



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND ELECTORAL
VIOLENCE IN AFRICA: KENYA CASE STUDY

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A Research Report submitted at the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master Arts in International Relations

Johannesburg, 2019

DECLARATION

I declare that this Research Report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts in International Relations by Coursework and Research, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

(Signature)

Signed on this day of..... 20..... in.....

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To my son, Thanduxolo, your free mind has rekindled my spirit to truly live and learn through success and failure. I am grateful to the love of my life Thami Oliphant, for your steady encouragement and sacrifices in supporting my time consuming academic and professional journey. I am forever indebted to my family of matriarchs, their lived accounts of life under apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa evoked my interest in world affairs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to my Supervisor, Dr Michelle Small for sharing her valuable expertise, providing unconditional encouragement and guidance. This research would have not been possible without the generous financial support of the Teaching and Learning Unit in Faculty of Humanities, at the Witwatersrand. I also wish to acknowledge EISA for allowing me to utilise its financial and academic resources and introducing me to the complex world of elections.

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ACRONYMS

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
AU	African Union
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
CA	Communications Authority
CIPEV	Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence
CRMS	Candidate Registration Systems
CVE	Civic and Voter Education
DCT	Digital Communications Technology
DoP	Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation
RTS	Results Transmission System
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EU	European Union
EPV	Electoral Violence Prevention
EVI	Electronic Voter Identification
EVM	Electronic Voting Machine
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems

ITU	International Telecommunications Union
KOT	Kenyans on Twitter
KIEMS	Kenya Integrated Elections Management System
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
LEON	Liberia Elections Observation Network
MCA	Member of County Assembly
MPs	Members of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Steering Committee
PAP	Pan African Parliament
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SMS	Short Message Services
TV	Television
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network

ABSTRACT

Existing frameworks that seek to respond to the challenge of preventing and managing electoral violence often omit technology as a relevant factor. Yet there is resounding proof that technology has wielded a sizeable amount of influence in shaping voter behaviour and perceptions, mobilising support, lobbying and ultimately influencing electoral outcomes. The utilisation of technology is evidenced by many examples; such as the use of biometrics to register and identify voters, the establishment of situation rooms and drones that collect data in real time, campaigns messages that are sent via text messages, video footage, radio, internet and bots that are used to collect and transmit information. The main problem that this study seeks to interrogate is the bi-directional outcomes generated by the use of ICTs in elections. There are cases where ICTs have been deployed to ferment violence, whilst ICTs have also proven to be useful in preventing electoral violence. Therefore, there is a need for research that assesses how ICTs can be better harnessed as a tool for the prevention and reduction of electoral violence in Africa. Notably, by exploring the use of ICTs by actors in Kenya's 2007, 2013 and 2017 elections, the study posits that collaboration and responsible use are key in the prevention of electoral violence. Moreover, the study highlights that the use of new ICTs in elections is important in the growing discourse about defining the parameters of electoral integrity.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Regular elections are a necessity for democratic consolidation. In Africa, member states have increasingly relied on international and regional instruments to assess their performance in the conduct of elections. Within this context, elections have been increasingly utilised to resolve intra-state issues pertaining to governance, power sharing and elite turnover. In Lesotho for instance, political elites have continuously held “snap elections” in efforts to resolve power struggles and ensure a constitutional means of alternating power (Letsie, 2015). The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), has played a vital role in promoting and recognising elections as a legitimate tool for the legitimate transfer of political power whilst rejecting unconstitutional change of power. The military assisted resignation of Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe in November 2017 for example, attracted a lot of international attention, with many asking whether the removal was through a coup or not. Elections also offer a means to forge a path towards democratic governance for states by promoting peaceful changes of power amongst leaders. The power of elections is further highlighted by the case of Gambia’s 2016 “good shock” presidential election whereby the ousting of Yahya Jammeh after 22 years in power through the ballot box occurred. These elections are credited for their pivotal role in halting the continuation of authoritarian rule (BBC News, 2 December 2016).

Elections normally fall under the domestic level of analysis, however given their use as a tool of diplomacy, foreign policy, donor aid, and conflict resolution by regional, continental and international actors, the relevance of elections has been internationalised. As a continental organisation, the African Union (AU), for instance, necessitates member states that are signatories to the ACDEG, to commit to the holding of regular elections as a democratic principle (ACDEG, 2007: chapter 7). The ACDEG is a normative instrument that outlines the AU’s benchmarks for assessing the gains of democratic governance at a continental level (Aniekwe, Oette, et al :2017). Thus, the need to improve the quality of elections held in the Continent is a key

element of the Charter. Specifically, Article 19 of the ACDEG further mandates member states to notify the AU of its scheduled elections and to invite the AU to observe the electoral process. Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of ACDEG held in Pretoria South Africa on November 2017, the AU reported that the Charter had been signed by 45 out of its 54 member states and ratified by 30 member states (Mangu, 2007). In March 2018, Zimbabwe became the 46th member state to sign the Charter, a few months before it was due to hold its elections following President Mugabe's resignation (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum: 27 March 2018). The slow rate of ratification amongst Member States is attributed to lack of political, lack of citizen awareness or knowledge. As an example, Studies in West Africa found that a lack of political will to implement and enforce the ACDEG and lack of awareness amongst citizens were key reasons for non-subscription to the Charter (NDI: 2013). Political implications posed by ACDEG when Member States fail are also cited as a hindrance. Aggad and Apiko (2017) notes that there is also the perception that ACDEG is only for Member States that already meet the Charters set norms and standards as those that do not will face criticism and negative attention.

An observed phenomenon with the regular holding of regular elections (irrespective of their transparency, fairness and freeness) is that they have produced varied outcomes. Osei-Afful (2017) concurs that although the increased acceptance of regular elections is a positive for African democracies. However, the quality of elections held remains a top area of concern considering that the Africa faces higher threats to electoral integrity when compared other continents. Although normative international and regional instruments that govern the elections have been commendably successful in terms of securing the holding of regular elections. These instruments have not recorded similar success in securing the quality of elections that are held on the African continent. As these instruments are limited when it comes to responding to electoral contests that are increasingly utilising new ICTs to influence electoral outcomes. They are limited primarily because many of the instruments were adopted at a time when technology was not envisioned as a significant force in African elections. Thus, it is difficult to apply these instruments that do not have clear pronouncements or guidelines on how to deal with cases whereby technology (that thrives on deregulation and privacy) is utilised to rig elections, spread false information, spark protests and produce

fraudulent election results. Therefore the influential role of technology to spread fake news that has the power to spur on violence and often without consequences shows that Although African norms and standards are continuously evolving, they do not respond at a pace that enable election administrators and governments to effectively make informed decisions especially where the use of technology is concerned. The AU for instance introduced ACDEG in 2007 to promote the holding of regular free and fair elections and promote democratic changes to governance (ACDEG: 8-9). However, the Charter is silent on the role of new ICTs in the elections. Article 17 (3) for instance only calls on member states to ensure *'fair and equitable access by contesting parties and candidates to state controlled media during elections*. It is only in 2017, that the AU adopted its guidelines on access to information and elections in Africa (ACHPR, 2017:). Notably, article 25 of the guidelines call for media and internet regulatory bodies to ensure fair media coverage on both traditional and online media platforms. Article 26 of the guidelines also call on telecommunications authorities to refrain from implementing internet shutdowns during elections. These guidelines were adopted following growing recognition that poor access to credible information during elections not only breeds distrust among electoral stakeholders but can lead to electoral violence (ACHPR, 2017:5). Thus it appears that there is a significant limitation in the timeous adoption of normative instruments that respond to the fast changing electoral context.

The use of technology can yield two opposing forces dependant on how it is applied and suited for its environment. Firstly, technology can improve the quality of an election if its application improves the management of an election. In contrast the use of technology carries with it, risks that may result in the credibility of an election being tarnished. There are countries that have experienced generally peaceful and credible elections, (South Africa 2014, Botswana 2014, Ghana 2016) and those for whom elections have resulted in wide scale violence and irregularities (Kenya 2007, Ivory Coast 2010, Nigeria 2011). Lindberg and Van Ham (2018:217) point out that cases of electoral fraud and electoral violence have emerged as key factors that undermine the quality of elections. According to Birch and Muchlinski (2017:386) electoral violence is more prevalent in electoral authoritarian and hybrid States across Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Atuobi (2008) on the other hand, argues that election related violence in Africa is so prevalent that even elections that might have been marred by violence

in any period of the electoral process are still considered to be free and fair. Small (2015) reiterates the high recurrence of electoral conflict in Africa. Noting that the Social Conflict in Africa Dataset (SCAD) dataset (2013) illustrates that from 1999-2010, the top ten most violent elections in Africa resulted in a total of 2652 deaths. Sierra Leone had the least violent elections with 28 lives lost (1996 elections) whilst Kenya (2007 elections) accounted for the most violent elections with 1502 deaths. This has prompted a need to respond to electoral violence through a research based understanding the causes of electoral violence and also finding possible solutions to electoral violence.

Existing frameworks that seek to respond to the challenge the preventing and managing electoral violence often omit technology as a relevant factor. Despite the observation that technology has wielded a sizeable amount of influence in key global occurrences particularly with the field of economics, conflict and culture. In the early 21st century, ICTs played a pivotal role in ushering in a shift from industrial to post-industrial societies that are dominated by seamless trade and production across borders and conflicts that are won by drones. Despite the positive record of technology in shaping the global world, the connection between technology and global politics remains relatively understudied in International Relations (IR) studies (Fritsch, 2016). A possible explanation for the neglect of technology is that the IR discipline conceptualises technology as a peripheral factor outside the international system. Fritsch (2016) describes the role of technology in IR as that of a residual variable whereby, technology is only introduced as the last resort when all other possible explanations for structural and process change in global affairs had been exhausted.

Within the context of the electoral environment, there is evidence that practitioners in the field of elections have increasingly become dependent on technology to plan and oversee the electoral process. According to the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2017), Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) increasingly rely on ICTs, DCTs and social media as a means to communicate to the electorate and more often these institutions are increasingly shifting from traditional modes of administering elections by utilising electronic voter machines (EVMs) and Electronic Voter Identification (EVI) systems amongst others, to reduce human error and improve the efficiency and credibility of the electoral process. Namibia for instance, was the first African State to utilised EVMs in 2014 (ABC News, 2014). The DRC recently followed suit in 2018,

citing the need to reduce the length of its ballot paper as key reason for its adoption of EVMs. In the field of election observation, observer groups for example utilise smart tablets to report their findings and to fill and send digital checklists on polling procedures. An Election Observation Mission (EOM) report on Uganda's 2016 parliamentary and presidential elections, notes that smart tablets have been incorporated into the methodology of observing the electoral process (EISA Election Mission Report no 51, 2016). Considering that electoral processes in Africa are also increasingly becoming more technical in nature, research on electoral violence seldom ponders on the intersection between new ICTs and election violence. Thus, the role of technology in electoral processes is theoretically understudied in the same manner that technology as an explanatory factor is theoretically understudied in IR.

This research utilises the case of Kenya's past three elections from 2007-2017, to better understand the role that ICTs play in fermenting and preventing violence in elections on the African Continent. Through analysis of the utilisation of ICTs in the 2007, 2013 and 2017 elections, this research finds that ICTs are not sufficient to incite or prevent violence. Thus, they cannot be treated as a sole determinant of electoral violence. The research finds rather that collaboration efforts and responsible use of ICTs by electoral stakeholders determines the role that ICTs play in preventing or fermenting electoral violence.

Research Objective

The main aim of this study is to explore ways in which ICTs have been utilised in elections for purposes of fermenting electoral violence and preventing electoral violence.

Problem Statement

The use of ICTs by incumbents and challengers can affect the outcome of elections. There are cases where ICTs have been deployed to ferment violence. On the other hand, new ICTs have also proven to be useful in preventing electoral violence. Therefore, there is a need for research that assesses how new ICTs can be better harnessed as a tool for the prevention and reduction of electoral violence.

Research Question

The main research question that the thesis seeks to answer is: *How can new ICTs be used to reduce the prevalence of violence during African elections?* The case of Kenya's 2007, 2013 and 2017 general elections.

Hypothesis

ICTs can prevent or reduce electoral violence if they are effectively managed and regulated by all actors involved in the political and electoral process.

Rationale

Increased access to ICTs exposes a growing need to better manage and regulate their utilisation. Mancini (2013:1) notes that in 2011, the developing world accounted for 75 per cent of the world mobile phone subscriptions. Furthermore, Africa had five countries¹ whose mobile phone subscriptions exceeded their populace by the end of 2011. This increase is largely attributed to the youth bulge and the high rate of urbanisation in African States.

It is worthwhile to note that, the discourse on technology and IR is evolving in response to the proliferation of participatory communication technologies known as web 2.0 technologies (Ashely et al. 2015:8). This discourse is broadly shaped by concerns on how ICTs impact on matters of national sovereignty, human rights and development. ICTs impact on the sovereignty of States because they do not need to be physically situated in States where they operate. It therefore difficult for governments to regulate ICT tools that are often located in 'safe havens' that protect them from being held accountable (Mutahi and Kimari 2017; Van Balrcum:2009). ICTs impact on human rights because they present a tension between the need to protect individual freedoms and the competing need to ensure that individual freedoms do not infringe upon national interests. ICTs impact on development because their utilisation can either empower or disempower the work force. It is anticipated that the fourth industrial revolution will introduce disruptive technologies that force people to change their means of living and that its main beneficiaries will be those that understand how to utilise these technologies for maximum gain (Schwab, 2016; Philbeck et al. 2018:6).

This entails exploring possible opportunities for better coordination/ engagement through ICTs, assessing the need to incorporate ICTs into areas of work and developing regulatory frameworks or policies for ICT usage and access. Through this perspective the study enables a broadened yet clear objective of grappling with the issue of how ICT tools can be better harnessed in order to ensure that they effectively work for the greater good specifically towards reducing electoral violence.

¹ Botswana, Gabon, Namibia, the Seychelles and South Africa

The study will explore how the correct utilisation of ICTs can be influential strategic tools in the prevention and reduction of electoral violence. As explained in the background section of this proposal, IR theories and frameworks addressing issues of peace processes and conflict resolution have a deficit in theoretically reflecting on the practical utilisation and impact of technology on the ground. Given that it is an emerging and evolving field of study.

Methodology

This study is qualitative. Thus, information will be gathered through open source primary sources, secondary sources and grey literature. The primary sources consulted will be existing legislation and policies on elections and ICTs, treaties, charters. The secondary sources to be consulted will be journal articles, book, newspaper articles and social media platforms. 'Grey literature' will include reports, statements and publications from national and international organisations and think tanks. Data from the think tanks and organisations such as EISA, TCC and NDI will be collected mainly through their web pages and email will be used to seek clarification where necessary. These think tanks and organisations have practical knowledge on African electoral process due to their presence and frequent engagement on electoral issues in African States where they interact with a wide variety of actors. Where necessary, descriptive statistical analysis will be applied. The research problem will be answered through analysis of a single country case study involving three elections. Kenya is selected because of; its prominence as a technology hub in Africa, it has regularly experienced electoral violence at varied levels and new ICTs have been deployed in its elections. In addition, the research employs process tracing as qualitative research method. In this regard, the research will analyse the role of ICTs in Kenya's past three elections, namely 2007, 2013 and 2017 by tracing the phenomenon of technology across each election through primary, secondary and grey literature sources. Mahoney and Goetz (2006) state that qualitative researchers employ a cause-effects method of explaining outcomes. Thus, they utilise outcomes as their point of departure in tracing back the factors that cause and explain the outcome. This will enable the research to understand whether an increase in access to new ICTs increases the possibility of electoral violence. Thematic analysis will be employed to understand the role of ICTs in either fermenting or preventing electoral

violence. analyse data gathered on the role of new ICTs in producing varied outcomes in the 2007,2013 and 2017 elections. Themes will be derived mainly from literature available on the different types of new ICTs utilised in the Kenya's last three elections. The themes derived will be aimed at understanding what kind of ICTs are deployed during elections and the rationale for their deployment

The study identifies new ICTs as the independent variable (IV) which causes the outcome. However, it is important to note that technology in and of itself cannot act to produce an outcome. New ICTs are tools of knowledge dissemination that still require activation and usage by humans. Thus, it is how new ICTs are deployed that has a bearing on the outcome. Whilst electoral violence is the dependent variable (DV). The manner in which new ICTs are deployed can be explained through various intervening variables. In this research, some of the intervening variables identified are: (the quality of leadership, ethnic tensions, electoral system design, election management, law enforcement) as these also have the potential to affect the IV. Although these intervening variables are not exhaustive, they will be useful in explaining how they can either strengthen or weaken the power of new ICTs to reduce electoral violence. However, it is also important to note that intervening variables are difficult to measure. As their presence can be at varying degrees and is often determined by a variety of factors. They hardly stay constant overtime. As an example, election management will change as frequently as various other factors change. This change itself can be spurred by the quality of commissioners in an EMB, the availability of funds, civic and voter education initiatives, implementation of new electoral legislation amongst others. Notwithstanding there is still value in utilising intervening variables as the control factor in studying how constant the relationship between the IV and DV is in the absence or presence of IVs. This will enable a better understanding on the causal relationship between the IV and DV. Electoral violence will be operationalised by tracking the mortality rates, number of displaced people, and recorded incidents of election related violence across the three elections.

Limitations

A limitation to the study is that literature that focuses specifically on the role of technology in relation to the management of electoral violence in Africa is relatively

scarce. Due to the fact that access to ICT tools (cell phones, social media) is still an area that is currently growing. Another limitation emanates from the nature of the sources that are available on technological tools. The most primary sources for understanding new ICTs require that one obtain information from the source itself and the reliability of such primary sources such as blog entries can come under scrutiny considering that they are hardly peer reviewed or verifiable. Initially, I intended to conduct field research, however this was not possible due to time operational constraints². The study will attempt to mitigate these limitations by triangulating information from various sources of where possible as a means to verify information.

Defining key terms

New ICTs

The term ICTs refers to a broad range of technologies that aids in accessing, creation, storage, dissemination and management of information. They incorporate both hardware (computers, mobile phones, scanners etc.) and software systems (internet, telecommunications etc). New Information Communication technologies refers to technologies that have been modified and developed for the purposes of encouraging participation and interaction amongst its users. Ashely *et al.* (2009) identifies two generations of websites that make up ICTs. The first generation of websites embodies traditional forms of media that are hierarchical with regards to information dissemination and do not enable interaction amongst and between the providers and consumers of information. On the other hand, New ICTs fall within second generation websites often referred to as “web 2.0” websites. The websites have evolved, from the first-generation approach by adopting more participatory methods of disseminating information thus empowering users.

² Field research would have been conducted through the joint collaboration between EISA, Wits School of International Relations and the University of Michigan which will analyse Local patterns of election related violence and peace. Although the project was set to commence in early 2018, it will now commence the mid-half of 2019.

Social Media

Social media can be defined as social networking tools that require internet and subscription to the network in order to interact with other users within the network. According to CLC (2019) social media requires both software technology and a hardware such as mobile phones and computers. It functions on content that is created and shared by network users by enabling users to share personal and general information within their chosen social media platform such as Facebook through texts, pictures and videos. Furthermore, social media enables them to express their emotions and reactions through emoticons, words, videos and images. Social media, encompassing platforms such as twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, You tube, Instagram etc. form part of New ICTs. These platforms have gained recognition as key instruments in the management and prevention of electoral violence however, current discourse tends focus specifically on social media as an alternative resource to traditional media, especially when governments impose bans on the freedom of press for public media institutions. They are often ungoverned and function within the prescribes of individuals. According to Corbett et al. (2009) social media is particularly useful in maintaining communication amongst people especially when communities are dispersed.

DCTs

Digital Communication Technologies refers to internet-based tools that enable interactive communication amongst people. There four different types of DCTs, namely text based DCTs such as blogs/email, audio DCTs such as skype podcasts/video calls (CLC:2019).

Electoral violence

At the most abstract level, electoral violence can be understood as any event in which threat or coercive force coincides with the electoral process. Burchard (2015) defines electoral violence as a subset of political violence that can be distinguished from other

forms of political violence based on its timing and intent. Its timing usually coincides with scheduled elections and is intended at affecting the electoral outcome. Moreover, it refers to the use of any form of harassment and intimidation that is used throughout the electoral cycle (pre, during and post-election). In the pre-election period, electoral violence can be utilised to intimidate voters and therefore decrease prospects of free and fair elections. In the electoral process, violence can be targeted towards disrupting polling procedures in efforts to influence election outcomes (Höglund, 2009; EISA, 2010). Whereas in the post-election period violence can be employed as a means to disenfranchise election victors or to punish specific voters for their voting decision. Birch and Muchlinski (2017:2) go on to add that election results, political parties and opposition groups tend to be the main sources of contention causing violent protests. Furthermore, Cheeseman and Klaas (2018: 98) identify a correlation between electoral violence and multiparty elections. Noting that electoral violence tends to increase as multiparty competition increases. Typical examples of electoral violence include politically motivated assassination, intimidation and arrest of political leaders, harassment and censoring of freedom of speech often directed at media houses and the use of violence to displace voters.

According to Birch and Muchlinski (2017:387) electoral violence prevention (EVP) refers to different types of electoral assistance activities that focuses on the prevention or mitigation of electoral violence. Understanding that electoral violence manifests itself in various forms. EPV can be carried out by national and international actors based on their varied interests. Birch and Muchlinski (2017: 386) note that EPV has been recently recognised as an important subtype of international electoral assistance. This entails that EPV ought to be composed of specially designed programmes that are implemented by neutral bodies in efforts to improve electoral integrity. The rationale being that elections with integrity are most likely to have outcomes that are accepted by a majority of stakeholders and therefore reduce the need for deploying violence.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This literature review explores the role of ICTs and DCTs in elections on African soil. It will therefore first broadly examine the role of elections in International Relations. This will assist in understanding why elections are an important international relations issue. The review will then proceed to provide an overview of some of the challenges of holding elections in Africa and then provide an overview on the role of ICT and DCTs in elections.

Elections as part of the International Human Rights Framework

Elections are an integral part of the international human rights framework. Public International law recognises the need for states to hold regular elections, the need to protect the rights of individuals to elect representatives to govern their State's, the right to stand for election and also protects several freedoms such as freedom of assembly, freedom of association amongst others (Davis-Roberts and Carroll, 2010:420). The Universal declaration of human rights (1948) states that:

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country and (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.” -Article 21

Whilst the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICPR) states that:

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: “(a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (b) To vote and to be elected at periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors...”-Article 25

As such, the holding of regular elections and the protection of becomes a crucial aspect of protecting civil liberties and complying with the treaties and charters that States have signed and ratified as members of the international community. In Africa,

the African Union (AU) commits member states that are signatories to the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) to the holding of regular elections (ACDEG, 2007: chapter 7). In this regard, elections are held in high regard as a mandatory exercise that should occur at regular intervals in line with international and regional legal instruments. Regional groupings also reflect in their statutory instruments the need for their member states to hold regular elections and ensure that civil and political rights are protected (Reilly, 2017: 17).

Elections as part of public international law

Beyond the framing of elections as a mandatory exercise in line with international obligations. Literature has also delved into the task of developing election standards in accordance with international obligations (Davis-Roberts&Carroll, 2010; Boda, 2005). Based on the critic that obligations are often too broad and therefore need to be further unpacked in order to bridge the gap between enshrined principles and their actual implementation. This approach had been adopted by most international election observer groups in the form of checklists that assess electoral activities in accordance with principles enshrines in the international, regional treaties and charters that Member States have signed and /or ratified. The International Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation (DoP) (2005) states that international election observation:

“... assesses election processes in accordance with international principles for genuine democratic elections and domestic law, while recognizing that it is the people of a country who ultimately determine credibility and legitimacy of an election process.”

Elections and Global Security

Elections also form an integral part of the security framework in IR. The international community has a mandate to intervene in situations whereby a state is unable to protect its citizens be it due to civil war, political instability or if the state itself violates the rights of its people. This right to intervene is defined in United Nations (UN) Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The right to intervene mandates the international community to take collective action in protecting citizens against acts of gross human rights violations in accordance with the UN Charter (UN background note:4). As such, the R2P is also relevant in cases of electoral violence in order to prevent gross human

rights violations (Halake, 2013:6). Côte d'Ivoire is an early example of the implementation of R2P in 2011 due to post-election violence. Whereby UN resolution 1975 affirmed the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) by authorising it to take any necessary measures to protect life and property following an escalation of post-election violence sparked by outgoing President Laurent Gbagbo refusal to transfer power to President Ouattara who had won the elections at the time. Shortly thereafter, UNOCI undertook a military operation and President Gbagbo was tried by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of crimes against humanity (UN background note: 4).

[Elections for Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding](#)

Elections are also a tool for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. They are utilised as a means to broker power sharing deals especially in post-conflict settings. Aside from the holding of regular elections, the international community often requires states that are emerging from war or conflict to hold elections. This requirement is often contained in peace agreements. Whereby, the need to hold an election is often an important condition required to maintain the validity of the agreement. Lyons (2004: 37) notes that in the 1990's, elections in Africa were held as a key pillar of conflict resolution. Therefore, the ending of war through democratization led to a proliferation of peace agreements that required the holding of post-conflict elections as a means to establish a legitimate authority to govern and as also acted as an exit strategy for the international community. According to Flores and Nooruddin (2012:559) elections offer the advantages for establishing a legitimate post-conflict government and reduce the need for long, costly, and politically unpalatable international missions. Relly (2017:18) notes that almost half of all peace deals contained a requirement for elections to be held within three years and some even call for the holding of elections within a year or earlier. Some key motivating factors for the early holding of elections includes donor requirements for elections to be held as a signal towards stability and the need for the localization of authority in the post conflict era.

[Liberal vs Authoritarian Perspectives on Elections](#)

However, there has also been a gradual shift in the discourse of the efficacy of elections in fostering democracy. Based on observations that the holding of regular

elections does not guarantee democratic consolidation (Orji, 2013:94). Proponents of this argument challenge that the holding of regular elections does not always result in consolidated democracy. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) (2018) reports a 1,6 per cent decline in the number of people living under democratic regimes. Furthermore, the decline is vivid when only 4,5% per cent of the world population lives in a full democracy whilst more than a third of the population live in authoritarian States. Although the statics point to a democratic recession, there is a significant rise in political participation, with more citizens turning out to vote. The EIU (2018), goes on to add that the rise in political participation signals that voter apathy towards political institutions should not be mistaken as apathy in exercises of democracy. Nonetheless, the liberal perspective conveys that elections yield significant influence on the democratic status of a State. Since elections are increasingly viewed as a process that can either lead to democratic progression or regression. On the other hand, Reilly (2017:18) argues that by design elections are most likely to expose social cleavages and existing differences as opposed to highlighting commonalities. Thus, it can be argued that elections alone cannot bring about democracy due to their competitive nature which thrives on political competition. In addition, there are scholars that have explored the phenomena of 'electoral authoritarianism' (Diamond, 1999; Geddes 2005; Nooruddin and Flores 2012; Abbink 2017). Under electoral authoritarianism, it is argued that even authoritarian states hold elections in order to establish hegemony and assert national sovereignty and development. These elections are founded on democratic structures however in practice, the institutions do not embody core liberal practices such as freedom of expression and consultative practices in general.

[Overview on the use of New ICTs in elections](#)

The role of technology in elections will most likely remain a highly important topic in academic, civic and governmental spaces for as long as technology evolves. In the field of elections, technology has emerged primarily as a solution to electoral administration. Considering that, the discourse of technology is not entirely new in the study fields of IR and politics, sources available tend to be explorative accounts on the nature of technologies such as; features and benefits as well as their potential across a broad spectrum of fields concerned with development. This section is aimed at providing an overview of the main arguments surrounding the use of technologies in

elections. In so doing, this chapter provides a foundational understanding on the broad benefits and challenges involved in using technology in elections. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) recorded a global estimate of 7.7 billion mobile cell phone subscriptions in 2017. Furthermore, an estimated 79 per cent of the mobile cell phone subscriptions were in developing states (ITU, 2017). Furthermore, youth are the main users of ICTs, with an estimated 80 per cent of youth in 104 States connected to the internet. It has therefore become increasingly important for practitioners and academics working in field of elections to increase their knowledge and capacity to work in countries that adopt ICT tools in administering electoral processes. The chart below shows show that most ICT subscriptions (cell phones, internet, broadband) have increased consistently over the past 17 years, with fixed telephone subscriptions (landlines) being the only ICT component that is on the decline. One could argue that the decline in telephone subscriptions is evidence of the shift to web 2.0 technologies, that utilise wireless technology to connect people faster at their convenience.

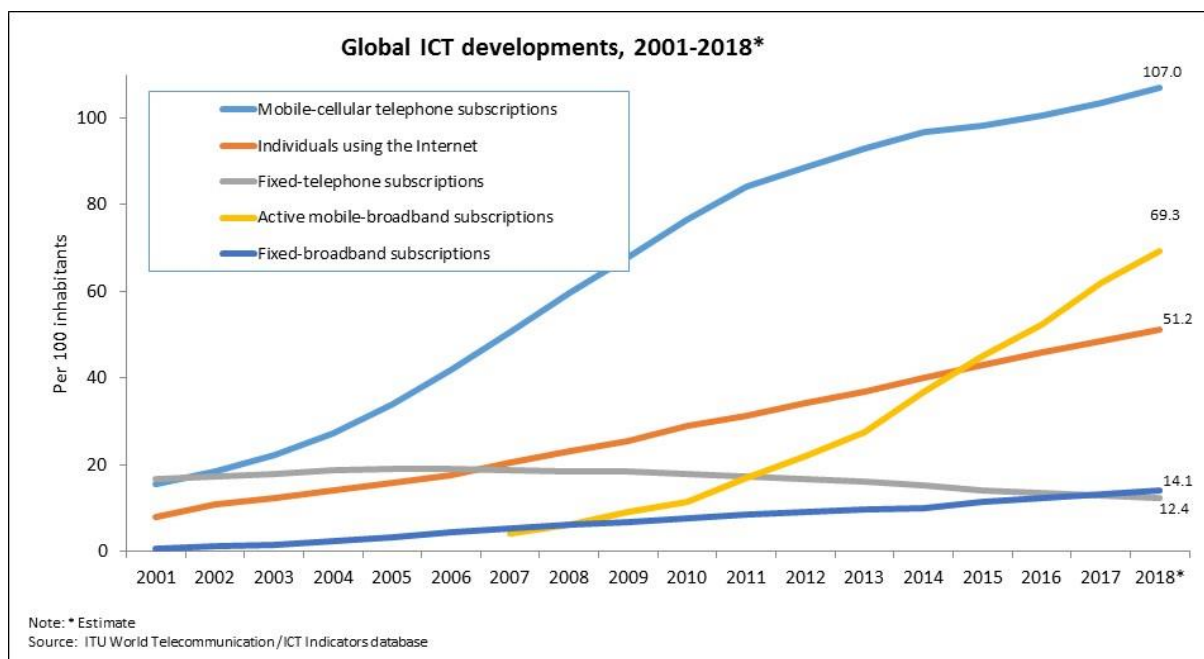


Figure1: (ITU, 2018).

Horizontal versus Vertical approaches of deploying New ICTs

Literature available on the utility of New ICTs conveys tensions with regards to the challenges and opportunities stemming from their ability to enable a horizontal flow and vertical flow of communication in addressing violence. The main concern raised is whether horizontal approaches (mainly deployed by citizens) can be as effective as vertical approaches (mainly deployed by governments) in effectively analysing the information gathered and responding effectively (Muggah and Diniz 2013). Specifically, there are those that favour the horizontal flow of communication as a positive step in improving early warning and crisis response mechanisms and providing cost effective means of consultative dialogue (Mancini, 2013; Diamond 2007, Shirky 2011). Noting that new ICTs have improved State-Citizen relationships by substituting top-down approaches of disseminating information with more localised and bottom-up approaches that encourage participation and interaction. On the other hand, there are those that focus on the vertical flow of communication through New ICTs as an effective tool in maintaining security and preventing violence. Noting that States have increasingly deployed New ICTs and DCTs in order to gather intelligence (Muggah and Diniz 2013:34). Examples of vertical application of ICTs and DCTs include camera surveillance in public spaces, geolocating government vehicles through Global Positioning System (GPS), imposing tax on social media users and internet shutdowns (Muggah and Diniz 2013; Namubiru, 2018).

Mobilising power of ICTs

ICTs and DCTs are gaining recognition for their power to mobilise citizens for the pursuit of common goals and interests. There is a growing body of literature that focuses mainly on the utility of social media for advocacy (Kreutz 2009, Shirky 2011, Castells, 2012). According to Shirky (2011) social media tools, are changing the rules of the game by enabling even the most undisciplined movements to collectively bargain for common goals through the reduction of coordination costs.

The Rhodes must fall movement (Mangcu, 2017), the *#Gambia has decided* (Facebook : *Gambia Has Decided* Page³), and the Arab spring (Castells, 2012) in North Africa are some examples of the capacity of social media to enable civic society groups/movements that are largely informal to deliver coordinated responses to political events in a uniform manner without necessarily subscribing to formal political organisations. In Tunisia, Mohamed Bouazazi, a vegetable seller set himself alight in front of a governor's office after police had confiscated his stock of fruit and vegetables. In reaction, video footage of immediate protests shared on social media, ignited similar protests against dictatorship in the Arab region (Lageman 2016). In South Africa, a group of students at Rhodes University sparked a revolution by demanding that the Statue of Cecil Rhodes as a symbol of racism be removed from campus. Under the twitter handle *#Rhodes Must Fall*, the movement infiltrated Universities across South Africa and the world. In a moment of frustration, *#Gambia has decided*, a youth led movement, launched an online and offline campaign against President Yayha Jammeh's refusal to leave office after his defeat in the 2016 presidential election poll. Such examples demonstrate that New ICTs and DCTs are gaining prominence as liberators in times of State repression and human rights violations.

ICTs and Internet Shutdowns

The Democracy index (2017) noted that civil liberties are continuously being eroded despite the vast opportunities presented by the internet and social media. As evidence suggests that freedom of speech and access to information is continuously threatened by State and non-State actors. As a result, has explored the rising phenomena of internet shutdowns to stifle the power New ICTs especially around election time. Internet shutdowns occur when governments block internet access for users in order to limit communication and access to information. According to Mc Carthy (2018) internet shutdowns are usually enacted in anticipation or following mass protests or public unrest. Castells (2012:7) explains that governments conduct internet shutdowns in order to limit the autonomy of social actors created by mass communication. In Africa, the trend of internet shutdowns is becoming an area of concern. According to McCarthy (2018) four out of ten countries that frequently experienced internet

³ <https://www.facebook.com/GambiaHasDecidedPage/>

shutdowns were in Africa⁴. In 2017, the AU Commission adopted guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa which speak against the phenomenon of internet shutdowns during election time. Article 26 of the guideline's states that:

“The body responsible for regulating the broadcast media and any other relevant national security, public or private body involved in the provision of telecommunication services shall refrain from shutting down the internet, or any other form of media during the electoral process.”

Shirky (2011) recognises two main perspectives that negate the ability of ICT tools such as media to bring change in national politics. The first argument is that the tools are ineffective as the bulk of participants of those ICT instruments might simply subscribe to platforms and become passive bystanders as opposed to engaging in real physical action. Similarly, Brooks (2018) argues that contrary to utopian beliefs, social media platforms are designed to provide minimal information that evokes emotions in order to keep people online as opposed to fostering real and engaging discussions. In this sense, social media platforms are viewed as a commercial tool selling subscriptions as opposed to empowering users. The second argument levelled is that ICT tools particularly, social media tools often worsen political situations since States also improve their use of the tools to suppress dissent under the premise of public safety and security. Mueller and Schmidt (2013) note that governments argue for greater control in governing the internet based on national interests and security.

Assessing the Impact of ICTs

Shirky (2011) provides two key explanations regarding the problematic aspect of measuring the impact of technology. Firstly, ICT tools often provide varied outcomes and therefore make it difficult to assess their ability to effect political change. This is echoed by Makinen and Kuira (2008) and Rotich and Goldstein (2008) through the case study of Kenya's 2008 post-election crisis whereby they identify the dual role SMS system played in initially spreading messages of hatred and violence and then messages of peace in efforts to do damage control. Secondly, ICT tools are relatively new and therefore there is limited empirical work on the power of technology on political issues. Corbett *et al.* (2009) notes that formal mechanisms to assess impacts

⁴ Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Chad, Egypt

if ICTs are mostly still under construction although useful frameworks aimed at measuring the impact of ICTs on development are emerging. Shirky (2011) asserts that attempts to measure the power of ICT tools to yield positive political gains, it is important to understand that a long term perspective ought to be applied and that the effectiveness of ICT tools is most effective in States that have a strong civil society that is able to effectively veto actions of government.

The politics of ownership

Another key element to consider when assessing the impact of technology in relation to political matters is that of the politics of the ownership of ICT tools that are being utilised across the globe as well as the interaction amongst States regarding internet freedoms and accessibilities to those ICT tools (Shirky;2011). The key contention made in this regard is that although ICTs have virtually empowered social networks through access. The impact has not altered the distribution of power amongst States. Ruiz and Barnett (2014) find that power through ownership of ICTs is still largely concentrated in developed States. Noting that in 2014, the top 16 companies within the international internet network had headquarters in only seven countries. Furthermore, America accounted for almost 40 per cent of all internet links. Through such observations, many have argued that new ICTs have brought about a digital divide within the international community. Whereby developed States are at the core as intellectual property holders of the bulk of ICTs and DCTs. Whilst, the majority of developing States are in the periphery as consumers (Al Jazeera, 2016). In Africa, access to the internet breeds inequality at a national level, as internet access is concentrated in urban areas and those in rural areas are left behind. At a Continental level, Africa is in the far corner of the periphery, this is attributed to lack of basic infrastructure (mainly electricity) which in turn limit internet access (Al Jazeera, 2016; Rice-Oxley and Flood, 2016). Nonetheless, it is clear that ownership of ICT tools is important because it raises the question of what the unequal distribution of power entails and what this means for developing States in terms of access and development. Furthermore, the question of ownership is important because those that have control, ultimately have the power to construct the world in accordance with their values and interests (Castells, 2012:4; Philbeck *et al.*:2018).

Instrumentalist and Environmentalist approach to ICTs

According to Shirky, (2011) governments tend to employ an instrumentalist approach as opposed to environmentalist approach when dealing with the question of internet freedoms. The shortfall of the instrumentalist approach is that it places too much focus on limiting the ability of States to censor the public utilisation of foreign websites such as google whilst underestimating the power of local platforms/ tools such as cell phones that enable citizens to communicate privately amongst themselves. Researchers have attempted to apply both views in discussing the impact and utility of different ICT instruments whether it is social media, blogging, geomapping, cellphones etc. This method is evident in the research of both (Goldstein & Rotich, 2008 and Ashely et al. 2009). They argue that cell phones are most effective and inclusive for widespread low-cost communication. Therefore, cell phones are more in line with the environmentalist view as opposed to the instrumentalist view of ICTs. The use of the bulk Short Message Service (SMS) to distribute information rapidly, is relatively cheap and effective since a large segment of the populations have mobile phones and SMS does not need internet connection.

Kreutz (2009) states that "...not all communication solutions need to be technological. In the development context, the key question must always be: how can this potential tool help?" Hence, this statement advocates for a shift away from the dissection of ICT tools towards discourse on their suitability for achieving certain outcomes. Noting that the most effective approach of assessing the impact of ICT tools is to focus on how potential tools in question can provide solutions to problems. Therefore, Kreutz (2009) cautions against the current trend in discourse that tends to place emphasis on the need to digitise solutions to problems.

[Overview of Election Stakeholders and their use of ICT's and DCT's](#)

Elections are also vital for political functioning and the citizenry. Birch and Muchlinski (2017:1) note that elections have the ability to birth various forms of collective action. Beyond the need for States to comply with the universal benchmark of holding elections regularly, elections serve an important role for a variety of actors. Broadly these actors can be civil society groups, governments, election management bodies (EMB's) and political parties/independent candidates. Accordingly, for each of the above-mentioned actors, elections are integral to the attainment of their respective

objectives. Additionally, these actors may also utilize ICT's and DCTs as integral instruments to attain their objectives. This section will explore how ICTs are being deployed by key electoral stakeholders, namely EMBs, civil society, political parties/candidates as election observers.

Uses of ICTs and DCTs by EMBs

To EMB's, elections provide a platform to display and enhance the capacity of the body in fulfilling its broad mandate of administering elections. Noting that the functioning powers and mandates of EMBs vary in accordance with national laws. An EMB refers to an entity that has the legal authority to manage the conduct of elections as prescribed by the law. In order to fulfill their respective mandates, EMB's may employ ICT's and DCT's for various activities throughout the electoral cycle. Civic and Voter Education (CVE), Polling, Results tabulation and management, voter registration and boundary delimitation are some common examples where technology can be incorporated for various reasons. Usually in the interests of efficiency, transparency and accountability. EMBs can adopt technology for purposes of establishing and maintaining a credible voter register that contains valid and verifiable information of voters (ACE project). National elections tend to be hotly contested; therefore, inaccurate voters register can be a major source of contestation during the pre-election period as it has the potential to jeopardise the entire election. This threat was seen in the Zimbabwe 2018 elections, whereby Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) was employed for the first time to create an entirely new voters roll.

EMB's can also utilize electronic voter identification systems to verify the identity and eligibility of voters to vote at a polling station by comparing a voter's personal details to a national database of all voters. At polling station level, the IEC of South Africa utilises "Zip-Zip machines" referring to a handled machine that scans the barcode of a voter's identification document and verifies their eligibility to vote at the particular polling station. EMB's can also utilize technology for boundary delimitation and establishing polling stations through Geographical Information Systems (GIS). During the election period, EVMs and vote counting systems, results transmission systems, results publication systems are some examples of technology that can be employed to speed up processes and reduce human error. Voter Information systems can also be applied to convey important information on the electoral process as required.

Normally these systems enable voters to find out where they are voting, who the candidates or parties contesting the election are, details of election results and statistics, access to official public notices or statements from the EMB on any developments such as the dropout or disqualification of candidates or political parties and electoral calendar activities as well as legal frameworks related to the electoral process.

The central argument in the adoption of technology by EMBs has been that it needs to be procured on a sound assessment of needs. Technology therefore needs to provide a solution to the specific problems that is deemed to be problematic. In the case of Mozambique, key motivations for switching to BVR machines were that the optical mark recognition (OMR) forms used for the 2004 national elections had failed to provide a credible and comprehensive voters register as well as the fact that the film used for the Polaroid cameras (voter photographs) was no longer being produced (Wall 2010: 218-219).. Kenya for instance introduced an electronic system to transmit its election results in the post-election phase. In efforts to enhance the integrity of the results transmission process which had drawn allegations of fraud and manipulation in past elections. Furthermore, EMBs need to give due consideration to the security, integrity and cost implications of the technologies adopted (ECES, 2018)

Beyond administration, EMBs also utilise social media platforms to share information regarding electoral processes. In the Southern Africa for example, the electoral commissions of South Africa (@IECSouthAfrica)⁵, Lesotho(@IECLesotho) ⁶ and Zimbabwe (@zecZimbabwe)⁷ amongst others, have active Facebook pages, aimed at informing the electorate on electoral activities and answering queries at an informal level.

⁵ See: <https://www.facebook.com/IECSouthAfrica/>

⁶ See: <https://www.facebook.com/IECLesotho/>

⁷ See: <https://www.facebook.com/zecZimbabwe/>

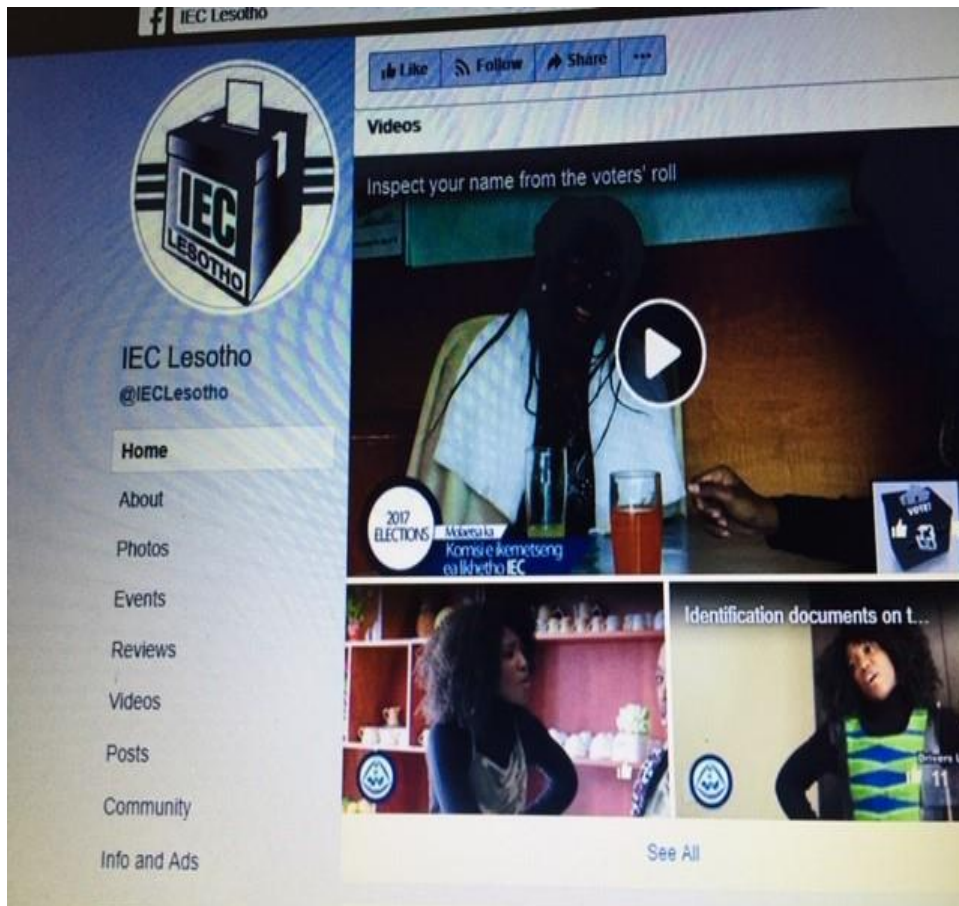


Figure 2: IEC Lesotho Facebook page



Figure 3: Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Facebook page

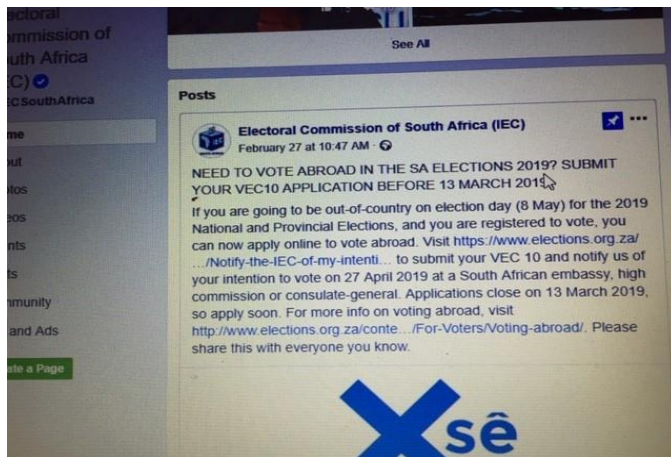


Figure 4: IEC South Africa Facebook page

Use of ICTs and DCTs by Civil Society

To civil society, elections serve the purpose of advocating for governments and political parties to be guided by the voices of the citizenry in their policies and action plans. Mainly to ensure that the will of the people is accurately reflected and implemented in State governance. Beyond the right of eligible citizens to participate as voters in the electoral process, there are examples of citizens that also take on the “watch-dog” role on the conduct of electoral activities. In this regard, citizens mobilise and form Civil Society Organization’s (CSO’s) that design and implement programmes aimed at monitoring activities based on their areas of interest within the context of the State concerned. Some examples of activities undertaken by CSO’s within the electoral cycle include, citizen observation, auditing of the voter’s roll, conducting Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT), conducting civic and voter education, advocacy work and contributing to legal reviews of the electoral law. In undertaking their activities, there are many practical examples of CSO’s that have adopted new ICTs and DCT’s in their election focused programmes. The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), Liberia Elections Network (LEON), are some of the notable CSO’s that have successfully deployed new ICTs and DCT’s for activities such as situation rooms focused on elections, auditing voter registration, conducting PVT and election observation.

Use of ICTs by Political Parties and Candidates

To political parties and candidates, elections serve the purpose of providing a regular platform to compete for political power, provide an opportunity for the transfer of

political power or bestow the legitimacy to govern for incumbents (Birch and Muchlinski, 2017: 1). To achieve their set objectives in the political landscape, it is vital for parties and candidates to maintain electorate support. Therefore, their internal and external communication strategies have increasingly evolved to incorporate ICTs and DCT's as viable instruments to communicate. Romelle (2003:9) describes political parties as "middlemen" responsible for connecting citizens and the State through communication. Noting that instruments employed by political parties have evolved in line with technological developments. In this regard, political parties can use ICTs and DCT's to campaign during elections, to maintain databases of supporters, to monitor public opinions and essentially to enhance favorable election outcomes. Towner (2012:188) notes a global increase on the utilisation of new ICTs by political contenders (including incumbents) to communicate with the electorate, send their messages, canvass for political and financial support and mobilize their supporters. Although, academic discourse thus far does not provide astounding proof that the use of digital platforms such as social media and the internet can influence political behavior. Towner (2012:188) notes that although causality between usage of new ICT's and DCT's in many States or regions, in the US and Australia there has been some causal evidence conveying that usage of new ICT's and DCT's could yield change in political participation in the real world and influence voter decisions. There is common consensus that candidate and political parties can benefit greatly from using ICTs and DCTs in their campaigns alongside the traditional modes of communication such as newspapers, television and radio. The ISS for instance, cites the 2008 US Presidential election and the 2013 Kenyan elections as some positive examples of effective utilisation of social media. Towner (2012: 188) concurs that the 2008 Obama campaign displayed the power of social media when used effectively to reach many citizens that could be mobilised in both the virtual and real world. According to the People's Assembly (2014) notable benefits for political parties are that are able to communicate directly with their supporters as there is no need for journalists or reporters etc. Secondly, social media and other digital platforms allow for interactive communication between the political party and the supporters. Noting that interactive communication tends to be more limited via traditional media platforms. There is also growing concern that political parties and candidates can utilise new ICTs and DCTs to manipulate electoral outcomes. The role of Cambridge Analytica

in the 2016 US Elections, stimulated widespread concerns about the power of data when utilised as a currency to influence electoral choices and possible electoral outcomes. Following the surprise victory of Donald Trump, allegations that Cambridge Analytica- a British PR firm, was behind the Trump campaign's success. It was alleged that the firm had hacked into the Facebook profiles of over 50 million Facebook users and harvested personal information that enable the Trump campaign to send personalised messages that would appeal to the psychological traits of each recipient (Ward, 2018:133). The case of Cambridge Analytica signalled both the power and dangers of ICTs and DCTs in shaping international politics through the shaping of public perception with or without the consent of society. According to Ward (2018: 134) Cambridge Analytica's microtargeting practices violated the privacy of Americans and limited their ability to vote rationally and interrupting the American democratic process. Taking into account evidence of the detrimental role the misuse of new ICT's and DCT's as seen with the bot farms can have on the peace and stability of States.

On the whole, this literature review has firstly established the relevance of elections in IR studies as part of; international human rights, public international law, security framework, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. By providing an outline on use of ICTs and DCTs in elections, it is evident that the literature available on new ICT technologies is still focused on an exploration of the nature of ICTs and DCTs and understanding the manner in which they function. In this regard, discourse focuses on the utility of elections through the liberal versus authoritarian perspectives. Noting that elections can be deployed to consolidate democracy and can also be utilised to consolidate authoritarian rule. The literature review also found similar tensions on the utilisation of new ICTs and DCTs through the vertical versus horizontal approach. Whereby ICTs and DCTs can work positively as mobilisers for citizen advocacy and can also be utilised in the same vein for the restriction of civil liberties. In the context of elections, the manner in which New ICTs and DCTs are deployed can either prevent or ferment electoral violence. Lastly, this literature review explored how key electoral stakeholders have deployed new ICTs and DCTs. Noting that New ICTs and DCTs are increasingly influencing the electoral process positively with examples of interactive communication stakeholders and negatively as illustrated through internet shutdowns and manipulation of electoral outcomes. The place of technology in

elections depends on its ability to improve the overall quality of an electoral process. Although what constitutes as quality may vary across different contexts, common consensus amongst election practitioners is that the quality of elections is equal to the overall credibility of the electoral process. There is an increasing need for research that seeks to view elections from the lens of new ICT's and DCT's. In order to better understand the implications of employing these technologies in elections especially in highly contested elections which can easily manifest violence.

Conceptual Framework

This study will be guided by relevant International Relations discourse applied to the study the subfields of peace peacebuilding and democracy. In IR theory, the biggest criticism levelled by African scholars against IR is that it is mostly Eurocentric, and its focus on explaining wars and power dynamics between states limits its explanatory power with regards to the analysis of micro-issues or intra-state issues (Lemke 2003). In this study electoral violence falls under these micro-issues that are seldom addressed by IR theories. Hence this study will proceed with caution in its application of IR.

Hoglund (2010) notes that major causes of electoral violence in Africa are due patronage politics, ethnicity and colonial disparities and electoral system design and administration. However, electoral violence is a subcategory of political violence that has been neglected in terms of theoretical and methodological development. Thus, the need to incorporate the role of New ICTs and DCTs in electoral violence. According to Hoglund (2010) a large segment of research on electoral process in peace building and democratic studies tends to prioritise electoral system design and not much research is conducted on the causes and effects of electoral violence. In the context of this gap, the study argues that new information technologies play a significant, previously understudied role. This research seeks then to fill the gap between the overlooked impacts of second-generation ICTs in preventing or inciting electoral violence in Kenya.

The Social Network Theory in International Relations

The network theory is based on the premise that, there is value in studying the power of networks as creators of structures that either enable or constrain social actors at individual, national and international level (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009:560). The criticism levelled against IR, is that by treating networks as a mode of organization, has limited the capacity of networks to unpack the power of social relationships. In elections, social networks grant electoral stakeholders' power to influence electoral outcomes, through the application of a variety ICTs and DCTs that seek to shape minds and through thoughts and that can provide valuable information that can be utilised influence electoral outcomes. (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009:560). The lens of network analysis offers a broader and contrasting view: networks are sets of relations that form structures, which in turn may constrain and enable agents. Thus, network analysis can be utilised in various contexts, since it provides a variety of theories and tools that can be utilised to generate puzzles and test propositions on structures (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009:560). Castells (2009) posits that social networks are established by the need to counter power that is traditionally vested in State institutions. Furthermore, network analysis opens new avenues for reconsidering core concepts in international relations, such as power. Within the context of rising social movements that have mobilised the power to effect change through the power of online mass communication (Castells, 2012). In this regard, New ICTs and DCTs are the instruments that make mass communication possible. They enable users to mobilise around a particular cause and ultimately influence change. There are also rich examples of how these social networks have empowered people to generate their own content, based on shared thoughts and emotions, to advocate for change in regimes, to put pressure on politicians, to campaign and mobilise behind the candidates of their choice, to verify results

In summary, this chapter has thematically studied available literature that can be utilised as a foundation for firstly understanding electoral violence in terms of what causes it, why electoral violence is an important issue in international relations. The literature review established that although elections fall within the domestic level of analysis, they are still an important international relations issue because States are global actors and they are bound by global standards and values. As a result, the chapter finds literature that supports elections as a key issue within the sphere of

international human rights, public international law, conflict resolution and peacebuilding and global security. This chapter then developed a conceptual framework based on existing theories in international relations that will be effective in guiding research in terms of analysing the relationship between new ICTs and electoral violence. The conceptual framework finds that new ICTs are often overlooked when it comes to explaining electoral violence. It also draws on the social network theory to explain the utility of new ICTs in elections. The following chapter will provide an overview of electoral violence in Africa in order to understand why electoral violence is prevalent in the Continent and look at past efforts taken to prevent or reduce electoral violence.

CHAPTER THREE: OVERVIEW OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN AFRICA

Electoral Violence poses a key challenge to the positing of elections as an exercise of civil liberties and freedoms. In contemporary democratic studies, electoral violence is viewed as a threat to democratisation. Based on growing evidence that administration of elections has not necessarily translated to democratic consolidation. This phenomenon requires interrogation especially within the African context where the regular holding of multi-party elections have not proved themselves a strong indicator of democracy. In Africa, Egypt, Rwanda and Algeria present strong cases of the prevalence of this phenomenon and its impact. Whereby States comply with international best practices of holding regular elections, yet the holding of such elections does not translate to democratic gains. The problematic trend of electoral violence has broadly shaped discourse on the utility of elections that are marred by violence. This chapter seeks will outline some of the main factors explaining the prevalence of electoral violence The Chapter will then briefly discuss why electoral violence is prevalent in Africa, establish the role of new ICTs in electoral violence and review some of the efforts taken to counter electoral violence.

Why is electoral violence prevalent in Africa?

Although electoral violence is a global phenomenon, empirical study findings convey that it is most prevalent in the regions of Africa, Middle East and Asia (Birch and Muchlinski, 2018:387). Notably, Birch and Muchlinski (2017:17) argue that although electoral violence may be a common occurrence, it is still difficult to draw common trends in incidents of electoral violence since levels of electoral violence vary widely across nations. In Africa, electoral violence is a growing human rights and security concern in terms of loss of live, gross violations of human rights and freedoms. Isola (2010) notes that election violence was a common occurrence in over 100 elections held in Africa between 2011-2017. Noting that this violence occurred at different stages of the electoral cycle. In efforts to understand the causes of electoral violence, structural factors, socioeconomic factors and cultural factors are often attributed to the manifestation of electoral violence in Africa. The next section briefly highlights dominant reasons for electoral violence in Africa.

The manipulation of electoral outcomes

Elections are susceptible to electoral manipulation. This deficiency is often exploited by those with skills and resources, to manipulate election outcomes in order to retain political power. Cheeseman and Klaas (2018: 247) present global statistics, which note a positive correlation between the number of years an incumbent has been in power and the possibility that an election is rigged. They track this regression by analysing elections held by the world between 1989 and 2012. With the analysis, conveying that there is a 60-70 per cent chance of election rigging in States with incumbents that have been in power for 24-40 years. It then follows that election rigging practices such as gerrymandering, vote-buying, repression, ballot stuffing, digital hacking and ‘fake news’ (in the case of technology being used) present significant hurdles for those contesting elections in multi-party states.

Ethnic divisions and patronage networks in elections

Zeydanli (2017: 545) identifies a positive correlation between competitive elections in Africa and a rise in ethnic classification. Noting that politicians tend to utilise ethnicity, religion and race as vote winning tools. This is especially pronouncing during elections times. Zeydanli (2017:545) goes on to explain that ethnicity is a powerful mobiliser during elections because it is a powerful determinant of people’s lives that depicts who they can trust, work for, conduct business with and vote for. In Axel and Peters (2008: 134) notes that in Kenya for example, ethnic divisions have been cited as a cause the long standing ‘ethno-regional alliances’ and dominance of a single party. The cartoon below illustrates the problematic intersection of ethnicity and resultant networks of patronage.



Figure 5: (Wainaina :2017)

Youth unemployment and the proliferation of criminal gangs

The high levels of youth unemployment are also cited as a contributor in electoral violence. Based on the understanding that young people are often recruited as perpetrators of violence by politicians during election time as a means to intimidate voters. It is important to note however that in this regard, find it easy to recruit young people as most of them already operate within criminal gangs that operate beyond election season. In Kenya, the CIPEV report (2008:33), the chances of unemployed youth participating in electoral violence was extremely high based on the fact that the number of street children displaced between 1992-1996 as a result of ethnic cleansings had grown by 300 per cent. There was therefore a high likelihood that these children, having been victims of violence, without family ties would easily turn to gangs. Criminal gangs also flourished through the recruitment of idle youths. As such most of the victims of Post-Election Violence cited youths in criminal groups as the perpetrators of violence. Another disturbing finding of the CIPEV is that the political elite had 'tapped into the resources of criminal gangs' as means to sustain and advance their life span in politics. These gangs operated in an atmosphere of impunity, in combination of State Security institutions have ethnic allegiances that made them compliant as violence ensued.

"...Politicians and businessmen allegedly chose to hire gangs of youth to fight their attackers rather than call in the forces whose loyalties could not necessarily be counted on."-CIPEV (2008:35)

Countering Electoral Violence

Generally, there are two dominant views on the role of new ICTs in preventing electoral violence. The first is that new ICTs are a useful tool that can be applied to possibly prevent electoral violence in particularly in high stake elections. The second is that new ICTs can ferment electoral violence. A study of Tools for Forecasting and Best Practices for the prediction and prevention of electoral violence released by Georgetown University proposes technology as a new aspect to be incorporated into existing frameworks that are aimed at preventing and addressing electoral violence. The study is unique to the topic of this thesis considering that it focuses specifically on the contribution that technology can bring to already existing frameworks on the prediction of electoral violence. However, the study fails to adequately delve into an evaluative account of how technology can specifically assist in the case of electoral violence. According to the study, recent examples of different forms of technology used in India, Afghanistan, South Africa and Nigeria for the reporting, management and prevention of electoral violence demonstrate the power of technology to improve responsiveness for those working in the field of electoral violence prediction (Bai *et al*, 2015: 32). India launched and deployed drones to monitor unrest throughout its electoral process in 2014. The drones provided security agencies with real time data thus improving their reaction in the context of managing a high population. In South Africa, hotlines and strategically located call centres enable citizens to report unrest and acts of election related violence in real time. In Nigeria, social media tools such as the Artificial Intelligence for Monitoring Elections (AIME) and Aggie demonstrated the potential of social media tools as a means to predict and prevent electoral violence.

Overview of existing frameworks and approaches in the prevention of electoral violence

Elections are an important part of democratic development in the international framework for peace building (Omotola, 2008:54). Thus, need to ensure that elections are peaceful has given rise to many frameworks and approaches that are aimed at preventing electoral violence. The existence of frameworks aimed at preventing

electoral violence highlight the global efforts aimed at securing elections that harness democratic values. There are many examples of EPV activities across Africa, that are rolled out based on a needs analysis especially in States that are prone to conflict. According to Orji (2013) much of the research has been skewed largely in favour of understanding the causes and consequences of electoral violence as opposed to the efficacy of approaches that can be adopted to address it. There is therefore a growing need to generate knowledge that not only tracks how electoral violence manifests but also generates methods and practices of addressing electoral violence. Within the diplomatic community, the carrot or stick approach is often employed to mitigate the risks associated with holding elections. The use of diplomatic stature is often important in the context of states that have held elections that have previously resulted in electoral violence.

Organisations running projects aimed at preventing electoral violence tend to assess the efficiency of strategies applied in relation to the context of each state concerned. In order to frame our understanding of the types of approaches employed by the various initiatives aimed at preventing electoral violence. This research frames its overview of the initiatives into two broad categories namely, capacity building strategies and attitude transforming strategies. Birch and Muchlinski (2018: 385) explain that capacity building strategies refer to initiatives that are aimed at improving the capabilities of electoral stakeholders to deliver a credible electoral process. It follows that capacity building strategies assume that electoral violence can be prevented if those involved in the electoral process are better equipped to run a credible electoral process. Logistical support, technical expertise, trainings etc are typical examples of capacity building strategies. On the other hand, attitude transforming strategies assume that capacity building strategies are not sufficient to address the underlying causes of electoral violence and thus there is a need to transform the thinking and behaviour of electoral stakeholders. As such attitude transforming strategies seek to address these underlying causes by transforming the behaviour and thinking of groups through effective communication and messaging. Examples of attitude transformation strategies include peace pledges, peace messaging, roundtables and mediation. Birch and Muchlinski (2018:385) prove that electoral violence prevention strategies (used between 2003-2015) link capacity building strategies with a reduction in the use of violence by non-state actors. Whilst

attitude transforming strategies are most likely to reduce the use of violence by state actors and their partners. Even though there is general understanding of how the strategies above operate, there is a gap in the knowledge generated with regards to the efficacy of these strategies and how the strategies work in different contexts.

Examples of Election Violence Prevention Projects/Initiatives

Countries at Risk of Electoral Violence (CREV)

CREV is a database that contains data of 101 nations that were identified to be at risk of electoral violence as from 1995-2013. The database continuously collates data on electoral violence in accordance with the electoral cycle. Ensuring that the status of electoral violence in these countries is monitored before, during and after an election. The database limits its aggregation of electoral incidents to only general elections and executive elections. The Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) is CREV's primary source of data. Birch and Muchlinski (2017:2-3) point out that ICEWS is at present, the largest automatic coder of event data. The database is fairly new, however its latest findings. Firstly, the database highlights that the broad scope of existing measures of electoral violence result in the incapacity to obtain a clear picture of the actors involved, the strategies employed and inadequately report on the nature of the violence. As a result, researchers are less equipped to fully unearth intricate details on the phenomena of electoral violence especially in order to better understand the widely varied experiences of electoral violence at both national and international level (Birch and Muchlinski, 2017:2-3). Through the provision of accurate information about the instigators of electoral violence, its timing, causes and implications. The database is aimed at addressing this gap in available data on electoral violence for the benefit of researchers and practitioners. The database also aims to assist practitioners to ensure that their resources are effectively directed to high risk States. The database also aims to provide a more detailed analysis on the mobilising strategies that perpetrators employ to carry out electoral violence.

AU Panel of the Wise APSA- Preventive Diplomacy

The AU Panel of the Wise (PoW) is a part of the AU's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). It focuses on preventive diplomacy as a tool to abate possible conflicts before they manifest into violence. Through high profile diplomatic negotiations. The AU PoW deploys engages in preventive diplomacy as a means to prevent violence. Birch (2017:287) notes preventive diplomacy as a fruitful strategy that can yield positive results in endemically violent situations or environments that are ripe for negotiated post-electoral agreements. Even though the high-profile nature of preventive diplomacy engagements is classified as confidential thus academic writing on the topic is limited. Regional Bodies (REC's) also have preventive diplomacy bodies similar to the PoW. The ECOWAS Panel of Imminent Persons and SADC Troika are examples of regional bodies that engage in preventive diplomacy.

Election Observation

Election observation is largely seen as a preventive measure that is appreciated for its potential to deter practices of electoral fraud and violence whilst enhancing public confidence in the electoral process (ACE project). There are two main types of election observation, international election observation and citizen (national) election observation. International election observation comprises of a group of individuals that are not from the State that is holding an election. Whilst, Citizen election observation comprises of a group of individuals that are from the citizens of the country holding elections. The main aim of election observation is to gather and analyse data on electoral processes in order to make an informed assessment about the integrity and credibility of an electoral process. Election observers also make non-binding recommendations to relevant stakeholders with the aim to improve on the conduct of future elections. Election observation works best if the individuals or organisations conducting observation are politically neutral and therefore able to conduct their election assessments without favour. The practice of election observation forms an important aspect in deterring electoral fraud and therefore possibly mitigating violence during elections (Birch and Muchlinski, 2017:5).

Conflict databases

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project and the Social Conflict Analyses databases track and report incidents of all types of violence in Africa. These databases are relevant for the study of electoral violence because they provide quantitative data that can be utilised to better understand the nature, timing and scope of cases of violence. According to Clionadh, Linke, Hegre and Karlsen, 2010, the Armed Conflict and Location Event Dataset (ACLED), established in 1997, focuses the actions of governments, opposition groups and militia in Africa. The dataset stores real time data on the location and date of conflict, transfers of military control, headquarter establishment, citizen violence and protests. The Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD) tracks social conflicts in Africa, Mexico, the Carribean and Central America. The database covers protests, riots, strikes, inter-communal conflict, government violence against civilians and other forms of social conflict (Idean et al, 2012)

In general, there is a variety of electoral violence prevention frameworks are constantly evolving based on contextual experiences. However, there is a gap in terms of frameworks that also incorporate ICTs and DCTs as a valuable factor that needs to be taken into account in the crafting and implementation of electoral violence prevention.

The utility of New ICTs in understanding electoral violence

There is a large volume of research dedicated to electoral violence addressing its impact and most importantly research documenting lessons and best practices in addressing electoral violence have been widely published. According to (Malik, 2018) electoral violence has become a focus area of research and policy analysis as developing states continue to experience a rise in electoral violence. Thus far, research design and approaches to addressing electoral violence has been focused on monitoring and reporting the occurrence of electoral violence in order to identify factors surrounding electoral violence. Mancini (2013) argues that although there is normative coherence on the causes and consequences of violent conflict, there remains a “warning-response gap” that has resulted in ineffective efforts by the international community to prevent the outbreak of electoral violence. Noting that the international community has made more progress in ending violent conflict as opposed to preventing its outbreak. There is therefore a growing need for research that is cognisant of the moral and fiscal value in in prevention. The moral aspect of preventing

violent conflict speaks to the need to act against the detrimental effects of violent conflict when it is possible to predict the possible outbreak of violence. Mancini (2013) provides an example of the Rwandan genocide whereby the Carnegie Commission estimated that preventing the Rwandan genocide would have cost only one third of the two billion US dollars spent by the international community in the aftermath of the genocide. As such the emergence of such statistical based research that correlates with the 'prevention is better than cure' mantra has also prompted scholars studying electoral violence to narrow their focus towards understanding how new ICTs can effectively assist decision-makers to respond to warnings more effectively to prevent violence.

Overall this chapter finds that the prevalence of electoral violence can be explained through a variety of structural, socio-economic and cultural factors. In this regard, there have been widespread efforts to better understand and mitigate the prevalence of electoral violence in Africa. However, new ICTs are often omitted as a significant factor in the study of electoral violence. The next chapter utilises the case study of Kenya to explore the dual role that new ICTs play in either preventing or fermenting electoral violence.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE UTILITY OF NEW ICTS IN KENYA'S ELECTIONS

In light of the global wave of the fourth industrial revolution, ICTs have become an important driver of economic growth in Kenya (KNBS, 2018: 212). Mallone (2018) refers to Nairobi as 'Silicon Valley in Africa.' Kenya has gained increasing prominence within the region as a technical hub, with a highly tech savvy population. Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics (2018: 212) estimates that Kenya's technical hub net worth stood at \$1 billion in 2017. The hub is comprised of tech companies that offer online services to a diverse range of public and private entities operating locally and abroad. In 2017, mobile subscriptions grew by 6 per cent with 91,9 subscriptions per 100 people. Furthermore, the Communications Authority of Kenya (2017) reported that most of its 40,5 million internet users subscribe to social media platforms. Therefore, the rapid growth of technologies in Kenya cannot be exempt in explaining electoral violence. There are various examples that show how technology has also been part and parcel of elections in Kenya. This chapter analyses the role of new ICTs in either preventing electoral violence or fermenting electoral violence. This is done by tracing how new ICTs were utilised by a variety of actors in the 2007, 2013 and 2017 elections in Kenya.

Context of the 2007 General Elections

The 2007 Kenyan elections are today synonymous with large scale violence that has been the subject of discussion and dissertations amongst scholars worldwide. According to Axel and Peters (2008:133-134) the 2007 electoral violence was "shocking" for two main reasons; the violence was unexpected; therefore, stakeholders were inadequately prepared to address, and Kenya was widely perceived to be politically stable. On 30 December, violence broke out after the Independent Electoral Commission of Kenya (IEBC) declared then Incumbent President Mwai Mbaki as the winner of the election over Raila Odinga of ODM. Tolou (2008) explains that presidential results released by the ECK raised suspicions and controversy as they did not tally with the parliamentary results as 20 members of Kibaki's cabinet lost their parliamentary seats. Leaving the President with in the minority in parliament with 37 seats whilst Raila Odinga (ODM) secure about 100 parliamentary seats. Tolou (2008) goes on to add that the ECK's delay in announcing

coupled with controversy surrounding the disparity between the parliamentary as well as the Chairman's admission that the results were 'doctored' in some constituencies contributed to the widespread of post-election violence. The Pan African Parliament (PAP) observer mission blamed the outbreak of violence on the premature announcement of the election results by the ECK Chairman⁸ noting that:

"The premature announcement of the supposedly final presidential election results by the Chairman of the ECK, Mr Kivuitu at a remote and secured place was clearly stage managed. It almost coincided to the hour with the swearing-in of the President of the PNU Hon. Mwai Kibaki" -(PAP EOM Statement:2017)

The reported death rate from the onset of violence in December 2007 to late February 2008 as a result of the post-election violence stood at approximately 1300 people. Furthermore, almost 350000 people were displaced as a result of violence (CIPEV 2008, Kramon and Posner: 2011:90). The Kenyan Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence report⁹ (2008) found that the although electoral violence is a long-standing feature of elections in democratic Kenya, the severity of electoral violence witnessed in the 2007 elections was unprecedented. Noting that the electoral violence affected six out of the eight provinces at the time, whereas in past elections violence was largely situated within the Rift Valley, Western and Coast Provinces. next section will seek to explore the role of ICTs in fermenting violence and reducing electoral violence in the 2007 elections.

[The Role of New ICTs in Fermenting Violence in the 2007 Elections](#)

In 2007, traditional media still occupied a dominant role in election reporting and coverage during the pre-election and election phases. With radio, television and newspapers being the most popular sources of information. New ICTs however did also have a hand in fermenting violence through large scale dissemination of hate speech. In Nyeri for instance the CIPEV (2008:215) received reports that an emailⁱ urging the Kalenjin to rise and defend their land against Kikuyu dominance, circulated

⁸ The ECK Chairman was Mr Kivuitu

⁹ The Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) investigated the facts and circumstances surrounding the 2007 post-election violence and make recommendations. The commission conducted public hearings in Nairobi, Naivasha, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu, Borabu and Mombasa.

for 13 days from 15 January to 14 February¹⁰. In this regard, were highlighted as inciters and mobilisers for violence.

Notably, vernacular radio stations were singled out as the main culprits in disseminating ethnic based hate speech. The role of Kass FM, a Kalenjin based vernacular radio station was highlighted by the CIPEV (2008:298) report as being instrumental in the eruption of violence by fuelling hate speech. Notably, phrases and messages of hate speech utilised metaphors. On Kass FM specifically the following phrases were flagged as part of hate speech:

“let us remove the weeds from our crops” this was interpreted as a call for the Kalenjin to eliminate non-Kalenjin groups-(IRIN, 2008)

“the mongoose has come and stolen our chicken”- this was again interpreted as an attack on non-Kalenjin groups-(IRIN, 2008)

In the aftermath of the violence, Joshua Arap for Sang, a Kass FM radio presenter, faced ICC charges alongside two politicians for his role in inciting the 2007/2008 post-election violence.

In addition to text-based hate speech, vernacular music played by radio stations was also highlighted as a mobiliser for violence. In particular, Kameme and Inooro which are kikuyu based, played a song called *“talking very badly about beasts from the west”*. The song was interpreted as inciteful and dangerous since Raila Odinga and the ODM are based in western Kenya. Radio Lake Victoria, which is Luo based, also played a song titled *“the leadership of baboons’* in reference to the incumbent government.

Blog coverage

There were a handful of blogs covering topics related to the 2007 elections. Namely, Mashada.com, Kwani.org, Thinkersroom.com, Afro-musing.com, All-Africa.com, Ethanzuckerman.com and Kenyanpundit.com (Makinen and Kuira, 2008: 5). Notably, blogs had been covering election related issues in the period before the violence and also in the aftermath of the violence (Makinen and Kuira 2008:9). During the 2007

¹⁰ The email was anonymously circulated on the Kenya Power and Lighting Company Limited webmail

elections, privately owned blogs fuelled ethnic divisions through the dissemination of hate speech.

The shutting down of Mashada.com is a good example of the power of owners to either address hate speech or stay complacent. When the site owner of Mashada.com realised that the influx of comments from followers on his blog were laden with hate speech and ethnic prejudices, he decided to shut down the blog without notice. Thus, the denying followers the platform to further express or strengthen their harmful opinions and thoughts.

Similar to other New ICTs, blogs were utilised to spread hate speech whilst others focused on spreading peace. Noting that since blogs often reflect individual owners' thoughts and views that are susceptible to biasness, it can be difficult for States to impose any form of regulation (Makinen and Kuira, 2008). The main problem posed by blogs during the post-election violence is that most of the bloggers had strong opinions that leaned in favour of their preferred candidates or tribal groups. At the time of the post-election violence, only 3.2 per cent of Kenyans had internet access and therefore it is most likely that blogs represented the views of the minority (Makinen and Kuira, 2008). Thus, it is challenging to fully ascertain the influence or impact of most of the hateful messages that circulated on blogs.

[The Role of New ICTs in Preventing Electoral Violence during the 2007 Elections](#)

On the other hand, ICTs were later employed to understand the nature and extent of electoral violence through the identification and mapping of hotspots. In this regard, ICTs came to play an important role in the post-election period following the outbreak of electoral violence due to their capacity to report and disseminate information at a faster rate than traditional media. Wiki's blogs, Facebook, Flickr, Youtube, Twitter and mashups are examples of social media tools that were popularly employed in response to the crisis, by sharing information and for fundraising (Makinen and Kuira, 2008:5). However, the outbreak of electoral violence in the post-elections period, reflected the power of social networks to mobilise against electoral violence and to also provide solutions in addressing electoral violence. Thus, the post-election period was marked by two significant shifts in power. The governments ban of traditional media reporting on electoral violence, opened up a gap in reporting which was filled by citizens through digital communication platforms that beyond the reach of

government regulation. Secondly New ICTs enabled a shift of power in the ability of the government to address the outbreak of electoral violence. Through innovations such as Ushahidi, citizens became the main agents in providing credible information and responding to reports of electoral violence. In this regard, new ICTs enabled citizens to generate and share their observations and experiences of the electoral violence. Thus, connecting minds and establishing bottom- up approaches in understanding and addressing the electoral violence.

The rise of citizen journalism

Following the first reports of protests and violence after the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK)s declared Incumbent president Mwai Kibaki as the winner of the 2007 elections, the Kenyan government¹¹ imposed a media “blackout” (Amnesty International, 2008:5). This made it impossible for journalists in Kenya to broadcast incidents of electoral violence. When the State closed the space for accredited journalists to report on electoral violence, social media and SMS enabled citizens to take reporting into their own hands. As a means to fill the information gap caused by the ‘blackout’ people took to their cell phones to update each other as the violence ensued. Notably, bloggers took the helm of reporting in the immediate outbreak of violence. The founder of Mental Acrobatics blog for instance, described the sense of agency and empowerment in documenting and reporting cases of violence:

On Thursday, (3 January) I headed into town to get a feel of the mood on the ground before the ODM rally, banned by the government but which ODM insisted it would go ahead with anyway, at Uhuru Park was due to start. I took a matatu into two, jumped out at Railways and started walking towards the centre of town. I noticed all newspapers had the same headline, Save our Beloved Country. The local media has been criticized in some quarters for not utilizing its unique position to help efforts against the violence, clearly the editors had decided to get proactive (Mentalacrobatics blog 2008) -cited in Makinen and Kuira, 2008:331)

¹¹ The ban was announced by Mr John Michuki, then Minister of Internal Security

Mutahi and Kimari (2017: 17) describes the utilisation of SMS during the media ban as a double-edged sword that enabled instigators of hate speech and violence to flourish on a wide scale whilst at the same time enabling those countering the electoral violence to mobilise for peace mainly through SMS. The peace messages however only came at a later stage when much violence had already occurred. Mutahi and Kimari (2017:17) further note that in efforts to counter the dissemination of hate speech through SMS, the government imposed also imposed a ban on bulk SMS. In order to restrict opportunities for mass collective action.

Prior to the results announcement, the media had been instrumental in releasing provisional results based on results posted at polling station level. It was on this basis that protests, and violent episodes ensued as these publicised results differed greatly from the results released by the ECK. Tolou (2008) notes that the results released by media as well as pre-election and exit polls conducted agreed that the Raila Odinga of ODM had won the elections. The rise of citizen journalism following the ban of traditional media, highlighted a shift in communication power. As such information was sourced using bottom up approaches for reporting that were unprecedented. Voices of Africa for instance, depended entirely on cell phones to write, publish their stories, take pictures and create videos. Whereas the information provided by media houses underwent internal and state regulatory vetting procedures prior to public consumption, the emergence of citizen journalism turned the wheels as the public could consume instant raw data that could then be vetted as it got circulated. In addition, traditional media platforms increasingly based their reports on social media content (Mutahi and Kimari, 2017: 14)

The Rise of Ushahidi

Ushahidi¹² is a locally developed¹³ online crowd sourcing tool launched in the height of the 2007/2008 post-election violence in efforts to fill the information gap following the media ban. The crowd sourcing tool made it possible to collect reports of electoral violence, sexual abuse, riots, fatalities and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and

¹² Swahili word that means 'Testimony' or 'witness'

¹³ Developed by Erik Hersman, Ory Kolloh, David Kobia and Juliana Rotich

geolocate the incidents accordingly. Ushahidi had geolocated and mapped out electoral violence using over 40000 verified and triangulated reports. By so doing, people could be better informed on which areas were hotspots of electoral violence and find means of staying safe. The tool enabled people to send reports using SMS and the web. The Harvard's Kennedy School of government found that Ushahidi performed better than traditional media in providing quality information on electoral violence and broad coverage inclusive of rural areas. In this case, ICTs provided solutions to addressing electoral violence. By documenting reports of violence and verifying data collected, Ushahidi gathered evidence that was instrumental in identifying perpetrators of violence. Goldstein & Rotich (2008) write that the Kenyan government was able to receive information about over a thousand people that participated in the promotion of mob violence during the post-election crisis.

Ushahidi also proved to be instrumental in informing people on the ground and abroad on developments on the ground as well as the extent of electoral violence. Similar to the rise of citizen journalism following the media ban, Ushahidi also enabled bottom-up reporting that was powerful in amplifying the voices of victims of electoral violence in order to effectively call for leaders to take action. To date, Ushahidi has been deployed to more than 160 States in efforts to tackle social issues and deal with humanitarian challenges to foster bottom-up communication from the people to their leaders. Beyond elections the tool has enabled reporting on humanitarian and crisis response, research and community engagement, media and journalism and environmental monitoring (Ushahidi, 2018:5). Some of the notable successes of Ushahidi include, its deployment in the earthquake Haiti¹⁴, the 2011 elections in Nigeria, the Kenya West gate mall attacks. ¹In Haiti, over 40000 reports were collected and verified and enable response teams to assist people trapped under the rubble based on reports received and to deliver much needed food and water supplies to those in need. The Nigeria 2011 elections are also testimony to the contribution of Ushahidi in making elections safe across the world, three years after its success in Kenya, Ushahidi is believed to have contributed in increasing voter turnout by 8 per cent. Following its work under project reclaim Naija, Ushahidi enabled citizens to closely monitor electoral activities and report incidents on the platform so that

authorities could respond accordingly through allocating resources to the polling stations in need. In 2010 the MIT Tech Review, placed Ushahidi in the top 50 most disruptive companies. Most notable in the work of elections is that Ushahidi originated as a means to keep elections safe in line with democratic ideals that advocates for the right of citizens to freely express their will through the ballots under peaceful environments. Most importantly, Ushahidi also highlights the importance of improving accountability and trust in electoral processes as an important condition for securing peace in elections. It also adopts a grassroots approach in informing decision making based on advocacy work. The story of how Ushahidi started illustrates that ICTs can rapidly connect people online in times of crisis and that those social connections can translate into actions in the real world.

“Violence has erupted in Kenya following the election. Millions of Kenyans have no way of understanding what is happening on the ground and how to stay safe. A local blogger writes, “Any techies out there willing to do a mashup of where the violence and destruction is occurring and put it on a map?” Within days, four technologists build a web-based platform to crowdsource first-hand reports from citizens via SMS and the web.”

Overall, the use of SMS seems to have been the most preferable means of communication amongst the citizens due to accessibility and the constraints of technology at the time. Despite the limited role of popular social media platforms such as twitter and Facebook in the discourse 2007, new ICTs were not used to a large extent as a means of preventing violence but rather the most notable technologies were those aimed at curbing violence that had already manifested. This is exemplified through the story of Ushahidi, a powerful citizen initiative that aggregated the voices of those that lived to tell their stories and contributed to the greater cause of advocating for change. The 2007 post-election violence perhaps also convey the first signs of a government grappling with the rapid flow of communication tainted with hate speech and tribalism. The banning of live broadcast and bulk SMS in the absence of sound legislative frameworks by the Ministry of Interior was largely believed to have further evoked suspicions of fraud in the results transmission process. The 2007 elections marked the height of electoral violence, yet new ICTs had not yet enjoyed widescale public utilisation. Rather it was the SMS traditional media, television (TV), radio, newspapers, leaflets and blogs that dominated discourse.

Context of the 2013 General Elections

The 2013 elections occurred three years after Kenyans had turned out in numbers to vote in favour of devolution and the resultant adoption of a new constitution in 2010. Voter turnout in the 4 August 2010 referendum was at 70 per cent (Kramer and Posner 2010:90). The elections were the first to be held under a new Constitution. The referendum essentially changed the system of governance from that of a centralised government with power concentrated in the executive to a devolved system of government. Resulting into the fragmentation of eight provinces into 47 counties. On Election Day, voters had to elect candidates for six positions-President, Governors, Senators, Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of County Assembly (MCA) and women's representatives (ELOG:2017). Notably, the devolution of government opened up new opportunities for contestation and broadened the choices of voters to elect leaders that they felt best represented their needs in their respective communities (Mutahi and Kimari, 2007:14). In terms of the office of the Presidency, what did not change is that the contestants were still Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga except that whoever won the Presidency would enjoy diminished executive powers than before owing to the introduction of county governments. This meant that the Presidency position was once again contested along ethnic alliances as Uhuru Kenyatta represented the Kikuyu tribe whilst Raila Odinga represented the Luo tribe (Gould:2013). Furthermore, the two candidates of the Jubilee party, Uhuru Kenyatta (vying as Presidential candidate and William Ruto (running as Vice-President) were facing trial by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for their role in the outbreak of the 2007/2008 post-election violence (Gould;2013). Similar to the 2007 elections, the 2013 final presidential election results released by the reformed IEBC were disputed by Raila Odinga on the count of fraud and rigging. An election petition was filed, and the court ruling upheld the election results released by the IEBC. As far as electoral activities throughout the electoral cycle are concerned, various projects and contingency measures were taken based on lessons learnt from the 2007/2008 post-election violence.

The Role of ICTs in Fermenting Violence in the 2013 Elections

The 2013 elections recorded an increase in volumes of hate speech and incitement on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp and You-tube. Organisations monitoring volumes of hate speech on social media concluded that electoral violence was once again highly probable (IHRB: 2013).

On Facebook for instance, instigators were openly revealing their identity and locations as well as utilising dangerous words such as “*chinja chinja*” which is Swahili for “*butcher butcher*” and calls for people to beat, loot, strike and force evictions. All these calls for violence were made in reference to ethnic groups that the instigators wanted to attack (Jorgic:2013). However, this plausible hypothesis was proven wrong as incidents of electoral violence occurred at a significantly lower margin than what was experienced during the 2007 elections. In terms of the utilisation of ICT and DCT's, the use of social media platforms and crowdsourcing technologies was unprecedented (Mutahi and Kimari 2007:14). The greatest challenge posed by ICTs during the 2013 elections, is that hate speech was now rampant on social media platforms. Mutahi and Kimari (2007: 18) describe it as the migration of hate speech and incitement from traditional media to social media platforms.

At the national and international level, there were many projects that acknowledged the fatal role of hate speech during the elections and sought to counter the speech through calls for peace. According to BBC News (2013) the government also took the helm in countering violence. Through the imposition of a fine or 3-year jail term for those found guilty of hate speech. It mandated mobile operators to register cell phone sim cards for tracing purposes. Politicians were also required to go through a vetting process (sifting for messages of hate speech) through their mobile operators in order to send bulk messages. Furthermore, the government had sent out warnings of prosecution to bloggers and social media users for the use of dangerous language. The Independent Media Council also monitored hate speech radio stations, TV channels, and newspapers. Thus in 2013, the government made significant efforts to counter hate speech through regulations and constant monitoring of the electoral environment,

The Role of ICTs in Preventing Electoral Violence in the 2013 Elections

On the other hand, peace actors used ICTs to condemn violence and campaign for peace. Television broadcasters went on social media such as Twitter and Facebook to spread positive messages and encourage viewers to remain calm and patient as the election results were announced. It was during this election that social media also became a visible component of campaigning as candidates seized on its potential to mobilise supporters (Mutahi and Kimari 2017:6)

The section below highlights some of the ways in which ICTs and DCTs were employed by various actors to prevent electoral violence.

The Rise of Counter speech

Counter speech emerged as a strategy to prevent the spreading of hate speech, rumours and fake news surrounding the 2013 elections. In this regard, counter speech refers to valid and verified information that is disseminated to counter incorrect information or hate speech (Bartlett and Krasadomski-Jones, 2015). Microsite, Whatsapp, Twitter, Facebook and SMS are platforms that were identified as popular sites for counter speech.

The Crown Paint Initiative “Uniting colours of Kenya” is a great example of private companies that joined the call for peace during election season. Specifically, Crown Paints by incentivised people that sent and shared messages, photos and videos of peace with free airtime and cash. The campaign was launched in Kibera, a cosmopolitan area that is amongst the areas that suffered greatly from the post-election violence in 2007/2008 (Giecheru, 2013).

Mobile Operators also took the lead and responsibility by vetting hate speech through their user information. Most notable was the role Safari-com played in the lead up to the 2013 elections. Firstly, the network launched guidelines for Political Mobile Advertising in efforts to limit hate speech by regulating bulk messaging. This meant that anyone who intended to send bulk messages for campaigning would need to seek the approval of the network by applying to the network so that the content of their message could be screened for elements of incitement, hate speech and ethnic hatred before being sent out to the intended recipients (BBC News: 2013 ;Mutahi and Kimari,

2017:18). Secondly, Safaricom donated 50 million free SMSs towards counter speech messaging with Sisi ni Amani, a local non-governmental organisation (NGO).

The Communications Authority (CA) of Kenya (2017) also released its own Guidelines for the Prevention of Transmission of Undesirable Bulk Content/ Messages via Electronic Communications Networks. As these guidelines were released by a national authority, the guidelines were therefore applicable to all mobile networks operating in Kenya. Specifically, the CA guidelines required network providers to check for elements of hate speech on bulk messages with political content before sending on to recipients. Messages found with hate speech content were blocked. This resulted in an average of 300 000 SMS's that were blocked daily. (Mutahi and Kimari 2017). In addition, the Communications Authority recognised only English and Kiswahili as languages to be utilised for mass communication:

“Bulk and premium rate content shall be communicated in English and Kiswahili languages only” -CA (2017:7)

The IHRB (2013) notes that governments regulations on hate speech raised questions about freedom of speech and expression. Especially with the language ban of

However, it remained a challenge for government to extend similar regulations to social media corporations and private users based on the high volumes of social media messaging and also taking into account that the owners of the popular social media sites are based in foreign countries which makes it difficult to impose domestic regulations to them. Thus, the 2013 elections were preceded by notable regulatory measures that were aimed at targeting hate speech through counter speech and vetting. There was a basket of private companies, NGO's and national authorities that all played a key role in promoting and sharing messages of peace whilst making efforts to prevent hate speech from spreading. These actions were largely informed by the well acknowledged finding that hate speech and the use of SMS in sowing ethnic divisions and hatred contributed greatly to the electoral violence of the 2008 elections.

Kenyans on Twitter

In 2013, Kenya was second In the Continent based on the number of tweets it produced (Jorgic, 2013; Gould 2013). The Kenyans on Twitter (KOT) platform, is also an example of an effective online community vetting of hate speech. By publicly calling out instigators of hate speech, the platform curbed more hate speech from spreading on Twitter (iHub and Ushaihide 2013:6; Mutahi and Kimari, 2017:25). With the common consensus being that hate speech was more rampant on Facebook than on Twitter (Mutahi and Kimari, 2017:25; Jorgic 2013). Twitter was also increasingly utilised by politicians, as Gould (2013) notes that seven of the eight leading candidates¹⁵ were using Twitter in the lead up to the elections. With their utilisation of Twitter peaking during the televised presidential debates of which the first debate also made it onto the top global trending topics. During the campaign period in particular, You Tube, an online social media site that makes it possible for people to have their own channel, followers by uploading their own videos and photo, was utilised by political parties and candidates to share their campaign videos and to also air the Presidential television debates to wider network beyond the air time given by national broadcasters.

ICTs and DCTs as early warning response mechanisms

The 2013 elections were also preceded by various efforts of public and private organisations in improving responses to incidents of electoral violence through the utilisation of ICTs and DCTs. These efforts were largely aimed at ensuring that the probabilities and occurrences of electoral violence can be better detected from the grassroots level in order to inform actions or strategies at the local and national decision-making levels.

Whereas crowdsourcing was employed mainly in the post-election period in response to electoral violence, it was utilised throughout the electoral cycle of the 2013 elections to prevent electoral violence. Ushaihide for example modified its crowdsourcing tool that it had employed in the 2008 elections for maximum data collection in the 2013 elections (Mutahi and Kimari, 2013). To explain further, Ushahidi widened the

¹⁵ The twitter handles of candidates were:

@JamesOleKiyapi, @MarthaKarua, @MusaliaMudavadi, @Paul Muite, @Peter_Kenneth, @RailaOdinga, @UKenyatta

platforms to source reports of any electoral malpractice and violence, from social media tools namely, Facebook and Twitter. According to Mutahi and Kimari (2013:20) Ushahidi made it possible to collect real time data on any incidents that were happening in connection to the elections. In addition, Ushahidi supported Uchaguzi. Uchaguzi is a tool developed specifically to enable citizens to monitor the electoral processes by reporting on any incidents witnessed such as electoral fraud, mobilisation for violence and disruption. The tool operated based on reports received from users via SMS, the reports would then be verified and relayed to the relevant authorities for action. Mutahi and Kimari (2017) note that the platform improved coordinated reporting to authorities such as the IEBC, by enabling CSOs, monitors and other networks to report and share information through the platform. Furthermore, Uchaguzi was also user-friendly and accessible since it also had a toll-free number for people that otherwise had limited resources to access the internet or send their reports via SMS. According to Treisman (2017) Uchaguzi was instrumental in seeing the resolution of almost three quarters of the reported 8000 incidents during the 2013 elections.

The Uwiano platform for peace was also designed and used for the documentation of violence after the 2007/2008 electoral violence. It was launched in 2010 by Peacenet Kenya and provided tools to track, report and retrieve evidence of rhetoric (SMS's, video, images and voice) that could lead to or incite acts of violence. The platform worked based on free SMS's that people utilise to report potential violence or its occurrence (UNDP Kenya; Mutahi and Kimari:2017). The reports would then be classified into categories¹⁶ by the National Steering Committee (NSC). The reporters would then be called back to verify information and the relevant authorities would also be informed for appropriate action or rapid response where required (Mutahi and Kimari, 2017:21). Monitors were key informants of the platform; they were strategically placed in hotspots for violence. To ensure wider coverage, the platform also engaged in informative awareness raising campaigns, highlighting the trends emerging from reports received through regular media engagements. Furthermore, instigators if

¹⁶ The SMS received is either classified under: informative, threat, positive, hate speech, incitement to violence or coded message

incitement and hate speech were publicly summoned by “naming and shaming” to deter other perpetrators.

In 2013, early warning systems were developed with more clear reporting structures in efforts to bridge the gap between reporting and response mechanisms. Specifically, there were collaborative efforts for civil society to move beyond the collation of verified data through ICTs and DCTs but to also share the data with the relevant authorities concerned for coordinated response (Mutahi and Kinari, 2017:22). Peace monitoring projects also widened their data collection methods beyond traditional text messaging to include social media platforms. In addition, there were various technologies implemented in efforts to verify the reports received from the ground. The Umati monitoring project¹⁷ for example, was able to view Twitter trends of violence by capturing geographical location through Google Maps. On Facebook, the project was able to monitor incidents of violence in real time through the Open Search Status tool which enables keyword searches of public conversations on Facebook (iHub 2013:7; Mutahi and Kimari 2017:21). In addition, several guidelines were adopted by both state and non-state actors to regulate hate speech during the 2013 elections. Although regulation on do not necessarily translate into national legislature, it made it easier for researchers and political actors, programme implementers to understand or grapple with what constitutes incitement to violence and hate speech. Whereas in the 2007 elections, there were no tangible guidelines. Mutahi and Kimari (2017:23) note that the legal framework remains largely underdeveloped in terms of hate speech, incitement and online mobilisation to violence. On the other hand, it is also important to note that implementing laws and policy on online hate speech may be challenging as digital platforms have no physical borders. Thus, it would prove difficult to ascertain whether the domestic courts in question have jurisdiction over hate speech platforms that are often in foreign states.

What explains the limited nature of the outbreak of violence?

In 2013, various collaborative efforts were implemented by State and non-state actors, with a particular focus on maintaining peace and security during the elections. Through lessons learnt from the 2007 post-election violence, the need to address hate speech

¹⁷ The project was established in 2013 for purposes of monitoring social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook pages, blogs etc. for incitement to violence and hatespeech

and replace it with a culture of political tolerance could be seen through the various campaigns for peace online and offline. The national government also partnered with bloggers, civil society, the KNHCR and the Umati project to sift through online content for hate speech and warning signs for violence. According to Gould (2013), the NCIC established in efforts to avoid a repeat of the 2007 post-election violence through nation-building and promoting unity amongst tribes, came in the forefront to curb hate speech in anticipation of the 2013 elections. The commission was established in efforts (Gould, 2013). Innovative approaches were taken to promote peace, and counter speech emerged as a powerful weapon to fight potentially dangerous messages. The government also implemented various means of regulating the utilisation of ICTs and DCTs through the introduction of guidelines and compliancy measures for ICTs. Although there was criticism over their poor enforcement, regulations did in a way provide a blueprint on basic standards for reporting, expressing opinions and politicking online and offline. It is also generally acknowledged that regulations worked better on traditional media as opposed to social media. However, the high levels of hate speech on social media and the rise counter speech as its anti-dote assisted in neutralising danger. In addition, whereas ICTs and DCTs were mostly deployed by civil society in 2007, there was improved coordination and collaboration in the deployment of ICTs by stakeholders in 2013.

Context of the 2017 General Elections

The 2017 general elections were the second set of elections conducted after enactment of the 2010 Constitution which endorsed devolution. Even though the 2013 elections were contested under a new Constitution, the 2017 elections were fiercely contested amongst prospective candidates. According to Mutahi and Kimari (2017:15), the 2017 general elections recorded the highest number of candidates.¹⁸ As a result the political party nomination process was characterised by violence, intimidation, harassment and organised attacks against minority groups. The fierce levels of political contestations reported in 2017 can also be likely attributed to the probability that it was perhaps the first time that the real effect of devolution was felt

¹⁸ Final list of candidates comprised of approx. 14 523 candidates and 3752 independent candidates

as resources were transferred from national to county governments (Mutahi and Kimari, 2017:15; IFES 2017:23). Meaning that each county now had direct control of its own budget. Whereas in the past, political competition would be felt from the elite level and trickled down to the citizens, the 2017 elections arguably altered the face of political contestation and ultimately violence. There was now more incentive for political power to be contested at a more localised level without much influence or directives from political party structures at the top. As governor and MCA seats became politically and financially lucrative. According to the Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies (2017), the outbreak of violence during the party primaries in Meru, Kisumu, Migori, Nairobi and Uasin Gishu was due to fierce political competition for governor and MCA seats. In terms of contestation at the presidential level, the two main contenders were still incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta under the Jubilee party-running for a second term in office and opposition leader, Raila Odinga of the National Super Alliance (NASA) coalition (IFES: 2017). Beyond contestations at the local level, the Kenyatta and Odinga rivalry still contributed to the reoccurrence of violence in the 2017 elections especially in the post-election period. Odinga was vocal in his refusal to accept results released by the IEBC, calling for an annulment of the election results citing failure of the KIEMS system and the alleged hacking. Kenyatta was vocal in his belief that the judiciary was corrupted after they ruled in favour of Odinga for a fresh election (Campbell, 2017).

On electoral administration, the IEBC had several challenges from the public due to its perceived lack of impartiality. In 2016 for instance, there were a series of public protests against commissioners that allegedly lacked impartiality and the capacity to conduct the 2017 elections (EU: 2017). As a result, the commissioners voluntarily resigned in August 2016 which entailed that new commissioners that were appointed in January 2017, only had seven months to ensure the smooth running of the 8 August 2017 general elections (IFES, 2017:6). The time constraints further impacted on the implementation of technology in the elections (EU:2017). As election day neared, the IEBC was further challenged following the murder of Chris Musando, who headed the Kenya Integrated Elections Management System (KIEMS) system and had been instrumental in defending the deployment of the KIEMS system to the public (Gwala: 2017, Freytas-Tamura 2017).

Furthermore, Kenyan elections were also characterised by the introduction of various ICTs and DCTs aimed at improving the electoral process, social media platforms became further entrenched especially in the campaign period as political leaders, traditional media and civil society increasingly took to Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, Youtube to share their thoughts and opinions on development. Hate speech on social media platforms, however, did not cease to be a primary concern for stakeholders engaged in the electoral process. Furthermore, ICTs and DCTs were utilised as a means to address historical concerns over allegations of election results fraud. The 2017 election was no exception to the trend of disputed results; however it was the first time that the Kenyan courts ordered a run of the presidential elections. The next section provides an overview on the technologies involved during the 2017 elections.

The Role of ICTs in Fermenting Electoral Violence

Hate speech during the 2017 elections continued to be a major challenge and source of tension. However, the proliferation of fake news in the form of rumours, misinformation and propaganda dominated the social media platforms. ELOG (2017: 44) reports that “fake news contributed to a chaotic environment, which impacted on the process and even the outcome of the election.” According to UNESCO, (2018) fake news are untruths that can be classified as misinformation, disinformation and mal-information. Whereby misinformation refers to incorrect information that is spread unintentionally, disinformation refers to information that is false and intentionally circulated to mislead and mal information refers to information that is true but aimed at inflicting harm on the people concerned. In the 2017 elections, volumes of fake news peaked at crucial times of the electoral process namely in the pre and post-election phases of the fresh presidential elections. In this regard, hate speech was further intensified by the proliferation of fake news on social media platforms.

Focus on fake news especially during the elections highlighted some key issues. Although it may be relatively easy for citizens to identify fake news, it is difficult for them to fully grasp the harmful effects of circulating fake news. CNN and BBC for instance had fake news distributed through videos that resembled their logos and reporting styles. The fake videos were widely disseminated on social networks (BBC News:2017). The first screenshot below (figure 6), shows the fake CNN video which claimed that Uhuru Kenyatta was on the lead. The screenshot below (figure 7) is a

tweet from the US-Embassy in Nairobi. The embassy wrote the word Fake over the counterfeit diplomatic cable that was widely circulated on social media during the pre-election phase. It claimed that:

“Severe unrest and a massive breakdown of law and order would follow if Odinga were to defeat Uhuru in the election” -CBS News (2018)



A Portland/GeoPoll survey found that many Kenyans feel some news items about the elections have been deliberately misleading.

Figure 6: BBC News (2017)



Figure7: CBS News (2018)

According to an online survey on the rise of fake news, there is a positive correlation between declining levels of trust in the media and the rise in fake news. People that do not trust their local media tend to be susceptible to alternative sources of information (often unverified) and through circulating the information they contribute to the proliferation of fake news conducted (Wasserman and Madrid-Morales :2018).

The media ban of the 2007 post-election violence highlighted how information could be compared to a basic human need that led to various citizen initiatives that were generally viewed in a positive light. The role of Ushahidi in providing accurate and updated information and the rise of citizen journalism emerged as inspiring examples in the fight against electoral violence. Similarly, it is the same need for information in the 2017 elections that can be attributed to the proliferation of fake news. Despite the

positive developments in regulating hate speech, the rise of counter speech and coordinated efforts, fake news flourished in the 2017 elections.

Social media platforms played a role as a means to campaign for peace but also as a means to spread hate speech through fake news in most cases. The death of Chris Musando for instance, led to various rumours and news pieces on the reasons behind his murder in relation to the elections. There were various versions on social media with some alleging that the body of Chris Musando was maimed for the purpose of acquiring his finger that would be utilised in order to login and manipulate the KIEMS system. These stories and versions highlighted the fast rate at which sensitive and unchecked stories could be published on social media and spread without verification. To a large extent, the proliferation of fake news requires collective and continuous efforts aimed at countering the untruths with verified information that need to be published at an equal pace. This is often considerably difficult as it requires state institutions, media and civil society groups to verify and disseminate information through often formal channels internally and also simultaneously relay information on social media platforms. Relaying valid and verified information of social media is even more difficult when human beings and bots are concerned. Kenya was the only election where bots dominated in terms of influence. According to Portland (2018) bots accounted for a quarter of influential voices on Twitter. In most cases, bots were aimed at increasing tensions, shaping negative public perceptions on candidates and electoral practices. Traditional media took second position, accounting for almost a quarter of influential voices. The international community also had considerable influence as 43 per cent of twitter accounts that reported on elections were based outside of Kenya. On the #Kenya decides, media houses and journalists tweeted on important electoral issues such as the importance of voting and issues emanating from presidential debates and campaign promises. Furthermore, Twitter was used throughout the electoral period. Most notably by influential political candidates such as Raila Odinga who made several announcements during the results transmission process, having tweeted that his own party's assessment showed that Uhuru was trailing behind him by votes (BBC 2017).

The Role of ICTs in Preventing Electoral Violence

Introduction of KIEMS in the results transmission process

Technology was also further entrenched into the electoral process, extending to poll proceedings. The IEBC for the first time, utilised technology in the results transmission process. The decision was made in light of past experiences i.e. 2007, 2013 whereby the validity and authenticity of results announced by the electoral commission have been disputed in and outside of legal courts. As a result, the 2017 general elections, were the first to be conducted in accordance with the amended 2016 Election Laws (Amendments) which effectively enabled the finalisation of results at the constituency as opposed to them being finalised at the national level. The amended laws further led to the acquisition of the Integrated electronic electoral system called the (KIEMS)¹⁹ (IFES, 2017:6). In this regard, KIEMS enabled the IEBC to utilise technology throughout the electoral cycle by integrating the BVR system (introduced in the 2013 elections), the Biometric Voter Identification system (EVI), the electronic results transmission system (RTS) and the candidate registration systems (CRMS) (IFES, 2017:8).

During the pre-election period, the BVR system (capturing the photo, finger prints of registrants) was deployed for the second time and EVI was deployed for the first time (to verify identity of voters registering) for the two phases of the voter registration drive²⁰ and the voter verification drive²¹ (IFES 2017: 7-8). ELOG conducted a computer test audit of an electronic voter's roll audited by KPMG in Kenya and found that there were still errors and inconsistencies in the voters roll especially when it came to the identification of voters in ID and passport voters' field (ELOG 2017:51).

On election day, EVI was once again deployed to verify the identity of voters by taking the voters fingerprint and to also verify that the voter is at the correct polling station. For this purpose, 45000 KIEMS smart tablets were distributed to each polling station (IFES 2017:8). There was general consensus from the International observer groups, that voting and counting at the polling station level generally proceeded smoothly

¹⁹ See Section 44(1) of 2016 Election Act (amendment)

²⁰ 16th January to 14th February 2017

²¹ Voter verification drive conducted from 10 May-9 June 2017

under a peaceful environment²² (EU 2017; IGAD, 2017:2). ELOG (2017: 76) acknowledged that the KIEMS system had performed better than it had in 2013. Noting that in 2013 the KIEMS Identification system had failed in 54 per cent of total polling stations whereas in 2017, the system failed in only 7.6 per cent of total polling stations.

In the post-election period, the RTS system was activated to record and transmit the election results (for the six contested positions) received from polling station level and also supports tallying of results and displays them at the 290 constituencies and 47 tally centres at county level and at the national tally centre. The RTS also supports the validation of transmission results (IFES 2017:8). It is worthwhile to note that the initial agreement had been that the RTS system had to transmit presidential results together with an image of the polling station tally sheets. The tally sheet, referred to as form 34 A and form 34B needed to have been signed and scanned by the Returning Officers at the polling station level. It was on these grounds that the presidential election results were disputed by Raila Odinga, as the IEBC released presidential election results without the accompanying form 34 As and 34Bs that would enable party agents, observers and candidates to verify the results being transmitted by the RTS (Gwala:2017).

Cybersecurity

The introduction of KIEMS in the electoral process, also opened new discussions cybersecurity and the efforts taken by EMB to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process. Raila Odinga, first called a press conference that was aired on national TV at midnight following the close of polls on 8 August 2017, announcing that the KIEMS system had been hacked and that hackers had used the login credentials of deceased Chris Musando to manipulate the results (Wambua: 2017; BBC:2017; Freytas-Tamura:2017). The video footage of Raila's press conference circulated widely on social media platforms such as You Tube and Facebook. Rallying public opinion and fuelling tensions. The following are some comments in reaction to the video on YouTube²³:

²² There isolated incidents of violence in Mombasa for example where shots were fired in the air (AUEOM 2019), In some polling stations observers, there were also instances where KIEMS could not identify voter information (AU 2017, EU 2017)

²³ See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkPTSJNBHf8>

"It's a pity to see some Kenyans see this as funny, let me remind those talking (insult) to Raila you will ever regret losing this great man he has done enough for this country take a moment and think your voice your right is being shut down forever remember from here if there is no right today then forget it forever prepare for Amin dada of Uganda government coming soon no more opposition"

"They have stolen election after killed Msando God will punish Jubilee badly"

"Babaa ..don't let them Go this tym... We want u n not! #UHuRU X X 😏😏😏😏"

"First Mr Msando is murdered Then using his password for hacking How was the password attained. "

"Fellow countrymen the 2017 general election was not about Uhuru Kenyatta or Raila it is about us Kenyans who voted so we condemn any act of rigging if any. God bless Kenya"

The comments above illustrate the widespread use of social media tools to foster horizontal communications between people based on their interests and opinions. As people were able to comment on each other's comments and challenge the validity of Raila Odinga's allegations. In so doing, social media provides an opportunity for people at the local level to voice their opinions on the information received from the top. Mr Odinga's announcement of alleged hacking, did lead to protest, and violence, with most cases of violence being reported from the 9th of August in areas known as Raila strongholds, namely Mathare, Nairobi, Kisumu, Kibera (NBC:2017). Furthermore, the heavy handedness of security personnel dealing with cases of protests and violence further intensified the post-election period. Over 60 deaths were attributed to the brutality of security personnel. In other instances, people were beaten to death and night raids of private homes resulted in assaults and in most cases, women were subjected to sexual violence (ELOG 2017:46).

In efforts to contain the situation, the IEBC then began the process of uploading all 34A forms on their website for all stakeholders to have access (EU 2017). The IEBC in response refuted claims that the RTS system had been hacked with the IEBC Chairperson Wafula Chebukati stating that "hacking was attempted but was unsuccessful" (Akwei: 2017) and further went on to officially declare incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta as a winner having secured 54.3 per cent of the votes compared to Raila Odinga's 44.7 per cent of the total votes cast.

Following the declaration of the results, Raila Odinga filed a petition and the Supreme Court subsequently ruled that the results declared by the IEBC be nullified and ordered the IEBC to conduct a fresh election (ELOG:2017). The fresh election took place in a tense environment as Raila Odinga boycotted the fresh presidential election held on 26 October 2017. The IEBC once again declared Uhuru Kenyatta as the overall winner and President. ELOG (2017:6) reports that it was unable to deploy observers in 75 constituencies due to tensions, insecurity and violence. Noting that once an ELOG observer was killed and several more became targets of harassment, attacks and intimidation in the lead up to the fresh elections.

E-LOG deploys Parallel Vote Tabulation System

The Elections Observation Group (ELOG) deployed citizen observers throughout the country's polling stations on 8 August 2017 (EU 2017). Furthermore, ELOG had been instrumental in following crucial electoral activities such as the BVR process and the procurement of electoral materials in the pre-election period. Notably, ELOG conducted a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) exercise to verify the validity of the disputed election results announced by the IEBC. The process of PVT entailed that results gathered by ELOG observers at polling station level were utilised as a sample to verify results announced. ELOG found that the results that had been released by the IEBC matched its own projected PVT results which were based on a representative national sample and a calculated margin of error (ELOG 2017:87). In addition, ELOG's projected PVT results were further strengthened by observers deployed to observe tallying in 274 constituencies, who collected 79 copies of form 34Bs whose results matched the IEBC results (ELOG 2017:75). Thus, ICTs enabled E-LOG to observe polling procedures, answer digital checklists and report back to the data centre via SMS using cell phones. Information sent by the observers went through the data centre which utilised a mix of software and hardware to verify and analyse data received from the field (ELOG 2017; Ruvaga 2017). Thus, new ICTs enabled the CSO to rally its members around a common goal, to safeguard the credibility of the electoral process through verified information. PVT therefore made the people agents of change, who did not wait for the IEBC to provide them with results, but rather went out to the polling stations to gather data themselves. Although, the burden of proof laid

solely on the IEBC to provide evidence that the results transmission had not been hacked and that the results transmitted were indeed credible. PVT in this case, complemented IEBC claims that the results they transmitted were credible.

 Data From ELOG's Parallel Vote Tabulation Indicates				
Comparison of ELOG's PVT Estimates with IEBC's Official Results Based on 1,692 of 1,700 polling stations reporting with 851,427 registered voters				
Candidate	ELOG Estimates	IEBC Results	Margin of Error	Match
Kenyatta Uhuru	54.0%	54.3%	+/- 1.9%	✓
Odinga Raila	44.9%	44.7%	+/- 1.9%	✓
Nyaga Joseph William Nthiga	0.2%	0.3%	+/- 0.1%	✓
Dida Mohamed Abduba	0.4%	0.3%	+/- 0.2%	✓
Aukot John Ekuru Longoggy	0.2%	0.2%	+/- 0.1%	✓
Kaluyu Japheth Kavinga	0.1%	0.1%	+/- 0.1%	✓
Mwaura Michael Wainaina	0.1%	0.1%	+/- 0.1%	✓
Jirongo Shakhhalaga Khwa	0.1%	0.1%	+/- 0.1%	✓


Elections Observation Group
CREDIBLE. PEACEFUL. FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

 Election Observation Group (KENYA)
 @elogkenya
 www.elog.or.ke

Figure 8 : ELOG 2017 general elections observation report, page 70.

According to Mutahi and Kimari (2017:6) the spread of hate speech that sought to sow divisions and intolerance during the 2007 elections brought a peculiar challenge. Unlike in previous elections, messages of hate could be disseminated on a large scale than previously due to the rise of ICTs in election campaigning (Mutahi and Kimari 2017:6). Voters had in addition to TV, radio and newspapers, unlimited access to election updates through mobile platforms such as Short Message Services (SMS), emails, blogs, Facebook, twitter and WhatsApp. In this regard, ICTs were frequently cited to have played role as catalysts to the outbreak of electoral violence by enabling the rapid and wide dissemination of hate speech. On the other hand, social media also

enabled Kenyans to locate and report incidents of violence through twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook. Incidents of electoral violence could be documented and verified in real time, with the dissemination of videos, photos and first-hand accounts that were instrumental in informing the interventions of electoral stakeholders (Mutahi and Kimari, 2017:12).

Understanding the Varying Levels of Electoral Violence

This section seeks to understand how ICTs either prevented or reduced electoral violence in the past three elections. In all the three elections, new ICTs were utilised at different capacities by various actors which in turn resulted in varied experiences of electoral violence. With the 2007 elections being the deadliest elections and the 2013 elections being generally peaceful and the 2017 elections experiencing significant violence again. Table 1 below reflects these varied outcomes in electoral violence through mortality rates and the nr of displaced people. It is also important to track the role of new ICTs in preventing violence or fermenting violence by analysing whether intervening variables identified in the methodology section increased or decreased in a manner that influenced the increase or decrease of electoral violence.

Table 2 illustrates intervening variables that influenced levels of electoral violence witnessed across the three elections.

	Mortality rates	Nr of Displaced people
2007	1300	350000
2013	13	
2017	70	

Table: (data sourced from: CIPEV: 2008, KNHCR: 2017)

	2007	2013	2017
Quality of Leadership		✓	✓ -
Ethnic Tensions	✓	✓	✓

Electoral System Design		✓	
Election Management	✓	✓	✓

Table: Based on authors analysis below:

The 2007 Kenyan elections were undoubtedly the most violent elections the country had ever experienced. The violence was widespread, organised and sporadic, with communities bearing the consequences, through forced displacements, assaults and abuses. Ethnic tensions and the election management were the main intervening variables at play in fuelling the electoral violence. In both cases New ICTs did not have a significant influence as ethnic tensions were attributed to the circulation of hate speech on traditional media platforms. Election management was also a trigger of the electoral violence based on widespread allegations of electoral fraud. Instead, New ICTs were at the fore front of civil society initiatives during the post-election violence. New ICTs, empowered citizens as narrated through the launch of Ushahidi and the rise of citizen journalism through social media tools signalled a new era of bottom-up agency. The governments imposition of a media ban conveys how people were able to transcend government regulations by connecting and mobilising through ICTs and DCTs. At a time where, traditional media came under the spotlight for fuelling tensions, it can be said that ICTs and DCTs were predominantly deployed for the promotion of peace after the outbreak of violence.

The 2013 elections were generally regarded to have been peaceful and successfully conducted. Ethnic tensions, the electoral system design, quality of leadership and election management were the main intervening variables that indicated that increased the heightened the probability of electoral violence. In the 2013 elections, hate speech migrated from traditional media to social media thus fuelling ethnic tensions on a wider scale. However counter speech and government and private company regulations emerged as intervening variables that had not been considered before. These variables were instrumental in restricting widespread dissemination of hate speech. As the increase in hate speech was countered by an increase in counter speech and increased measures regulate mass communication as an enabling tool for hate speech. Electoral Systems design was also an influencing variable since the 2010 Constitution, created new positions for leadership with power decentralised from

national level to county level. However, the struggle for power was still centred at Presidential level, with Odinga and Kenyatta as the main mobilisers along ethnic lines. It is worthwhile to note that although the ethnic, political tensions and allegations of electoral fraud characterising past elections still remained, the utilisation of ICTs and DCTs evolved in a manner that could have led to similar scales of the 2007 electoral violence. This paper argues that violence did not erupt in the 2013 elections because ICTs and DCTs were proactively and effectively deployed throughout the electoral cycle in order to prevent rather than to respond to crisis. ICTs and DCTs were effective and impactful through collaborative efforts amongst key electoral stakeholders.

In 2017, Kenya once again experienced post-election violence. Ethnic tensions, quality of leadership, and election management played a significant role in the post-election violence witnessed. Ethnic tensions were exacerbated by the emergence of 'fake news' as a dangerous tool in fuelling tensions. Thus, hate speech was further reinforced by fake news and increased ethnic tensions. The unprecedented number of candidates in the elections, changed the rules of the game as far as quality of leadership is concerned. The elections became high stakes elections and political leaders competed fiercely to influence voter preference in the pre-election period. Most politicians utilised social media platforms to campaign for votes. Furthermore, fake news that circulated was generally aimed at swaying voter perceptions either in favour of or against a targeted candidate. The introduction and management of technology in the transmission of results and the operational challenges within the IEBC had a negative impact on variable of election management. Allegations of electoral fraud were based entirely on the adoption of the KIEMS. In this case the system that had been adopted to boost public confidence in the results transmission process, became the main source of suspicion and mistrust. Fake news also played a significant role in positing KIEMS as a tool for electoral fraud. Electoral violence occurred despite the fact that similar projects that worked in 2013 had improved and maintained their work particularly in monitoring hate speech and promoting peace during the electoral processes. This instance brought forth the challenge presented by ICTs and DCTs based on their inability to work for the achievement of both good and bad. This paper notes that there were no significant projects employed collectively by electoral stakeholders to adequately verify and track that KIEMS was being operated in a credible and transparent manner.

Overall, threats and acts of violence occurred again in 2017. As previously stated, these incidents of violence were not widespread, and most were attributed to police brutality. Although many factors can be credited in containing the violence, this paper identifies time and better coordination of stakeholders as the key factors to be noted. Firstly, memories of the 2007 post-election violence spurred many actions that were geared towards containing and reducing violence. Stakeholders had sufficient time to draw many lessons from the 2007 post-election violence and had realised the value of working together. The IEBC for instance partnered with CSOs in countering fake news on social media. Secondly, the efforts of domestic and international observer groups to verify information and produce impartial reports aided in improving public confidence. Efforts to accurately document and map out incidents of violence in real time also assisted to improve strategy and interventions of stakeholders.

The varying levels of electoral violence in Kenya's 2007, 2013 and 2017 elections, illustrate that the manner in which new ICTs are deployed during elections have a great bearing on the levels of electoral violence experienced. Through discussions on the changes in the usage of new ICTs, this chapter argues that although new ICTs can prevent or ferment violence, counter strategies are important in mitigating electoral violence. In addition, legislation and regulation that regulates and guides the utilisation of technology during elections also plays a significant role in electoral violence prevention strategies.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

This research paper set out to understand the role of New ICTs in fermenting or preventing electoral violence. This was modestly illustrated through the case study of Kenya. Whereby new ICTs as a common thread were utilised to explain the varied outcome of violence in all three elections. In so doing, the paper confirmed that the bi-directional nature of New ICTs appears to be inherently permanent. Since New ICTs were deployed by a variety of actors for good, as seen through efforts to counter hate speech, to gather intelligence on electoral violence and trace instigators of hate speech. However, New ICTs were also deployed by a variety of actors to ferment violence as described through the migration of hate speech from traditional media to social media in 2013. As well as the generation and dissemination of fake news through New ICTs in 2017.

In so doing, the paper found that New ICTs do not function independently. Thus, they cannot be posited as causes of electoral violence but rather viewed as tools that function according to how they are programmed by the actors concerned. To explain further, New ICTs operate within a network of social actors that deploy new ICTs to further their own interests and values. Notably, by exploring the collaboration in the use of New ICTs by actors in Kenya, the study found that collaboration and responsible use, determined how new ICTs reacted to a decrease or increase of the intervening variables. In 2013 for instance, there were notable collaborations between state institutions, CSO's, private companies and police throughout the electoral cycle. To such an extent, that although many predicted that violence would manifest due to the high levels of hate speech in the pre-election period, the elections turned out to be the most peaceful elections when compared to 2007 and 2017. Thus, confirming the initial hypothesis of this paper, which stated that: effective management and regulation by all actors involved in the electoral process is key in preventing electoral violence. Counter Speech, PVT exercises, Crown Paint uniting colours of Kenya campaign, the voluntary shutting down of Mashada.com in response to high volumes of hate speech are all examples that regulation and responsible use of ICTs must come from actors themselves as autonomous beings. Through the social network theory, networks made up of autonomous beings can form social networks that have power to effect change. The paper also found that effective management and regulation of new ICTs

depends on the emergence of normative instruments that speak directly to the use of technology during elections. Thus, instruments need to constantly adapt as technology evolves. At the continental level, efforts are now being taken to respond to the impact of technology in elections as evidenced by the 2017 guidelines on access to information. In Kenya, the lessons of 2007 and 2013 elections led to the enactment of various legislations, most notably the 2017 guidelines for prevention of transmission of undesirable bulk content that were adopted by Kenya's Communications Authority. It is therefore important for legislation and regulations to keep abreast of technological advancements in elections in order to limit their capacity to ferment electoral violence.

A notable limitation that emerged, is that it is difficult to assess the impact of New ICTs in elections in Africa. Especially when literature still shows that Africa faces significant challenges with regards to access to New ICTs as explained through the politics of ownership of New ICTs and the global positioning of Africa within the international order. Although the research paper relied utilised a single country case study. It would be useful to strengthen the analysis by testing the findings against other African countries that have deployed New ICTs and experienced peaceful elections. Interaction of New ICTs with the identified intervening variables (ethnic tensions, quality of leadership, electoral system design and election management) that can be widely applicable to other African States. In this case, network analysis can be utilised in various contexts, since it provides a variety of theories and tools that can be utilised to generate puzzles and test propositions on structures (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009:560). Another limitation is that it is difficult to ascertain the base of decisions that leaders make. As an example, ideally Uhuru and Odinga's role in inciting or fermenting violence in the past three elections was explained through their party ideologies, their ethnicity etc. However, the level of unpredictable human behaviour that was involved in the outcomes. In other words, the decisions taken by political leaders are not always based on clear policy direction or defined rules of the game. Thus, this research limited its analysis to quality of leadership as seen through the decisions taken by the leaders and not necessarily how and why they chose to act in a manner that could incite or prevent electoral violence.

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