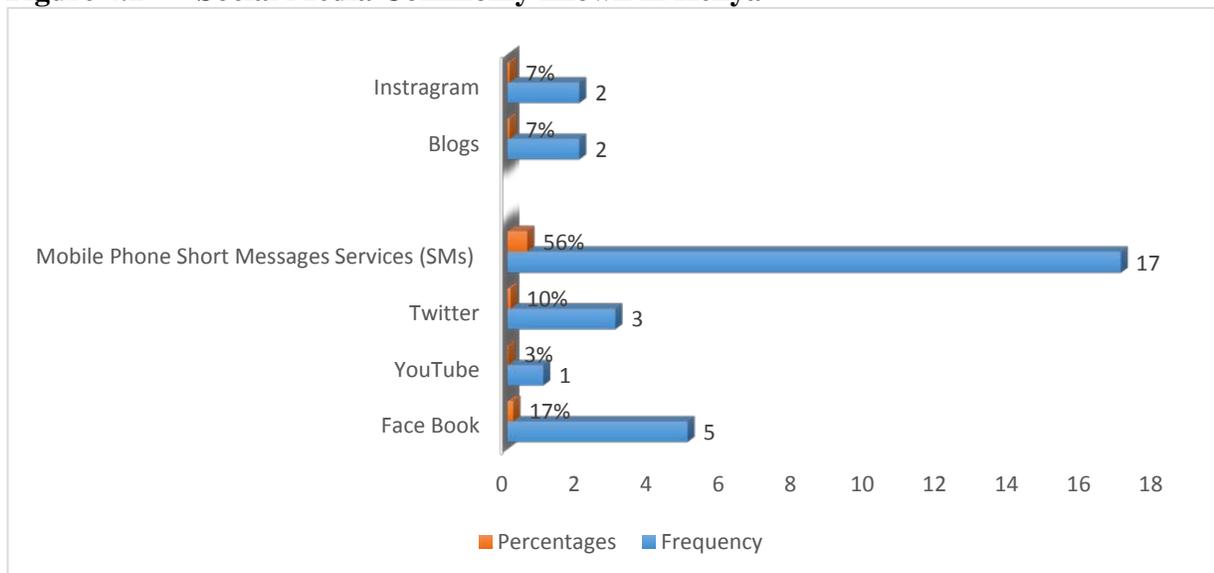
Findings from FGDs revealed that Mobile Phone was highly used to relay information instantly unlike Broadcast or Print Media. Kenyans have access to mobile phones and therefore peace messages were relayed within shortest time possible and also it can reach many people. Further from the literature review, the findings indicated that there were some inspiring examples of using mobile devices as social media tools in Kenya's crisis. One such example is Voices of Africa, a concept of mobile reporters, which was also practiced in time of violence in Kenya. These local reporters used mobile phones and a portable keyboard to write, take photos, short videos, and also to publish their reports online.

In March 2010 there were a little over two million Facebook accounts according to the Communication Council of Kenya CCK (Wambugu (2011)). This accounts for about 5 percent of the entire population. These numbers are much large now with more and more Kenyans joining Facebook. A great majority of those on social media are the youth. The reason for their popularity has been attributed to the easy access from cell phones. There is a Short Message Service SMS to Facebook for instance, that sends a text to the users on every time something happens on Facebook. According to Goldstein and Rotich (2009), Kenya has perhaps the richest blogging tradition in sub-Saharan Africa, which made their use even more effective and readily available during the election.

Kenyan bloggers became a critical part of the information flow in the country, starting from the three-day ban on live broadcasts, when it is reported that the web traffic from within Kenya shot through the roof. The influence grew further when radio broadcasters began to read entries from influential bloggers over the airwaves, helping them reach not 5 per cent, but 95 per cent of the Kenya population. Shortly after Kibaki was proclaimed winner on December 30th, 2007, the Kenyan internal security minister John Michuki announced the ban of live broadcast. The ban had been ordered in the interest of public safety and tranquility (The Standard 2007; AllAfrica.com 2007).

Social media is considered to contribute to government accountability, human rights activism, the development of civil society and practices of citizenship. In terms of accountability and transparency, it is increasingly difficult for governments to hide or manipulate information or to act inconsistently with citizen concerns. The use of mobile phones and the Internet, for example, allow for news of any inappropriate government actions to quickly reach the public and to be challenged (Haider 2011).

Figure 4.1 Social Media Commonly known in Kenya



Source: Researcher (2017)

4.2 Effectiveness of Social Media in Peace building

The question sought to know whether Social Media can be used effectively among the Communities in peace process in Kenya. 80% of the respondent indicated yes, 20% indicated No. All epicenters, registered high frequency of agreement to the fact that social media was effective in peace fostering process during the PEV period as indicate in Table 4.1. Further findings from one a participant from the FDGs revealed that Social Media was and can be used in peace process in Kenya because of the fact that many Kenyans have access to mobile phones and therefore peace messages can be relayed within shortest time possible and also it can reach many people.

As a resident of Naivasha, Nakuru County I no longer buys newspapers, instead I spend the sixty shillings in buying internet bundles and reads online version of the newspaper and eventually connect to social media to see what my friends are saying about the political developments". This was during the FDGs at Sunflower Flower Farm, (Jackie, 10th February, 2017).

Jackie comments are articulated by findings from various Scholars from the literature review in that, Social media sites have distinct inherent properties conceptualized as affordances and network functionalities. These properties are seen to reduce the cost of civic and political participation. As we know the resources required for political participation are usually expressed in terms of time, money and civic skills, which include communication and organizational capacities. With online communication, the cost of information retrieval and communication in general falls and political participation becomes less costly (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, and Wollebæk 2012).

While the exact significance of the new media “revolution” for peace-building is still hard to pin down, the use of social networking sites Facebook and Twitter to organize protests in Colombia, Iran and Egypt, and the use of text messages for activist mapping by the Ushahidi website during the post-election violence in Kenya, are promising examples of the possibilities. The greatest potential of social media is their ability to make media peace-building interventions more participatory. Dialogue is the first step in creating the sense that disputes should be settled through negotiation rather than violence. Radio phone-in shows are ideally suited to spur this dialogue within the safety of anonymity, (Adam and Schoemaker, 2010).

For many years’ political violence upheavals, nuclear proliferation and international terrorism have posed the biggest threats to the nation state. We are now in an era in which the internet has been added to that arsenal. Where millions of finger plucking and poking at touch screen phones, a logging in posting, can bring down a government as they did in Egypt declares, Countemanche (2011).

“I’ve always said that if you want to liberate a society just give them the internet” said Wael Ghonim a Google executive and the administrator of Facebook page, Ghannam, (2010). The social media tools gave Hosni Mubarak’s opponents unprecedented ability to share information and organize their activities including the massive protests which riveted the world attention asserts, Tapscott (2011). As hundreds of thousands Egyptians in Cairo’s Tahrir square celebrated the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak on 11th February 2011, some wielded signs proclaiming “Thank you Facebook” (Harsch 2011). Although empirical evidence is thin, there is positive anecdotal evidence that social media can contribute to peace building by improving knowledge for conflict prevention and increasing contact and understanding between opposing groups (Oatley and Gagliardone, 2011).

Table 4.1 Effectiveness of Social Media in Peace building Process

Response	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	24	75%
No	6	15%
Total	30	100%

Source: Researcher (2017)

4.3 Mobile Phone SMSs and De-escalation of Violence in Kenya 2007/2008 PEV

During the Focus Discussion Group from Kenya Assemblies of God Church, Kiambaa in Uasin Gishu County in Plate 4.1 and findings from literature reveals that, shortly after Kibaki was proclaimed winner on December 30th, 2007, the Kenyan internal security minister John Michuki announced the ban of live broadcast.

Given the news blackout, many Kenyans turned to other means of getting and relaying information with mobile SMSes shorting high at the rate of 50% compared to other information channels. People used mobile phones to communicate and circumvent the media blackout. SMS messages were used to share news and feelings, but the ability to send mass SMS had been disabled by the government to prevent people from sending what it deemed to be “provocative messages.”

I think the media contributed to the reconciliation in Kenya when they broadcasted peace messages to all Safaricom users. Also, supermarkets like Nakumatt printed peace messages on their receipts to promote reconciliation. My sister told me that one time when she was withdrawing money from an ATM, instead of the usual thank you message, it was a peaceful message saying something about Kenyans reuniting. This was during the FGDs at Sunflower Flower Farm, (Nafula, 10th February, 2017).

Nafula comments are supported and collaborated by Scholar Munyua in that, the main mobile service providers, Safaricom and Celtel began sending texts with peace messages through their Short Message Service (SMS) to all mobile users in an effort to help shun the violence and instead promote reconciliation (Munyua, 2011).

These findings collaborate with the findings from one of the scholar Cullum who voiced that, during the media black-out, online networks proved to be the next best option to some Kenyans. This saw the creation of political blogs whereby bloggers wrote on what was going on wherever they were and asked readers to e-mail or post comments with details about incidences they witnessed. Eventually a mash-up was created showing where incidents occurred on a map. Following this development, a platform was created to serve as a centralized repository for on-the-ground reports from any Kenyan via SMS. This platform was what came to be known as ‘Ushahidi’ meaning ‘witness’ in Swahili. The Ushahidi platform was developed as a rapid prototype model that enabled individuals to submit reports via SMS or e-mail detailing acts of violence and trouble spots. A Kenyan could send an incident report with location details to a short code number (Cullum 2011).

When the Government announced a media blackout by the Minister, us Kenyans were left with no other alternative on how to get information and security updates other than through the use of Mobile Phone Short Messages Services (SMs)." This was during Focused Group discussion in Olympic Estate Kibera, Nairobi County, (Kibet, 10th February, 2017).

We Kenyans, during Kenya PEV we used our Mobile Phones to warn others of the places which were perceived to be insecure. We also used our Mobile Phones to pass Peace Messages to different Communities as we were encouraged by the media". This was during Focused Group discussion in Olympic Estate Kibera, Nairobi County (Eunice, 10th February, 2017).

For example, Chiefs could update the Communities by forwarding message of peace to many. Mobile Phone was used to relay information instantly unlike Broadcast or Print Media. Further finding from FGDs, is that the use of mobile phones was very effective in deescalating the violence during Kenya 2007/2008 PEV because people were able to make informed decisions. Other felt that SMSs was used widely to convey peace messages because charges are cheap and reliable. They were also use to share prayers for the Nation and loved ones.

Again, from the literature review the findings indicated that there were some inspiring examples of using mobile devices as social media tools in Kenya's crisis. One such example is Voices of Africa, a concept of mobile reporters, which was also practiced in time of violence in Kenya. These local reporters used mobile phones and a portable keyboard to write, take photos, short videos, and also to publish their reports online. The project covered the electoral process from the preparations to the post-election violence and riots. In situations of crisis when the mainstream media suffer restrictions and do not cover many events and grassroots opinions, new social media offer opportunities for a diversity of voices to be heard and connect with each other.

Rather than speaking for Kenyan people affected the situation, we could point to the several ways people raise their voices and make stories more nuanced. Further, Literature findings also revealed that, the 2013 elections saw the creation of Uchaguzi, A fancier version of its 2007 crisis-mapping online platform. It was created under the title of Uchaguzi, meaning "choice" in Kiswahili.

On this new platform, citizens could report on security and tension as in 2007, but also now items directly related to the vote, including announcements of results, problems with staffing and polling station administration and logistics, as well as, comfortably, any "positive events." While in 2007 reports were primarily submitted through SMS, this year reports could also be submitted through virtually any electronic means imaginable, including Twitter, email, and even a specially-designed Uchaguzi Android and iPhone app (Marchant 2013).

This collaborate in a study conducted by Mäkinen & Kuira, social media generated an alternative public sphere, which widened the perspectives about the crisis and enabled new kinds of citizen participation in discussing the situation. The crisis also showed the significance of the social media as a horizontal form for information sharing. The social media offered narratives by citizen reporters and digital activists that were more diverse than the views presented in the mainstream media and represented grassroots reactions during the crisis. While the international media only scratched the surface of what was happening, and the traditional media partly resigned to censorship due to fears of repression, the social media offered swifter, more subjective, and more detailed coverage during a fast moving and changing situation this in turn resulted into the main stream media relying on social media sites for information as they quickly gained confidence from the general public (Makinen and Kuira 2008).

For the first time social media offered an opportunity by allowing Kenyans to question candidates using short mobile phone messages, social media and crowd sourcing information and on the other hand social media affordances and network logic was leveraged by individual citizens wanting to encourage other citizens to take action resulting into the flourishing of hate speech (Abshir 2013). Further Findings from the literature review revealed that, the impact of the social media was clearly significant at the level of individual agency in the process of political mobilization. Social media played a significant role in facilitating the dissemination of news especially the feature of Twitter's news propagation in the use of re-tweets which allows users to record the importance they attach to an item of news. Popular tweets therefore spread very quickly through cascades (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, and Wollebæk 2012).

According to Goldstein and Rotich (2009), Kenya's post-election violence demonstrated the effects that new technology can have. Despite a history of violence associated with elections, these were the first elections where mobile phones and access to vernacular radio stations were widely available. Mobile phones and media (including social media) can play the roles of mirroring events and providing an important opportunity for reflection and insight into political dynamics. They can analyze the level of dialogue, the polarization, and progress towards reconciliation, including possible avenues for the peaceful resolution of disputes. In these cases, the media, internet and mobile phones acted as enablers providing a positive role in mediating divergent perspectives, and creating a national vision of reconciliation; a space for dialogue that helped to reduce polarization and supported transitional justice processes.

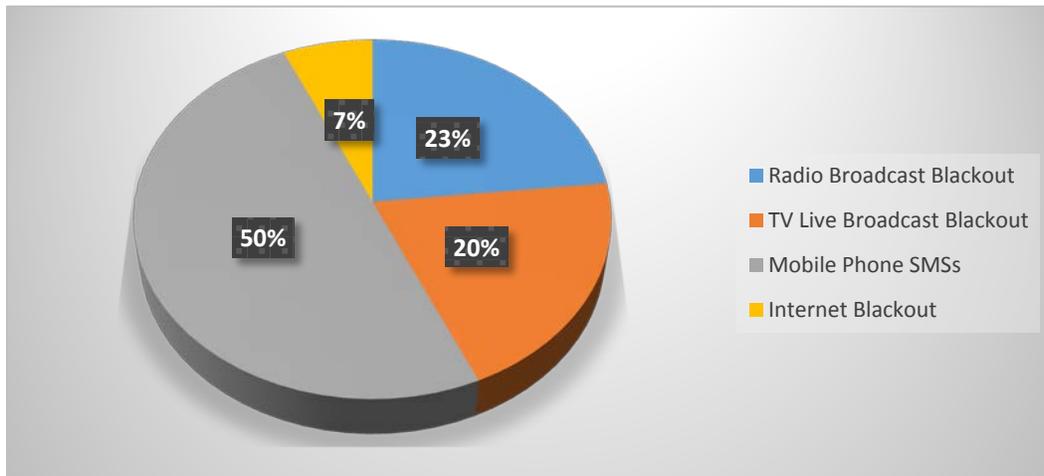
Sisi Ni Amani, which is Kiswahili for 'We are peace,' is a grassroots peace building program that links local NGOs in Kenya to support peace efforts at the local level. While Sisi Ni Amani has programs that are not technology-focused, one of their core projects is a SMS text message subscriber service that provides information about leadership, local news, and provides a neutral source for information during tense periods such as elections (Sisi Ni Amani, 2013). This effort is in direct reaction to the violence in 2007/8, which was facilitated in part by mobile phone communication; Sisi Ni Amani is making an effort to take the same medium and use it to project political information, and knowledge about peace building fostering. Sisi Ni Amani currently runs mobile phone SMS programs across Kenya, and works with national networks such as the National Steering Committee on Peace building and Conflict (NSC) to increase the reach of their programming to as many communities as possible (Okuthe, 2013).

Amani Kenya @108 operates differently from Sisi Ni Amani's mobile phone SMS information sharing since it is rather a data collection and management program. It is part of the Uwiano Platform for Peace comprehensive peace architecture, which encourages information sharing between government, international, and NGO actors in Kenya who are working to prevent violence (Chuma and Ojielo, 2012). This platform was what came to be known as 'Ushahidi' meaning 'witness' in Swahili. The Ushahidi platform was developed as a rapid prototype model that enabled individuals to submit reports via SMS or e-mail detailing acts of violence and trouble spots. A Kenyan could send an incident report with location details to a short code number (Cullum 2011). The text or e-mail could be rerouted through Frontline SMS, a free software that turns a laptop and a mobile phone or modem into a central communications hub (Vila 2010). The functionalities and affordances of the program, made it a very efficient means of spreading information among the population about forthcoming actions and demonstrations. The program enabled users to send and receive text messages with large groups of people through mobile phones. It did not require an Internet connection, and worked with existing plans on all GSM phones, modems and networks, and synched with the Ushahidi platform.

The message would then be received by an administrator who would verify the information with the original sender. If the report proved credible, it would be uploaded onto Google Maps in as close to real time as possible.

This we see as evidence of the capability of digital networks enabling social processes such as in this case information cascades whereby people are seen to make decisions sequentially, observe others' decisions, draw rational inferences from these decisions and imitate them or share them on the basis of their inference (Cullum (2011)).

Figure 4.2 Mobile Phone SMSs in de-escalation Kenya 2007/2008 PEV



Source: Researcher (2017)



Plate 4.1 Focus Discussion Group in KAG Church Kiambaa, Rev Stephen and Assistant Researcher Mr. Boniface Opany, Gentleman on right side.

4.4 Instant Messages from face book, YouTube, /Mobile SMS in Peace Building Since Kenya 2007 Elections

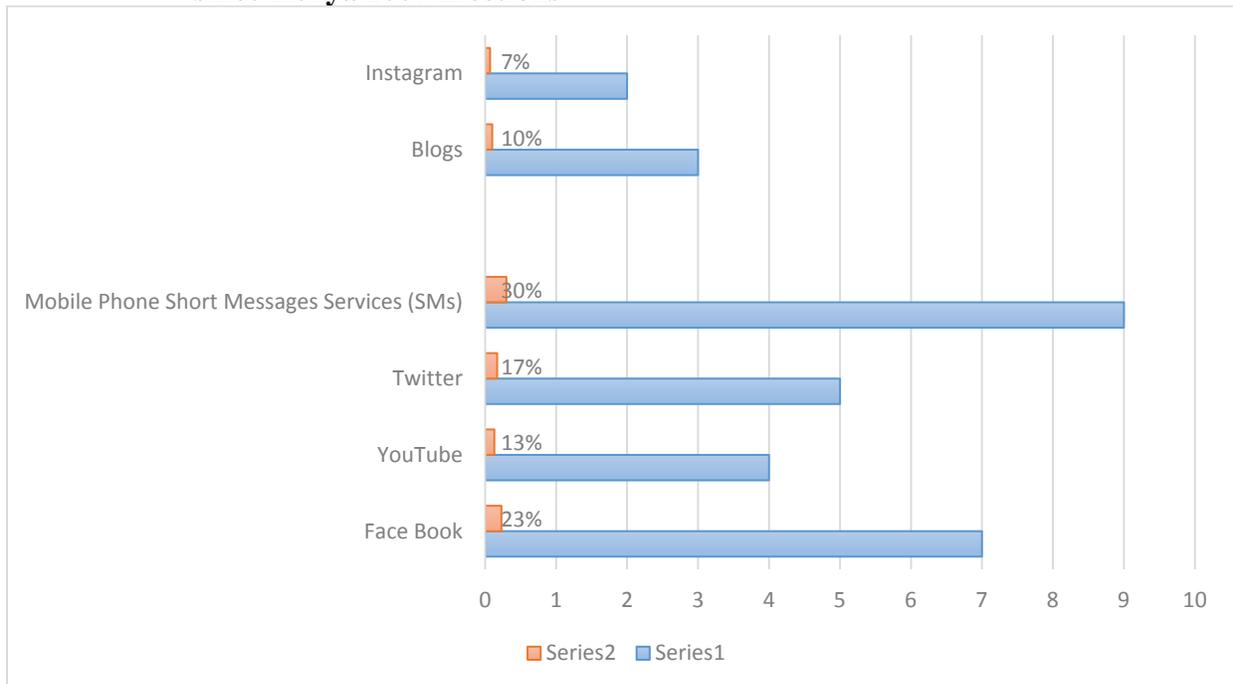
During the Focus Discussion Group from Focused Group discussion in Olympic Estate Kibera, Nairobi County during Peace Journalism Training in Plate 4.1, it was revealed that Mobile short messages were highly used compared to other social media platforms during Kenya 2007/2008 PEV. The usage as follows; Face Book 23%, YouTube 13%, Twitter 17%, Mobile Phone Short Messages Services (SMS) 30%, Blogs 10% and Intragam 7% as indicated in Figure 4.4.

These findings are consistent with Scholar Haider in that, Social media is considered to contribute to government accountability, human rights activism, the development of civil society and practices of citizenship. In terms of accountability and transparency, it is increasingly difficult for governments to hide or manipulate information or to act inconsistently with citizen concerns. The use of mobile phones and the Internet, for example, allow for news of any inappropriate government actions to quickly reach the public and to be challenged (Haider 2011). It also allows for people to follow decision-making processes and discuss issues of common concern. Kenya's post-election violence demonstrated the effects that new technology can have. Despite a history of violence associated with elections, these were the first elections where mobile phones and access to vernacular radio stations were widely available. Mobile phones and media (including social media) can play the roles of mirroring events and providing an important opportunity for reflection and insight into political dynamics. They can analyze the level of dialogue, the polarization, and progress towards reconciliation, including possible avenues for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Findings from the literature reviews indicates that, for many years' political violence upheavals, nuclear proliferation and international terrorism have posed the biggest threats to the nation state. We are now in an era in which the internet has been added to that arsenal. Finding from various blogs which promote peace in Kenya, it was revealed that Social Media Peace projects were established at a grassroots peace building program that links local NGOs in Kenya to support peace efforts at the local level. Sisi Ni Amani, which is Kiswahili for 'We are peace,' is a SMS text message subscriber service that provides information about leadership, local news, and provides a neutral source for information during tense periods such as elections.

This effort is in direct reaction to the violence in 2007/8, which was facilitated in part by mobile phone communication; Sisi Ni Amani is making an effort to take the same medium and use it to project political information, and knowledge about peace building fostering. In addition to re-tweet, hashtags also played a role in targeting online conversations and the communities that had been formed online and also bolster the position of traditional media online. There was a generally high concern of the possibility of another post-election violence and therefore, to counter the hate speech there was a lot of individuals who used Twitter to call for a peaceful election and post-election.

Figure 4.3 Instant Messages from face book, YouTube, /Mobile SMS in peace building since Kenya 2007 Elections



Source: Researcher (2017)



Plate 4.2 Focused Group discussion in Olympic Estate Kibera, Nairobi County during Peace Journalism Training

4.5 Factors that Necessitated Popularity of Social Media During Kenya 2007/2008 PEV

Discussions from Focused Group discussion in Likoni Social Hall, Kwale County, Focused Group discussion by KAG Church Kiambaa members, Uasin Gishu County and highlighting from Table 4.2 and Plate 4.2 and Plate 4.3, is that, respondents were asked to indicate the factors that necessitated Popularity of Social Media during Kenya 2007/2008 PEV, this was the indication:

To Share information was 17%, Express their fears were 33%, Conflict/ Animosity Reduction was 23% and security updates was 27%. This findings therefore reveals that the factor which necessitated popularity of the Social Media during Kenya 2007/2008 PEV was primarily to express fear and for security updates, thus the two coming very strongly.

Table 4.2 Factors that Necessitated Popularity of Social Media during Kenya 2007/2008 PEV

Response	Frequency	Percentages
Share Information	5	17%
Express fear	10	33%
Conflict Animosity Reduction	7	23%
Security	8	27%
Total	30	100%

Source: Researcher (2017)



Plate 4.3 Focused Group discussion in Likoni Social Hall, Kwale County



Plate 4.4 Focused Group discussion by KAG Church Kiambaa members, Uansin Gishu County

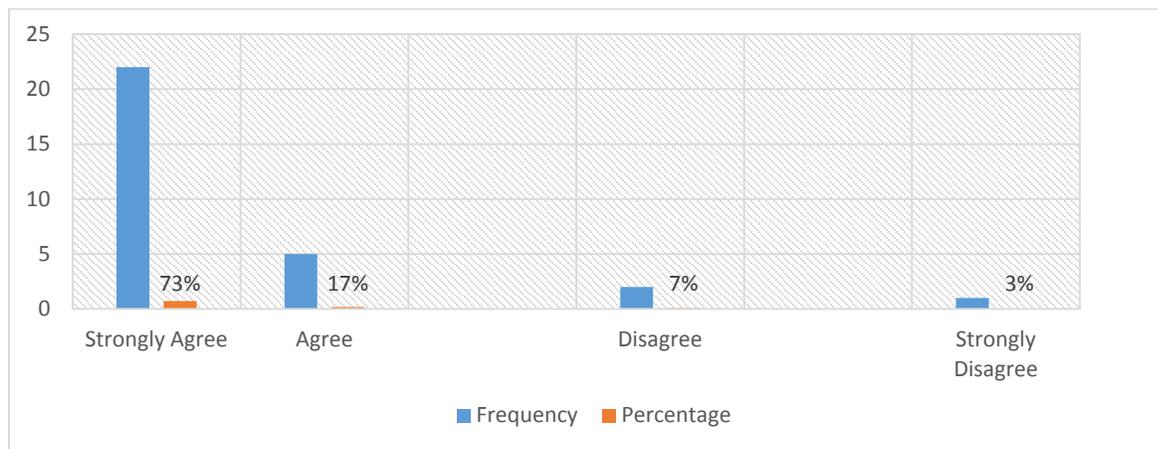
This findings are consistent with Goldstein and Rotich (2009) in that, Kenya has perhaps the richest blogging tradition in sub-Saharan Africa, which made their use even more effective and readily available during the election. Kenyan bloggers became a critical part of the information flow in the country, starting from the three-day ban on live broadcasts, when it is reported that the web traffic from within Kenya shot through the roof. The influence grew further when radio broadcasters began to read entries from influential bloggers over the airwaves, helping them reach not 5 per cent, but 95 per cent of the Kenya population. Social media is considered to contribute to government accountability, human rights activism, the development of civil society and practices of citizenship. In terms of accountability and transparency, it is increasingly difficult for governments to hide or manipulate information or to act inconsistently with citizen concerns. The use of mobile phones and the Internet, for example, allow for news of any inappropriate government actions to quickly reach the public and to be challenged (Haider 2011.

Kenya's post-election violence demonstrated the effects that new technology can have. Despite a history of violence associated with elections, these were the first elections where mobile phones and access to vernacular radio stations were widely available. Mobile phones and media (including social media) can play the roles of mirroring events and providing an important opportunity for reflection and insight into political dynamics. They can analyze the level of dialogue, the polarization, and progress towards reconciliation, including possible avenues for the peaceful resolution of disputes. In these cases, the media, internet and mobile phones acted as enablers providing a positive role in mediating divergent perspectives, and creating a national vision of reconciliation; a space for dialogue that helped to reduce polarization and supported transitional justice processes.

4.6 Influence of Social Media on Communities in Living Together, Working together and Conflict/animosity Reduction

From the findings from the FGDs as indicated figure 4.5 is that, all epicenters registered high frequency of agreement that most of Social Media platforms are able to influence Communities in living together, working together and conflict/animosity reduction in that 73% of the respondents strongly agreed, 17% agreed, 7% Disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed. These findings are supported by Jorgie who avers that, online participation has become an important avenue of citizen participation therefore the arrival of affordable smart phones on the Kenyan market increased internet use on cell-phones and caused an explosion of social media (Jorgic 2013). However even though a number of authors have expressed hope of increased citizen participation, others have been more skeptical about the internet’s democratic potential and in this case there was fear that Facebook and Twitter would take the place of text messages during the upcoming 2013 elections and be used to incite violence as it had happened in 2007/2008. Respondents perceived that interactive shows inspired audience participation, and implementation of policies at grassroots levels, to some extent they were used as platforms for listeners to relay Information. From the data, it was evident that new tools of social communication such as, text messaging and Facebook hastened the spread of information.

Figure 4.4 Influence of Social Media on Communities in living together, working together and conflict/animosity reduction



Source: Researcher (2017)

4.7 Satisfaction with the Influence of Social Media in Peace Building

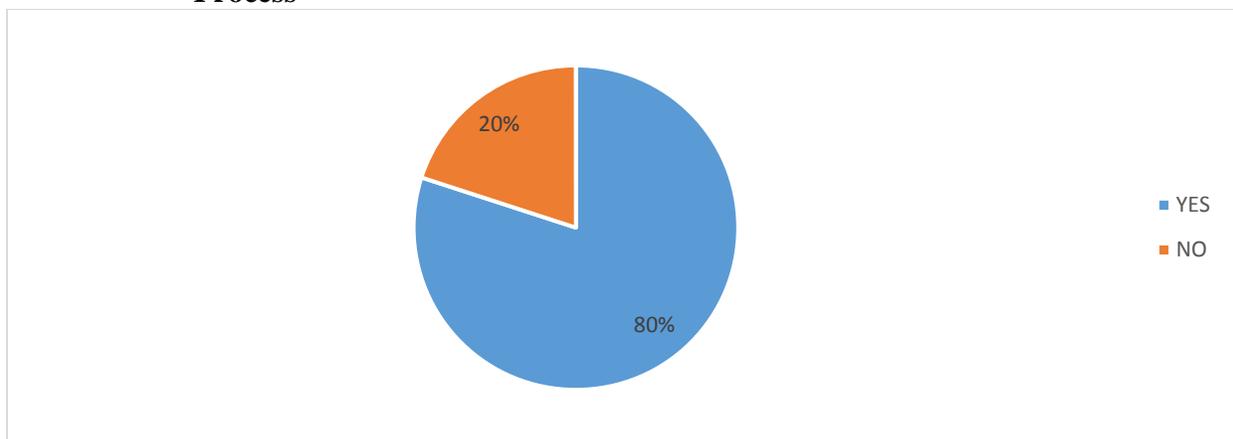
The question sought to know whether the respondent was satisfied with the Influence of Social Media in Peace Fostering process. As indicated in Figure 4.5 is that 80% of the respondent indicated yes and 20% indicated No. From all epicenters I learnt that the general public were satisfied with the Influence of Social Media in Peace Fostering process in that it helps Kenyans speaks out their feelings, fears and the do it honesty. Kenyans also felt that the Social Media especially SMSs are secure mode of communication.

Collaborating my findings with Goldstein and Rotich argues that, in Kenya, as in the rest of Africa, SMS is the most widely used digital application. The leading Kenyan online community, Mashada, during the elections period became overwhelmed with divisive and hostile messages. By the end of January 2008, the moderators decided to shut down the site, recognizing that civil discourse was rapidly becoming impossible. However, a few days later Mashada's site administrator David Kobia launched 'I Have No Tribe', a site explicitly centered on constructive dialogue among Kenyans. The Mashada site was then redirected to the new site of which it rapidly filled with comments (Goldstein and Rotich 2007). This was a period that accelerated the development of the Kenya blogosphere and blogs were suddenly a critical source for Kenyans in Nairobi and the diaspora. Rumors that were spread via text message were dispelled via an online dialogue that took place on blogs and in the comments section of blogs, *Ibid*).

Kenyan bloggers became a critical part of the national conversation, starting during the three-day ban on live broadcasts, when the web traffic from within Kenya shot through the roof. The influence ballooned further when radio broadcasters began to read influential bloggers over the airwaves, helping them reach not 5 percent, but 95 percent of the Kenya population. The people formerly known as the audience are simply the public made realer, less fictional, more able, less predictable (*Ibid*).

Further findings from secondary data further reveals that, we are now in an era in which the internet has been added to arsenal where millions of finger plucking and poking at touch screen phones, a logging in posting, can bring down a government as they did in Egypt. The feeling is that; if you want to liberate a society just give them the internet". Triangulation from literature/documents reviews, Interviews and the FGDs is that the potential of social Media as a tool for peace building is evident by the elaborate penetration of Social Media as a communication tool. This is because it's effectiveness derives from the fact that it's communication is built primarily on relationships and deals with the user's circle of influence".

Figure 4.5 Satisfaction with the Influence of Social Media in Peace Fostering Process



Source: Researcher (2017)

5.0 Conclusion

The study established that most of Social Media platforms are able to influence in peace processes. The study revealed that during the Kenya 2007 Elections, while the international media only scratched the surface of what was happening, and the traditional media partly resigned to censorship due to fears of repression, the social media offered swifter, more subjective, and more detailed coverage during a fast moving and changing situation this in turn resulted into the main stream media relying on social media sites for information as they quickly gained confidence from the general public. Further findings is that, the use of mobile phones SMSs was very effective in deescalating the violence during Kenya 2007/2008 PEV because people were able to make informed decisions. Other felt that SMSs was used widely to convey peace messages because charges are cheap and reliable. They were also used to share prayers for the Nation and loved ones. Chiefs could update the Communities by forwarding message of peace to many. Findings revealed that during the Kenya 2013 Election, for the first time social media offered an opportunity by allowing Kenyans to question candidates using short mobile phone messages.

However during the Kenya 2007 Elections, the social media peace messages campaigns were not a standalone activities. The mainstream media incorporated various social media platforms in peace building. In Kenya, political conflict prevention is made easier by the fact that the violence occurs around elections; the mainstream Media in conjunction with various social media platforms has time to reach out to leaders beforehand, set up programs, test software, and organize networks of trusted reporters which promotes peace.

6.0 Recommendations

The study recommends promotion of continued efforts that scrutinize Social media behavior is desirable. This is because it is very difficult to verify the authenticity and accuracy of Internet reports, including visual materials. Audiences may not know who, when, where, and under what circumstances a particular photo or video clip was taken. Also recommends Geo-referencing: another feature of great importance in contexts of peace building in fragile or conflict-affected situations is the possibility to include GPS coordinates in the data transmitted. GPS coordinates allow to link pieces of information to the exact location where they are reported and software may present this information visually and spatially.

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