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Online news consumption in Kenya: emerging and receding patterns among young people

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA STUDIES



ONLINE NEWS CONSUMPTION IN KENYA: EMERGING AND RECEDING PATTERNS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

A PhD thesis submitted in (partial) fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Media Studies of the University of the Witwatersrand

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March 2020

DECLARATION

I, Edwin Tallam, hereby declare that this thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Media Studies at the University of Witwatersrand has not been submitted for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my work in design and execution and that all reference material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.



…… 23/10/2020

Signature Date

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores news consumption patterns and habits among young people in Kenya. While there is a widespread agreement that the internet and mobile devices have reconfigured the mediascape in the Global South, it is not yet clear how the adoption and adaptation of both have shaped content (including news). Instead, much effort has been expended on how the relatively high internet and mobile penetration rates could 'transform' and possibly help states in the Global South, achieve their development goals. In addition, existing literature has devoted attention to how traditional news organisations have embraced social media and messaging applications in their routine news gathering, processing and dissemination practices. This approach has obscured rather than reveal the news users' experiences, particularly the kind of news genres accessed and consumed. It also underplays the motives behind such choices, against the proliferation of 'fake' news. In this regard, I combined the rooted Uses and Gratifications theory (U and G) and the relatively new concept of "scalable sociality" as the two main pillars of an original framework aimed at analysing and explaining young people's agency in news consumption. Uses and gratifications was particularly useful in framing research questions on news access and the enablers of the high mobile and internet penetration rates in Kenya. On the other hand, Scalable sociality was valuable in illuminating online news consumption processes—including how news mutates across public and private spaces of socialities. The non-normative third wave African scholarship was embraced to explain unfamiliar news use and consumption patterns among young people. This study embraced a mixed-methods approach. The first phase was a survey involving 800 respondents in two academic institutions. The objective of the survey was to map the emerging and receding patterns of news consumption. The second phase comprised of eight focus group discussions (FGDs) aimed at nuancing the emerging themes of news consumption revealed by the survey. Lastly, ethnographic methods (online and offline observations) were useful in providing a more holistic understanding of how internet-enabled mobile devices are interwoven in the daily lives and news consumption experiences of young people. Findings revealed how news consumption among young people in Kenya is a complex and multi-layered process, often defying pre-existing conceptions. While statistics on the internet and mobile penetration rates tend to be used to frame Kenya as a leading country in the African digital space, these obscure the specific ways in which young people creatively navigate barriers to access, through hacking and developing parallel markets for cheap bundles. Regarding the content that is consumed on social media, the prevalent news sub-genre is political news. Paradoxically, young people consume political news not to become responsible civic agents, but rather for their entertainment value. They enjoy the 'drama' staged by political leaders as they transgress their private lives in

public spaces. Therefore, while news exposure occurs across public and private platforms, news deliberations occur on ephemeral private platforms such as WhatsApp. Finally, the perceived prevalence of 'fake news' on social media has increased the stakes of traditional media (radio, newspapers and television) as the most trusted news sources online and offline.

Keywords: News Consumption, Young people, Social Media, Messaging applications, Kenya

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	African Broadcasting Corporation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CA	Communication Authority of Kenya
CBD	Central Business District
CGTN	China Global Television Network
CNN	Cable News Network
Gbps	Gigabytes per second
IBM	International Business Machines
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IMEI	International Mobile Equipment Identity
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
KANU	Kenya Africa National Union
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
Kbps	Kilobytes per second
KDF	Kenya defence forces
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KoT	Kenyans on Twitter
KP&TS	Kenya Post and Telecommunication services
KRA	Kenya Revenue Authority
KTN	Kenya Television Network
KUCCP	The Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
NACOSTI	The National Commission for Science and Technology
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NCCCC	National Computer and Cyber Crimes Coordination Committee
NETFUND	Kenya the National Environment Trust Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NTV	Nation Television
QUAL	Qualitative

QUANT	Quantitative
SCOK	The Supreme Court of Kenya
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
SNS	Social Networking Sites
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
TEAMS	The East African Marine System
TuK	Technical University of Kenya
U and G	Uses and Gratification theory
UCL	The University College London
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UoE	University of Eldoret
UoN	University of Nairobi
USA	The United States of America
WI-FI	Wireless Fidelity
WWW	World Wide Web

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The significant rise of the internet and mobile phones in Sub-Saharan Africa has profoundly shaped the digital news ecology. Today, (the) news is predominantly accessed and consumed via internet-enabled mobile devices[1]. In Kenya, the increased proliferation of the internet (99.2%) and mobile devices (100.1%) (CA, Q1, 2019), have altered the way people communicate (Ndlela & Mulwo, 2017 b). These relatively new technologies have introduced "user participation and the fast continuous news cycle" (Karlsonn, 2011:279). However, the implications of the increased user agency, fast news cycle and the massive presence of users—mainly young people—experimenting on the production and consumption (and in some instances recirculation) of online news is not yet clear.

Today, 'alternative journalistic actors' (Cheruiyot, 2019), many of whom are young people aged 18-35 (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017), have positioned themselves within digital spaces as content producers and consumers. These emerging trend forms the crux on the debates on 'journalism claim to epistemic authority' (Cheruiyot 2019:1). The internet and mobile devices have permeated different social classes and cultural bases in Africa. This has challenged truth telling, which for a long time remained the most essential component of journalism (Karlsson, 2011). Although my aim is not to explore the journalistic transformation, it is important to note that the unprecedented wave of digital disruptions currently underway in Kenya and many other African States invites questions on the journalistic authority and legitimacy to perform this cardinal role. Against this backdrop, I shift focus to news consumption experiences and reproduction patterns among young people, paying attention to how social media and private messaging applications have altered how news is socially constructed (Mabweazara, 2015). By so doing, the acts of young people as alternative journalistic actors positions journalism as a dialogic and collaborative practice.

But how is news defined and produced in the African context? This background is useful in delineating what constitutes news and alternative journalistic acts within the African context. Mabweazara (2015) observes that "in the context of traditional journalism, new technologies have literally altered news gathering, writing and reporting" (2). Journalism roots are deeply

[1] News is conceptualized in this case as 'not just mediating reality but constructing experience and acquiring identity' (McQuail, 2000:337).

entrenched in the western societies particularly Europe and America, journalists have for a long time found themselves entrapped in the norms and values emanating from the rich scholarship history from the west. For example, Mabwezara (2015) observes that the application of the 'reductionist' cannons of journalism have punctuated the practice of journalism in African news rooms. This blanket application of western centric concepts oftentimes ignores the local cultural values of sociality, interdependence, and conviviality (Nyamjoh 2005). In Kenya, Ogola (2011) notes that twitter has expanded the user's participation in news. Omanga and Chepngetich (2013) echoes this by observing that twitter has been embraced as a space for news dissemination and deliberative engagement akin to the '*local baraza'*.

These emerging trends in Kenya, as in other Global South states, have opened new research spaces useful in providing insights on the contemporary mobile news uptake. This study sought to offer a theoretical and empirical contribution to understand how mobile connectivity is changing dynamics in news consumption. It does so by mapping mobile phone and internet access among young people in Kenya; paying attention to how they combine the full range of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram among others), messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram and Snapchat among others), and traditional media (radio, television and newspapers) in daily news consumption experiences. Secondly, it explores the understanding of what news is (or is not) from a young people's perspective, paying attention to the motives driving access to specific sub-genres (politics, business, sports, fashion and lifestyle and weather), and how they mirror in young people's daily lives. Thirdly, this study explores how trust and privacy shape news consumption, particularly at a time when studies indicate waning institutional and networked trust. In the next three paragraphs, I briefly put these grey areas into perspective.

To begin with, mobile phones as material devices have increasingly become enmeshed and embodied in the daily news consumptions habits and practices of users. Paradoxically, studies in Africa have increasingly focused on access to mobile devices and the internet, instead of how the users appropriate these technologies in their daily lives. Consequently, emerging results from these studies showing a high internet and mobile phone penetration rates have been uncritically celebrated thus obfuscating a nuanced understanding of the contextual complexities, possible enablers as well as the motives for internet and mobile devices access. Limited efforts have been expended in shedding light to how users in many Global South states with economic limitations and deprivations sustain their digital media access.

Secondly, content—including news—has not received much attention. Despite young people being exhorted as the drivers in the adoption and adaptation of new technologies in Kenya (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017), the specificities and complexities of the diverse Kenyan context, the creativity and the agency of its ordinary people (particularly young people) in how they refashion new technologies to meet their information needs has not received much attention. Instead, studies of the internet and mobile devices have devoted much attention to the transformative potential of these technologies (Gagliardone, 2016 a; Wasserman, 2011b, 2017). This transformative discourse, anchored on liberating power of internet-enabled mobile devices, lends itself to Global North assumptions on how Global South states can leverage these technologies for meaningful development. In reality, the media determinist perspective embedded in the transformative potential media technologies has not been helpful. It blurs rather than reveal the specific ways in which African users actively domesticate these technologies (Wasserman, 2011).

Thirdly, the perceived 'openness' of the internet has brought about positive and negative disruptions. Positively, the internet and mobile devices have partly collapsed bureaucracy and the hierarchies that punctuated the traditional media era, resulting in the broader pool of information relayed in real-time. On the negative side, the ungoverned nature of social media and messaging applications has made it increasingly difficult to discern real and false news stories, thus raising media and news trust issues. Also, the cost of staying informed is deeply entangled with the global market structures mainly by the tech oligarchs such as Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Amazon, among others, accused of behind the scenes data mining raising privacy concerns. Taken together, these have threatened journalistic authority and legitimacy raising fears and panics on the quality of news (see Wahutu, 2019; Wasserman, 2019; Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2018).

Reckoning with what the audience considers or counts as quality news experience is vital for academic, social, economic, cultural and political reasons. Rather than focusing on media alone––as is the case with a litany of studies in the Global South; I zoom in on young people's relationships with media types and news content (as a specific genre). Paying significant attention to how news is consumed through a wide range of traditional (radio, television, newspapers), social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter among others) and private messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat). The contention here is you cannot choose from what you do not have. Besides users' needs partly or fully influence consumption of specific news sub-genres (politics, business, sports, fashion and lifestyle and weather).

Considering the above research trajectory, this thesis maps how gratifications sought from specific sub-genres reflect in the everyday lives of young people— in the process, providing insights on how the audience needs drive news consumption. This dimension partly responds to calls for primary research of the audience in the Global South (Willems & Mano, 2016) by focusing on young people's online news consumption experiences—mainly through a broad array of social media and private messaging applications comparatively with traditional media. Using the radical user perspective—focusing on the uses and users of news– as a structuring tool, I now turn to why studying news consumption experiences is important highlighting the *uses* and the *users* of news.

1.0 News consumption from a radical user perspective

For decades, the media has consistently played a critical role in (re)mediating the lived experiences of the audience and users in context. Through framing, news potentially shaped public discourses. Media institutions "could barely exist without news, and news could not exist without media"(McQuail, 2000:337). Nevertheless, even with the clarity of purpose on why the discussion of news is essential, its definition remains quite elusive to date. In the Global South, news has often been 'constructed' in a way that produces and re-produces the interests of the ruling elites, institutions and development initiatives. To surmount this, I adopt a radical user perspective (Clark & Marchi, 2017; Picone, 2016)— I devote attention on the uses and users of news—considered in the context of emerging technological trends in Kenya. Although this is not a theoretical framework, I embrace it as a structuring tool in this introductory chapter to systematically unpack the uses and the users of news.

Research on news consumption has received considerable attention in Europe, America, Latin-America, Asia, and Australia. Notably, two research bodies: The Pew Research Centre (Brenner, 2013; Gottfried & Shearer, 2016; Purcell et al., 2010, 2011) in the USA, and the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University (see Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielsen, 2017; Newman, Levy, & Nielsen, 2015); have consistently monitored and mapped news consumption providing incredible insights on the emerging trends and patterns in the Global North compared to the Global South. Young people's news consumption patterns, Antunovic et al., (2016) established, revolves around routine surveillance needs to be gratified directly or incidentally through a wide range of online platforms.

Cognisant of the calls to transcend access and impact in the Global South, internet and mobile devices penetration statistics in Kenya are useful in this study in three ways: first, the increased

proliferation of mobile devices and the internet has collapsed the hierarchical relationship between media institutions, professional journalists and their audiences—in this case, mobile news users—thus expanding news exposure avenues exponentially. Secondly, the increased access to the internet-enabled mobile device has not only shaped how news is gathered, processed and disseminated by the media institutions, but equally allows users to experiment on different formats of news through the distinct socio-technical affordances of social media. For example, different platforms (social media and messaging applications) support different genres of content. Thirdly, internet-enabled mobile devices have also triggered new debates on (the) news trust and invasion of privacy amidst the rise of 'fake news'. These trends invite us to examine the varied ways through which these emerging innovations have not only shaped how news is consumed but also how news as the material content has shaped these technologies based on the user's needs.

The exhortation of Kenya as a 'hotbed' of innovation has equally been counterproductive; it has stifled debates resulting in a monolithic discourse on how Kenya is steadily positioning itself globally on matters technology. However, these discourses fail to illuminate how mobile devices have not only shaped how news is accessed but how users make sense of the news consumed. Against this background, this thesis interrogates how emerging platforms are combined with the existing traditional media channels in news consumption, paying attention to the possible enablers and the motives behind media and news content choices. The increased user agency in conventional traditional media newsgathering partly indicates that journalism has ceded some control (Karlsson, 2011). The internet and mobile devices and its wide range of applications have disrupted the routine unilinear news production targeted at an often 'passive audience'.

The uses of news can be explored from three broad perspectives, namely: Socio-technological, sociological and political (Duffy et al., 2020:7-9). On the other hand, users in this context are young people (18-25yrs) in two public universities in Kenya. The radical user perspective, though not a theoretical lens, is incredibly useful for spreading the broadest possible canvas upon which to study the *uses* of news and its *users* in the context of emerging technologies. It gives us a systematic way of organising the full range arguments useful in a holistic understanding of how digitalisation has shaped the understanding of news from a user's perspective. In the next few paragraphs, I unpack the three broad news uses perspectives, and in the tail end of the section, I make an argument for re-centering the users in news media debates–particularly young news consumers.

1.0.1 Socio-technological news use perspective

In the Global South, mobile phones have been described as the 'new talking drums' (De Bruijn et al., 2009). Without delving deep into the evolution of media innovations, the debates surrounding innovations broadly revolves around the binaries of optimism and pessimism (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002; Van Dijck, 2013). In this regard, there has been considerable optimism in the Global South concerning the possibilities of mobile devices and the internet to transform societies and governance; with such optimism leaning on the deterministic nature of these innovations. Similarly, in Kenya, the high internet and mobile phones penetration have triggered a wave of optimism; these conjoined technologies are widely viewed as the panacea to socio-economic emancipation particularly among young people (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). On the other hand, a slow but steady wave of pessimism pertaining the use of these technologies is beginning to emerge, more so with the proliferation of 'fake news', invasion of privacy and erosion of trust. The rapid spread of the internet and the broad access to mobile devices owing to their relatively affordable cost has significantly allowed periphery 'voices' into the discourse of news production and dissemination. The result is a vast corpus of truths and half-truths.

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp among other platforms have significantly altered how young people communicate in Sub-Saharan Africa (see Ndlela & Mulwo, 2017a). They afford users spaces where they acquire, produce, and negotiate meanings. Rather than offering a uniform experience in Africa, different social media platforms are used to access different types of information and facilitate different types of interactions and sociability among users. Swart et al. (2019) contend, "News has more than just an informational function and can also foster sociability" (3). However, despite the widespread agreement on digital disruptions, partly triggered by the adoption and adaptation of these platforms, the content carried or affected by these waves of disruptions have not received much attention in Africa. Particularly at a time when studies conducted in the Global North show that young people's news consumption is increasingly "gravitating towards online sources of news and information"(Antunovic et al., 2016a).

In Kenya as elsewhere, these platforms have afforded alternative avenues for self-expression (Ligaga, 2012), thus expanding the public sphere. Also, they partly facilitate 'civic participation' allowing multiple actors—often at the peripheries to voice their concerns (Omanga, 2019:175). The potential of new media to archive information in a diverse range of formats thus allowing for such information to be replicated, repurposed, recirculated over time and space, forms part of the crucial changes in communication. Put differently, the relatively affordable cost of mobile and

internet access have availed new avenues for public and private communication and information flows. Yet at the same time, the presumed ubiquity, and inclusive architecture of digital platforms sits disconcertedly with the lived realities of users in the Global South (Ogola, 2011). Srinivasan et al. (2019), argue that Africa's digital transformation should be understood "for what it is, not what it should or could be, or indeed what it is not" (4).

Due to the multiplicity of platforms "news, information and truth itself are under siege"(Clark & Marchi, 2017:28). This view calls attention to the changes in news consumption, real or imagined[2]. It also highlights the urgency to unravel the threats posed by 'fake news' online, paying attention to how this has shaped (negatively or positively) levels of trust and privacy in online spaces. In other words, news is increasingly being consumed from a wide pool of content producers via a wide range of mobile devices, making it difficult for users to discern truth and falsehoods in their daily news consumption experiences. This highlights the fundamental character of social media and messaging applications; they do not operate outside the existing social orders, but rather, are deeply embedded within the prevailing structures of power and relationships in specific contexts.

Thus by focusing on 'news' content, this study not only focuses on news as content disseminated via a multiplicity of platforms but also positions social media and messaging applications as symbolic news content by themselves due to their embedded socio-technical affordances. Important to note, these affordances keep changing and mutating as technologies evolve. For example, in the twilight years of Facebook and Twitter, (Boyd and Ellison (2007a) identified four affordances, namely: "persistence, visibility, spreadability, and searchability" (10). However, Miller et al., (2016:10) argue that platforms such as WhatsApp (founded in 2009), Instagram (founded 2010) and Snapchat (founded 2011) among others do not necessarily exhibit such affordances. Instead, they 'do consolidate a trend towards scalable sociality'. Social media have challenged the mundane understanding of "sociability, audience activity, passivity and involvement" (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2010:212).

[2] "News consumption refers to every contact with news items: both news seeking and unintended contact. News is thus interpreted in the widest possible meaning, including hard news (e.g., politics, economics, and crime), soft news (e.g., showbiz and health), and service news (weather and traffic). This includes both editorial news, whether or not completed with interpretation, and short news updates"(Van Damme et al., 2015).

1.0.2 Sociological perspective

News serves more than information purposes; it also fosters sociability (Swart et al., 2019). In the same fashion, Clark and Marchi (2017:21) view 'news' as a "form of story-based communication" (21), with social media playing an increasingly important role in how news is defined"(4). While for Fletcher and Park (2017) news is a lens through which people view society. For Park (1940) news is bits of information about social events, which offers people the way of knowing the world. This view is consistent with Tuchman's (1978) suggestion that the explanation of news events provides a much-needed context for consumers' debates. McQuail (2000) further adds that news is not something complete and fully formed—it is constructed like any other form of communication (110).

Therefore, news deserves attention because of its fundamental role in shaping specific 'cultural forms of expressions' (McQuail, 2000:337). Miller et al. (2016) argue that "the core to the study of social science is how people associate with each other to form social relations and societies" (3). Even so, Africa has often been left out of empirical studies aimed at understanding the emerging and receding patterns of news consumption. In this regard, the rise of social media and messaging applications highlights the relational and connective potentialities of information and news content carried by these devices and draws our attention to user's interconnective practices. These relationships are forged, sustained, or wound up depending on the practicality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the bonds of socialities. With hindsight on the increasing use of mobile devices for news access in the Global North, this study shifts focus to Africa, zooming in on how young people forge new relationships based on the public and private scales of socialities in Kenya.

One vexing question, though, is how do young people combine a universe of media channels and platforms at their disposal? Social media and messaging applications are deeply imbricated within prevailing cultural norms and values; they do not operate outside the existing social orders, but rather are deeply embedded within the prevailing structures of power and relationships in specific contexts. Gadliardone (2016) contends that the increasing access of ICTs should be studied in "relations to the variety of actors, networks, and languages that do matter in a specific locality rather than the idealised conception of the state-society relations" (1). Uses and Gratification adopted in this study aims as shedding light on the motivations **why** and through the relatively new concept of scalable sociality demonstrate **how** social media content materialises through and within the scales proposed by Miller et al., (2016).

1.0.3 Political perspective

Embedded in these descriptions of news is the dominant view of news as a useful tool in making sense of immediate surroundings and keeping in touch with the 'outside world'. Through a web of networks and connections, "digital democracy has become a reality" (Horst & Miller, 2012:166). Wasserman (2010) argues, "the domestication of mobile phones within a specific socio-cultural and politico-economic context in Africa tells us about people's engagement or disengagement with politics" (151). This view, though it speaks to the materiality of mobile phones, content (including news) has not received much attention. How young people engage with news sub-genres sheds light into the role of young people—often dubbed the drivers of innovation—in the construction of communities and societies that they live in.

The net effects of the proliferation of the internet and mobile devices are not only an expansion of news exposure avenues but an expansion of the public sphere as well[3]. Thus, "news consumption is the key pillar of civic life" (Elvestad, Phillips, & Feuerstein, 2017:3), leading to an informed electorate (Jarvis et al., 2009), who then actively participate in their civic and political duties (Elvestad & Phillips, 2018; Westlund, 2015a). However, the continued focus on news as a pillar in entrenching and sustaining liberal democracy in the Global North has obscured context-based realities, particularly in Global South. Yet scholars and media practitioners seem to contend with this normativity which takes the form of a broad-brush generalization of what news is (or what it is not), based on the assumption that what the understanding of news and its value in a society is universal and can be applied across contexts. The result is "an idea of democracy hardly informed by popular articulations of personhood and agency in Africa"(Nyamnjoh, 2005:282).

Against this background, this study locates and positions news as a critical pillar in linking the broader societal goals and aspirations with individual and collective information needs; mapping how such information shapes, distorts, creates and recreates realities in context. Often, young people have been perceived as 'makers' or 'breakers' in Africa, predominantly being portrayed as 'breakers' "feared for the disorder their number and ideological choices might engender"(de Bruijn & Both, 2017: 781). In part, the content' (including news) propagated and mediated by the media informs these ideological choices.

[3] Associated with Jürgen Habermas, "a public sphere is an 'arena, independent of government market) …. Which is dedicated to rational debate and which is both accessible to entry and open to inspection by the Citizenry" (Websters 1995:101-2)

1.1 Statement of the problem: Why explore young people's news consumption experiences

News audiences are "seeking access, navigating in, and making sense of the multitude of news messages across print, broadcasting, online, and mobile media platforms" (Schröder, 2014). These emerging news consumption trends, though not explicitly, invites us to depart from 'mass-media' thinking (Picone, 2016), to accommodate the emerging forms of user content and platforms control, real or imagined, in daily news consumption experiences. Cognizant of the unsettled debate on whether to do away with the term audience in favour of the user(s), this study 'puts forward 'news user' as a more appropriate term'(Picone, 2016:126). Social media and messaging applications platforms, alongside the conventional traditional media, have enacted varied forms of multi-directional user's agency, which operates at the intersection of public and private scales of sociality as suggested by Miller et al. (2016). However, despite the widespread agreement on the shifting patterns of news consumption, little efforts have been devoted to understanding these trends from a user perspective in the Global South.

Despite the sparse grounded empirical studies in the Global South, news consumption has long formed the crux of debates in the Global North yielding a dearth of literature. Studies show that news consumers oscillate between social media platforms (public) and messaging applications (private) (see Antunovic, Parsons, & Cooke, 2016a; Gottfried & Shearer, 2016; Groot Kormelink & Costera Meijer, 2014; Miller et al., 2016; Olmstead, Mitchell, & Rosenstiel, 2011; Picone, 2016; Purcell, Rainie, Mitchell, Rosenstiel, & Olmstead, 2010; Rosengard, Tucker-McLaughlin, & Brown, 2014; Westlund & Färdigh, 2015) in their news search, access, consumption, and in some instances reproduction. These findings seat well with the long existential butter-bread relationship between news and media. McQuail (2000) notes that "media institutions could barely exist without news, and news could not exist without media" (337). Although this view was informed by 'mass-media thinking'(Picone, 2016), it positions news centrally in the study of the media, offering a useful starting point in exploring the recent developments in news consumption. Contrary to the long inextricable ties of media and news, the prolific rise of mobile phones as central tools for news access and consumption, alongside a host of social media and messaging applications have seemingly muddied the information market and the existing social orders created by prior innovations.

Empirical studies show that young people are the drivers of innovations; they, unlike their seniors, prefer consuming news via mobile devices. Although 'young people' have attracted considerable attention in Africa (see Abbink & Van Kessel, 2005; Baller, 2007; de Bruijn & Both, 2017;

Honwana & De Boeck, 2005; Lesitaokana, 2017; Muhula, 2007; L. Mukhongo, 2014; L. L. Mukhongo, 2015; Ndlela & Mulwo, 2017; Tufte, 2017), the debate on who fits well into the category of young people remains unsettled. Also, the over celebration of the socio-technical skills of young people (Livingstone, 2009), has obfuscated the daily realities on the nature and form of young people's agency, particularly on news consumption. Thus, devoting attention to the young people's news consumption experiences allows us to imagine the future of Kenya since young people embody the aspirations of democracies owing to their numerical strengths, talents and creativity.

However, young people's attributes have ignited unchecked optimism, particularly in African states (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). They have been lauded for their creative potential in seizing online opportunities by tapping the possibilities embedded in the socio-technical affordances of mobile devices and social media; these platforms are widely believed to intensify and amplify the creative potential and agency of young people in myriad ways[4]. Inadvertently, this kind of normativity eclipses any meaningful attempt(s) to disentangle the ambiguities surrounding the study of 'young people'' in Africa. Honwana and De Boeck, (2005) argue that by going beyond the 'rosy' statistics (i.e. young people constitute about 70% of the African population), this study focuses on young people in public universities in Kenya, foregrounding 'young people'' as a sub-cultural category and 'social shifter' (see Durham, 2008)

Social media and messaging applications are deeply imbricated in a complex web of networked actors, yet embedded within these networks are nodes of weak and a strong ties; enacted by public and private scales of sociality that facilitates need(s) based interaction within large or small groups[5]. For example, WhatsApp, Snapchat, WeChat among other private messaging platforms are viewed as the 'antidotes' to public platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram among others (Chambers, 2017:32). Clark and Marchi (2017) argue that it is through our relationships that we come to recognize the gap between what is and what ought to be (31). By foregrounding the relational dimension and the varied scales of socialities (See Miller et al., 2016) enacted by social media and messaging applications, this study seeks to provide insights on the varied ways

[4] Young people are conceptualized in this study not just as a segment of the population within the age bracket of 18-35, but also as social and cultural category (Ito et al., 2009; Literat et al., 2018).

[5] These actors include the regimes in power where these technologies are embedded, immediate institutions such as internet and mobile services providers, mobile phone manufacturers, software and mobile applications developers among other actors. These actors play different roles in the backstage (See Galiardone, 2016).

through which these platforms shape how news is experienced in young people's daily lives. It does so by narrowing down on the link between communication and news.

1.2 Research aims

With the increased penetration of mobile devices and the internet in Africa, this study seeks to offer a theoretical and empirical contribution to understand how mobile connectivity is changing dynamics in news consumption. This overarching aim is further broken down into three specific elements:

First, this study seeks to contribute to scholarship in African studies on the uptake of mobile news through various social media and messaging platforms; specifically focusing on mobile devices as the enablers. It maps the Kenyan mediascape; paying attention to what media platforms and formats are receding and emerging. It also provides insights on how young people navigate access in digital spaces. Although news consumption forms the thrust of this study, online news access is increasingly predicated on mobile devices and the availability of internet network infrastructure. Though studies on social media and digital news have been conducted in various parts of the world (Miller et al., 2016; Newman et al.,2016; 2017), Global South has not received much attention. Through an exploratory survey in the first phase of data generation, this study mapped the most popular social media platforms used by young people to access news in Kenya, comparatively with traditional media brands. Important to note, traditional media have re-invented themselves online by successfully developing customisable mobile applications. Traditional media have gone online (Fletcher & Park, 2017; Newman et al., 2015), inviting further analysis on the frequency of news access via 'traditional media' mobile applications.

Secondly, this study attempts to establish from a users' perspective, how young people in Kenya engage with online news consumed via mobile devices; most importantly how they define news, and negotiate access to news sub-genres (politics, business, sports, fashion and lifestyle, and weather). In the Global South, there have been attempts to generalise the results without paying attention to the varying degrees to which users in different contexts make sense of information received online. Thus, this study responds to calls for studies in Africa to move beyond access and impact debates and focus more on the appropriation of not just the technologies but the content as well–including news. According to Gagliardone (2016), many studies have approached the study of ICT in Africa from a revolutionary perspective, with ICTs being celebrated more than the content they carry. With this in mind, this study moves beyond the technologies per se to news content, paying attention to the social relationships as well as the socio-cultural, political,

and economic realities where these technologies are embedded. Technologies are not only re-shaping social realities in Africa, but are equally being shaped by the ingenuity of the users across societies within which these technologies are embedded (De Bruijn, Nyamnjoh & Brinkman, 2009). In Kenya, like many African states, a myriad of social, cultural, economic, and political factors shapes the social relationships between and among individuals, groups, and institutions. Important to note, genres of content oscillate in-between platforms as well as within a single platform/inter-platform scalable sociality (Miller et al., 2016). Extending this argument, genres are the products of the lived realities in context. It cuts across social, political, cultural and economic realms of sociality.

Finally, this study maps the most trusted news sources in Kenya, highlighting key elements that influence the trust of news online and offline. Through a multiplicity of social media and messaging applications, users navigate a variety of news information 'real' or 'fake'. 'Fake news', a term that shot into public discourses during the 2016 USA general elections, is not entirely new in Africa (Wasserman, 2020). Perhaps, the difference between what existed in the past in Africa (in the form of satirical television programs and propaganda in print media) and what exists today boils down to the diversity of form and formats. Also, the scale and speed of dissemination have been expanded exponentially. News stories in the click of a button can be reworked, repurposed and recirculated. In this regard, technology-savvy users find it easy to tap distinct socio-technical social media and messaging applications. In a study of the hybridity of mobile phones and radio in Kenya, Gagliardone (2015) established that mobile phones were deceptively used to manipulate the public sphere through radio talk shows, serial callers. These callers strategically advance the interests of the patrons. Also, through internet-enabled mobile devices, 'political rumours, gossips, jokes 'SMS' wars' are used as ways of expressing resistance to the political establishments, economic structures and rigid cultural norms, beliefs and values (Wasserman, 2020).

Although the internet and mobile phones have enacted new forms of interaction and socialisation among users, they have equally compromised the already waning media trust. These platforms have raised concerns on their catalytic role in the spread of "fake news". With the click of a button, news stories explode into local and global domains. Inadvertently, the availability of a news story across a wide range of platforms could persuade users to believe the information is genuine. Wasserman (2017) argues that "news–whether 'fake' or 'real'–should not be understood outside its particular context of production and consumption" (3). Although recent research

findings by the Reuters Digital Report indicate the rise of news aggregators, as well as online audience trusting more reputable online brands such as BBC and CNN (Newman, 2016), very few studies on trust levels in relation to news, have been conducted in the African context (Wasserman, 2017b, 2020; Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2018). Also, recent studies have linked news mistrust to perceived 'mainstream media bias in advanced democracies such as the USA and Britain (Newman et al., 2017), inviting a closer look at Africa. There is a need to explore how context–socio-political dynamics–enhances or constrains news trust. Before I state the research question that guided this study, I use the next section to briefly highlight my auto-ethnographic perspective on the chosen topic and how this shaped the research questions.

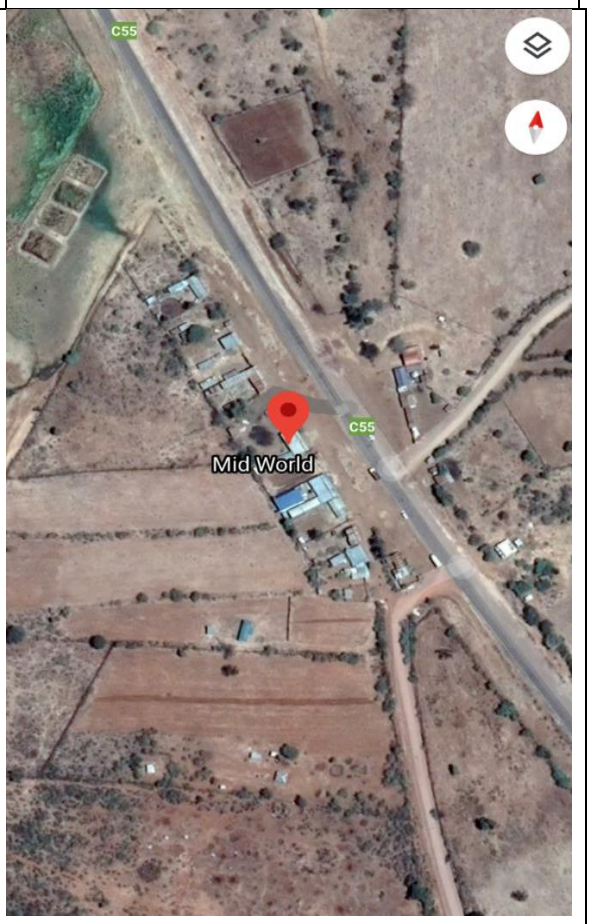
1.3 My interest in studying news consumption experiences: Auto-ethnographic perspectives on the chosen topic and research questions

This study was conceptualized for eight months (January 2017 to July 2017) culminating in a proposal that was presented to the department of media studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. However, the idea of studying and understanding news consumption patterns was hatched back in the year 2014. My experiences as a young man born and brought up in a small rural village in Baringo-county in central rift valley exposed me to the early rise of mobile phones and later the internet.

In the dawn of the new millennium, I used to frequent Mid-world mini-café (our nearest shopping center), not just to deliver milk, but to also have my parents' phones charged. This café had locally brewed Kenyan tea, *mandazi* and *chapati* as its main menu (Mandazi and Chapati are famous delicacies in East Africa made of wheat flour). Mid-world is unique in its ways. It has such a big 'international' name for itself, yet by then it had only three small semi-permanent structures. While the neighboring shopping centres were assigned Kalenjin (One of the local dialects in Kenya) names with deep historical meanings, Mid-World became one of the early shopping centres to defy this conventional naming. Besides, it was the first shopping centre in the locality to be connected to the electricity grid courtesy of a private investor. This not only made it a booming commerce hub but also positioned it as a critical place in shaping the early beginnings of mobile phones within the immediate surroundings.

Sitting right along the equator line, in the central rift valley in Kenya, Mid-world is a walking distance to the point intersection between the equator line (0° degrees latitude) and the busy Nakuru-Eldama Ravine road in Koibatek sub-county in Baringo County. Mid-world, as it is popularly known today, was born out of the idea that the equator line divides the world into two

halves; thus, the term Mid (Middle) of the world. Perhaps the paradigm shift in naming signifies early forms of resistance and the idea of connecting the 'local' to the 'global' and vice-versa. Most importantly, the vast commerce opportunities presented by the equator motivated a private investor to invest colossal sums in connecting his three semi-permanent structures to electricity grid. These initial developments are instrumental in this study because it partly contributed to the early adoption of mobile phones as tools of communication, albeit by a few early majority. It combines my early experiences, mainly driven by specific contextual needs such as the need to sell milk, but through my many daily trips helped my parents stay connected, despite the limited resources.

Photo 1: A photo showing the pioneer structures at Mid-world trading centre	**Photo 2: A satellite screenshot of mid-world trading center along route C55**
	

Visiting the hotel in 2004, I noticed the full brands of mobile phones brought for charging–Sony Erickson, Siemens, Motorola, Nokia, Sagem, Alcatel, to name a few. However, in the year 2014 when I visited the same mini-hotel, I noticed massive transformation; from the significantly reduced number of mobile devices brought for charging to the sophisticated nature of the smartphones on the charging shelves. From my observation, none of the dominant 2004 brands was on the charging shelf. Instead, brands such as Infinix, Techno, Huawei, Samsung, I-tel, Oppo, among others were dominant. Unlike the brands that were brought for charging a decade earlier, these devices were relatively compact with full screens.

While I could see young men and women browsing their phones both inside and outside the hotel during the day, they only left for their hoods after watching the seven o'clock news bulletin (Popularly known as *Taarifa ya Habari* in Swahili). I wondered why such a vast crowd could gather to watch the evening news, yet from my observations, an overwhelming majority had internet-enabled mobile phones. However, it is essential to point out that, the internet speeds and capacity of the phones were a bit limited compared to what we have today. Where was the disconnect? Was it related to internet and data costs? Was it because of the dominance of traditional media? Was it because of the kind of sociability enacted by news content? I did not have answers to these questions. These unanswered questions prompted me to seek more answers through an empirical study.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ1. How, and to which extent do young people in Kenya combine different social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) and private messaging platforms (WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat, Facebook messenger) to access different types of information?

RQ2. What kinds of news sub-genres (politics, business, sports, fashion and lifestyle, and weather) do young people access online, and how do they reflect in their daily social lives?

RQ3. What are young people's perceptions of trust and privacy across social media and private messaging applications; what elements influence trust of online news sources comparatively with traditional brands news?

1.5 The rationale of the study

A broad array of studies have devoted significant attention to the transformative and revolutionary potential of the relatively new technologies, particularly regarding development (Gaglairdone,

2016), sidestepping the role of audiences in weaving these technologies in their daily information production, reception and consumption patterns, and the lived reality in Africa. A more significant percentage of studies conducted in Africa have sought to address the issue of access (Wasserman, 2017). Although access profoundly informs the overall process of information production, reception and consumption, Wasserman (2017) suggests that studies should devote significant attention to appropriation of not just new technologies but the form and content of the messages embedded in the technologies. Against this backdrop, this study aims at bridging the gap of knowledge, with a view of providing a reliable and empirically grounded theoretical and methodological response in understanding contemporary news consumption from a user's perspective. It builds on appropriation as one of the critical areas of contestation as observed by Wasserman (2017).

This study departs from the burgeoning body of research that has increasingly focused on the transformative potential of new technologies in the Global South. It adopts a radical user perspective (Picone, 2016; Picone et al., 2015); it focuses on the uses and users of news (Clark & Marchi, 2017). Picone (2016) notes that, "as control of media institutions over the new processes is in decline, we should take the news audience more seriously and try to improve our understanding of changing news use patterns" (35). With this in mind, this study zooms in on young people's news experiences in Kenya, paying attention to how they define news, the channels and platforms used to consume such news, the dominant genres and how their subsequent consumption mirrors in their daily lives, and finally the elements that influence news trust online.

This study specifically targeted young people in two public universities in Kenya, namely: University of Eldoret (UoE) and the Technical University of Kenya (TuK). As pointed out above, there is unsurprisingly widespread agreement among Global North and South scholars on young people's increasing use of mobile phones for information access. Owing to their vast population (70%) in many developing states (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017), "foregrounding the processes of youthful news production and consumption creates a way for us to think about who we are as a community and as a public, and how we intend to go forward together" (Clark & Marchi, 2017:5)

The first task was to explore how young people combine a wide range of social media, private messaging applications and traditional media in their daily news consumption practices. Secondly, it attempted to draw the motivations for the various choices informing young people's choices, both in their choices of the medium/platform in any news consumption moment as well

as the kind of news sub-genre consumed, paying attention to the levels of engagement if any. Clark and Marchi (2017) contend, "Communication in its less technological and more ancient associations recalls ideas such as sharing, participation, commonality and the building of community (21). Though this is debatable, particularly in the Global South, it provides a broader framework of understanding how social media and private messaging applications may have enhanced or constrained sharing, participation, commonality, and building community.

In the Global South, the spread of mobile devices and the internet across states has generated excitement among millions of users on the potentialities of these technologies in democratizing the public sphere (Ligaga, 2012; Rodny-Gumede, 2017; Wasserman, 2011; Wasserman & Garman, 2014). At the same time, it has cast doubts on the agenda-setting role of traditional media (radio, television, and newspapers). The excitement stems from the possibilities embedded in the materiality of mobile phones in surmounting spatio-temporal barriers. In other words, this study explores how traditional media, social media, and private messaging applications have complimented or displaced each other in the relatively new media landscape. Most importantly, little attention has been devoted to understanding consumption of news, despite the conflation of findings linking news to a healthy and vibrant democracy in Euro-centric contexts (Elvestad & Phillips, 2018; Esser & Strömbäck, 2014; Jarvis et al., 2009; Westlund, 2015a).

Despite the pocket of successes in African countries, including Kenya, new questions have emerged. One vexing question is on the nature and form of deliberations (if any) on these platforms. Many states in Africa are reeling from a dark history of colonization. Moreover, even after emancipation from the yokes of colonialism, many states seem to have dived deeper into neocolonialism. The narrative in developing countries, particularly in new media technologies, including social media, continues to magnify the window of opportunity for African states to leapfrog some stages of development. These narratives have served the interest of powerful conglomerates and Global North researchers who have often been accused of using Africa as a testing ground for their theories (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2015). New directions have been suggested, particularly on the need to move away from the development and transformation discourses, to more nuanced and context-specific studies. More specifically, there have been calls to move beyond the economic dimension of news technologies, to robust studies on how diverse social structures shape the daily use of these technologies in information reception as well as the distinct gratifications derived from such choices.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The following sections give an overview of the overall thesis structure. Starting with chapter two (next chapter) to chapter ten (the last chapter), the paragraphs below demarcates the boundaries of each chapter, and the key theoretical and where applicable empirical arguments.

Chapter 2 sets the context (Kenya) and explores the various debates that underpin the scholarship on online news in Africa, comparatively with other continents. It also explains the rise of mobile phones and internet penetration rates in Kenya. This chapter also examines the debates underpinning user participation in online spaces, and the changing Africa media landscape.

Chapter 3 unpacks two complementary analytical perspectives: the rooted uses and gratification (U&G) and scalable sociality. It begins by giving a historical background of both U&G and the concept of scalable sociality; highlighting their fundamental tenets, criticisms as well as the specific elements that make them useful in exploring the uptake of online news in Kenya. It also presents an extensive review of literature on news and audience studies in Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa. It explores the non-normative debates that underpin the scholarship on online news in Africa, comparatively with other continents. It also explains the rise of mobile phones and internet penetration rates in Kenya, comparatively with traditional media. It also examines the debates underpinning user participation in online spaces, and the changing Africa media landscape. It then concludes by developing a complementary perspective useful in thinking along with, as well as a lens for looking into the data and picking insights for the overall discussion.

Chapter 4 unpacks the methodology and methodological procedures that inform the study. It includes an overview of the mixed methods research approach, the research paradigm, and the epistemological foundation. It further discusses data collection instruments; Population size and sampling technique; exploratory survey; focus group discussions and online and online/offline observations. Finally, it provides insights on the data analysis procedures informing the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study.

Chapter 5 discusses mobile devices and the internet as enablers of online news consumption among university students in Kenya. This chapter pays significant attention to the quotidian mobile phone use among university students in Kenya, highlighting the role of the internet in making the online dream a reality. Young people particularly university students do not have a source of income; therefore, this chapter provides insights on the wide range of avenues available

to young people in their quest to stay plugged in. It specifically makes an original contribution on the booming parallel data markets in Kenya.

Chapter 6 examines the dilemma facing young people in their daily news consumption patterns. It specifically provides insights on the various ways in which young people in Kenya combine online social media and private messaging platforms comparatively with traditional media channels in their news consumption practices. Further, this chapter highlights the most popular social networking sites (SNS) as well as the most popular messaging applications among young people. Finally, it examines the place of traditional media digital formats in the overall news consumption landscape.

Chapter 7 explores young people's daily news experiences in two public universities in Kenya intending to provide a more nuanced and grounded understanding of what news is or is not. By adopting the public and private scales of sociality as an analytical tool, this chapter shows how distinct socio-technical affordances shapes the understanding of news. It does so by analysing themes that emerged from eight focus group discussions namely: news as a window to a socially differentiated social world characterised by a multiplicity of sub-domains, news as a reinforcement of time and a useful tool for 'bracketing' the day. Lastly, news is largely understood as 'politics'. Although these descriptions are limited, it takes place in conversation with burgeoning studies on new media and young people's news use experiences in the Global North

Chapter 8 provides insights into the kind of news accessed by young people, as well as the varied ways in which they engage with the kind of news accessed. Using the U&G and the concept of scalable sociality, this chapter highlights young people's motivations behind news access, consumption, and production patterns. In addition, this chapter explores young people's online activities, providing insights into five groups of online users identified. Finally, it discusses young people's news language and format preference; specifically, how this profoundly shapes their appropriation patterns in their daily lives.

Chapter 9 begins by exploring the current debates on news trust and privacy around the world, zooming in to Africa and Kenya. Online privacy concerning news uptake, highlighting privacy levels of various online new platforms available to young people in Kenya. Using the concept of scalable sociality, this chapter examines the dynamics of news consumption in often (un)secure online spaces. The debate on fake news and its broader implications on local politics are explored, with significant attention devoted to young people's awareness of fake news as well as their news

verification practices during the August 8, 2017, general elections in Kenya. Further, it reveals the levels of trust in the various social media and traditional platforms among young people in Kenya. Finally, it highlights elements influencing news trust among young people, foregrounding their perceptions on the leading carrier of fake news in Kenya between traditional and social media.

Chapter 10 makes a summary of key findings, conclusions on the reception of online news in Kenya, highlighting how mobile devices have expanded news exposure avenues. It also makes a recommendation on the emerging patterns of news consumption and suggests further research in relation to the emerging patterns.

CHAPTER 2: SETTING THE CONTEXT

The epochal spread of the internet and mobile devices in Africa has problematised the nexus between young people as 'makers' or 'breakers' with institutions (including the media and universities) and their societal roles and goals. Recent statistics by Communication Authority of Kenya (CA) shows that Kenya has a mobile penetration rate of 100.1% and mobile data penetration rates of 99.2% (CA first-quarter report of 2019)[6]. Kenya is not the first country to record over 100% penetration rate. Countries such as Taiwan, Israel, and Hong Kong surpassed 100% penetration rates in 2003. As of 2017, Morocco, Namibia, and Tunisia had exceeded the 100% mark in Africa (ITU REPORT 2005-2017)[7].

The main reason advanced by the CA for the high penetration rates in Kenya is that users own multiple subscriber identity module (SIM) cards. For this reason, SIM cards have been identified as the primary drivers for the high mobile and internet penetration. A study conducted by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) in April 2018 established that "at least 30% of mobile users in Kenya own more than one Sim card" (CA, Q1, 2019:8). With three primary mobile subscribers (Safaricom, Telkom, and Airtel) competing for customers, their strategies to attract and retain more customers have largely benefitted Kenyan users. Kenya has four fibre optic cables which have resulted in relatively high internet speeds, and availability of broadband at a reduced cost (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017).

Against this background, this chapter locates and positions news as a critical pillar in the daily lives of young people in Kenya. News access and consumption are predicated on internet and mobile phone access. Rather than join the bandwagon by celebrating the high internet and mobile penetration rates, I focus on how high internet and mobile phones penetration rates have enhanced or constrained news access and consumption. I also trace Kenya's journey from early post-colonial era to the present. By doing so, this chapter shows how the evolution of the state is intricately linked to the evolution of its media, and in some instances, its audiences. Between 1963 when Kenya gained independence, we shall notice how power structures within the state inadvertently shaped the kind of media systems and the quality of citizens. In this regard, the kind of information to be disseminated was determined mainly by 'gatekeepers', often working closely with the power establishments.

[6] https://ca.go.ke/document/sector-statistics-report-q1-2019-2020/
[7] https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/misr2017/MISR2017_Volume1.pdf

Though much has changed in Kenya, the point of entry here is that news has the potential to shape how young people make sense of the global and local environment. However, as I will show in chapter 5, both global and local world domains are made up of multiple-intersecting sub-domains. Thus, news helps reconcile not only these overlapping domains and sub-domains but also connects them (albeit indirectly) with individual and collective information needs. Arguably, news becomes useful not only in making sense of the multiple domains but also in mapping how it shapes, distorts, creates, and recreates realities within these domains.

Often, young people are perceived as 'makers' or 'breakers' in Africa; predominantly portrayed as 'breakers ' "feared for the disorder their number and what their ideological choices might engender"(de Bruijn & Both, 2017: 781). In part, these ideological choices are informed by the "content'(including news) propagated and mediated by the media resulting in what Herman and Chomsky 1988) described as "the manufacturing of consent". Thus, by expanding the research on the use of mobile devices and the internet on access news, this chapter attempts to paint the picture of the research context, paying attention to the intertwined nature of the relationship between young people and new technologies. It also highlights how universities have been the epicenter of socio-political struggles in Kenya, with university politics intersecting with national political discourses. In this case, media has been pivotal in mediating such public discussions through the relay of timely news and information. This chapter attempts to map how young people's news access and consumption within university spaces shape their lived experiences in contexts. It further extrapolates this to include their civic commitments and engagements. Most importantly, engagements based on the scales of socialities enacted by social media and private messaging applications (Miller et al., 2016).

2.1 Mapping disruptions in Kenya's mediascape

The rapid diffusion of mobile devices and the internet have shaken old journalistic structures in varied ways. Notably, social media and messaging applications have not only expanded news and information exposure, but they have also shaped journalism as a social practice. Mabweazara (2018) contends, 'news production (…) lies squarely within the social process that sustains it" (9). Although Mabweazara's view speaks to news production by media institutions, the aspect of social relations chimes well with the concept of scalable sociality suggested by Miller et al. (2016). Today, news stories that ordinarily would not feature on traditional media have multiple avenues online for penetrating public discourses. Equipped with smartphones and data, young people could freeze moments in time and share them with their networked others in real-time. At

the same time, these platforms have reconfigured conventional gatekeeping procedures, which for a long time punctuated the practice of traditional journalism.

There are numerous incidences in the Global South where 'ordinary stories' have gone viral, ending up in the Global news public sphere. Two notable examples, #someonetellCNN and #IfAfricaWasABar stand out (**See photos 1 and 2 below**). Both hashtags have one thing in common; they allow users to assert themselves in the 'ordinary' news stories on a global scale. It also exemplifies how Twitter has shaped how news is produced and consumed, as well as how news consumer resist what they consider unfavourable to their aspirations, norms and values. In 2013 and 2015. Kenyans on Twitter (KOT) used #someonetellCNN to challenge the negative representation of Kenya by CNN (Cheruiyot & Uppal, 2019; Nothias & Cheruiyot, 2019). Also, #SomeoneTellCNN highlights how news framing by global media conglomerates can now be challenged not only through twitter and other social media platforms but also by users who are at the periphery or marginalised spaces (Ogola, 2019). In other words, social media and messaging applications offer a platform for the 'marginalised' to speak up against deliberates acts aimed at 'silencing' African stories. This fierce resistance by the KOT community culminated in CNN sending its vice president to apologize to the Kenyan President on behalf of all Kenyans.

Photo 3: Screenshots of #ifAfricaWasABar	**Photo 4: Screenshot of #SomeoneTellCNN**
	

These changes in journalism have spawned a torrent of studies aimed at analysing the changes in journalism and juxtaposing them with the prevailing realities in context (Mabweazara et al., 2014; Mabweazara, 2018; Mabweazara & Mudhai, 2014; Mawindi Mabweazara, 2015). However, in doing so, these studies have paid little attention to the specificities of information reception– including news. Studies that have explored news in the Global South have focused on news as an object of journalism, but not as a social construction of reality accessed and consumed via a wide range of social media and private messaging applications. Mabweazara (2018) concedes, "Change has always been part of journalism" (2); thus, there is no need to devote significant attention to the "apocalyptic claims of the end of journalism" (Waisbord, 2013 in Mabweazara, 2018:2). This study does not seek to homogenize news experiences, but rather zoom into the contextual specificities of news consumption from a user's perspective.

2.2 Historiography of news media in Kenya

Cognizant of Kenya's rich and diverse historical past, any meaningful evaluation of its mediascape invites a close examination of its political history (Ogola, 2011). Therein lies competing narratives of the 'highs' and 'lows' of news production and consumption. Kenya has made headlines, particularly during electioneering periods, mainly due to the competitive nature of its politics and the ethnic dimension that it usually takes. General elections in Kenya often evoke fear of the chaos that might erupt during and after the elections. The 2007/2008 post-poll chaos was perhaps the lowest moments in Kenya's sojourn to democracy (see Cheeseman, 2008; Goldstein & Rotich, 2008; Kagwanja, 2009). However, this violence, arguably, can be understood as an outcome of biased media coverage of the campaigns and skewed news framing. For example, local radio stations were accused of spreading 'hate' and inciting communities to violence (Mäkinen & Wangu Kuira, 2008).

The post-poll chaos is a useful reminder of the critical role that the media plays in a democracy, mainly through its news framing and coverage of newsworthy events such as political campaigns. I am drawing on the 2008 post-election skirmishes in Kenya because it was the genesis of citizen journalism, and perhaps the early beginnings of increased user agency, as we know it today. At the height of the violence, the government banned live coverage occasioning 'news' blackout in Kenya. Instead of Kenyans staying in the 'dark', the ban heralded creative ways of experimentation with new technologies such as blogospheres. By so doing, Kenyans showed and exercised forms of resistance in circumventing and navigating news access barriers. The banning of live coverage by the minister in charge of internal security the late John Michuki exacerbated

the need for news by the millions of Kenyans. This, Dugmore and Ligaga (2014) argue, led to the emergence of a new form of citizen journalism with blogs and SMS playing a pivotal role in how Kenyans accessed and interacted with the news. A decade after the violence, Short Messaging Service (SMS) seems to have become obsolete, and blogs have faced fierce competition from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Snapchat among other. These platforms have presented alternative avenues for news access and dissemination, allowing people to freeze moments in time, upload, post, and share the same with networked others. In part, this could be viewed as journalism, 'but much of it is just random content'(Dugmore & Ligaga, 2014:250).

To make sense of Kenya's social-political context, the next few sections unpack the media and its roles, particularly in news production and dissemination in the Post-Independence period (1963-1991), post-multiparty (1992-2002), Post- KANU regime and Post-2010 constitution. It highlights specific turning points, including but not limited to: the advent of multiparty politics in 1992 (Oloo, 2007 cited in Murunga & Nasong'o, 2007), the defeat of KANU by NARC in 2002 general elections, marking the first-ever transition of power from an incumbent regime to the opposition-led party (Oloo, 2007 in Nasong'o & Murunga, 2007; Murunga, Okello & Sjogren, 2014; Wrong, 2010) and lastly the enactment of a new constitution in 2010 (Murunga et al., 2014). These changes are useful in locating the Kenyan media in the struggle for a vibrant democracy. The story of John Githongo, a former journalist who later turned to be a whistleblower, exemplifies the relationship between Journalists, the media and the state. Wrong (2010) describes Mr. Githongo as man willing to fight corruption using his experiences as a journalist in Kenya to unearth the underbelly of corruption, this, however, had far-reaching consequences not only to the young democracy but to the Journalists and the media as well.

By highlighting the continuities and discontinuities, this chapter provides insights into the convoluted media landscape in contemporary Kenyan society. Among significant continuity across Africa, Nyamjoh (2005) observes, are the "repressive tendencies towards the media" (35). Yet at the same time, there are pockets of evidence on discontinuities that; since colonial times, "Africans have always challenged the high-handedness and arrogance of the repressive state through social movements and groups critical to their collective marginalisation" (41). This, I will demonstrate shortly, is useful in providing insights on the surveillance practices by the government of Kenya in its quest to regulate and control the mainstream media, and more recently social media. As earlier mentioned, the objective of this study is to transcend access debates that have dominated the research of the internet in Africa (See Wasserman, 2017).

2.2.1 Post independent Kenya

This section traces media evolution in Kenya, thus allowing us to understand the varied ways through which news mutate, — to reflect or resist the existing power structures. Gleaning insights from the history of the media, studies have shown that the history of the media is inextricably tied to the evolution of the nation-state (Ake, 1996; F. B. Nyamnjoh, 2005). The colonial masters and church missionaries started Media in the pre-independence period in Kenya. Early examples include *Taveta Chronicle* attributed to Rev. Robert Stegal, a church missionary in 1895, which mainly distributed news among Europeans (Ochillo, 1993 in Ogola, 2018).

Similarly, in Southern Africa, 'European settlers or Colonialists' (Phiri, 2017:402) started modern-day media. The publishers of these newspapers wielded enormous power particularly on what could be published, with substantial content aimed at relaying and receiving news from their mother countries (Phiri, 2017). Ochillo (1993) further argues that, these publications aimed at entrenching, sustaining and legitimising colonial rule by providing a social link between the geographically dispersed settlers in Kenya (6). Arguably, while media objectives were to provide news to a small segment of the ruling class, such kind of news was highly filtered through gatekeeping to serve the needs and interests of the white minority (Missionaries and colonial masters).

The establishment of Radio in 1928 also reinforced the dominant white ideologies. This significantly disadvantaged the natives who were mostly illiterate and lacked the economic capacity to access and meaningfully engage with media products (Barton, 1979; F. Kasoma, 2000). In 1953, African Broadcasting Services (ABC) was established to reach marginalised communities. This meant the periodic change of languages (Kiswahili, Kikamba, Nandi, Dholuo, Kipsigis, Kikuyu and Luhya) day and night. Almost at the same time, freedom fighters were quick to appropriate these tools for communicating and coordinating their quest for freedom and solidifying their political formation in various parts of the country. Although the rudimentary media networks employed by freedom fighters at the height of British Imperialism are not well documented, media played a crucial role in sustaining and equally dismantling the colonial rule.

After independence in 1963, the change from white to black leadership was widely expected to mark the beginning of 'new ways' of self-rule. On the contrary, media and power structures transitioned from the colonialists to the neo-colonialists. This, inadvertently, reproduced the old media and power structures that punctuated colonial media. Nationalists government and leaders that took over leadership in many post-colonial states did very little to initiate structural changes

to the media. Debates ensued in various African countries, particularly concerning the ownership of the media (Hatchen, 1979; Phiri, 2017). Broadcasting, as conceived by the nationalist governments, was a useful tool for achieving social and economic development.

In Kenya, President Jomo Kenyatta lamented that the European ownership of the media was the central problem in Africa. In Mozambique, President Samora Machel decreed that the media must stay in tune with the political ideologies of the ruling Frelimo party. In Ghana, President Kwame Nkrumah, one of the founder fathers of the Pan-African movement, questioned the media loyalty and their attitudes towards black governments. Put differently, the nationalist's government in Kenya as in other independent African states largely viewed the media as its appendage to spread ideologies through news programs that highly favoured the state.

As it were, the more things changed, the more they remained the same. Various media in the countries these nationalist leaders represented were taken captive by the state to spread its propaganda messages and ideologies. As Phiri (2017) notes, "these dominant post-colonial perceptions of the media eventually resulted in the new African governments taking control of the leading newspapers and national broadcasting stations" (403). In Kenya, the KANU regime controlled the airwaves in its quest to perpetuate its hegemonic ideologies. A case in point, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) was commandeered by the masterminds of the 1982 coup and used it to spread alarming news to Kenyans. Although this attempt was thwarted, the paranoia lasted for as long as the regime was in power.

Similarly, in Zambia, the media were accused of 'nostalgia of the past', which had consequently pacified them to the present realities and future ambitions(F. P. Kasoma & Hall, 1986). It can be argued that since independence the authoritarian regime exercised control of the media to entrench its dictatorial tendencies, the media was mainly a puppet of the state, captured and emasculated (Makali, 2003; Ogolla, 2011). This was aided by draconian laws and repressive policy frameworks aimed at curtailing the freedom of the press. As a result, the media experienced 'stunted growth' during this period (Maweu, 2017:28)

One key feature of the media during the pre- and post-colonial times—is that they were centrally located in urban areas such as Nairobi and Mombasa. Thus, they mainly operated in a linear way (Nasongo, 2007). The linear model of transmission served the purpose of transmitting positive news about the state. These exposed audiences to news heavily laden with dominant ideologies mainly perpetrated by the elites and those in the political class. This trend was replicated in many newly independent African states, the media was micro-managed and controlled by state organs,

with ‘truth’ widely believed to be what the government of the day said (Phiri, 2017). The media were reduced to “hapless cheerleaders” (Chuma, 2014). One distinct feature of the ideologies disseminated through media is the conspicuous absence of the audience; they are not an outcome of public participation (Oosthuizen, 1989).

While the conventional linear models of news production, dissemination and consumption were mainly characterised by static texts, new technologies introduce a break-away from the linear model, breathing a fresh breath of “flexibility, elastic deadlines and constant delivery of liquid news” (Karlsson & Stroback, 2010). The state of affairs during the pre-liberalization period triggered studies that mainly aimed at providing more insights on government-media relations (Kivikuru, 2017; Ogola, 2011). This had some ripple effects; the government control studies attracted other studies that aimed at unearthing the implications of ‘media concentration, commercialization, ownership and the professionalism of Journalists’(Mabweazara & Mudhai, 2014; Nyabuga & Mudhai, 2009; Ogola, 2015). These studies, however, ignored the centrality of the audience in the overall news consumption patterns.

Another key feature of media during the pre and post-colonial era in Kenya is that they mostly remained in the hands of expatriates and political elites (Mboya, 1963). Shortly after independence, the newly independent government took control of public broadcasting services from the colonial administration without any attempts to decolonise the structures. Ownership and access were privileged to the minority affiliated to the authorities, mostly an alien group (Kareithi & Kariithi, 2005:4). Contrary to the expectations of many citizens, transitioning into the post-colonial state saw the reproduction of the power structures and contours that had dominated colonial media (Mbembe, 1992; Nyamnjoh, 2005). There was nothing new for the audience who were eager for sweeping changes not just in the structures of media and governance, but also on the content carried by the limited airwaves. Paterson (2015) notes that media structures in the post-colonial states in Africa “proved to be propagandistic, elitist, lacking in content diversity, and only marginally more democratic than they had been under colonial regimes” (2). This, among others, shows the continuities between colonial and post-colonial media structures. White settlers, whose interest was to detect threats and protect the interests of their colonial masters (P. J. Kareithi, 1991; Tomaselli, 1989), owned print media in Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

On the other hand, media structures in the post-colonial triggered forms of ‘discontinuities’ among the audience. Through their limited agency, audiences challenged dominant power

structures through: “rumours and political derision including identification with certain values, beliefs, and outlooks commonly held by ordinary citizens”(Kareithi & Kariithi, 2005:42). Political derision was a tactic aimed at demystifying the dominant state and painting it powerless and at the same time making the autocrats look like ordinary folks (Ligaga, 2012; Musila, 2007; Ogola, 2005). This seems to be the case in Kenya today. The expanded avenues of news access and consumption have given rise to alternative spaces for challenging dominant and hegemonic power structures. Through social media ‘memes’ and #tags on twitter (Cheruiyot & Uppal, 2019), Kenyans have often questioned and engaged governance institutions, political elites, and other agencies in their communities (Ogola, 2019). However, while this may be partially true, it remains unknown how young people engage in such online discourses.

The continuities from the historical literature reveal concerted efforts by the colonialists to regulate the media and thus indirectly control news flow. Nyamjoh (2005) argues that those who own the press may not have the freedom to say anything they wish, but they do have enormous power to decide who has access to the channels of expressions” (11). This is indeed a clear case of how colonial powers sustained their domination among Kenyans and Africans, through a well-calculated process of ‘manufacturing consent’. Kenya and Nigeria, Kareithi and Kariithi (2005) note, sought to control content in the private media by bringing it in line with the national government interest.

2.2.2 Post-Multiparty (1992) and the liberalization debate

In Kenya and many other parts African states, the understanding of news, media, journalists, audience, as well as the state, remained stable, with subtle changes brought about by convivial discussions taking shape from the early 1990s. This period is vital for two reasons: First, it ushered a small but significant shift to private media ownership. Secondly, it reconfigured the media-state relationship by shifting away from the clientelism and patronage to a more adversarial relationship.

In 1991, a meeting organized by UNESCO in Namibia came up with a raft of measures aimed at guaranteeing press freedom in a free and pluralist media environment (see Kasoma, 2000). This conference was an attempt to shift away from ‘developmental’ journalism that had dominated the post-colony between from 1963-1990 to a more liberal kind of journalism — dubbed as ‘UNESCO declaration’ significant attention was devoted to understanding the concepts of ‘independence’ and ‘pluralistic’ media. ‘Independence’ was associated mainly with the end of governmental, political or economic control of the media.

On the other hand, 'pluralism' was related to the end of monopolies in media ownership. As Maweu (2017) observes, "political and economic liberalization in the early 1990s led to media proliferation in Kenya" (28). For instance, from 1990 to 2010, Kenya witnessed phenomenal growth from one television station to the excess of twenty television stations, from one radio station to the excess of over 60 stations, an increase of daily newspapers from four to eight and the issuance of licenses to more than 75 internet dealers (Maweu, 2017). Although media pluralism was witnessed, it did not necessarily translate into the 'pluralism' of opinions; for instance, media ownership remained largely within the armpits of the ruling elites and well connected individuals thus allowing minority owners to set the agenda for public engagements through skewed editorial practices. These changes have been viewed alongside their implications on democracy, with little attention paid to the audience as the ultimate consumers and producers of media content.

Against this background, the Kenyan mediascape as elucidated has undergone some significant disruption, particularly in the quest for freedom of the press and the breaking away from the draconian state laws aimed at muzzling the media. With the emergence of the internet and its affordances, the state finds the users increasingly seeking alternative spaces to express their views online (Will unpack this in the next section). For instance, the print media in Kenya played a significant role in creating awareness and educating Kenyans on the new form of governance (Multi-party democracy). Kenyan airwaves were partially liberalized in 1992, following a raft of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) at the fall of the cold war, the government gave concessions to allow individuals and private individuals to acquire licenses and operate media stations (Murunga & Nasong'o, 2007). The SAP exemplifies the influence of the west on governance in Kenya and other states in Africa, which has been critiqued for often trying to entrench liberal democracy without necessarily understanding the lived reality in Africa (Nyamjoh, 2005). Other scholars have reinforced this view, with great concerns raised over the tendency of western countries using Africa as a crucible for testing their theories (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2015).

2.2.3 Post-KANU and full liberalization

The full liberalization of the airwaves took place when the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) regime took over power from KANU (Gachigua, 2014). This accelerated 'unsophisticated liberalization'(King, 2008:15-16)— 'haphazard and without any legal or philosophical grounding' (Makokha, 2010:278). Full liberalization attracted debates on the best ways of filling

the void that was evident in the country's legal and policy frameworks. It also came with tumultuous policy changes, key among them; the revision of the old ICT policy in 2006[8]. The use of the word 'partially' is deliberate; it reflects what Ndemo and Weiss (2017) note "that on paper, Kenya's ICT sector was liberalized. However, the reality was that the incumbent telecom, a creation from the colonial days, controlled vital resources such as the international gateway (340)".

The NARC coalition, which came into power in 2002, had campaigned vigorously on the platform of stable transformation including— ending the endemic corruption that had become the norm in post-colonial Kenya. As Wrong (2010) observed, "Kibaki's campaign rhetoric had been almost too effective–they had taken the anti-graft message to heart" (82). Corruption and powerful cartels had entrenched and clenched their fists on the information sector in Kenya, reducing it to privately owned property. In his reflections as the permanent secretary (chief executive officer) of the Ministry of Information Technology in the early years of NARC administration, Ndemo (2017) chronicles the adverse effects of monopolization on the Kenyan communication market. Monopoly had become the norm, with cartels minting fortunes by controlling international gateways the ripple effects being exorbitant costs of making calls that were eventually passed down to the final consumer (341). Wrong (2010) further points out 'it had taken the dawn of multi-partyism in 1992 for any newspaper cartoonist to dare depict the president' (8). It was, however, fully liberalized in 2003 after a new regime took over the mantle of leadership.

2.3 ICTs and uprise of mobile devices in Kenya

The widespread agreement on Kenya's position as a hub of digital innovation in Africa has obscured rather than reveal paradoxes in its ICT journey. As hinted earlier, Kenya has a mobile and internet penetration rate of 100.1% and 99.2% respectively. In light of these emerging statistics, many studies have increasingly focused on these statistics to understand how African states, including Kenya, can leverage from these opportunities for development (Gagliardone, 2016). However, little efforts have been expended to dissect and contextualize these findings; for instance, what do they mean in context? Moreover, how did Kenya get to these high percentages? Most importantly, how have these levels of penetrations shaped or constrained news access and

[8]"The elephant in the room was what we would do to open the industry by subverting corrupt networks. Before I joined the sector in 2005, privatization was a pressing matter. The new minister and I consulted with the industry and concluded that the answers lay in policy changes. We revised a draft policy document (Government of Kenya 2006) that had been developed earlier and formally adopted it through publication in the *Kenya Gazette*, the government legal publication. Thereafter, implementation—though characterized by risk—started in earnest". (Ndemo& Weiss, 2017:340)

consumption. More so bearing in mind that online news access and consumption is predicated on having access to the internet and mobile devices. In this regard, it is instructive for us to quickly reflect on Kenya's history with computers and internet adoption. The next few paragraphs trace Kenya's ICT journey and highlight the significant turning points paying attention to 'crude experiences engraved in the collective memory'(Kivikuru, 2017:308). It does so by analysing the growth of ICTs in three phases: 1990-1999, 2000-2009 and 2010 to 2019.

2.3.1: The first policy reforms (1990-1999)

To begin with, the government vehemently resisted the introduction of computers in government offices in 1982 (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). Almost at the same time when liberalization was taking shape in the early 1990s, the internet was slowly diffusing across the world. In Kenya, the introduction of the internet in 1995 (Mureithi, 2017 in Ndemo & Weiss, 2017:27) was also met with resistance just the same way the government had banned the use of desktop computer in government offices for fear of job losses in 1982. The Kenya Post and Telecommunications Corporation (KP&TC) declared that internet use in Kenya, including the use of emails in government correspondence illegal and, was banned from civil service until 1999 (Mureithi, 2017 in Ndemo &Weiss 2017:34). These two separate events speak to the 'moral panic' that often engulfs the innovation of new media technologies. While the Government under the late President Daniel Moi was skeptical of the use of computers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private companies were beginning to experiment on these digital platforms.

With this in mind, mobile phones and the internet remained a preserve of the wealthy and privileged few, locking out millions of Kenyan users who could not afford–marking the first wave of the digital divide—"the gap between the *haves* and the *have nots"* (Gagliardone, 2019). This did not last for long. The rise in mobile penetration rate is an outcome of the concerted efforts between various stakeholders both within government and the private sector. Kenya's transformation could be traced back to the year 1998 when parliament enacted the Kenya Communication Act (KCA) of 1998. This law ended the government monopoly of the telecommunication sector, allowing more participants to roll their services. Initially, Kenya Post and Telecommunication services (KP&TS) was the only state monopoly in the industry. After the enactment of the bill, KPTS was split into five entities (Munyua & Mureithi, 2007:174), namely: Communication commission of Kenya (now Communication Authority of Kenya), National Communication Secretariat (NFS), Telkom Kenya (Operated fixed lines), Postal Corporation of Kenya (Posta) and finally the Communication appeals tribunal. In essence, the

enactment of the above bill was a significant step in laying the ground for the ICT driven economy, as envisioned in the Vision 2030 policy document (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017).

However, despite the waves of reforms which swept across the telecommunication sector, audiences did not receive much attention. Nonetheless, these structural reforms presented opportunities to the political elites to quickly position themselves in the lucrative telecommunication sector. They did so by acquiring shares in telecommunication companies such as Safaricom. Ndemo (2017) notes that "publicly owned shares of the new mobile company, Safaricom, had disappeared to a secret company registered under nominee accounts" (340). He further notes that radio frequencies had been irregularly allocated to well-connected individuals, thus preventing more entrants into the broadcasting industry. Mureithi (2017) notes that although the mobile cellular network was deployed in 1992, it could not support the internet, and at the cost of 'USD 9 per minute' it was expensive for many Kenyans (in Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). This view highlights the challenges faced by potential mobile services users as well as mobile service providers.

While emails dominated the use of computers and the internet in the early 1990s to 1995, the demand for 'cellular data services and paging service' had increased exponentially (Mureithi, 2017:35). KP&TC was constrained by capital and could not adequately meet the demand to provide a connection to over 80,000 pending applicants (Mureithi, 2017 in Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). Put differently, making calls became a laborious exercise due to the traffic congestion which was a norm. This was even made worse by the obsolete crossbar technology that made it difficult to procure spare parts (Mureithi, 2017:35). The cost of mobile phones, Subscriber identity modules (SIM) cards, as well as the cost of making calls, were considered expensive by ordinary folks.

2.3.2: The second wave of reforms (2000-2009)

Massive changes in the telecommunication industry were witnessed in Kenya during this period. First, the Telecommunication and Postal industry policy statement was revised in December 2001 to accommodate more foreign investments. For instance, the policy adjusted policy investments to 70% from 30%. This allowed two mobile service providers-Safaricom and Kencell to join Telecom which had enjoyed a monopoly in the sector for long. The results were instant. For example, mobile subscriptions tripled in one year from 330,000 to 980,000 by the end of 2002. During this period cybercafé started to mushroom in various parts of the country. As will be shown in chapter 8, there is an underlying economic motive behind the adoption and adaptation

of new technologies in context. This chimes well with Foster et al. (2018) argument that internet connectivity and global economic structures in East Africa are deeply intertwined.

Secondly, the regime changes in 2002, as earlier alluded to, came with the political goodwill to further institute reforms in the ICT sector. In 2006, the Government of Kenya draft policy on ICT was revised to liberalise ICT sector fully. Ndemo (2017) avers that on paper, Kenya's ICT sector was liberalised, yet in reality, the industry was controlled, albeit remotely, by the incumbent telecom. This connects with the Gagliardone (2016) arguments that ICTs are embedded within the social-political structures and the contours of power in context.

This monopoly, he notes, made the cost of making phone calls quite expensive. One of the decision to abandon the East Africa Submarine Cable for the TEAMS was a game-changer (Graham & Mann, 2013; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). The fibre optic cable was viewed as a springboard to tech-start-ups, thus promising to provide jobs to many unemployed youths(Graham & Mann, 2013). Also, the government rolled out the *e*-Government system, aimed at synchronising service delivery in the private sector. This was deemed necessary because of prevailing realities such as increasing population growth, dwindling fortunes in key revenue earners such as Agriculture and tourism. The government made more concession, particularly in its economic blueprint captured in the Vision 2030 policy document

The government's move to zero-rate mobile phones imports in 2009 and computers as well as internet infrastructure partly led to an increased inflow of mobile phones which consistently with the law of demands and supply saw a significant reduction of prices. This phenomenal growth could be attributed to the availability of relatively cheap phones, steady improvement of communication infrastructure and favourable government policies (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). However, the Value Added Tax was re-introduced in 2013, reversing the initial progress made.

At the same time, the continued investment in fibre optic and the licensing of more data services providers significantly led to competition. This significantly led to a scaling down of data rates. Kenya has four fibre optic cables which have resulted in relatively high internet speeds, and availability of broadband at a reduced cost (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). For example, the internet speeds have improved from the 64-Kbps in the early 1990s to, 32Kbps in 1995, and now over 1.7Gbps (Munyua & Mureithi, 2007; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). The number of data service providers have increased too with private companies venturing into this sector rivalling dominant players such as Safaricom.

2.3.3: The third wave of reforms (2010-2019)

The new constitution promulgated in 2010, safeguards the fundamental 'ICT-related rights, such as access to the internet'(Kivikuru, 2017:313). Two decades later, the government has fully embraced the internet and ICTs in service delivery, as well as a catalyst in socio-economic development in Kenya (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). The government, Ndemo and Weiss (2017) observe, developed Open Data Initiative aimed at fuelling the development of new applications and tech start-ups. It also invested in research to map ICT trends and align its agendas appropriately. The Jubilee administration which came into power in 2013, sought to extend these gains by introducing ICT in school program, by providing free laptops to primary schools. It also sought to streamline service delivery in the public sector by introducing *Huduma* centres, 'one-stop shops' for accessing government services electronically (Kivikuru, 2017).

Because of the relatively high unemployment rates in Kenya, digital innovations have been taken up by young people to create job opportunities for themselves (see Ndemo & Weiss, 2017; Ndlela & Mulwo, 2017a; Tufte, 2017). Young start-ups are leveraging the potential of the internet and more recently, social media and messaging applications to package themselves, their products and services. The increased demand for the internet and data has been attributed to high mobile phones subscriptions (98.9%) connections and more customised mobile phones applications (Wasserman, 2017a). With the three dominant mobile subscribers (Safaricom, Airtel and Telkom) competing for customers, their strategies to attract and retain more customers have left ordinary citizens as the principal beneficiaries. The prices of data as earlier hinted has made it relatively easy for young people with smartphones and other mobile devices to access the internet. Despite the re-introduction of the value-added tax on mobile phones and related ICT devices in 2013, smartphones continue to flood the Kenyan market. This could be attributed primarily to the Kenya-China bilateral trade agreements which have seen mobile and electronics imports from china increase over the last few years.

2.4 News trust in an increasingly fragmented online space

Across East Africa, different regimes are experimenting on various ways of reclaiming control of the often-perceived 'volatile' social media and private messaging spaces. Paradoxically, as will be shown in the next chapters, these platforms are profoundly the main ways of news exposure thus calling attention to how these tactics manifest in the patterns and practices of news consumption. In Kenya, the recent launch of the National Integrated Identity Management System (*Huduma* Number) by the government came under sharp scrutiny with questions on an invasion

of privacy through data harvesting generating heated debate[9]. The hashtag #ResistHudumaNamba was formed to persuade Kenyans to resist the whole exercise, with issues of the absence of clear legislation to protect the data collected from ordinary Kenyans forming the crux of the debates. As hinted in the opening paragraph, innovative media technologies have challenged the mundane patterns and routine news consumption, including the audience 'inclination to trust news'(Fletcher & Park, 2017; Quandt, 2012; Tsfati, 2010). Social media platforms are increasingly becoming spaces where audiences acquire, produce, and negotiate meanings. Yet within these expanded news exposure avenues, 'truth', 'half-truths', rumors and gossips compete for attention thus raising concerns on the capacity of news users to draw a distinction between the variety of news available.

Trust in news media is critical for legitimizing and lending credence to the news, and by extension, democracies. The revelation of data manipulation by Cambridge Analytica in the 2013 and 2017 general elections in Kenya triggered debates on the security of user's data, particularly during critical electioneering moments. As Duncan (2018) notes, "online security is a precondition of privacy" (49). Fears of invasion of privacy interlinked with trust. Put differently, the fear of losing personal private data is the reconfiguration of relational trust among and between connected users.

Locally, the government has attempted to enact laws through the national assembly to address these threats, yet paradoxically these efforts have been challenged for the underlying motives of government surveillance. For example, Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act 2018 in Kenya was subject to much public debate due to its perceived impact on the freedom of expression. Critiques claimed the bill was unconstitutional because it aimed at curtailing rather than enhancing freedom of expression online by coming up with hefty penalties for users found guilty of publishing 'false' or 'fictitious' information in sections 22 and 23 of the bill. This move could be interpreted as a tactical move to instill fear, particularly among WhatsApp group administrators[10]. Another example is the Data Protection Act of 2019 in Kenya aimed at regulating the "processing of personal data; provide for the rights of data subjects and obligations of data controllers and processors; and for connected purposes" (671)[11]. Yet beneath these laws,

[9] https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2001314408/state-has-no-right-to-deny-you-services-for-lack-of-huduma-number

[10] http://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/ComputerMisuseandCybercrimesActNo5of2018.pdf

[11] http://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/bills/2019/TheDataProtectionBill_2019.PDF

there are fears that the move to allow data to be 'collected indirectly' by the state for surveillance could infringe on the freedom of expression, particularly in online spaces.

Going back in time, satirical television programs in Kenya such as '*Redykyulass*'(a show credited with three Kenyatta university students), and XYZ sprung into prominence among the audience due to their style of masking the truth with a dose of humour (Ogola, 2011). These programs are partly a manifestation of the audience's distrust of traditional media often captured or controlled by political elites. Instead, they gravitate towards channels, websites and platforms which offer 'alternative facts'. Nyamjoh (2005) argues that as "trust in formal media declines; the audience will seek alternative channels to satisfy their information and communication needs" (Nyamjoh, 2005 in Wasserman, 2019:110).

Ushahidi (Swahili for evidence) platform emerged as an alternative open-source news platform during the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya (Goldstein & Rotich, 2008). More than a decade after the violence (for instance from 2008-2018), blogs and SMS which were the dominant alternative platforms have partly been replaced by a variety of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) and messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat, etc.). These platforms have catalyzed immediacy in news production (Karlsson, 2011) and consumption, while at the same time raising trust issues. Even so, there has been little empirical efforts to establish how these platforms have altered news consumption patterns among young people. The pivotal role of the mobile phones and the internet in mediating social experiences brings to the fore the position of news and how trust becomes an incredibly useful element in news consumption experiences. As will be examined through the lenses of scalable sociality, earlier shown have scaled mainly up or down by the full range of social media and messaging applications. It would be interesting to provide insights on how these platforms have disrupted, altered or reconfigured the thoughts, patterns, and processes of news consumption.

While this shows the heightened significance of privacy and by extensions, its roles in enhancing or eroding trust in democratic contexts, it also demonstrates the intertwined relationship between the state and conglomerates and the global powers. While very little came out of this summons, particularly about privacy, individual behavioural measures introduced shortly, have not yielded much. Besides, Kenya has been faced by a wave of cyber-attacks in the recent past. In 2014, the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) twitter handle was hacked by a group calling itself "Anonymous"[12].

[12] https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Wake-up-call-to-hasty-Internet-users/1056-5164108-112yx0fz/index.html?fbclid=IwAR0z8pw6oflipukXdH0Hlpj_gcgaWC9zBeUUmIx17Yf8kgO61OLE8m7v3Xw

The hackers also defaced the website of the Kenya the National Environment Trust Fund (Netfund). Most interestingly, Mr Alex Mutuku, a young University graduate, was alleged to have siphoned over US dollars $ 40 million from the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA). In June 2019, a group calling itself 'Kurd Electronic Team' hacked and took control of Kenyan government's websites[13]. This comes barely a year after the enactment of the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crimes Act in May 2018. This bill saw the formation of the National Computer and Cyber Crimes Coordination Committee ("NCCCC"). Among other things, the Act's overarching objective is:

> Provide for offences relating to computer systems; to enable timely and effective detection, prohibition, prevention, response, investigation and prosecution of computer and cybercrimes; to facilitate international co-operation in dealing with computer and cyber-crimes matters and for connected purposes (NCCCC Act, 2018:1)

In neighbouring Uganda, the government introduced social media tax aimed at raising additional revenues for the government. This move was met with resistance from Ugandans who felt the government was curtailing their freedom of expression by making it expensive for people to share news and information within these platforms. The government imposed a daily tax of 200 Ugandan Shillings ($0.053USD) as a condition for users to access communication applications-including social media and private messaging applications[14]. In Ethiopia, there has been an attempt to surveil what happens online (Gagliardone, 2016). In the same vein, Arora (2019) observes that: "Samira in Gujarat slum hesitates to declare that she is a Muslim for the Indian government's new biometric identity scheme that matches social benefits with digital identities (…) Johan in a township in Cape town is nervous about the launch of South Africa smart ID" (371). These examples partly show how governments are appropriating technologies to entrench surveillance practices through data governance. In addition, it shows the enormity and complexity of trust and privacy in an increasingly internet-mediated society.

These examples paint a picture of a continent grappling with the realities of increased percolation of mobile phones and the internet. However, deep within these positive developments, there seem to be emerging challenges concerning the rights of the users to stay informed while at the same time maintaining their rights to privacy. These raise fundamental issues of trust. Mobile devices and the internet are ubiquitous and pervasive. Thus, the quotidian use of smartphones and the internet to access 'timely' news and information have disrupted conventional wisdom on trust. There is a need to understand these disruptions within the specific political, social and cultural

[13] https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001328320/ifmis-and-other-government-websites-under-cyberattack

[1414] https://internethealthreport.org/2019/taxing-social-media-in-africa/

environment where social media and messaging applications are used to consume news. Increasingly, news consumption is no longer dependent on traditional linear channels (e.g. radio, television and newspapers) as was the case during the few decades that traditional media dominated the airwaves. The ubiquitous form and nature of smartphones and the various applications—including social media and private messaging applications—exposes the 'self' to new types of risks and opportunities. The highly popularized data governance in the global south is colonizing the self, and this has not been made any better by the ethnocentric conceptualization of trust (Arora, 2019). This then invites the question: How have platforms shaped news consumption due to their perceived levels of trust and privacy?

All these indicate the downside of adoption of new technologies, yet at the same time reifies the argument by Nyamjoh (2005) that Africans have displayed ingenuity and creativity in the adoption and the adaptation of new technologies. More so, young people seem to be the key drivers of these emerging trends, such as hacking. The CA—the leading telecommunication regulatory body, made attempts through the Consumer Education Program to create awareness by providing guidelines on ways to ensure privacy and security online[15]. However, this piece of information is so thin in content and provides the basics of ensuring safety and privacy with passwords and screen lock affordances. This conceptualization of privacy underestimates the ingenious creativity among young people. For instance, despite the varied ways-such as use of passwords, screen locks and IMEI, many mobile phone thefts incidents have been reported, yet such phones are hardly recovered despite their security features. What is more, the sophisticated hacking strategies seem to target the software and the operating systems of these phones. Thus, the use of Passwords and Lock screens is no longer enough in enhancing privacy and data security online.

Thus, while news has been described variedly as a window to the world, the prize that users-young people- pay to access consume and stay connected online has hardly received attention. In this thesis, I seek to explore how government interferes with privacy in the name of surveillance, particularly in Kenya, where terrorism has been used as justification for surveillance. In this regard, the historical past of the internet as a military communication platform presents a useful starting point in tracing the evolution of surveillance tactics. In the Global South, however, lack of clear legislation to tackle new forms of surveillance, locally and globally, have increased calls for a more inclusive debate on how to safeguard the privacy of the internet users. Weak

[15] https://ca.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Internet-security-and-Privacy.pdf

democratic systems have not made things any better. While the Global North, particularly the USA and the UK have been grappling with privacy rights for at least four decades (see Duncan, 2016:42), Global South appears to be experiencing these realities at a time when the pace of research seems to have been outpaced by the speed of digital innovations.

2.5 Drawing the nexus between Universities, Young People and New media

> Kenyans first heard of (Philomena) Chelagat Mutai as the editor of the University of Nairobi (UoN) student paper University Platform, which in 1972 vigorously protested police brutality against students. Two years later, Mutai was elected to parliament as its youngest female member…until a politically engineered imprisonment in 1976; Mutai fought an increasingly lonely battle as one of the few 'voice of reason' in the third parliament (Murunga 2003 in Mwangola, 2007:154)

The excerpt above demonstrates the significance of universities in nurturing an optimum environment for young people to engage in debates and public discourse. It also offers insights on the inextricable role of the print media in punctuating and accentuating such debates against the vicissitudes of the dominant ideologies perpetuated by the ruling class. Jomo Kenyatta used publications such as *Muigwithania*, *Ramogi* (Achieng' Oneko and Oginga Odinga) and *Uhuru wa' Africa* (Paul Ngei) respectively to advance their alternative ideologies in the emancipation struggle against colonialism (Mwangola, 2007).

Largely, universities in Kenya are deeply imbricated within the societal needs and aspirations. The 2010 Kenyan constitution made recommendations to the effect that the forty-seven devolved units in Kenya should each have a university. Although this has not been achieved, it underscores the critical role of the universities in the social, economic, political and cultural dimensions. Through a wide range of courses and programs, universities are to an extent expected to respond to diverse societal needs periodically. They do so mainly through churning out 'trained' and 'competent manpower', instilling ethos and above all inculcating a sense of humanity. This is aptly captured by three interrelated factors identified by Cloete, Bailey, and Pillay (2011):

> "First, the nature of the pact between universities political authorities and society. Secondly, the nature, the strength, size, quality and continuity to the academic core. Lastly, the level of co-ordination effectiveness of implementation, and connectedness in the broader policy context of Universities" (8)

However, despite the capabilities (intellectual and material) of young people in the increasingly mediated society, their ability to influence politics appears significantly smaller than the changes introduced by the nationalist's leaders (Kenyatta, O'neko, Odinga, and Ngei). While traditional media, mainly newspapers, presented the space for the articulation of political discourses,

internet-enabled mobile devices have entered the media landscape, significantly altering the mundane roles of traditional media. Social media, to a large extent, are perceived to be free of censorship from government agencies, yet the limited discursive interactions as will be shown in Chapter 7, reifies the concept of scalable sociality. Deliberative engagement on the news seems to be scaling down to private platforms. Scholars have argued that social media have collapsed the barriers and democratized the communication space (Ligaga, 2012; Ndlela & Mulwo, 2017), though such generalized conclusions have obscured debates on the emerging forms of marginalization and exclusivity. Put differently, technology has disrupted the monopoly of the three traditional media (radio, newspapers, and television) by creating multiple news and information exposure avenues, yet such avenues may have triggered new forms of elitist conversation and political patronage as will be shown later in the thesis.

Universities are the new incubation centres in Africa. Important to realise, the achievement of knowledge-based economies in Africa affirms the intertwined relationship between the universities and the societal needs in context. Yet, universities as spaces through which public discourse takes place, have not received considerable attention, particularly on the varied ways young people seize opportunities to build on the past struggles of resisting dominant ideologies. News in this study is positioned at the center of the struggles of emancipation, not just from ignorance, but also on other societal counter-hegemonic discourses. For example, in 1993, Mosaic browser developed by students at the University of Illinois revolutionised the world wide web(www); "it made the web colourful and inviting medium that anyone could navigate"(Hindman, 2008:1).

On the contrary, While the Global North, particularly America, has nurtured its creative hub through the Silicon Valley (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017), the same cannot be said about Africa. Instead, studies on internet access often target 'rural populace' or the 'urban poor', and how they appropriate technologies to transform their lives. For example, in Kenya, it is now the norm that studies funded by foreign bodies find the slums of Kenya as very fertile grounds for empirical studies (Omanga & Mainye, 2019), ignoring the spaces where a lot of creativity and ingenuity could be happening.

However, focusing on universities and young people in these spaces limits the study in terms of representing the totality of the youthful Kenyan population. Universities represent the upper layer of young people, and may not capture the diverse views of young people in Kenya holistically. Having said this, I am least concerned about the university as an agent of change, but rather as

diverse spaces that attract students from all parts of the country. In a socially-and, culturally differentiated society as Kenya, achieving a representative sample can be daunting. However, universities present a useful starting point in mapping news consumption because of their diversity. In addition, by focusing on Universities, this study transcends the 'developmental' or transformative paradigm where studies on internet and mobile phone adoption and adaptation have been conducted in informal settlements such Kibera (*Kibra*) and Mathare (see Omanga & Mainye, 2019). This is not to say research in informal settlements is not necessary, but rather the association of technologies with socio-economic development has presented skewed findings on internet and mobile phones adoptions. In their reflections of North-South collaborations, Omanga and Mainye (2019) conclude that:

> "the constant reductionism of Nairobi to Kibera and Mathare slums among sections of scholars studying Kenya is partly the outcome of popular news production, but most probably a reflection of an increasing blurring of lines between scholars and traditional donor agencies" (275).

This study shifts attention to the kind of sociality enacted by internet-enabled mobile devices and their attendant applications within the university spaces. Although there are varied ways through which young people seize online opportunities, to tell their stories and resist narratives that represent the past hegemonic struggles and power relations, this has not received substantial attention in the Global South. Kenya, among other countries, has been dubbed as a Knowledge economy (Teferra & Altbachl, 2004). A study by Cloete, Bailey, and Pillay (2011) established that Kenya and Mauritius exhibited high awareness in this regard closely followed by Mozambique and Tanzania. This description and the high level of awareness can be deconstructed in a dual sense: First, the concept connotes a gap in literacy levels, with subsidiary skills relevant to catapult the Global South to higher development scales, still at critically low levels. The second dimension is the opportunity to leverage new technologies for knowledge transfer through outsourcing (particularly in businesses) and bridging the gaps through collaborations. Arguably, the second perspective is weighty; it speaks to the varied ways knowledge is inextricably linked to new technologies, at its stages of production and sharing[16]. Knowledge generation, application as well as its transfer has been widely associated with socio-economic development (Mulinge, Arasa & Wawire, 2017). This recognition has attracted significant efforts from various countries

[16]Here, "the social impact agenda dominated, making business process outsourcing more than just an employment- and wealth-creation opportunity, but also a means to transfer crucial knowledge to the nation's youth. The key takeaway was that the knowledge economy provides a new context and new resources to entrepreneurs seeking tailor-made solutions to societal problems" (Weiss and Weber, 2016).

across the world, particularly in their quest to reconfigure their national strategies to leverage from the Knowledge economy. In this regard, higher education institutions, including universities, have been recognized as major players (Cloete et al., 2011).

What is more, these institutions have been described as the hubs of innovation, with expectations to lead in the 'design, and productive use of new technologies' (Mulinge, Arasa & Wawire, 2017:1). These views underscore the significance of institutions of higher learning, including Universities. It also positions young people at the centre of making Kenya and Africa dreams of a knowledge economy a reality. In part, Universities are charged with the responsibility of providing and nurturing a conducive environment for innovation to take place. On the other hand, young people are expected to seize these possibilities to recreate new possibilities (Okioga, Onsongo, & Nyaboga, 2012)

Even so, studies have emerged critiquing universities in Kenya. Key among these criticisms include but are not limited to political interference, weak quality assurance mechanisms and lack of clear policies on the retention and reward of talented staff (see Odhiambo, 2011). In his reflections on University expansion in Kenya, Sifuna, (2010) notes that, since the attainment of independence in 1963, the "unprecedented expansion of university education has had far-reaching effects on its quality" (415). Intriguingly, Sifuna (ibid) notes that among the catalysts for university expansion was the need to "satisfy ethnic interests, especially of the large ethnic groups" (417). This view highlights the role played by ethnic formations in resource distribution and the development of infrastructure. While there is a widespread agreement on the expansion of universities, young people attending these institutions have hardly received attention. While this study acknowledges the criticism advanced by the above scholars, it remains alive to the surge in student population within these institutions. Put differently, expansion in this context has been linked to increased structures and not necessarily the learners.

Besides, the Kenyan government vision 2030 policy document recognizes the role of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) as the key enablers in realizing the goals and aspirations embedded in the policy. In this regard, the policy documents recognize universities as the drivers of innovation. The vision 2030 document envisages that full access and adoption of ICTs will profoundly "transform Kenya into knowledge and information-based economy by enabling access to quality, affordable and reliable ICT services through innovation and e-government" (KNBS, ICT report 2016:2). Although this document advances the view of the transformative potential of ICTs, a position that has been challenged by media scholars in Africa (See

Gagliardone, 2016; Wasserman, 2017), it underscores the role of young people in realizing such goals. Therefore, by focusing on university student's uptake and reproduction of news, this study attempts to establish news consumption patterns as a prerequisite in a knowledge economy. Also, a close examination of young people's news consumption habits and patterns allows for the understanding of broader social, economic, and political changes; providing insights on how to approach social media and messaging applications, but also how these platforms are enhancing or complicating news engagement.

Young people (below 25) form a significant percentage (70%) of Africa's population (de Bruijn & Both, 2017; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). In universities, young people (18-25) enjoy some degree of freedom from overt policing (Mwangola, 2007). In Kenya, however, Mwangola cautions that "the license for free speech within educational institutions in the past was by no means a blanket endorsement of the right to free public discussion on socio-political issues" (151). The fusion of intellect and energy exuded by university students, often described as youthful exuberance, has incubated provocative ideas that could otherwise "have been considered seditious in practically all other public spaces" (Mwangola, 2007:152). Mwangola points out that print media stood out alongside junior military ranks, despite the repressive KANU hegemony (154). A critical reflection of Kenya history is replete with incidences where university students played a role in advancing debates through print media. By participating in university politics and debates, young people not only imagined the future but also delivered the future for themselves. However, the rapid diffusion of mobile phones is assumed to have altered these mundane roles of traditional media, though there is little empirical evidence. Although news dissemination was the significant role of traditional media, they have been altered by new technologies, though the specifics of these alterations remain mostly unknown.

2.6: Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a brief historiography to highlight continuities and discontinuities; paying attention to news access and consumption in Kenya. It begun by exploring the significant rise of ICTs—including mobile devices and the internet, and the kind of disruptions they have brought. It is important to note that, the enactment of the Kenya Communication Act of 1998 was a significant step in laying the ground for the ICT driven economy, as envisioned in the Vision 2030 policy document (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). The liberalisation of the telecommunication sector through the legal framework provided a solid foundation for what is currently, perhaps one of the success stories in Eastern Africa. This chapter

has also explored the nexus between universities, young people and new technologies. In this case, numerous examples have been cited to demonstrate how universities in Kenya have been the hubs of innovation, particularly among young people. Most importantly, university spaces have been instrumental in realising the government of Kenya development agenda, though the relationship between the state and the university students has not been rosy. Nevertheless, by focusing on university students, this study lays bare the opinion shaper roles that young people play in their respective communities by being a university student: The top-cream of society.

CHAPTER 3: THEORIZING NEWS CONSUMPTION

This chapter explores the theoretical concepts that underpin this study. It emphasises young people's daily news consumption experiences informed by the rooted uses and gratification theory (U and G), and the relatively new concept of scalable sociality (Miller et al., 2016). However, aware of the limited nature of these conceptual lenses, I extensively refer to the non-normative African scholarship to explain unfamiliar news consumption behaviours among young people. Although U and G and scalable sociality focus on what the audience do with the media, their strengths vary. U and G strength lean more on the medium rather than the content. This makes scalable sociality incredibly useful in unpacking how news content circulates and metamorphoses on digital spaces—within and between social media and messaging platforms. Even so, both conceptual tools lend themselves to Global North assumptions and experiences, thus necessitating reference to more grounded empirical studies conducted in the Global South.

While U and G concerns itself widely with the '*why*'; for instance, *why* young people choose a model of a mobile device over other(s), as well as the kind of news accessed, scalable sociality blends the *why* and the *how* of news consumption and production. The why addressed by U and G is linked to the user's motivations and needs that compete for gratification. These gratifications are partly associated with distinct media feature(s), in this context, mobile devices. This significantly differs from the why addressed by scalable sociality which concerns the varied ways young people post news and content online. It also relates the whys to the level of privacy and trust online. Finally, the how addressed by scalable sociality include, but is not limited to the varied ways through which young people originate, post, comment, share and consume online news via the full range of online platforms.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section presents a historical overview of U and G theory. It traces the evolution of U and G as well as the criticisms that kept triggering more investigations. The second section explores the relevance of U &G in the new media era. It focuses explicitly on how U and G can be used to understand the consumption of online news among young people in Kenya. The third section presents a review of social media studies that have employed U and G. It highlights their specific contributions to the ongoing U and G debates as well as their limitations. The fourth section shifts attention to scalable sociality as a complementary perspective. It highlights the usefulness of scalable sociality as a relatively new concept in understanding online news among university students. It also offers insights on the varied ways in which it was useful in unpacking the levels of privacy across social media

platforms as well as the elements that influence news trust online. Lastly, the section presents the synergies between U and G and scalable sociality in conceptualizing appropriation of online news among university students in Kenya.

3.1 Historical development of U and G

U and G is one of the oldest traditions in media studies. Its roots can be traced to the media effects research in the early 1920s (McQuail, 1994). I do not intend to reinvent the will by regurgitating what these studies have established over decades (e.g. Cantril, 1942; Diddi & LaRose, 2006a; Katz, 1959; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973; Katz & Foulkes, 1962; Luo, 2002; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979; Rayburn, 1996; Rubin, 1994; Ruggiero, 2000; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). However, a century later, the significant rise of information technologies, "has revived U and G from dormancy" (Ruggiero, 2000:13). The internet and mobile devices, coupled with its vast and versatile platforms, have extended its shelf life considerably. Today, we have a vast pool of traditional media, social media and messaging applications, which arguably have led to diversity and plurality of content.

U and G is significant because it was the first movement to recognize the centrality of the audience in media usage. It acknowledged that individuals actively seek and search for 'identity with' and seizes the media potentials to fulfil their own unique gratifications needs (Ku et al., 2013). Therefore, it remains a useful framework for exploring how individuals make media choices to meet their needs—thus enabling them to experience gratifications such as social interaction, acquiring new knowledge, entertainment, and reward (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005). The argument here is audience behaviour, especially in daily media choices, is selective and motivated by rational self-awareness of their own needs. This is hinged on the expectation that a media and content will gratify those needs (Katz 1974 in Rugierro, 2000:18). Several other typologies have been developed: For example, Kuehn (1994) identified Convenience, diversion, relationship development, and intellectual appeal as the key drivers of media consumption while December (1996) came up with surveillance, entertainment and diversion, interpersonal utility and parasocial interactions.

However, U and G devoted significant attention to the choices audiences make in their daily media consumption, inadvertently, limiting debates on the significance of media content and contextual realities in shaping the kind of choices and options adopted to gratify specific user needs. Owing to its theoretical and methodological imperfections, U and G fell out of favour with media scholars. However, U and G metamorphosed from a 'mechanistic' approach interested

with the effects of the media on the audience to a 'psychological perspective' attuned to users' use of content and their inherent motivations (Ruggiero, 2000). Needs are influenced by culture; thus, motivation leads to more considerable attention in either the medium used for gratification or the content carried by the medium. Thus, the motivation for media content consumption is driven by 'situations within which they are involved' (Ruggiero, 2000:18).

Therefore, as will be shown later, scalable sociality becomes incredibly useful in unpacking news as content that is shared across a wide range of social media and private messaging applications. Schröder and Steeg Larsen (2010) established that the perceived worthwhileness of a news medium is dependent on five factors, namely: "(1) time available; (2) the affordance of public connection; (3) the price; (4) normative constraints and (5) participatory affordances" (527). These set of factors, though limited to the context within which the study was conducted, connect well with the contextual realities in day-to-day media and content choices. For example, the available time for reading or consuming news determines the level of engagement with the news content.

3.2 U and G in the new media Era

Against this background, the rapid spread of the internet and mobile devices have not diminished the relevance of U and G. Instead, it invites a more critical engagement, more so on the emerging forms of social networking platforms, as well as the content shared on these platforms. The rapid spread of social media and messaging applications have become central tools of accessing information, including news among young people. In this regard, College students form an essential segment of the population worth studying, mainly how they consume and experience news in their daily lives (Diddi & LaRose, 2006a).

Even so, the relevance of U and G remains contested. Considerable disagreements abound, particularly on its capacity to unearth the relatively new sociality brought about by the rapid spread of new media in various parts of the world. As Ruggiero (2000) notes, some scholars have argued, "U and G is not a rigorous social science theory" (3). However, a significant number of new media researchers have advocated the U and G theory in exploring the motivations for internet use (Morris & Ogan, 1996; Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996). In this thesis, I sought to demonstrate just the opposite, positioning U and G right at the center of media evolution and advancement. Other scholars in the recent past have attempted to reconcile these debates on the relevance of rooted theories, by adopting a continuity approach rather than complete rapture from the past (Livingstone, 2004).

Although critiques acknowledge that U and G was incredibly useful in studying 'traditional' media, they remain skeptical of its capacity to explain relatively new forms of gratifications and unfamiliar audience experiences. While this is partly true, new media innovations have 'not' in any way substituted traditional media as it were. Instead, they have complemented it in varied ways. In their study of viewers' exposure to television, Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) conclude that U and G complement other determinants including but not limited to media availability, social constrains and work schedules. Embedded in this view is that new media has only succeeded in building upon and improving the traditional media. Although some scholars have argued that mobile devices and the internet have expanded the communication space in Kenya (Gagliardone, 2016; Mukhongo, 2014; Omanga, 2015; Omanga & Chepngetich-Omanga, 2013), the nature and dimension of these expansions remain broad. This thesis seeks to explain this expansion alongside the audience's needs. Specifically, through U and G, it examines whether the expansion of the communication space has proportionately expanded and stretched the range of audience needs and motivations about news access, consumption, and production.

U and G evolved with the advancement of media technologies, providing a wide range 'points of exposure' to the audience, consequently leading to multiple ways of audience need gratification. While, in the mid-20th century the central focus of U and G was mainly on newspapers, radio, and television, it has "evolved in parallel to growing diversity and pervasiveness of ICTs" (Alhabash & Ma, 2017:3). Though a considerable number of studies have employed U and G in studying the internet, these studies have increasingly looked at the internet use in American and European contexts (Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Perse & Ferguson, 2000). Other studies have looked at the internet from a commercial perspective (Cho & as-, 2004; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 2002; Zhou & Bao, 2002), as well as from a political dimension (Kaye & Johnson, 2002). The kind of sociality made possible by the proliferation of mobile devices and the internet has not received much attention. In addition, how this has resonated with young people's needs in their daily news consumption and production practices. In addition, this study seeks to explicate the motivations as well as the dynamics of news consumption and production online. The current debates about news trust and the ever-elusive privacy will be explored using both the U and G theory as well as the concept of scalable sociality.

Notwithstanding the remarkable technological advancement, there has been a tendency to frame these changes on the materiality of technologies. Inadvertently, obscuring the audience's use of not just the technologies as material and symbolic artefacts, but on the messages received via these channels. As earlier mentioned, U and G is key in unpacking the audience's needs and

motivations behind the kind of media accessed as well as the messages consumed, produced and reproduced. This study, however, foregrounds the social system or the context within which these disruptions occur. As W. Schramm (1973) noted:

> "The social aegis under which the message comes, the receivers social relationships to the sender, the perceived social consequences of accepting it or acting upon it, must be put together with the understanding of the symbolic and structural nature of the message, the conditions under which it is received, the abilities of the receiver, and his innate and learned responses, before we can predict with any real confidence the consequences of an act of communication" (8).

Technological convergence, mainly catalyzed by internet access and penetration, has attracted the attention of scholars on why the audience access and adopt the internet. The Internet has been described variedly. For instance, it has been described as "communities of people who use and develop the networks, as well as a collection of resources that can be shared" (Ko et al., 2005). Although this description is contested, it attempts to capture the evolving nature of the internet at the same time recognizing the multitude of actors that directly or indirectly benefit from the internet. The internet arrived with some unique features such as interactivity, Spatio-temporal possibilities, full coverage and ease of access (Berthon et al., 1996). The internet as a relatively new phenomenon triggered studies to unravel the opportunities and inherent challenges posed by the innovation. Rubin (1994) explored how audience socio-psychological needs were a crucial determinant in internet access and adoption. Rayburn (1996) pointed out that the internet was 'intentionally' consumed, with the decision to access it resting on the audience. While the thrust of this study is not on the possibilities of the internet, it is fundamental because mobile news access is widely predicated on internet access. The internet particularly possesses some distinct characteristics such as 'interactivity, demassification, and asynchroneity' (Ruggiero, 2000: 15).

Other studies examined the inherent internet users' motivations, where rafts of motivations associated with the internet were identified, namely: 'social escapism, transactional security and privacy, information, interactive control, socialization, non-transactional privacy and economic motivation' (Korgaonkar & Woolen, 1999:4). Korgaonkar and Wolin suggested that the internet was a home of a diverse kind of activities; it was not merely a point of retrieving information but a physical place that the audience could escape into. A similar study conducted by Lin (1999) to unpack the relationship between motivation and online content adoption, established that surveillance motivation was strongly tied to internet access. This view highlights, though not explicitly, the significance of news and information in the day-to-day lives of internet users. Luo (2002) took a slightly different trajectory by focusing on the effects of in formativeness, irritation,

and entertainment or varied user's behaviour patterns. These studies affirm the usefulness of U and G theory in understanding audience needs and motivations for using the internet. However, despite the numerous empirical responses, news content did not receive significant attention.

Studies that have focused on news have mainly done so alongside its role in civic engagement and governance (e.g., Hardy & Scheufele, 2005; Kaye & Johnson, 2002). Other studies have sought to unpack how audiences combine a wide range of online and offline news sources (Dimmick, Chen, & Li, 2004; DeWaal et al., 2006). These selected studies made strides in advancing U and G as a response to the methodological and theoretical challenges of applying the rooted tradition in studying relatively new media reconfigurations, distinct from the traditional media sociality. However, whereas they provide useful insights into stretching the conceptual lens of the uses and gratification theory, the contextual application of uses and gratification has been underplayed. This study not only aims to explicate the news 'prosumptions' practices and patterns among university students but the varied ways in which they combine the vast array of social media platforms as alternatives to often 'boring' immediate environment. Mobile news 'prosumption' practices include "agglomeration, curation, crowdsourcing, updating, tagging, and sharing" (Sheller, 2015:13)

Furthermore, the epochal spread of new technologies, particularly mobile phones and the internet has led to significant interruptions and disruptions within the social system in varied ways. These disruptions have been associated with reconstitution and reconfiguration of physical and virtual spaces, turning space into places (Papacharissi, 2015:27). It is widely believed that the people taking up these technologies in Kenya and other parts of the world are young people. As Ndemo and Weiss (2017) note, mobile phones and the internet arrived together in Kenya, and the people taking up these technologies are young people who make up 70 per cent of the population. While this study transcends transformative potentials of the new technologies, it foregrounds the internal dynamics as well as the user experiences in any news consumption and production instance. By applying U and G in the study of online news among university students in Kenya, this study blends both quantitative and qualitative approaches in its attempt to understand the social and psychological needs of the young people as well as their motivations for accessing, adopting and consuming news. This moves the debate a notch higher from the technologies to the form and content carried by these technologies, particularly mobile devices.

The term social media affordance has gained traction in the recent past among social media researchers across the world. Its roots can be traced to the computer actionable properties such as

the Keyboard, the mouse, the hyperlinks, the joystick, haptic sensors, and so on (Gibson, 1977). While this study conceptualises new technologies as extensions and improvements of the previous technologies, it recognises the new realities brought about by social media affordances. Internet-enabled mobile devices have become relatively cheap and compact making them more portable, compared to traditional media. Sundar (2004) contends that these affordances offer users opportunities "not just to experience media in new ways, but also actively contribute to their content, given the rise in interfaces and applications that are premised on user-generated content (UGC)" (505). What is more, these new devices have the potential to store and run many applications simultaneously, along with other conventional roles such as making and receiving calls**.**

Although social media and messaging applications have expanded 'points of exposure', they have also created possibilities of disengagement through an online connection. Today, it is possible for young people to disengage by simply browsing their phones. For example, using social media to filter and block those people they do not want to associate with among many other strategies of disengagement. In the Global South, however, challenges such as inadequate network coverage, high poverty levels, relatively high tariffs, and low electricity connections among other challenges pose a significant amount of challenge to full utilization and realization of social media affordances. Traditional media affordances were limited in their simplicity. The increased speed of information transfer as well as the audience capacities to participate have mutated and reshuffled the gratifications sought by the audience. Although these new changes have dramatically shaped the media, as well as the form and content of the messages, social networking sites (SNS), have served to redefine already existing U and G (Alhabash & Ma, 2017).

New media technologies have also been grouped without necessarily paying attention to the unique possibilities and complexities that characterize them. Through U and G, this study aims to understand the unique dimensions of mobile devices as central tools of communication among university students as well as the opportunities and possibilities presented by social media platforms. Cooley (2002) suggests that the "new media seem to be most clearly making gains over traditional communication in terms of speed of transmission and diffusion through social classes" (Downing et al., eds. 2004:184). Although new media has brought about disruptions, it is worth recognizing that the introduction of mass broadcasting marked the beginning of modern-day disruptions. Mass communication technologies, as they were, disrupted old patterns and practices of expressing ideas and sharing experiences via a wide range of music, dance and old folklore stories. Most profoundly, the audience were least considered as active agents in the

communication process as mass media, it was believed, 'silenced and depersonalized' available avenues of cultural expression (Downing et al., eds. 2004).

3.3 A review of recent U and G studies

Harking back to the 1930s, debates on U and G have resulted in thousands of volumes of experimental recordings. In as much as this study conveniently focuses on mobile devices and the affordances of social media in daily news production and consumption, more efforts were devoted to how the audience appropriate news content mainly through social media platforms. In this section studies that have specifically focused on social media with mobile devices as enablers are highlighted, with specific emphasis on their contributions and limitations.

Media gratifications are broadly categorized into three: content, process and social gratifications (Stafford, Stafford & Schadtke, 2004). According to Stafford et al. (2004), content gratifications are mainly based on what the media carries, process gratifications are a derivative of the user's experiences with the media, and finally, social gratifications are the outcome of the interactivity facilitated by the media. Beyond the three broad categories, subsidiary gaps exist in the literature on the varied U and G enabled or constrained by social media. Subsequent sections review studies that fall under the three thematic areas, with more emphasis on content and social gratifications. Sundar and Limperos (2013) contend that "in order to capture the increasing volume and diversity of gratifications being obtained by such heavily used media products (Twitter, Facebook) …it is time that we broaden our focus beyond social and psychological origin of needs, and also consider potential influences of the perceived capabilities of the media technologies upon gratifications" (510). Mobile devices as technological artefacts constitute process gratifications, for instance, what are the motivations for acquiring and owning a smartphone. Social media intersect between the process and social gratification by enhancing young people's experiences in their daily news consumption patterns. Finally, news consumed and reproduced make up the content gratifications.

As earlier outlined, one fundamental assumption of U and G is its dichotomous view of the media and content as one (Katz et al., 1973a). Subsequent studies conducted over the years have increasingly focused on the possibilities of the media, leading to what has now been broadly viewed as the 'access' studies (Wasserman, 2017a). In Africa and Kenya in particular, there has been an increasing tendency to foreground what technologies do to people not what people do with or to the technologies (Gagliardone, 2014; Wasserman, 2017; Willems, 2014). What is more, the affordances of social media have been mainly assumed to expand communication spaces

without necessarily paying attention to the distinct features of the full range of platforms, and how audiences creatively appropriate these features to meet diverse information needs. Quinn (2016) argues that 'gratifications sought from media use are distinct from the actual gratifications, though they are strongly correlated' (3).

A four-year longitudinal study (2009-2012) conducted in the US to disentangle and demystify news media and content engagement (Ha et al., 2016), established that social media use "positively predicts total news consumption time"(2). Ha et al. (2016) further argue that news engagement is a multi-layered concept. It thus calls for a closer look to understand the implications of such layers in daily news consumption patterns among the general population comparatively with college students. Ha et al., (2016) conceptualise news engagement as "the involvement in news content for either personal or social purposes, which can be indicated by the effort made in obtaining and utilizing the news content among the audience" (3). They suggest four levels of news engagement, namely: "news consumption (exposure), diverse news platform use, sharing and exchange of news and lastly news media participation" (3). Although this study provides comparative insights between the general population and college students in a western context, the reliance of a purely quantitative approach limits the debate to measure user engagements. For instance, they identify "age, gender, level of education and media trust as negative predictors" (Ha et al., 2016:16). This study devotes attention to young people's demographics not as negative predictors of news consumption, but as distinct traits that enable or constrain news production and reproduction in diverse ways.

Social media studies continue to pop up in various parts of the world with a wide range of thematic areas being addressed, and many others are underway. Although this study conceptualises social media as the content posted (Miller et al., 2016), one common feature of social media platforms is their provision for users to create personal accounts and profiles allowing them to connect with 'friends' online (Boyd & Ellison, 2007b). Recent developments have further problematised the conventional understanding of social media, with algorithms widely believed in making the work of the user 'easy' or 'complex' by filtering information based on the search history as well as suggesting friends based on one's location among other possibilities (Newman et al., 2015). All these draw our attention to the dynamic and fluid state of innovations, ever in transition with a high degree of unpredictability. What is more, such changes are often viewed along the lines of what they offer to the audience, not how the audience creatively weave such changes, not always in conformity, but sometimes in contradictory ways aimed at telling their stories.

Studies have sought to explain the unique features of platforms, highlighting how users make use of these features in their day-to-day news production patterns. Rosengard et al. (2014) established that, while students may come across news through social media, they often confirm such news via other internet sources. This contribution is particularly meaningful in reimagining the varied ways through which young people navigate and assert their presence online in news consumption. It raises a fundamental question on why young people must confirm the information received online, by crosschecking through other online sources. Was this the beginning of trust issues in online spaces? Were these early signs of the recent debates on 'fake news'? Although Rosengard et al., (2014) examine news, they pay attention to the local news sources which provide young people with the news. This somewhat confines the news accessed to 'community' news online, a concept, which as earlier elaborated, has attracted heated debate in the recent past. What are the delineated boundaries between local/community news, in an increasingly multi-cultural global arena? (Quinn, 2016b) notes that the increased proliferation and use of the internet have challenged conventional 'mechanisms of boundary maintenance that individuals employ in daily life' (61). Most importantly, U and G has been used in this study to link young people's news needs with their quest for upward mobility in society, where social media platforms present them with such opportunities to forge new identities.

There have been attempts to trace the complimentary-displacements of new technologies, particularly internet-enabled mobile devices on traditional news consumption patterns. The assumption has been, mobile phones displace and even replaces traditional media as sources of news. Before the advent and rapid diffusion of social media applications, mobile phones were conventionally used for mundane purposes such as sending and receiving short messages (SMS) and making calls. Early studies thus sought to explore the audience's gratification of owning a mobile phone. Findings revealed that mobile phone usage was related to the need to be "fashionable, to communicate, to relax, save time and provide a sense of security" (Leung & Wei, 2000). Other studies have established similarity between traditional media and mobile phone gratifications in recent times; information-seeking has been found as a significant mobile news consumption predictor (Wei, 2008). Mobile phones have evolved into sophisticated digital pocket studios. They integrate different functionalities such as touchscreen interfaces and expandable memory provisions to host numerous customized applications with the ability to navigate sites exponentially increased (Westlund, 2015b).

Consequently, it is believed, mobile devices have expanded and simultaneously increased the spread of information dissemination, as well as news access. A platform for traditional media to

diversify their news dissemination patterns, findings indicate that mobile devices have served to complement traditional media in varied ways. In as much as these studies make significant contributions, particularly in already overpopulated research sites of America and Europe, such studies are still lacking in Africa. Moreover, while studies have examined the displacement-complementary effects in other parts of the world, how young Kenyan users combine a wide range of platforms in their daily news consumption and production patterns has not been fully explored.

News audiences increasingly are exposed to a multitude of news via a variety of channels online with social media applications forming a significant portion of these sources. Mobile news consumption has seeped through to individual news consumption patterns and practices (Van Damme et al., 2015). Embedded in this view is the tendency of news to permeate into the daily lives of the users. Faced with a variety of options from which to choose from, users straddle through a multiplicity of platforms in their news production and consumption patterns. Miller et al., (2016) remind us that, online content is continuously migrating from one platform to the other, significantly shaping how such news is accessed and produced by the audience. How do young people cope up with the fluid nature of news, even as they oscillate between one platform to the other? Some studies have suggested that the audience develops coping mechanisms such as relying on specific 'repertoires' of their favourite news sources online (Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012). By examining how young people combine online platforms and traditional channels, this study recognises the increasingly blurred distinction between the online and virtual world as well as online and offline realities. News consumption and production is not a passive activity.

Alhabash and Ma (2017) explored the motivation and uses of four platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat among college students. They found out that an overwhelming majority of college students spent their time on "Instagram, followed by Snapchat, Facebook and twitter platforms respectively" (1). Their findings revealed that college students widely use these platforms for varied reasons. Information seeking was dominant among the four platforms. However, other motivations such as "self-documentation, social interaction, entertainment, passing time and convenience" varied across platforms. Although a significant percentage of college students spend their time on Instagram, Snapchat seemingly was preferred to meet the above motivations. Instagram was found to lead in the motivation for self-expression, followed by Snapchat, Twitter and then Facebook (5). On medium appeal, Snapchat enjoyed a significant percentage compared to other platforms, followed by Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook respectively (5). These findings support the conclusion that platforms have distinct features that

drive the user's motivations. Though these insights significantly contribute to the ongoing debates on cross-platform uses and motivation, how content embedded on these platforms are produced and reproduced alongside their uses and motivation has not received significant attention.

The dynamics of news access and consumption in relatively reconfigured spaces, invite a scaling down of research from mobile devices and internet enablers, from social media applications to the content posted on these platforms. Sundar (2008) maintains that "affordances of digital technologies transform our media experience by inviting us to engage with content in such a personal way that we not only act but actively construct meaning" (505). This view is supported by Miller et al., (2016), who suggests that social media is the content posted on those platforms, without users and content platforms will not have much relevance. A similar study conducted by Mäntymäki and Islam (2016), established positive and negative influences of using social networking sites (SNS). They used the term positive influences to describe positive gratifications, which include 'social enhancement' and 'interpersonal connectivity'. Negative influences, which inadvertently refer to negative gratification, include exhibitionism and voyeurism. In their views, positive and negative gratifications were predicated on users' motivations, and profoundly determined the number of friends one had on SNS (Mäntymäki & Islam, 2016).

There have been attempts to explore social media privacy through the lenses of U & G. Privacy is a broad concept that has attracted debates in recent times, occasioned by the altered dynamics of information access and sharing. Privacy has been described as a "social construct that reflects the values and the norms of individuals within cultures" (Marwick & Boyd, 2014:1053). This shift focuses attention on the context within which people practice their communication with others. The conventional understanding of privacy centered on individual rights, for instance, it largely revolved on what could be shared, where, with whom and for whom. However, recent developments have presented new and challenged old realities, with social media affordances challenging and inviting a closer examination of online privacy. Owing to its enormous potential, social media content can be circulated to a vast online audience, through multiple network spaces, which have given rise to "imagined communities as a result of the intersection of people, technology and practice" (Marwick & Boyd, 2014:1052). This in its complexity or simplicity shapes privacy in varied ways. It is even more complex, particularly where the life of young people are increasingly being monitored by 'those' who believe young people are not yet mature enough to make some decisions online. Quinn (2016) examined U and G in relation to privacy regulation in social media use, where she established that privacy patterns follow somewhat a hierarchical level:

> Basic security is employed at the core level of internet access; systemic controls operate at the application level, within social media platforms themselves; social Curation relate to the social interaction that occurs within communication processes and activities, and stealth measures relate to more sophisticated internet protocols and technologies (81)

These findings indicate the complex nature of privacy. First, Quinn (2016) associates privacy with the media in this context mobile device, for instance, protecting and limiting access to one's phones either through central locking through passwords or lock codes, making use of phone covers for aesthetic purposes as well as a veil. Secondly, Systemic controls afford users opportunities to restrict third parties from accessing applications installed on mobile devices. Social curation as alluded to above widely refer to individual user experience with the information consumed or posted online, for instance, what kind of information is posted on which platform and who are the target consumers. Lastly, stealth measures are associated with internet protocols, mainly a function of internet service providers. Although this study was conducted in a different context, these insights are re-interpreted in this study to understand how young people navigate and negotiate privacy online and how this intersects with their news gratifications needs. Context profoundly shapes the understanding of privacy and sociality (Quinn, 2016b). This study thus explores not just, how young people appropriate news, but how their experiences have generated or resisted privacy mechanisms online. What is more, although scholars in the Global North have bothered themselves with privacy in online spaces, such studies are scant in Kenya and many African countries. Through U and G and scalable sociality, this study explores how social media has challenged established boundaries, and how their daily use 'intersect with effects'. Media scholars have found a relationship between the 'U and G that are sought from various media and the activity that takes place before, during, and after the use of such media' (Levy, 1987).

3.4 Scalable sociality

U and G has widely been applied in understanding the media and the consequence of its use among the audience. However, it has not been able to identify a "particular social outcome that would be the result of motives, socio-psychological predispositions and uses working together" (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2010:214). It is against this backdrop that scalable sociality as a complementary tool becomes useful in addressing the shortcomings of the U and G approach.

Scalable sociality is an anthropological concept developed by Daniel Miller and his colleagues at the University College London (UCL). In their work *How the World Changed Social Media*, Miller et al., (2016) demonstrate how social media has been appropriated differently over nine selected countries across the world. Although no African country was represented, the concept

still provides a useful framework with which studies on appropriation can invoke for a more nuanced understanding. U and G answer the question why, for instance, why young people choose types of media to access news as well as what kind of news to access and from what channels. On the other hand, scalable sociality shades more light, not just on the why but also dwells on how. Scalable sociality complements U and G by paying attention to audience interaction, which has been one fundamental limitation of the theory(Swanson, 1987, 1992).

The concept of Scalable sociality is arguably one among many other theoretical responses to media research in a relatively new landscape. It devotes significant attention to the full range of platforms that can be installed on mobile and other devices. Although traditional media presented a different kind of sociality, Miller et al., (2016) argue that through scalable sociality, such media broadly fell into two scales: from the most private to the most public and the smallest group to the largest group. Public broadcast media comprised of Television, radio, and newspapers. Such media were synonymous with broadcasting, whereby the broadcaster had no control over the audience. Apart from the public media, there were also private modes of communication, which facilitated 'dyadic' conversation between two or more people such as through a telephone, face-to-face group communication among other forms. The advent of the internet was not a replacement of these two broad scales (Private and Public), but rather a "scaling down of public broadcasting to become individual posting groups" (Miller et al., 2016:27). This argument reinforces the view that nothing is inherently new in new media; the internet is an advanced version of the network infrastructure that existed in the past. **Figure 1 below** demonstrates the two broad scales particularly on the scaling down of public media for instance from the largest to the smallest group, as well as the gradations from the most private to the most public.

Figure 1: The Concept of Scalable Sociality: The Two Broad Scales



NOTE: Figure 1 above was adapted from*: Why we post: How the World Changed Social Media* by Miller et al. (2016:3)

Armed with a smartphone, an individual can live stream an event that might be of public interest. Sheller (2017) contends that with the rapid spread of mobile devices, a new form of mobile interface and personalized networks have emerged which enables news access from "miniature mobiles' (personalized devices that are always on hand), but can also be tagged, curated, aggregated and easily redistributed" (13). While there are varied uses of mobile devices, this thesis singles out news as a critical area of study that has been shaped by emerging trends, particularly among young people. These practices blur the distinction between events and news of the event. Put differently, what is in the news and what is on the news.

Additionally, users have found new ways and means of telling their own stories, challenging the dominant narrative of linear news production. Journalists and young people find themselves in the same events actively witnessing, recording and sharing the occurrence concurrently. This has prompted a more holistic view of the user as "amateur journalists'(content producers) and aggregators (Content distributors)" (Sheller, 2015). Kenya is replete with such noble uses of technology that have ended up being adopted in various parts of the world. For example, *Ushahidi* (evidence) platform invented as an online platform for documenting the atrocities during the post-poll chaos witnessed in Kenya during the December 2007 general elections (Kibere, 2016).

Social networking sites (SNS) afford a wide range of social behaviours that significantly contrast with similar audience behaviours during the 'traditional media era'. These emerging platforms of sociality online have invited a re-evaluation of the traditional methods and theories of studying media (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2010). These platforms mainly made of social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Myspace, among other platforms, have profoundly shaped communication patterns and practices in various parts of the world. They have challenged the mundane understanding of "sociability, audience activity, passivity and involvement" (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2010:212). However, Miller et al., (2016) caution that social media platforms "and their properties are less important as the cause of their contents (i.e. the reason why people post particular kinds of content on that platform) than we assume" (12). News forms a significant part of the information posted online, particularly concerning current affairs and surveillance. In other contexts, research findings reveal that an overwhelming majority of young people prefer online news sources, particularly social media platforms as compared to traditional media (See Reuters News Report, 2016;17;18).

Although the aim of this study is not to explicate the distinct features of various platforms, scalable sociality is useful in exploring the potentials of social media platforms, and how university students in Kenya, in their daily news production and consumptions practices, harness these possibilities. There has been a tendency to generalize these potentials to different contexts, without necessarily paying attention to the extent to which users create, recreate or co-create these potentials to suit their own needs. Miller et al. (2016) observed that social media platforms, apart from being defined by the content they carry, this genre of content varies from one region to the other. Kenya as earlier mentioned has managed to some degree to identify these potentials, though there still exists an empirical gap on how young people resist or recreate their platforms from the original ones in order to tell their stories in a manner consistent with their needs.

Social media platforms have exacerbated the previous socialites, "by enhancing the potential for communication that we did not previously possess" (Miller et al., 2016: 10). These platforms have presented unlimited opportunities for news content to be transformed and reworked on by different actors. Miller et al. (2016) observe that social media affordances have significantly shaped the form and content of information posted, with more information being relayed in audio-visual formats as compared to the traditional texts only. These attributes of social media emphasize the overall importance of the form and content of news production and consumption. Thinking through this argument, this study explores the most dominant news format adopted by university students and how this fits within their broader news needs. How does the news form

and content mutate online through the active process of curation and agglomeration? Social media platforms are dynamic and possess distinct elements: some of the distinctive features trigger the audience's needs in varied ways. Scalable sociality provides an in-depth view of news as content thus shedding light on the processes that news undergoes within these platforms.

The Spatio-temporal affordances of the mobile social media such as live streaming have dramatically altered the news flow patterns as well as the conventional news production patterns. Within these networks, young people "engage the connective affordances of social network sites to combine offline and online communication strategies for interaction" (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2010:212). However, the use of the terms 'virtual' and 'real' world to demarcate online and offline worlds are increasingly being challenged, with findings revealing that social media is an extension of the offline world. Miller et al. (2016) argue, "Social media are the new places where most of the people spend their lives" (12). From the definition of news, the common theme that emerged from the array of definitions was the singular concept of 'news as a window through which people view their world'(Elvestad et al., 2017).

Young people form a distinct social group within a broader spectrum of society. They are often believed to be at the point of their lives where they seek to forge new identities. Although social media exacerbates the potentials of communication, they do so under the framework(s) of prior social groups, which often varies from time to time. In Kenya and many other countries in Africa, a wide range of ethnic groups socializes their members to shared cultural values, thus forming part of the often-contested identities. Just the way technologies are continuously and consistently being re-shaped and reconfigured to reflect the current dynamics, the society within which technologies are embedded are profoundly shaped by the social structures and the previous social groupings. This invites a closer examination of the theoretical backgrounds of the diverse views of young people in Kenya. For example, social media platforms such as Facebook and twitter were developed in mostly 'individualist' communities with the primary aim of connecting new friends. These technologies have evolved and spread beyond the immediate boundaries within which they were developed to serve.

Similarly, Sheller (2017) contends that mobile news practices such as "agglomerations, curation, crowd-sourcing, updating, tagging, and sharing have enabled the repackaging and mobile distribution of news to tailored audiences" (13). How these have repackaged news consumption and reproduction in Kenya and many parts of Africa is still mostly unknown. Through scalable

sociality, this study illustrates the emerging patterns of news consumption and production because of the conflation of a wide range of platforms.

> Before these technologies (social media), there were two main ways in which people communicated using media. The first was public broadcast media such as television, radio, and newspapers. With such media, anyone at all, providing that they can gain access to it, can be the audience. The broadcaster has no direct control over who makes up the audience, though they may try to persuade people to join them. Also available for quite some time were media that facilitated private communication between two people as one-to-one conversation, for example, the telephone conversation (Miller et al., 2016:27)

Miller and his colleagues define social media by the content they carry, "it is the content rather than the platform that is significant when it comes to social media matters" (1). This description signals an incredible shift from the mobile devices and social networking sites as central tools of communication to the texts or messages carried by these devices. These contents vary from context to context. Genres of content, particular in this context online news, 'migrate between different platforms' (Miller et al., 2016:1). As captured in the excerpt below, social media content, in this context online news has the potential to manifest and transform young people's relationships in diverse ways. Most significantly, young people are widely believed to be the people using taking these innovations to further their ends. In addition, social media and messaging applications allow young people to forge new friendships sustained by either weak or strong ties through a multiplicity of online tools (Ellison et al., 2010). Because of the prolonged periods of young people's 'marginalization' especially in Kenya, little is known on how social media promote multi-mediated identity coupled with individually customized modes of sociability.

> This research project is not, therefore, a study of platforms: it is the study of what people post and communicate through platforms, of why we post and consequences of those postings. We have found this content to be very different across the nine field sites in which we worked. Content manifest and transforms local relationships and issues (Miller et al., 2016:1)

In addition, the concept of scalable sociality, just like U and G theory, is useful in exploring the contentious and contemporary issues such as trust and privacy. Kenya has recently found itself at the center of the privacy debate. Facebook has been accused of colluding with a private firm-Cambridge Analytica to harvest user's data for political reasons in America, Europe and recently in Kenya (Nyabola, 2018). Within the various platforms, several privacy concerns have been raised. Initially, internet research scholars widely believed that with the prior concept of anonymity, privacy was assured. However, Miller at al., (2016) observe that, with the advent of social media, privacy is becoming increasingly elusive. Through the concept of scalable sociality,

this study seeks to explore the varied ways through which young people balance the right to access information without exposing or compromising their right to privacy. The two scales proposed are useful in transcending not just how news is produced and reproduced online, but through the scales, various elements influencing trust and privacy can be unpacked. This argument supports the overall thesis of investigating online news consumption, production, and reproduction among young people in Kenya.

3.5 'Fake news', trust and privacy

The increased adoption and adaptation of mobile devices have triggered new debates on the quality of news accessed and consumed online, and at the same time raising new concerns on the loss of private data to global conglomerates such as Facebook, Google, Yahoo, among others. Compounded together, the perceived 'openness' of digital platforms has brought about 'moral panics' (Wasserman, 2020); in this case not merely because of the introduction of new media formats but also by the susceptibility for manipulations and behind the scenes global-scale data mining for economic benefits, it is not yet clear how this has enhanced or contained news consumption in Kenya. Increased incidences of false information online threaten the quality of news and arguably may lead to poor decision making by news audience who rely on the news to keep up to date and make their informed decisions particularly in governance matters and other related civic commitments.

The 2016 US presidential elections exposed the profound role of "fake news' in shaping political decisions in a democracy" (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Ever since, scholars particularly in the Global North, have paid significant attention to the 'moral panics' by exploring trust and privacy in online news consumption (Elvestad et al., 2018; Fletcher & Park, 2017b; Heikkilä & Kunelius, 2017; Livingstone, 2005; Newman et al., 2017; Thurman, 2018). These studies are premised in part on the understanding that 'fake news' has been exacerbated by the widespread tools of communication—internet enabled mobile phone applications and its full range of attendant social media and messaging applications. As a result, findings from these studies –including the definition of concepts such as 'fake news', trust and privacy– continue to shape global debates.

'Fake news' has been described variedly. For Bakir and McStay (2018), fake news is news that is "either wholly false or containing deliberately misleading elements incorporated within its content or context" (1). On their part, Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) add that fake news is "intentionally and verifiably false and could mislead readers" (4). Also, scholars have sought to further dissect 'fake news' into three broad elements, namely: misinformation, disinformation

and malinformation. Misinformation is false information not intended to cause harm, while disinformation is false information created to cause harm deliberately. Finally, malinformation is real information and ought to remain private but is deliberately brought to the public spheres to inflict pain (2017 council of Europe report cited in Truth, Trust and Technology Report: 2018:7). These varied descriptions in part show that pinning down what fake news is or is not is a slippery exercise. It calls for a holistic understanding of the different layers and players that contribute directly and indirectly to the production and spread of false information online.

In an attempt to offer a more nuanced understanding of privacy and trust in relation to news consumption, I am cognizant of the call to embrace decolonial contextual, methodological and theoretical approaches in media studies (Arora, 2019; Chiumbu, 2015; Obonyo, 2011; Willems, 2014). However, trust and privacy, though analytically different should be understood within specific contexts. Wasserman (2020) argues that the distinctive social media and messaging applications affordances enact trust. The distinctive sociotechnical affordances facilitate public and private scales of sociality, which instrumentally influences the kind of relationships between contacts, friends and groups online (Miller et al., 2016).

Quandt (2012) argues that trust has coevolved with society overtime. He concedes that trust has been shaped by the ever-increasing sophistication and complexity of media technologies. Debates in media trust co-evolved with the complexities of society (Quandt, 2010). Yet in Kenya and Africa, these networks seem to be the driving forces of complexity. African traditional societies were largely defined by communal values among them trust. For example, before the advent of currencies and colonial borders and boundaries in Kenya, communities used to do barter trade among and between themselves. In the same fashion, trust is increasingly useful in directing attention to news (local, regional, national and international) in an increasingly information overloaded online spaces. As Kohring and Matthes (2007) argue, "trust is needed to reduce the complexity of the vast range of communicative processes…" (Cited in Otto & Kohler eds., 2018:4). Otto and Kohler further concede that trust in media triggers actions such as selection, which in an atmosphere of trust.

The new wave of experimentation across African states on the use of the internet and its attendant possibilities in governance has been uncritically celebrated (see Gagliardone, 2016a; Wasserman, 2017a). Arora (2019) observes, "Privacy studies continues to be ethnocentric for most parts. Drawing empirical evidence on privacy attitudes and behaviours of Western-based, white, and middle-class demographics to theorize privacy" (368). The way trust and privacy are

conceptualized in the Global North vary from how it is conceptualized in the Global South. de Bruijn, Nyamjoh and Brinkman (2009) note that "technologies are interdependent and are evolving in a dialectical process of cultural and social appropriation" (12). Further, they concede that "understanding socio-cultural ideas about public versus private spheres is a challenge" (27).

Thus, using the public and private scales of sociality as an analytical heuristic tool, this chapter is alive to the complex nature of trust and privacy in a socially, culturally and politically differentiated Kenyan society. Put differently, what is acceptable and forbidden in the process of accessing news on social media and private messaging applications, largely depends on the "interpretations and the context in which mobile phones (with social media and private messaging applications) are allowed to intrude and can be used without offence" (27- emphasis added). This, the authors contend, "varies from one cultural context to another. It does so by positioning trust within the broader discourses of surveillance as well as the socio-cultural context within which trust and privacy form part of public debates. Western-centric discourses have often positioned technologies as the window of opportunity for many African states to develop and democratize. Besides, discourses of surveillance and Cybersecurity have dominated literature in the Global North. Peters et al., eds. (2018) observe that surveillance is not new; it has its roots in the historical evolution of policing and the need to monitor others.

Many studies conducted in the African context particularly on new technologies have emphasized the transformative potential of these technologies, without paying attention to how African uses refashion these technologies based on their diverse needs (Gaglairdone, 2016; Wasserman, 2017). This chapter further scale down this argument, by moving beyond the technologies per se to news content, paying attention to the social relationships as well as the socio-cultural, political, and economic realities where these technologies are embedded. de Bruijn, Nyamjoh and Brinkman (2009) argue that 'technologies are not just re-shaping African social realities, but they are equally shaped by societies within which they are embedded". In Kenya, like many African states, a myriad of social, cultural, economic and political factors shapes the social relationships between and among individuals, groups and institutions. Put together, these competing factors shape perceptions of trust and privacy in context. At the same time, they determine the needs of the audience, thus the motivation to turn to various media outlets and news exposure avenues for gratification.

3.6 A review of third wave digital divide studies: the non-normative Global South perspectives

Information Communication Technologies (ICTS) have received significant attention since the end of the cold war in the early 1990s in the Global South. As earlier traced **(see section 2.3)**, the formative years of the internet and later mobile devices in Kenya, which quite connects with broader studies in the Global South, heralded a wave of studies aimed at understanding what access to these technologies meant for Global South states, many of which had just emerged from a protracted liberation struggles. However, these studies were caught in a confusing minefield of terms; Gagliardone (2019) notes that words such as 'news media, new technologies, ICTS, digital media' have been used interchangeably to refer to their potential to expand innovation and communication–horizontally and vertically. Horizontally these technologies have expanded how individuals and groups communicate among and between each other, while vertically, it has connected them to more powerful institutions and political actors. Paradoxically–and most importantly for this study–they (new media) were largely framed on the transformative potential; for instance, how transitional states mainly in the Global South could leverage on the promises of new media for economic and political emancipation.

As a result, the more recent non-normative studies have sought to map the evolution of new media in the Global South. Gagliardone (2019) identifies three broad focuses of earlier studies, and categorizes them into the first, second, and third wave digital divide– 'the gap between those who have access and those who don't have'. The first wave digital divide studies–conducted mainly in the 1990s–focused primarily on access in the Global South. In essence, the argument here was increased access could potentially trigger the much-needed economic and political emancipation. The second wave sought to scale down from the broad-brush focus on access to how individuals interacted with new media in their daily lives. For example, Gagliardone (2019) notes that these studies narrowed down on demographics (age and gender) as well as the socio-economic background; debunking myths such as male users having advantage online over female, and also established that socio-economic background of the users profoundly shapes their technical interactions with new media. The third digital divide, which forms the thrust of this section, devoted attention to 'the relationship between what people do online and whether their actions have consequences in their everyday lives' (4). The third wave resonates well with my focus on how users access, consume and in some instances reproduce news. I now turn to the third wave non-normative studies conducted in the Global South, and how they have shaped the discourses of mobile and internet appropriation.

A litany of studies has been conducted to ascertain how people appropriate mobile devices in Sub-Saharan Africa. In neighboring South Sudan, a study by Brinkman, Both, and De Bruijn (2017) ably demonstrate how mobile technologies are entangled with "mobility, politics, and entrepreneurship in a post-war setting and displacement economy" (334). South Sudan is a relatively new independent country in Africa following the 2011 referendum, which the people of Sudan voted to split the greater Sudan into Sudan and South Sudan. This move was viewed by many as a lasting solution to the extended vicious circles of conflicts that had engulfed Sudan since its independence in 1956. Brinkman, Both, and De Bruijn (2017) note that "a peace agreement was signed in 1972, but some ten years later in 1983, the war started anew, and the war lasted until the comprehensive peace agreement of 2005" (325). Coincidentally, in 1983 when the Sudanese civil war broke out, landline telephony was limited in the whole of Sudan. This context is necessary for making sense of the findings of Brinkman and de Bruijn. Mobile phones in South Sudan, it was found, was mainly used to re-connect people after the devastating effects of the war that led to thousands fleeing to safer parts of Sudan, others to neighboring countries and other countries of the world.

It was also established that mobile phones were used for surveillance and security (Klapper, 1960). These findings exemplify the significant role of the context in shaping the use of mobile phones. Immediately after the referendum, some Sudanese in various parts of the world decided to go back and rebuild their country. It was also an opportunity for neighbors and people from all occupations to help build by seeking to seize business opportunities with Ugandans, Kenyans, and Rwandese flocking the country in droves. South Sudan offered enormous opportunities for growth and investment. However, the fear of a relapse of the peace process positioned mobile phones as central tools for monitoring and spreading warnings of any impending threats. While the immigrants used mobile phones to connect with people in their home countries, native south Sudanese used mobile phones to reconnect, restore and rebuild the broken past.

A similar study on mobility and 'connectedness' spanning South Africa, the Netherlands and the villages in the grass fields of Bamenda in Cameroon (Nyamjoh, 2013a:2), revealed further insights in regards to how mobile phones transcends and shrinks distance, time and space. Mobile devices just like the study by Brinkman et al. (2017) in South Sudan, were found to be useful, particularly in connecting and reconnecting individuals and communities separated by distance, time and space. Nyamjoh (2013a) notes that "mobile communities crisscross the globe virtually or in-person to create linkages with the home country and wider migrant communities mediated by the internet" (2). This finding is significant in two ways. First, it offers the possibilities of the

mediated sociality of the internet-enabled phones. Secondly, it positions the needs of the audience to connect and belong, profoundly fostering and facilitating their identities wherever they are.

Chuma (2014) established that mobile phones were pivotal in the reconfiguration of youth culture. Inherent in this view is the competing interests, which trigger varied motivations through creative appropriation. In Botswana, gendered identities have been studied in relation to the ownership and use of mobile devices. A study by Lesitaokana (2017) sought to unpack the gender differences in the way young male and female students appropriate mobile devices, particularly regarding the distinct observable features of the smartphones. He found out that there were varied motivations behind the choice of mobile phones between males and females. These differences played out in the choice of mobile phones colours and models. While female students went for the bright coloured casing for their mobile devices, a move aimed at demonstrating their fashionable and modern lifestyles, male students, on the other hand, preferred more expensive smartphones to 'gratify their needs for contemporary personal status' (339). Lesitaokana concludes that such appropriations are 'predicated on conventional practices entrenched in the traditional Tswana lifestyle (339). This study is useful in unpacking the gratifications derived from mobile devices as material objects. They further confirm the arguments of scholars who have in the recent past argued that mobile devices are symbolic artefacts that can be appropriated to achieve specific goals.

Tazanu and Frei (2017) conducted a similar study on mobilities, explicitly focusing on Cameroonians living in Switzerland, Germany, and Cameroon. Their findings contrast and bear some similarities with the findings of Nyamjoh (2013a) in several ways. They are similar in the sense that both studies seek to explicate the full range of needs and use(s) that Cameroonians gratify using their mobile phones, within the broader framework of transnational social ties. At the same time, the social ties facilitated by mobile phones take place within different geographic locations and the actors assume relatively new social roles in the relationships. For instance, young people are largely expected to connect and at the same time remit their earnings back home, an expectation that will be explored shortly. Both studies reveal that mobile phones bridge the distance and allow information to flow between diaspora Cameroonians and those in Cameroon. This kind of mediated sociality, Nyamjoh argues, has facilitated and shaped their identities in varied ways. However, Tazanu and Frey captured an emerging kind of sociality, which seemingly challenges the widely held notion of 'connectedness.

While mobile phones have been useful in connecting and restoring social ties, Tazanu and Frey (2017) established that some 'respondents particularly those in Cameroon believed that the mobile phone contradictorily contributes in destabilizing the relationships primarily due to unmet expectations' (83). Emigrating out of Cameroon was widely viewed, especially by young people as a quest for success and a ticket for upward mobility (Nyamjoh, 2011, Frei, 2012). The term *bushfallers* has been coined to describe Cameroonians who keep in touch for the first two months and disappear. For instance, some respondents noted 'after two months the communication may cease…and they (*bushfallers*) disappear' (Tazanu & Frey, 2017:83). Embedded in this view are the mediated silences and the psychological needs of Cameroonians living in the diaspora to disconnect and lead a quiet life afar. It could be a clash of the social system, particularly the community-based culture based in many African countries and the often-individualist culture in many global north nations.

Studies targeting youth in Southern Africa have significantly increased. In a multi-site comparative survey targeting young people in Zimbabwe and South Africa, Mare (2016) found out that young people use Facebook in varied ways. His findings demonstrated that youth in both countries engage in political participation (traditional and alternative). Further, Facebook in both countries was useful in disseminating and accessing political information, more specifically as a platform for mobilizing funds and donations towards political goals as well as an advertising platform with varied activities. Mare (2016) argues, "Youth engagement with social media platforms for political purposes should be understood in their own terms without necessarily imposing boundaries on what counts as political participation" (3). These findings are similar and consistent with the ones of Bosch (2017) who established that young people "engage with alternative forms of political sub-activism that work at the margin of public sphere" (119). Bosch suggests that the alternative spaces afforded by Facebook and other forms of participation are dominated by "the cultural and economic elite-those who have the linguistic and cultural capital to engage in English-dominated conversations and those who have the capital to access the bandwidth" (128).

The burgeoning body of studies continues to reveal exciting insights. A study Dubbed "*Critical Perspectives on New Media and Processes of Social Change in the Global South*" (2013-2017) conducted mainly in Kenya, but also in South Africa, Botswana, Uganda and South Sudan, examines patterns of new media appropriations in various parts of Kenya and Sub Saharan Africa (see Ndela and Tufte et al., 2017). The thematic focus of this study is mainly social change and sense making in Sub Saharan Africa. Ndlela and Mulwo (2017) explore social media, youth and

everyday life in Kenya, mainly how they appropriate social media platforms. They note that social media access catalyzed by internet-enabled mobile devices have reconfigured communication space by expanding the available options (282). Most significantly they found out that social media are useful for expressing identities "through sharing of pictures, video clips and favourite quotes…they also share their feelings and thoughts through their profile updates that signal to their friends their experiences and state of mind" (284).

Although studies are sprouting in various contexts, news remains understudied. The conceptual west (Europe and America) have continuously and consistently bothered themselves with studies aimed at mapping and monitoring news uptake, ultimately linking this to the organic nature of their democracies (see Pew research projects, 2013-2017; Reuters news reports, 2016,17,18,19). There have been attempts to study social media and its potentials of mobilization in Africa's young democracies, with significant attention on the online possibilities afforded by social media. This thesis retraces the missing links between such engagements in evolving democracies like Kenya by linking the activities as newsworthy events capable of generating news (Locally and globally). For the last few centuries, news has formed the basis of vibrant democracies, with stable democracies often characterised by robust news networks as its pillars. Such democracies have for decades build and institutionalised media in their societies, examples include the Cable News Network (CNN) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Weak and fragile democracies often found in developing countries still experience repressive media laws and regimes determined to muzzle the power of the media. Although studies reviewed reveal the increased uptake of social media due to its 'freedom', news as a foundation and pillar of democracy has not received much attention, yet civic and political engagements continue to receive considerable attention.

The preceding section has attempted to explicate the use of mobile phones in different countries across Africa. Although the review may not capture the multitude of studies in this area, it paints the picture on some of the emerging trends as far as mobile phones are concerned. The studies reviewed are recent, indicating the ongoing scholarship in Africa concerning new media and mobile devices. However, from the preceding discussions, news content has not received much attention. The contextual factors seem to determine how mobile phones are used. What is more, these studies though they reveal the varied ways people use mobile devices; hardly capture the specific needs of the audience. Therefore, this thesis attempts to unpack news uptake and appropriation in a more formal university context, paying attention to the various ways through

which young people combine social media platforms in their news access, consumption, and reproduction.

3.7 What we know about new media use in Kenya

Mobile devices have evolved to become central tools of communication. They have become more portable, making them increasingly ubiquitous. In Kenya, like in many other countries in Africa, a dramatic shift in news access, consumption, and reproduction has been witnessed over the last two decades. In other contexts, a significant number of people "have shifted the ways they access news in everyday life, with mobile devices gaining such significance" (Westlund, 2015b). As a result, this has altered and challenged the mundane roles of the traditional media (newspapers, television, and radio). However, the diffusion of mobile phones and its centrality among Kenyans is not a straight forward as it is often assumed (Tufte, 2017). Mobile phones are technical, symbolic, and material artefacts that by themselves are subject to interpretation; they are a 'discourse'. From a U and G perspective, the technological affordances of mobile devices compete for the 'buyers' attention or users. In a different dimension, these affordances arguably gratify the audience's needs in varied ways. Some users may altogether resist these affordances over time, choosing to modify it to suit their agenda.

Drawing the line between mobile devices and social media is one slippery and challenging exercise. However, this section briefly reviews studies on social media across Africa, with specific emphasis on the kind of sociality they facilitate. In Kenya, a strand of studies has emerged on how youth seize online opportunities through a wide range of social media platforms available to them. These studies can broadly be classified into political activism and democratic deepening (Gagliardone, 2016; Mukhongo, 2014; Mukhongo & Macharia, 2016; Otieno & Mukhongo, 2013), economic empowerment and social change (Kibere, 2016; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017; Ndlela & Mulwo, 2017; Tufte, 2017;) and peace and security (Omanga, 2015; Omanga & Chepngetich-Omanga, 2013). Internet spaces have been found to expand the communication space allowing 'voices' which were often marginalized to be heard. The litany of social media studies promises to raise the debates higher by offering new theoretical and methodological insights, particularly in various contexts. However, some scholars have cautioned against overemphasizing the potentials of social media particularly in Africa where internal social, economic, political and cultural dynamics, have been found to play a significant role in the process of adoption and domestication of new technologies (Gagliardone, 2014; Mukhongo, 2014; Nyamnjoh, 2013; Omanga, 2015; Wasserman, 2017)

Broadly, uses and gratification theory foregrounds audience motivation in their choices of media as well, as how they are exposed to such media in the gratification of their daily needs. Tufte (2017) established that young people around Eldoret in Uasin-Gishu County in Kenya branding themselves as 'hustlers' use mobile devices for 'maintaining social relationships, for work purposes, for engaging in political debates, submitting assignments and articles as well for entertainment' (263). Tufte suggests that young people's livelihoods dictate how they adapt to mobile devices. Kenya's leading mobile services provider Safaricom could attribute this view to the launch of mobile money transfer services (M-PESA). This move profoundly transformed mobile devices to mini banking platforms, enabling young people to eke a living. This is one example of how technologies can be appropriated in a context. Embedded in these findings are the potential of mobile devices and the internet to widen or bridge the 'digital gap' or digital divide among users. Kivikuru (2017) links digital poverty to "situations in which people either can't afford an ICT service or lack the skill to use the ICT service, while digital divide refers to the availability for ICT access" (308).

Kibeere (2016) explored the appropriation of mobile phones in Kibera slums in Kenya. An overwhelming majority of the participants, she found, owned mobile phones. She established that young people in the slums used mobile phones in varied ways. Young people in Kibera (pronounced *Kibra*) used mobile phones as tools for self-expression, and they served as mobile offices-for the employed and self-employed. Some of the intervening variables towards access of mobile phones among the participants were level of education as well as the disposable income. However, the availability of relatively affordable phones popularly known as '*kabambes'* ensures that these challenges, particularly on disposable income, are surmounted.

These findings further revealed that young people appropriated mobile devices because of its convergence possibilities (Kibeere, 2016). Most significantly, mobile devices are appropriated within specific contexts by individuals or groups with lose or strong ties, which inadvertently are tightened or further loosened online. Social media platforms have significantly driven the motivation to own mobile devices among young people as a prerequisite for accessing and plugging into the full range of social media platforms. Omanga (2015) observes that the spread of mobile devices and the internet in Kenya have become the locus of control for accessing social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). Though her study makes significant contributions to the debates on technologies, it overemphasises mobile phones as the technical artefacts without necessarily paying attention to the content carried by these technologies.

What is more, these technologies as earlier alluded to are not seamlessly adopted into a context. The process is not often a straightforward case. The full adoption of these devices involves a negotiation between the underlying social, cultural, economic and political variables. This reality was supported by Kibeere's (2016) conclusions that revealed that young people appropriated mobile technologies to avoid social exclusion based on their contextual realities and perceptions by other mobile and social media users (23).

Studies revolving around terrorism, peace and security, (Omanga, 2015; Omanga & Chepngetich-Omanga, 2013) unpacks the varied ways twitter has been appropriated in combating terrorism and community policing. In his, article 'Chieftaincy' In the Social Media Space: Community Policing in a Twitter Convened *Baraza*, Omanga chronicles the story of a former teacher who quit his job to become a chief in the provincial administration in Lanet, which lies at the outskirts of Nakuru town in Kenya[17]. Chief Kariuki's story is one of creative appropriation of Twitter to serve the broader roles and to achieve community goals such as building a peaceful, cohesive and harmonious community.

Through his twitter handle created in 2011, Kariuki refashions twitter, enabling him to connect with over 65,939 followers (as at 5/7/18: 4:11 pm) scattered across Lanet Township and other regions with his message of peace, responding to emergencies, fighting crime and publicizing local events. In another Twitter study, Omanga and Chepngetich-Omanga (2013) explicate the various ways Kenyan Defense forces troops make use of twitter to relay news from the battlefields. In both studies, there are deliberate acts of appropriation of twitter to respond to the contextual needs particularly in matters relating to security. Though not explicit in both studies, it can be deduced that the need to relay 'news' promptly form the basis of both studies. From a U and G perspective, the audience's needs for timely information are ably gratified through a platform that can reach followers spread across vast locations. Although the studies target a broader population, they demonstrate the effectiveness of social media platforms such as twitter in news transmission and reception.

Political activism has also received considerable attention in Kenya and other parts of developing societies (Bosch, 2017; Mare, 2014, 2016; Moyo, 2009; Mukhongo, 2014; Mutsvairo, 2016). Mukongo (2014) observed that Facebook and Twitter afforded Kenyan youth the opportunities to post images laced with political messages, thus shaping political discourse online, both in

[17] Baraza is a historical deliberative space, where the chief is required to convene two Barazas per month (Omanga, 2015:1)

public and private spaces. Social media provides space for mobilization of youth for political activism. The occupy parliament protests in Kenya was modelled around the United States of America occupy white house protests. She further suggests that this kind of sociality opens the space for youth in Kenya to connect with and engage in debates with their compatriots in the diaspora. They do so without fear of government agencies censorship, a significant attribute of 'offline' communications. Her findings reveal that, while a visual representation of images can shape political discourses, it does so in varied and subtle ways, which include amplifying subjectivities and political stereotypes, they equally reproduced and subverted hegemonies. These findings speak to the nature of young people's creativity in weaving social media as platforms of self-expression and negotiating the barriers that have often stifled their voices for such a long time.

3.8 A theoretical framework to study news consumption in the Global South

This study blends insights from the rooted uses and gratifications theory (U and G), the relatively new concept of scalable sociality. It also blends insights from the third-wave non-normative African media scholarship to explain unfamiliar young people's news consumption behaviours. Despite its methodological imperfections, U&G has been brought back from dormancy by the rapid spread of the internet and mobile devices. Social media and private messaging platforms have expanded not just the avenues of news exposure but also the speeds at which news and information travels. Most importantly, these platforms have catalysed immediacy in news production (Karlsson, 2011) and consumption, while at the same time raising trust issues (will come back to this shortly).

None the less, this study acknowledges these imperfections and seeks to address them through scalable sociality. While U and G strengths lie in answering the question of why it does not adequately tackle the how questions which is critical in the study of news content in digital spaces. In this regard, scalable sociality addresses the process elements explicitly; for instance, how news oscillation between and within platforms shapes news consumption experience. Lastly, though these concepts foreground the audience agency with their varied strengths about media choice and content respectively, they do not offer a more nuanced understanding of unfamiliar behaviour in news consumption experiences in the Global South.

In this regard, I made references to the non-normative African media scholarship in an attempt to provide a more nuanced understanding of the emerging behavioural patterns among young people. This is critical, bearing in mind that identity politics have punctuated global debates and

are even more dramatic in the USA, with President Donald Trump. In Kenya, these debates cannot be understood within the western-centric framework, but instead require a more grounded empirical, theoretical, contextual and methodological response. As I will show later, I grouped these studies into three strands: Internet and mobile devices access, and the users and uses of social media in Africa.

3.8.1 Motivation for news media access, gratifications sought and gratifications obtained

U and G is useful in framing questions related to internet and mobile phones access. Although studies on the internet and mobile access have dominated African scholarship, news consumption is predicated on access. Therefore, there is a need to continuously and consistently map emerging and receding forms of access among African users. In this regard, Uand G offers a useful framework of framing question on the motives behind young people's adoption and adaptation of these technologies. There is a limited number of studies exploring motivations across social media and messaging applications. What are the motivations for combining a wide range of platforms in daily news consumption habits? In this regard, U and G helped unpack the diverse needs that make internet and mobile access a necessity. This provides insights on the drive the drivers and enablers of the high internet and mobile phones penetrations.

Secondly, African scholarship has examined how traditional media have responded to media disruptions. For instance, how media institutions have embraced social media in their routine newsroom practices. However, we know very little on the kind of gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. Thus, U and G allow us to map the overlaps and contradictions between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. This is mainly from traditional media (radio, television and newspapers), social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), and messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat, etc.)[18]. Social media and messaging apps have extended and broadened U and G approach to include a broader set of motivations and different forms of identifying behaviour. They have altered the nature of gratifications sought and the gratifications obtained — these gratifications triggered by distinctive media features or platforms affordances. Also, choices are mostly, but not always, limited to the availability of options in the context-for example in this study WeChat was not among the options available in Kenya, but Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat and telegram were quite popular.

[18] Gratifications sought (needs or motives) refers to the audience expectations before experiencing or using a medium. On the other hand, gratifications obtained relates to the experience of using or consuming media content(Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Quinn, 2016a).

Thirdly, U and G was useful in unpacking the motives behind choices to consume specific genres of news. Among the popular news sub-genres such as politics, business, sports, fashion and lifestyle, and weather, respondents were asked to indicate their preferred news genre and their frequency of access. News genres have been explored using U and G. However, the function of news in liberal democratic societies has obscured other forms of and functions of news in resisting or reinforcing the existing social, political, cultural and economic orders. The study of news should be expanded and decentred from democratic discourses for meaningful engagement with the varied ways through which ordinary folks or young people navigate and make choices from the full range of forms and formats, genres of content, multiple media platforms, among other choices in their daily news consumption.

Fourthly, although U and G has attracted criticism for relying so much on quasi-experimental methods (manipulating audiences or viewers to achieve results), the quantitative section of the U and G is incredibly useful in providing grounded statistical insights. Particularly in the African context. Past U and G studies sought to understand these motives from purely quantitative perspectives. They did so by either coming up with a list of gratifications which would then be tested through hypotheses. In consonance with the radical user perspective, I seek to thematically identify gratifications from the data and not the other way around. Many studies have embraced case studies to unpack the daily lived realities, thus increasingly limiting insights from the quantitative phase.

Lastly, age as a predictor of motivations among young people, i.e. the need to pass time is high among young people. Heterogeneity of the audience, i.e. they differ in their needs, and thus gratifications sought from the media varies. Audiences' inclinations could be related to contextual social realities and personality tastes and preferences. Young people are at an 'important period of socialisation'(Vincent & Basil, 1997) and thus the information they consume could play a significant role in shaping how they make sense of themselves, their communities and society at large. More so at a time when their news consumption habits have gravitated to mobile phones, social media and messaging applications. Previous studies established that 'media consumption both increase with the year of study'(Vincent & Basil, 1997:381)

3.8.2 Public and private news exposure: Understanding emerging and receding news consumption patterns among young people

Scalable sociality is a relatively new concept developed by a group of anthropologists in a study dubbed *Why we post: how the world changed social media* (See Miller et al., 2016), this study

proposes a scale of socialities, i.e. Miller et al. (2016) argue that traditional media used to populate two broad spaces: the public and the private. These could also be categorised into large- and small-scale media. Human behaviour "has long been divided into private and public arenas, with different roles adopted in each arena" (Karlsson, 2011:280). Important to note, these two spaces of sociality were clear and distinct, particularly with traditional media. However, the same cannot be said of social media and messaging applications. Scalable sociality focuses on the 'polymediated nature of user agency'(Chambers, 2017). It builds on the theory of polymedia developed by Madianou and Miller (2012). Miller et al. (2016) argue that social media and messaging applications cannot be understood separately, but rather should be studied jointly for a holistic understanding.

In this case, sociability is rooted in the historical development of platforms. Initially, platforms such as Facebook and Instagram were aimed at reinforcing pre-existing social ties between and among friends offline in online spaces (Boyd & Ellison, 2007a). Tech companies have emerged as powerful actors (Santos & Faure, 2018), raising fundamental questions on what 'friendship' as used by platforms means in daily relational engagements of the users (Chambers, 2017). Chambers notes that there is a stark contrast between 18th and 19th century friendship; whereas in the 18th-century friendship was build and nurtured around tenets of freedom devoid of market influences, the 19th-century friendship hinges on individualism and Market structures (Chambers, 2017:27)

To begin with, the public and private scales of socialities proposed are useful in distinguishing between social media and messaging applications. Social media has often been used as an umbrella term to refer to all platforms, oblivious of the kind of sociality enacted by the platform. This has not been helpful in attempts to understand how platforms (public or private) have shaped the emerging forms and receding patterns of news access and consumption. Thus, by using the public and private scales nexus, this study moves a notch higher by studying how each platform, based on its embedded social-technical affordances enacts and sustains the sociality and sociability of news. Put differently; scalable sociality allows us to explore social media and messaging applications as 'symbolic' news by themselves.

Though U and G provides a broad way of understanding the motives behind young people's media and content choices, it does not adequately address how content oscillates between and within platforms. News content migrates between and within social media and messaging platforms at very high speeds, thus necessitating a more robust theoretical approach. U and G was mainly

deployed in studying specific media such as radio, television or newspapers, with minimal comparative studies. However, today's mediascape is saturated with a wide range of media platforms, which are intricately linked. Miller et al. (2016) argue that it is not possible to study these media platforms in isolation. Therefore, Scalable sociality becomes incredibly useful in analysing how news genres oscillate between platforms online in what Miller et al. (2016) describe as intra-platform scalable sociality.

Important to note, genres of content oscillate in-between platforms as well as within a single platform/inter-platform scalable sociality (Miller et al., 2016). Borgerson and Miller (2015) argue that it is the robustness of genres that transform content. Extending this argument, genres are the product of the lived realities in context. It cuts across social, political, cultural and economic realms of sociality. In this regard, scalable sociality is incredibly useful in scaling down the debate from the medium to the content; it shifts our attention to platforms as symbolic content and helps in tracing how such content oscillates between public and private spaces of sociality

Also, the public and private scales of sociality provide a useful framework for analysing how the architecture of platforms shapes the relationship between and among young people. This then becomes useful in exploring how the gradations of these personal relationships forged based on the scales of socialities determine the level of trust, both of the content, the platform and the source or the person sharing the information. "Choices reflect different kinds of social relationships" (Lange, 2008). For instance, how one chooses the kind of friends to share or receive news from partly shows the type of friendships. This study embraces the public and private scales of socialities to learn more about the perceived trustworthiness of traditional media comparatively with social media and messaging apps.

In the same fashion, the levels of trust enacted and sustained through the strong and weak ties of sociality also determine the level of news engagement. In other words, news engagement refers to the kind of deliberations that emanate from the news stories. Discussing news allows users to critique, endorse, support and in some instances, act where necessary. More importantly, engagement on new media means acts of sharing, liking, commenting on, retweeting, and reposting, among other ways of expanding the reach of a news story. The public and private scales of sociality suggested by Miller et al. (2016) allow us to understand how news content is consumed based on the existing social ties (Strong or weak) and how these shapes the kind of news engagement.

3.8.3 The non-normative third wave Global South studies

Although the above concepts foreground the audience agency, they are limited in explaining young people's unfamiliar news consumption behaviour(s). Early studies on the evolution of new media in the Global South embraced normative frameworks borrowed from the Global North. These approach premised on 'unfettered citizens' access to social media to speak back to power and to demand for accountability (Gagliardone, 2019). Contrastingly, the non-normative studies embrace methodological eclecticism and theoretical pluralism to explain, for example in this case, why social media and messaging applications are used the way they are used in news consumption, rather than how they should be used.

Non-normative studies offer empirically grounded responses to unusual news consumption habits and patterns. They are also useful in providing explanations of the emerging forms of identity politics in the Global South. Kenya, like other African states, is socially and culturally differentiated and its community of users have long exhibited distinct ways of appropriating new technologies to suit their immediate individual, group and contextual needs. Helle-Valle (2016) argues that "what media are used, for what ends and with what effects are always affected by what people think and what their perspectives on life are" (28).

There is a widespread agreement that the rapid proliferation of the internet and mobile devices have altered how people communicate and share information. However, Mabweazara (2015) argues that "we must acknowledge the complexity of the social context because 'uses of technology takes place in socially structured contexts" (6). In the Global South, this has spawned a torrent of studies aimed at nuancing these changes in context. In this regard, Identity politics have dominated the global stage. The last four years–since the USA elections of 2016, President Donald Trump has seized the potentialities of twitter to castigate traditional media such as the CNN, often accusing them of spreading fake news. This has also triggered a torrent of studies aimed at understanding the emerging and receding forms of identity politics in the Global South. As earlier alluded to, Africa is a diverse continent and any attempts to make broad-brush generalisations of the lived experiences can be a significant undoing.

The first strand sought to understand how the rapid diffusion of the internet and mobile devices portends significant development fortunes in the Global South. However, such intervention has primarily done so from a techno-determinist uni-linear perspective. They have devoted significant attention to how the rapid spread of these technologies provides for the poor developing countries in the Global South to leapfrog stages of development. These studies have broadly been

categorized as developmental and transformative strands (Gagliardone, 2016). The spread of social media invites us to shift attention to the user's agency and how they define quality news from their perspective. Dugmore and Ligaga (2014) argue that quality journalism needs to factor four elements, namely: voice, veracity, reach and sustainability (248). Although I seek to delink news as an object of journalism, it raises the fundamental question of the multiplicity of actors in the media landscape. It invites us to explore forms of citizen Journalism in the Global South.

The internet and mobile devices have presented alternative avenues for news access and dissemination, allowing people to freeze moments in time, upload, post, and share the same with networked others. In part, this could be viewed as journalism, 'but much of it is just random content'(Dugmore & Ligaga, 2014:250). Citing the 2007-2008 post-election violence in Kenya and the subsequent banning of live coverage by the minister in charge of internal security the late John Michuki exacerbated the need for news by the millions of Kenyans. This, Dugmore and Ligaga (2014) argue, led to the emergence of a new form of citizen journalism with blogs playing a pivotal role in how Kenyans accessed and interacted with news.

Other strands of studies in Sub-Saharan Africa have sought to map how traditional media have embraced new media technologies in their daily operations (Mabweazara et al., 2014; Mawindi Mabweazara, 2015), anchoring them as convivial public spheres. Embedded in this view is the fear that emerging social media platforms could shape how journalists gather, process and disseminate information, while at the same time their broad adoption by the audience could also spell doom for these institutions in the long run. Chari (2014) notes that through social media, diasporic Zimbabweans renegotiate their citizenship by reading online newspapers that allow them to have a bird's eye view of national discourses. In the same vein, Mavhungu and Mabweazara (2014) observe that new platforms have made it relatively easy to publish and access free content online triggering unprecedented disruption of the traditional media news production and consumption (34).

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced the roots of U and G theory, highlighting the various debates and scholars that contributed to the modern-day U and G. At the same time, the various arguments and criticisms that have formed the basis of these debates have been elaborated. The relevance of U and G in the new media era has also been discussed, highlighting relevant social media studies that have embraced U and G as a theoretical lens. The theoretical insights offered by these studies are useful in several ways. First, they paint the picture of the varied ways mobile devices and

social media have been deployed in various parts of the world. Secondly, their insights are useful in framing news media debates within specific contexts within which they were conducted. Scalable sociality has also been discussed as a complementary concept. Scalable sociality precisely positions content as a fundamental pillar and foundation of social media. Content migration from one platform to another is explored against the varied ways through which young people combine these platforms to meet their competing needs. Consequently, the interface between social media and traditional media is explored with considerable attention devoted to the contemporary issues of privacy and trust in the online platform. This chapter finally ties the broad concepts of Uses and Gratifications and Scalable Sociality, to the mobile devices (media), social media platforms (news content) and audience agency. These three broad areas are elaborated, with relevant studies reviewed. Both lenses focus on the audience with U and G emphasizing the audience's needs as well as the motivations driving such needs. One notable limitation of U and G has been its failure to link needs and motivations with their origins. Through scalable sociality, this limitation is tackled by approaching online news from the user's perspective with specific emphasis on the kind of news accessed and the preferred news form and formats explored. Scalable sociality provides a scale as earlier discussed that is useful in understanding the levels of privacy in social media platforms as well as the various elements that influence news trust online.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The previous chapter discussed the theories that underpinned this study. This chapter elaborates explicitly and offers a justification on the choice, strengths and weaknesses of mixed methods research (MMR) approach. It does so by highlighting data generation tools and sampling strategies deployed to examine why and how young people access and consume online news. This study embraced a survey to map the terrain and contours of news uptake among university students in Kenya. The survey was useful in streamlining the relevant themes for further investigations. Complementarily, this study adopted two qualitative methods: Focus group discussions (FGDs) and ethnographic methods (Online/offline). These methods were useful in examining and probing the themes that emerged from the survey results. FGDs and observations were particularly helpful in nuancing the survey findings and providing a richer contextual understanding of the themes.

I begin this chapter by highlighting reflexive moments. I also provide insights on the methodological considerations stemming from theoretical tools deployed in the study. After that, I described the three phases through which data was collected and analyzed. Finally, this chapter concludes with a review of the validity and reliability of the strategies used to generate data and the ethical issues that were considered during research.

4.1 Reflexive moments

4.1.2: Research challenges and failures

Data collection in research is not always a straight-line process with data readily awaiting collection, as the 'word' suggests. Although the mixed-methods approach was embraced in this study, I drew insights from the anthropology of social media (Miller et al., 2016). The thrust of anthropology is 'commitment to holistic contextualization' (28). Anthropologists start from the premise of unknown to known. For instance, ''they simply do not know what factor in people's lives will be influenced by this object'' (Miller et al., 2016:28). Miller et al. (2016) contend that failures in a research study 'represent the best body of evidence' for by claiming that 'projects failed, we simply acknowledge that we were unable to realize certain intentions' (25). First, I allowed data (Quan and Qual) to drive the process of identifying specific motives and gratifications (sought and obtained) from traditional media, social media and messaging applications. Secondly, through ethnographic methods, I was able to record peculiar day-to-day mobile phones use and news consumption habits among young people within university spaces.

Resisting any temptations to give the audience what news to talk about, but instead through survey findings, the qualitative phase aimed at digging deep the ‘voices’ and contextual experiences and insights of the university.

Briefly, I highlight the failures encountered in the course of doing this study. Miller et al. (2016) argue that 'failure is a guarantor of the integrity of the project'. In other words, the 'discrepancy between what we plan to learn and what we subsequently discover is a major part of the original findings' (27). Having said this, I encountered minor and significant obstacles during the actual fieldwork. In this case, minor obstacles were not complex; they were manageable and did not necessitate a change of research course or abandoning research objectives.

On the other hand, major obstacles were vast and complex and could only be addressed by coming up with alternative approaches. One major obstacle was the closure of UoN almost at a time when I was ready to collect data. The closure was related to UoN involvement in political protests towards the run-up to the repeat election, which was scheduled to take place on 26 October 2019 (will be unpacked further in the next few sections). Almost at the same time, a minor obstacle came in the form of University teaching staff industrial action. In November 2017, lecturers in public Universities in Kenya went on strike, meaning part of the student community went home as they waited for the impasse to be resolved. As a result, I had to amend the sampling plan (See section 4.3). I now briefly turn to the methodological considerations where I will pay attention to the significance of embracing a mixed-methods approach in studying news consumption experiences.

4.2 Methodological considerations

Among the criticism of U and G was the over-reliance on quasi-experimental research methods in which ‘communication conditions were manipulated’ for insights on the direct effects of media messages on the audience (Katz et al., 1973b; Klapper, 1960). Media scholars questioned and challenged the capacity of purely scientific methods to study media consumption patterns among the audience. Katz et al. (1973b) observed that early U and G studies exhibited some similarities: First, a quantitative approach was mainly relied upon to generate data from respondents. Secondly, few studies that employed the qualitative approach conveniently dwelled on group gratifications, completely ignoring the frequency distribution to the broader population.

On the other hand, scalable sociality is a relatively new concept under the anthropology of social media. It foregrounds the adoption of a mixed approach, with ethnography making up a

substantial portion. Despite their strong anthropological orientation, Miller and his colleagues resorted to a survey to map the needs of social media users across nine markets and compared the results with ethnographic findings. The two conceptual tools, as earlier discussed, offer a productive theoretical and methodological approach in understanding news consumption in relatively new media terrains. With this in mind, this study deploys a mixed-methods approach to exploring online news consumption among university students in Kenya.

Mixed methods researchers have suggested that 'mixing decisions entail deciding on how and what stages the mixing will occur' (Creswell, 2015; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). From the onset, by combining uses and gratification theory and the relatively new concept of scalable sociality, this study mixes a rooted tradition, which has been proven and tested over four decades with the freshness of new(*er*) concept which offers new(*er*) perspective(s) of approaching new(*er*) socialities provided by internet-enabled mobile devices. By blending the two conceptual tools, this study strikes a balance between the past, without losing sight of the current realities evidenced by the dynamic nature of innovations and its subsequent adoption in Kenya. As earlier mentioned, many studies on news consumption have deployed majorly single strand studies leaning more on the quantitative approach (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Antunovic et al., 2016b; Diddi & LaRose, 2006b; Lindell & Sartoretto, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2016; Newman, 2016). Although there are studies which have explored news consumption from a qualitative perspective (Kobbernagel & Schröder, 2016), the number of such studies are comparatively low.

Mixed methods have attracted a litany of definitions from different scholars (See Creswell, 2015; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). Despite these varying definitions, one significant attribute that cuts across is the idea of combining quantitative and qualitative methods to answer research questions. As Creswell (2015) suggests, by following a mixed-method approach, "the investigator gathers both quantitative (close-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data that integrates the two, then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to (better) understand research problems" (Creswell, 2015:2). Adopting a mixed-methods approach in this study, therefore, is an attempt to draw on the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Morgan, 2016). Sharp et al., (2012) suggests that the choice to combine quantitative and qualitative methods is 'a reflection of an epistemological, or philosophical, stance to research as much as it is a choice in actual data collection methodologies' (36)

Ethnographic methods formed an integral part of this study. The ubiquity of mobile devices and their pervasiveness have invited debates on the terminologies that could be used to describe the reconfigured research landscape. These terms include virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000), Network ethnography (Howard, 2002), netnography (Kozinets, 2002), cyber ethnography (Domínguez Figaredo et al., 2007) and webnography (Puri, 2007). Miller et al. (2016) note that time is a crucial factor for a study to be considered ethnographic. In this regard, many ethnographic studies expected to last for more than a year. Cherny (1999) observes that online ethnography has evolved, 'it now incorporates social and discourse complexities of the socio-technical system of computer-mediated communication' (218). Majorly students that were selected for online observations were those who were active on the full range of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Based on Miller et al.'s (2016) two broad scales, private messaging applications were not included for observation. Only platforms that were considered public were observed.

Quantitative and Qualitative approach considerably differ in their world views (ontology) and ways of knowing the world/studying the world (epistemology) (Lincoln et al., 2011). Quantitative approaches foreground a reality 'out there' that can be measured. It tends to be highly positivist. On the other hand, qualitative approaches make the case of multiple realities, which are often relative to so many factors–including but not limited to the context. It is highly interpretive or constructivist. Although mixed methods research scholars seemingly agree on the need for one paradigm, it remains a tricky and messy subject.

This study embraces pragmatism as a relatively new mixed methods research paradigm (Morgan, 2007). Morgan conceptualises 'paradigms' as 'systems of beliefs and practices that influence how researchers select both the questions they study and methods' (49). Pragmatism is not a fixed paradigm espousing the duality of 'either-or'; it offers researchers the 'freedom' to choose what they consider useful in achieving the overall objectives of the research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). It also allows for methodological eclecticism (Creswell, 2015).

Similarly, no research problem resides in a paradigm. The overall research objective of this study was to explore the varied ways through which young people in Kenya combine a wide range of traditional and social media platforms in their day to day news consumption practices. Through the mixed approach, the three research questions were adequately tackled through a combination of an exploratory survey in the first phase (Quant) and focus group discussions and observations (Both Qual) in the second and ethnographic methods in the third phase respectively.

4.3 Sampling and sampling strategies

Lieber (2009) contends that 'addressing sampling issues early in the research design helps ensure that mixed methodology employed is maximized to the fullest extent possible' (23). In this regard, I begin by justifying why this study was conducted in Kenya and more specifically in spaces occupied by the 'top crème' of the society. Kenya was selected because of its recent rankings which place it among the top countries courtesy of its high internet and mobile penetration rates (Miller et al., 2016; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). Miller et al. (2016) observe that, in terms of innovation and adoption, 'Kenya and South Africa are already leading the way' (208). Kenya is also my country of domicile and therefore, being a native offered advantage in terms of navigating entry to the chosen research sites. My identity too, as a Kenyan made the process of building rapport and building trust relatively easy.

Two public universities, namely: University of Eldoret (UoE) and University of Nairobi (UoN), were purposively sampled for this study. However, as I will discuss shortly, UoN was closed indefinitely in October 2019. This unprecedented move saw Technical University (TuK), a University within Nairobi central business district CBD replacing it. During initial conceptualisations of this study, the idea was to conduct it in rural areas and informal settlements of Kenya. However, these sites are saturated and over-represented in Kenya. Many studies on the appropriation of new media embracing a transformative or developmental paradigm of new technologies (Ekdale, 2014; Faith N Kibere, 2016; Faith Njeri Kibere, 2016; E. Swart, 2013), have continuously focused on these fertile research sites (Omanga, 2019). These transformative discourses have obscured rather than revealed the inherent contradictions and dynamics surrounding the daily use of these technologies and tools. Focusing on universities allows us to centre universities, as it is in other parts of the world, as a useful innovation hub.

UoE lies approximately 313 Kilometers (KMs), North West of Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, while TuK lies at the heart of Nairobi central business district (CBD). Apart from their public charter, which allows them to admit students from diverse regions of the country, these institutions were also selected because of their strategic locations. UoE offers a vibrant blend of urban and peri-urban location that is useful in determining whether the territorial location of a university as space, shapes or constrains the adoption of mobile devices (media) as symbolic and material artefacts, as well as news consumption patterns. Just like UoN (which was later dropped), TuK is located in the busy Nairobi city. It offers a unique space that becomes useful in unpacking the kind of needs and demands, so to speak, particularly, when university students are exposed to

the city hustle and bustle in their day-to-day lives; it presents an urban space, which offers a unique dimension. It is often believed that when technologies and innovation land in any country, the capital city often becomes the epicentre of such diffusion of technologies to various regions in the country. For examples, when Safaricom launched its 4G network, it started covering Nairobi County first, before spreading to other cities like Mombasa, Nairobi, Kisumu and Eldoret[19].

Important to remember, the objective of the study was to establish from a user's perspective news uptake and consumption among university students. In this regard, a stratified sampling technique (Teddlie & Yu, 2007), was used to identify 800 students from various disciplines, to participate in the survey. This means 400 students were sampled from each university. This is in congruence with Castro et al., (2010), who notes, the determination of an appropriate sample for a mixed study calls for the balancing of two broad perspectives. First, balancing small manageable samples for in-depth qualitative analyses (n=20-40). Secondly, a researcher ought to consider large samples for the quantitative phase (n=40-200), enabling multivariate statistical analyses (p. 343).

The questionnaires were piloted with a sample of 100 students from UoE town campus. Piloting allows the researcher to make amendments and restructure the questions before the actual fieldwork. In this regard, questions, which were found to be vague and ambiguous, were adjusted and modified appropriately. For example, instructions were made clear in each question on what the respondents were expected to fill in the spaces provided. The questions were primarily closed-ended, designed to elicit as much information from the respondents, without losing their attention. Although piloting has been an essential tool of pretesting questionnaires as research instruments, how this should be done, and the 'experiences of failures' have not been shared by researchers.

With all the preparations ready, university lecturers went on strike in October 2017. This caused some delays because I was ready to administer the first batch of questionnaires. The ripple effect of the strike was the challenge of finding students as earlier planned; the sampling procedures were affected. There were no lectures; students mainly stayed in their hostels with others choosing to go home as they eagerly waited for the government to resolve the strike. Despite the green light received from the university registrar to collect data, the university was an empty shell. Very few

[19] Safaricom, a dominant market player in Kenya, launched its 4G network starting from five key towns :Nakuru, Eldoret, Meru, Kisii,a and Kisumu (*https://www.nation.co.ke/business/Safaricom-to-roll-out-4G-network-in-five-towns/996-3433106-jt7tvj/index.html*)

students could be seen moving around, with a majority coming to enjoy the free Wi-Fi behind the University Library while others were enjoying the quietness and calm to revise and study. There was also a group of fourth year students who were trying to beat deadlines for submission of their projects. This group helped me reach out to different student leaders across the various years of study.

We scheduled meetings with different cohorts on campus. This meeting was quite informal. We agreed to meet all cohorts (1st-4th Year students) the same day. Based on my observation, I thought the numbers would be way below the target of 400. After all, many lecture halls were vacant. We also had to think of a better way of sustaining the attention of those who turned up, knowing very well that lunch hours are not that productive for eliciting any useful data. We agreed to be on campus from the following day in the morning to begin administering the questionnaires. The next day, several copies of the questionnaires were ready; the process of data collection began in earnest. We repeated the process for two weeks before we hit our target of 400 questionnaires. Throughout the process, we informed respondents that we would still need their support in the FGD and online observation phase of the study. We made it clear that we would strictly sample those who had participated in the first phase.

Important to note, and this applied across both Universities, in close consultation with the class representatives, we were able to randomly pick seven participants from each year of study who had participated in the first phase. This means I had eight focus groups in total (1st year to 4th year of study). From the focus group participants, four participants from each institution were selected for online observation. Furthermore, as earlier mentioned, by immersing myself in the daily lives of students, I was able to observe their peculiar patterns of mobile phones use within the university precincts (Will unpack this in the next section).

As Miller and Slater (2000) argue, "we need to treat internet media as continuous with and embedded in other social spaces, which they happen with mundane social structures and relations" (p.5). Context plays a significant role in shaping how news is accessed and consumed. For example, the mobile service provider with the most robust network signal, fast and relatively affordable internet rates would possibly shape news access. At a more personal level, the economic realities shape, for instance, the ability of a student to purchase a mobile device, and regularly purchase internet bundles which consequently influences time spent online. Thus, through unstructured observations in context, it was able to record how young people spend their time when they are not in class. Both online and offline observation was useful in triangulating

data generated through the survey and focus group discussions. Paying attention to what participants were doing in their daily lives, with a focus on how they were using their mobile phones, this study unpacked some notable similarities of data as well as contradictions.

I concluded both Quantitative and Qualitative data collection at UoE in January 2018. I proceeded to TuK for data collection. Just like UoE, my relationship with one of the staff proved to be incredibly useful Unlike UoE, the lecturers strike had been temporarily called off, and I was able to distribute all my questionnaires with the help of class representatives within two days. The process of data entry and analysis began almost immediately. Within two weeks, I was back again for the focus group discussions. However, due to the lecturer's strike that started in early February 2018, one focus group discussion did not materialise at TuK. This, however, did not affect the overall findings as the three FGDs were rigorous enough to explain the survey findings in-depth. Each focus group consisted of seven members each. **Figure 2** below gives a summary of how the sampling process was handled during the study.

Figure 2: Table showing sample procedures

Activity/Label	QUAN (1ST Phase data generation)		QUAL (2ND Phase data generation)		Ethnographic methods (3rd phase: Online/offline observation)	
University	UoE	TUK	UoE	TUK	UoE	TUK
Purposive sampling	400	400	-----	-----	4 participants	4 participants
Systematic Random sampling (FGDS)			4FGDS * 7particpants each=28	3 FGDS * 7particpants each=21	General cues from all students	General cues from all students

4.4 Mapping news terrain in Kenya through a survey

The questionnaires were divided into four sections: the demographics, mobile phone and traditional media access, use of social media for news consumption, kind of news accessed and

its appropriation and finally trust and privacy in news consumption. These sections aimed at eliciting varied responses in tandem with the research questions as earlier set out in the introduction chapter. As previously mentioned, the questionnaire was pre-tested through a pilot phase by administering to 100 students at UoE town campus. Through the piloting phase, some questions that were found to be problematic and ambiguous were revised appropriately.

4.4.1 Section 1.0: Respondents demographics

The first section (**See Photo 5 below**) on demographics sought to offer insights on respondent's Age, Sex and Year of Study. This information offers a deeper understanding of the respondents or participants. U & G, as well as scalable sociality, emphasize the heterogeneity of the audience as subjects, not objects of study. Demographics can offer an in-depth descriptive overview of correlations between the varied needs of the audience as well as their motivations of media access. The first question on the questionnaire sought to establish the gender of the respondents, with three choices being provided (Male, Female, and other). Researches in other contexts have established that male and female users adopt mobile phones for varied reasons. For instance, while the conventional roles of mobile devices is for communication, the symbolic messages attached to the gadgets themselves varies; male students were found to own expensive mobile phones to assert their class position and appeal to their female counterparts, while Female students were found to use mobile devices for aesthetic beauty like buying flashy covers matching with their daily outfits (see Gustafsson & Nielsen, 2017; Lesitaokana, 2017).

The second question on age directly spoke to the target population, young people. Information elicited by this question was useful in ascertaining whether the study achieved its objective of reaching young people. The questionnaire carried the question: what is your age in completed years? This question allowed respondents to write their age in completed years. Research in other contexts (Brenner, 2013; Newman et al., 2015) shows that young people widely access news via mobile devices, as compared to different segments of the populations. The fourth question probed the year of study. The year of study was somehow useful in providing stratified insights on the nature and patterns of news consumption habits across the university space. Through the demographics section on the questionnaire, the information provided a concrete understanding on some of the varied ways through which news is consumed across the strata.

Photo 5: A snapshot of Section 1.0 of the questionnaire

DIGITAL NEWS IN KENYA

Brief instructions to the respondents (Please tick on the box once you have read)

☐ Please note that by filling and submitting this questionnaire is taken to mean you have consented. Do **NOT** write your name anywhere in the questionnaire.

☐ Please answer all questions (**where necessary**)as per the instructions provided in the brackets after each question.

1.0 Demographic Data

1.1	Sex of respondent	1	Male
		2	Female
		3	Other

1.2	What is your age (in completed years)? [Please note students **below the age of 18** are not eligible to participate]	

1.3	Which year of study are you in? (Tick where appropriate)	1		First
		2		Second
		3		Third
		4		Fourth
		5		Other (specify_____)

4.4.2 Section 2.0: Access to mobile devices and traditional media

The second section aimed at mapping access to mobile devices and other media. As earlier elucidated, there seems to be considerable agreement on the high level of internet and mobile penetration rates in Kenya and other parts of Africa (see, ITU, 2016; 2017, CA, Q4, 2017; Q1 2018). However, these statistics remain broad and are not cast in stone, for innovations keep on popping up destabilizing the often-unstable equilibrium. What is more, while young people have been captured by the full range of statistics as the majority in many African countries including Kenya (See, ITU, 2016;2017, CA, Q4, 2017; Q1 2018; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017), little efforts have been expended to understand their varied motivations for accessing these technologies in the Global South. UNESCO exhorted young people as the drivers of innovation (UNESCO, JAN 2016)[20]. Yet why and how they drive this innovation is mostly unknown. While scholars have argued for studies that transcend impact and access, they are also alive to the arguments by the uses and gratification theorist, who have established that mobile devices or media has inherent distinct features that can trigger various needs among the audience. Through the lenses of scalable sociality, news content mutates from one platform to the other, thus 'where' young people consume news or through which platforms, remains largely understudied (**See photo 6 below**).

[20]https://fr.unesco.org/.../unesco_youthmobile_briefing_jan2016.pdf

Photo 6: A snapshot of section 2.0 of the questionnaire

2.0 Access to mobile devices and other media

2.1	Do you own a mobile phone?	1	Yes
		2	No (**please skip to 2.3**)

2.2	If Yes in 2.1 above, is it internet enabled?	1	Yes
		2	No

2.3	Apart from mobile phone, which of the following do you have access to on a daily basis?(Tick where appropriate)	√	**Media**
		1	Radio
		2	Television
		3	Newspapers

Mobile devices have been identified as "one part of a repertoire of overall media consumption" (Lindell & Sartoretto, 2017)(Schroeder, 2010:637). Studies conducted in different contexts have established that owing to their wide range of affordances, mobile devices 'allow users control over time (when to consume content) and space (where to consume content)' (Schroeder, 2010: 37). This section specifically considered news as one purpose that has not received significant attention, particularly in Kenya and many other countries in Africa. The first question in this section sought to establish whether respondents owned mobile phones, with a rejoinder question on whether it was internet-enabled or not. This question aimed at establishing the percentage of young people who owned mobile devices and whether they were internet enabled. The third question under this section sought to determine whether young people used their internet-enabled mobile devices in daily news access and consumption patterns. This information provided insights that were used to validate or invalidate the broad assertions that young people are the drivers and users of these innovations. Most significantly, access to internet-enabled mobile devices is a prerequisite in online news access, consumption and reproduction. This question was closed-ended but provided users with the caveat to skip if they were not applicable, for instance, if they did not own mobile devices they were required to skip the next question whether it was internet-enabled or not. Van Damme, Courtois, Verbrugge, and De Marez, (2015) argued that mobile phones might serve different niches and purposes for different users.

While U and G in this section unpacks motivations and gratifications sought, scalable sociality becomes useful in using the two broad scales in understanding how these combinations occur in daily news consumption patterns. Yuan (2011) found out 'that different news users choose different mixes of media platforms depending on which news gratifications they are seeking' (…). The epochal spread of new media has replaced traditional media resulting in what has been dubbed complementarity-displacement debate. By establishing whether young people access conventional media in their daily news consumption, this study responds to the varied ways through which young people combine mobile news media and traditional media in their regular news consumption patterns. Overall, Molyneux (2018) notes that 'as news interest increases, the number of news platforms on which people get news increases' (637). This view significantly ties the burgeoning news platform to increasing news needs among the users.

Media exposure has been central to Uses and Gratification studies for the last four decades. While U and G theorist argued that gratification of audience needs largely depended on media exposure, new media affordances are believed to have widened the points of exposure, thus presenting enormous possibilities of audience needs gratifications. Complementarily, this study sought to tie media exposure with news engagement. News engagement is conceptualized as the 'involvement in news content for either personal or social purposes, which can be indicated by the effort made in utilizing the news content' (Ha et al., 2016:3). Ha et al. further suggests four levels of news engagement, namely: 'News consumption (exposure), diverse news platform use, sharing and exchange of news and lastly new media participation' (3). These suggestions are resonant with the scales proposed by Ahmadi and Wohn (2018) in studying news engagement, namely: 'the amount of time spent getting news updates, the frequency of getting news updates, and frequency of clicking on news links on social media' (4).

Scalable sociality specifically breaks down this kind of exposure by focusing on the kind of sociality facilitated by each platform through the scales earlier elaborated. In order to achieve this objective, questions were formulated to explore: the weekly average hours devoted to news consumption using a mobile phone, the frequency of accessing news via other media (radio, television, Tablets, Laptops, newspapers), the duration they have been on social media was also probed as well as the social media accounts respondents operated (split into SNS and messaging applications). Audience in the everyday uses and gratification studies were assumed to be active and goal-directed, though what 'active' meant was left broad and the 'goals' were later found to be inadequate, vague and problematic. In this vein, respondents were asked to indicate their main source(s) of news from the following: word of mouth, social media, radio, television, newspapers,

mainstream media websites/live streams, SMS alerts, email, news aggregators, local baraza, other). They were also asked to rank social media platforms in their preferred manner; in as far as, news consumption is concerned. They were provided with the following: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Yahoo, Google, and LinkedIn, other (s).

4.4.3 Section 3.0: Kind of News genres consumed and frequency of access

The third section examined the kind of news accessed, the frequency of access to various news genres, level of engagement, preferred format and language (**See photo 7 below**). In this study, news was broadly classified into four categories: Politics, business, sports, weather and fashion and lifestyle. They were further asked on a scale from 'Very often to never' to indicate their level of engagement with the five broad categories of news. This question aimed to map the most dominant news genre among university students. The second question shifts focus from frequency of access of media device as ably elaborated in the previous section, to engagement with the content carried by these technologies. One shortcoming of uses and gratification studies in the recent past has been the tendency to view media gadgets and content dichotomously. It is against this background that this study embraces Miller et al., (2016) suggestion of viewing social media as the contents posted therein by exploring news commonly accessed, the information elicited, particularly the motivation as well as how such news was appropriated in daily lives of university students. This was also explored further in the focus group discussions as well as through ethnographic methods (online/offline).

Photo 7: A snapshot of section 3.0 of the questionnaire

3.1	What kind of news do you **read/Watch online (tick where appropriate)**	Type of news	**Very often**	**Often**	**Rarely**	**Very rarely**	**Never**
		Politics	1	2	3	4	5
		Business	1	2	3	4	5
		Sports	1	2	3	4	5
		weather	1	2	3	4	5
		Fashion/lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5

3.2	What type of news do you **share/comment (tick where appropriate)**	Type of news	**Very often**	**Often**	**Rarely**	**Very rarely**	**Never**
		Politics	1	2	3	4	5
		Business	1	2	3	4	5
		Sports	1	2	3	4	5
		weather	1	2	3	4	5
		Fashion	1	2	3	4	5

The recent upsurge of internet-enabled mobile devices and social media has altered news consumption patterns in the Global North, yet such patterns are still largely unknown in Kenya and other developing countries. Although scholars seemingly agree on the increased communication space courtesy of the huge social media potentials, it is believed that the form and content of news production and consumption have been altered in significant ways. This study sought to map the most preferred news formats (e.g. mostly text, text and video, mostly video, I do not know) as well as the language choice (e.g. English, Kiswahili, Mother tongue, sheng/slang). Although recent studies in other contexts have shown that there is an increasing preference for audiovisual formats (Brenner, 2013; Miller et al., 2016; Newman, 2016), it is still unknown how the spread of social media has altered the formats of news production and consumption among young people.

4.4.4 Section 4.0: Fake news, news media and content trust

The last section of this study sought to establish the most trusted news and news sources (online and offline). Respondents were asked to rate trust and privacy levels of the full range of 'traditional' and social media platforms available to them (**see photo 8 below**). The recent debate on fake news or disinformation has gathered momentum since 2016, USA presidential elections (Elvestad et al., 2017; Fletcher & Park, 2017; Tandoc et al., 2017). Respondents were also asked if they had seen such kind of false/fake news in their news consumption practices. This study was conducted shortly after a contested election, and in this regard, respondents were asked if they were influenced by fake news in their voting decisions in the August 8, 2017 elections. The repeat election held on October 26, 2017 was somewhat controversial, and thus was left out, as it would have yielded inaccurate results bearing in mind a section of Kenyans did not vote.

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Photo 8: A snapshot of section 4.0 of the questionnaire

4.0 Trust and Fake news in online spaces

4.1	Do you trust news received online (e.g news from social media, websites, blogs, etc)?		Yes
			No

4.2	On a scale of 1-5, how much do you trust **NEWS** received from the following sources **(Please tick all that apply to you)**?					
		Not trusted				**Most trusted**
	Radio	1	2	3	4	5
	Television	1	2	3	4	5
	Print media	1	2	3	4	5
	Blogs	1	2	3	4	5
	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5
	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5
	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5
	Telegram	1	2	3	4	5
	WhatsApp	1	2	3	4	5
	Snapchat	1	2	3	4	5
	YouTube	1	2	3	4	5
	Google+	1	2	3	4	5
	Viber	1	2	3	4	5

4.5 Focus Group Discussions: Understanding news consumption and reproduction patterns

This study involved seven focus group discussions, four from UoE and three from TUK. The focus group discussion method was selected in the second phase as it allowed respondents to express their views in their own words and provided further insights on the varied motivations for accessing online news via a wide range of platforms, particularly those enabled by mobile devices. Together with research assistants, we announced after each survey exercise (the survey was administered in a batch of 100) that we would like to recruit students for the FGDs. An overwhelming majority indicated their willingness to participate, but when we informed them that there was no monetary reward, the crowd fizzled away.

The few students who remained faithful to the course of the study were selected. We further explained to the remaining students that we needed at least seven members and at most ten. We further engaged them to know if they were active social media users and news consumers before we could accept their participation. After some quick vetting exercise (this was quite informal), we managed to pick at least seven members in each group that was surveyed for the focus group discussion. Participants were at this point given the FGDs information sheet, explaining the

purpose of the study, and a space to sign if they were willing to abide by the terms set out. During the rapport period, participants were also informed that refreshments and lunch would be provided, a move that saw many students who had earlier declined the offer return with the hopes of being considered. Apparently, through their WhatsApp groups, those selected shared the information with their comrades. As a researcher, we offered to recruit data clerks from this section, through a rigorous interview conducted by the research assistants. Focus group discussions were conducted to generate an in-depth understanding of the emerging themes as revealed by the survey findings. As a way of achieving methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978), survey findings from UoE was analyzed and an FGD interview schedule developed. By the time a survey was being conducted at TuK, both survey findings and data from focus group discussion from UoE were already at hand.

This provided useful insights and helped in making some adjustments, particularly on the FGDs interview schedule. Five broad themes were identified from the survey, mainly borrowed from the four sections of the thematic areas covered by the questionnaires. From the findings, there were data similarities and dissimilarities in the two institutions. The themes included: Understanding of news and motivations for watching news (via social media and traditional media), Motivations for preferred news formats and language, places/spaces for accessing news as well as the kind of news accessed and their frequency, appropriation of wide range of news accessed in their daily lives, motivations for originating/posting/sharing/commenting news online, awareness of fake news/disinformation online and the impacts of this on the August 8 elections in Kenya, elements influencing trust and privacy online and finally the choice of sharing information online. Participants could offer their own experiences on the varied ways they combine the wide array of platforms in their news consumption repertoires, as well as how specific genres of news are appropriated in daily lives. Focus group discussions enabled the generation of in-depth information as participants were given the freedom to contribute to the debate. The discussions were open and informal, and respondents were encouraged to converse rather than respond to questions. The discussions lasted for one hour each and they were all audiotaped.

4.6 Ethnography: Online and offline observations

The new reconfigurations occasioned by new technologies have triggered new debates. These debates have increasingly challenged the dogmatic notions always encapsulated by clear boundaries in research methodologies. Ethnography has often been described as heterogeneous,

with scholars acknowledging its multifaceted nature, particularly on 'striking a balance between online and offline' (Greschke, 2007). However, Miller et al. (2016) caution that the distinction between online and offline, virtual and real, is increasingly becoming blurred because social media have increasingly become the new places where people spend an increasingly large portion of their lives in. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to observe participants in their natural settings (university spaces) as well as in their online lives (with their permission) for instance what they posted/shared online in the full range of accounts they operated. There was, however, one limitation, offline observations were restricted to university spaces.

Two participants from each of the seven focus group discussions were selected to participate in online observation. Kawulich (2005) defines online participant observation as 'the process that enables researchers to probe activities of the participants under study in their natural 'settings' through observing and participating in those activities. Kawulich further notes that, whereas the context has been physical all along, 'the social media natural setting is virtual'. According to Dewalt and Dewalt (2011), participant observation 'is a method in which researcher takes part in the daily activities rituals, interactions and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their routines and their culture' (1). Participants in the observation phase were mainly drawn from respondents who had participated in in the survey and the FGDs. From the onset, when I navigated entry into the two institutions, I started taking field notes on what I could pick from the day-to-day activities of the students. Where possible, photos were taken as evidence, particularly on anything that was considered useful as per the research questions.

In this study, FGD participants were observed offline as they went about their campus activities. Through the rapport developed in the preceding phases of research, it was easy to connect with the participants. It started by lunchtime hangouts, which to many students, was the critical thing in the tough campus life. Through the lunchtime hangouts, we explored different restaurants outside the university. The objective was to create as much time as possible through walking. In addition, I informed them that I was always on campus from 8.00 am (EAT), since I used to stay in a nearby hood. The lunch moment was just the climax of the hangouts. Observations were done during our walk to *Choma* market (name changed) and from *Choma* market back to campus. In some instances, when participants were not boarding public service vehicles (*Matatu*), we walked from campus towards the direction where most students resided, usually along the road. This, for instance, walking from the lecture halls or the field where they had their group discussions to the hotels in a nearby students' centre outside the university confines, proved useful in observing

how they used their mobile phones, not necessarily through looking at the kind of messages that they sent or received, but how the mobile phone as a material and symbolic artefacts was weaved in their lives. It nuanced the patterns of mutating from online-mediated spaces to the unmediated offline spaces. The number of times a mobile phone was removed, and the duration of use, before being returned for the 'regular businesses to continue was significant in providing insights on the significance of the mobile devices.

Some common trends were observed at TuK and UoE. In both institutions, at least in the lecture halls that I observed, students possessed laptops, and most of them were using them for assignments, while at the same time, some were using them for entertainment (listen to music and watch movies). I hardly came across students streaming online news. It was also common to see students chatting using their phones while walking; a trend that I should say is quite common among young people. At TuK, I observed that there were advertisements on lecture halls whiteboards about the availability of cheap bundles (*mwitu*-black market bundles), these notices were often written using permanent markers and were not easily erasable. At UoE for instance, I noticed there was always a crowd seated behind the library, when I enquired, I was informed that they were enjoying the free library WI-FI.

4.7 Data analysis: Making sense of the data

At UoE, as earlier mentioned, data collection was done between November and December 2017. The analysis of the 400 questionnaires was a reasonably straightforward exercise as some research assistants were students pursuing statistics in their fourth year (Will come back to this in the data analysis section). Important to note, this phase of data analysis was useful in the process of capturing data. We began by coding the questionnaires appropriately on the IBM SPSS software, coding involves the process of creating variables and representing the variables on the questionnaire. This was followed by data cleaning exercise whereby all questionnaires were checked, and those, which were inappropriately filled, were removed. The process of capturing data was done within 4 days. The method of generating qualitative data through focus group discussions was seamless as the rapport was already established. Data generated from the qualitative phase was transcribed and field notes, hard and soft copies were merged into a single document.

In the QUANT portion of this study, once all the questionnaires had been completed and returned, questionnaires were numbered starting with UoE. Each question on the questionnaire was coded appropriately on the IBM SPSS software version 20. After that, data was then entered into IBM

SPSS (version 20) spreadsheet. Forty-five questionnaires that had most questions unanswered were rejected at this stage. The SPSS program was then used to generate the frequencies and percentages showing how each respondent answered each question. Responses were summarized in a tabular form for more straightforward analysis and interpretation. Emerging findings from the first phase provided the basis for further questions that were probed in the second phase of the study. In the QUAL portion (FGDs and observations-online/offline), all the audiotaped interviews and field notes were transcribed. I re-familiarized with the data, did the first phase, second phase and third phase coding, and finally produced the report. Transcription is the process whereby recordings of research conversations (interviews) are turned into textual material which can then become the primary data for subsequent analysis (Poland, 2008). The audio recordings were played slowly and all words captured including fillers and repetitions, it is worth noting that words were not filtered at this level. After transcription, the next stage was to re-familiarize with the data. According to Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011), re-familiarizing with the data involves "reading each transcript…for the purpose of forming a general idea of what the data is saying as well as the researcher initial thoughts (interpretations) regarding the data" p.109. The transcriptions were all read at this stage and notes made.

The next step was to code the data. Juan and Ong'ondo (2011) define a code as a label or headline that is given to a chunk of data that is highlighted and grouped as making a specific point relevant to a study. At this stage, data from each group was coded separately. The first step in coding involved highlighting using different colours depending on the subject it was touching on. Thereafter, similar themes were put together to avoid unnecessary overlaps and then re-grouped into emerging topical issues. The final step was to embark on the narration. At this stage, the themes were discussed in relation to the research questions by paraphrasing the statements and retaining some few direct quotations.

4.7.1 Triangulation: Ascertaining and verifying research claims

Triangulation has been described as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Denzin, 1978:291). Denzin suggested four types of triangulation, namely: Data triangulation (i.e. use of multiple sources), investigator triangulation (I.e. different researchers conducting the same study), theory triangulation (i.e. use of different perspectives to interpret results), and methodological triangulation (i.e. use of multiple methods to study a problem). For this study, methodological and data triangulation was particularly useful. The three pronged-approach of data generation (Survey, FGDs and Observations) was utilized sequentially at UoE

and TuK respectively. Among the many advantages of triangulation (Jick, 1979), this study aimed at yielding thick and rich data. It also sought to unravel similarities and dissimilarities between the two research sites. Through the rigour of mixed methods, the study aimed at ensuring that the findings were reliable and comprehensive.

By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study achieved methodological triangulation. Although both approaches have widely been considered conflictual due to their varying ontological, epistemological and methodological backgrounds, combining them ensured that their strengths were maximized in answering the research questions. Data triangulation was achieved through the sequential mixed method research design adopted. Data from UoE was generated sequentially between November and December 2017. Survey data was generated first and subsequently analyzed, and emerging themes used to develop an interview schedule for the FGDs. Insights gathered through observations were mainly related to the observable patterns of mobile phone use as well as the wide range of news themes observed from participants' posts online. Structural designs that enabled or constrained mobile phone use within the universities were also observed. By focusing on UoE before embarking on data collection at TuK from January-March 2018, this study achieved data triangulation by having two sets of data generated from different students using the same research instruments. Data generated from UoE provided useful insights particularly on some of the glaring disparities as well as similarities between urban and peri-urban university experiences. Data was homogenously kept throughout the process until the final stage of analysis where they were merged and connected for a holistic and more productive view of the findings. It is at this point that points of departures, as well as overlaps, were noted for the final interpretation.

4.7.2 Sequential explanatory MMR design: Integrating research findings

A research design is an overarching framework that guides the process of conducting a study. Although a huge body of literature has dwelled on mixed methods research designs, the debate has subsided in the recent past. Scholars have identified a substantial number of research designs, namely: convergent parallel, explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential, transformative and multiphase mixed methods research designs (Creswell, 2003; 2013; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 1998). Creswell further suggests that understanding implicit assumptions of each design is useful in "configuring the procedure that best meets the need of the problem…" (215). In this regard, Morgan (1998) identified two broad assumptions; these are first "designs vary in terms of the sequence of collecting quantitative and qualitative data and secondly, they vary in terms of

priority or weight given'. This study was guided by a sequential explanatory design, whereby a survey was conducted to map the news media terrain in Kenya. Data from the survey was then analyzed and an interview schedule developed for the qualitative phase that was made up of seven focus group discussion and online and offline observations. The purpose of the qualitative phase was to explore and make sense of the quantitative findings.

Sequential explanatory mixed methods research design informs the crucial processes of integration (Creswell, 2013). Integration of mixed methods research findings has been dubbed the most crucial part, yet it has not received much attention. As earlier mentioned, combining quantitative and qualitative strands yields two sets of data-informed by distinct ontological, epistemological and methodological orientations. The task of harmonizing these sets of data, however arduous it is, has not received considerable attention (Uprichard & Dawney, 2016). Uprichard and Dawney suggest that the basic idea of integrating quantitative and qualitative data within a single study is to maximize the 'interaction-or-synthesis-of data' (2). This view is resonant with Fielding (2012), who argued that integration is at the heart of the whole mixed-methods exercise (…), bringing together the information is crucial (p.127). However, integration is not a straightforward exercise. Where there have been attempts to focus on integration, complexities associated with such integration has often received much attention (Bryman, 2006, 2007; Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). Some scholars have made suggestions aimed at sidestepping the philosophical tensions and the vicious historical tensions by suggesting diffraction as an alternative (Uprichard & Dawney, 2016). Uprichard and Dawney argue that the overarching objective of conducting a mixed study is to capture the complexity and contradictions, thus integration as a way of bringing data together in one piece negates this objective. Notwithstanding this argument, mixed methods scholars have suggested three strategies of integration, namely: merging, connecting and embedding data:

> Merging data involves combining the quantitative and qualitative data through the procedure of a side-by-side comparison, data transformation or a joint display. Connecting data means analysis of one data set is used to lead into or build into the second data set informs the data collected of the other data set. Lastly, embedding one data set involves combining quantitative and qualitative data within a larger design (Creswell, 2003:286).

From the above excerpt, this study connects quantitative data to the qualitative data. As earlier, discussed, survey data were collected first, analyzed and the findings used to develop an interview schedule. Data were integrated into this study during the interpretation stage when results from the two phases were brought together. As Gutterman et al. (2017) contend, "Merging the two

strands enables making stronger inferences from findings" (3). For reporting, this study presented a reflexive narrative description (Fetters et al., 201) as well as frequency tables and graphs to 'facilitate' holistic integration (Gutterman, Fetters & Creswell, 2015). As will be demonstrated in the next chapters, findings will be interpreted in a manner consistent with the overall research questions as well as theoretical underpinning, as explained in detail in the previous chapter.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Apart from the overall research process, 'researchers should anticipate the ethical issues that may arise during their studies' (Creswell, 2013). This kind of research involves dealing with human participants (Punch, 2005), thus calling for the utmost sensitivity. Creswell (2013) suggests that ethical consideration can be broadly thought of at the following levels, namely: before conducting research, beginning the study, collecting data, analysing data, reporting/sharing/storing data (137). In compliance with the rules and regulations at the University of the Witwatersrand, a copy of the proposal was presented to the ethics committee (non-human research) for ethics clearance. Since Data was to be collected in Kenya, I presented copies to the National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI) for research permit clearance. The certificate contained instructions to the effect that, further clearance was to be sought from the County Commissioners (Equivalent of District Commissioner in the old provincial administration hierarchy) and at the two counties where the study was to be conducted. After that, I presented all these documents for permission to conduct the study in the two institutions, which I was granted. These documents are well filed and shall be appended in this thesis.

The letters of authorization from the two universities sampled were clear on the need to minimize harm. During the actual research process, respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and how the findings will contribute to the scarce debates on news consumption and reproduction among young people in Kenya. Consequently, they were asked not to indicate their name anywhere in the questionnaire, and were also informed that, by filling the questionnaire, they were giving consent to participate in the exercise. This was aimed at minimizing harm from the outcome of the findings. They were also informed of their liberty to withdraw from the study, just in case one was not comfortable. In the second phase, participants were informed that the focus groups were going to be audio recorded for transcriptions. To avoid harm, any information from the transcription such as names were deleted and in some cases pseudonyms used. Concerning the online observations, participants were informed about their privacy. In as much as the researcher wanted information, this information was sought in a subtle manner so as not to disrupt participants' online spaces. After the first phase survey, all questions in the questionnaire

were coded appropriately in the IBM SPSS software version 20. All questionnaires were numbered and checked through and over forty-five that were inappropriately filled were rejected at this stage. Similarly, data from the qualitative phase was transcribed word for word, before embarking on the first, second and third phase coding. All transcriptions were read through to confirm whether there were names mentioned within the interviews. Such names where they were found were deleted.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained the overall research process, methodology, methods and procedures. A justification on the full range of mixed methods strategies has been unpacked, with emphasis on their relevance in understanding how mobile devices have altered news production and consumption patterns. The first phase of this study was a self-administered survey that consisted of structured open and closed-ended questions. This survey aimed to map the exposure of young people to online news through internet-enabled mobile devices as the enablers. The survey was particularly useful in streamlining the relevant themes for further investigations. Complementarily, I adopted two qualitative methods (Focus group discussions and Observations) to probe further themes that emerged from the survey results. In this sense, I used FGD interviews to provide a richer view of news uptake and combined it with observation for a holistic understanding of the situational and contextual dynamics that enable or constrain news consumption among respondents. Sequential explanatory mixed methods research design has been explained, with data integration strategies elaborated. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations that informed this study.

CHAPTER 5: THE MOTIVES AND THE ENABLERS OF NEWS ACCESS AND CONSUMPTION

From the onset, I outlined how empirical chapters are organized and interconnected. Empirical chapters (Chapter 5,6,7,8 & 9) report the findings from the quantitative, qualitative and ethnographic methods. Going forward, this and subsequent chapters weave these findings with research questions guided by the conceptual lenses earlier explored. This allows us to imagine and visualize the end from the beginning. To begin with, **this chapter** explores internet and mobile access explicitly, paying attention to the key enablers and the motivations behind such access. It sheds light on the varied motivations of owning mobile devices as well as the different ways young people access the internet. This is important because news consumption is increasingly predicated on internet and mobile phone access. As a way of grounding the study contextually, I begin by presenting and interpreting the respondent's demographics, albeit descriptively, as it emerged from the survey data.

In **Chapter 6**, I scale down the discussion to news content. While there is a widespread agreement that new media has reconfigured the mediascape, content including news has received very scarce attention. Thus, by foregrounding the understanding of news from young people's perspective in an increasingly mediated social world, chapter six opens a window for competing, overlapping, and in some instances, contradicting definitions. The emerging definitions and descriptions of news potentially opens up spaces for further discussion on news consumption. In other words, I disentangle media and content access motivations, a view that has been foregrounded by media scholars in U and G tradition (Rayburn, 1996; Swanson, 1987). In chapter six, I will discuss the varied understandings of news among young people as it emerged during the Focus group discussion (FGDs). Although the sequential design adopted in this study pre-supposes that quantitative data is presented first before the qualitative findings, the nature and form of the questionnaire could not adequately capture young people's understanding of news. Thus, foregrounding the findings from the qualitative phase provides insights on the contemporary understanding of news, which serves as a foundation of this study. By so doing, this study responds to Antunovic, Parsons, and Cooke's (2016) call for studies on news consumption among young people to explore their understanding of news in an increasingly networked media environment.

Chapter seven zooms into to the social networking sites (social media and messaging applications) and traditional media as sources of news. This chapter connects well with the complementarity-displacement debates, which have dominated the study of social media and messaging applications in relations to traditional media. It does so by expanding the definition of media and content as suggested by Miller et al. (2016). While I pay attention to the internet and mobile devices in this chapter, internet-enabled mobile phones have become versatile multimedia devices; they enact and facilitate different forms of interaction courtesy of their vast archival memory and architecture. For example, through social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.), and messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat etc.). Put differently, this chapter examines more in-depth both media and content, as two inextricable pair. By so doing, imbues the freshness of the user's perspective, something that has been conspicuously missing.

Still on news content, particularly how it mutates across and within platforms in what Miller et al (2016) describe as intra-platform scalable sociality, **Chapter eight** dissects news genre into five broad sub-genres (politics, business, sports, fashion and lifestyle and weather). Although this broad categorization is obfuscating and limits the full range of possibilities regarding available news sub-genres, it offers a useful starting point in understanding the dominant news subgenres, and the motives of accessing and consuming such genres. Acutely aware of calls to explore how news institutions in Africa are responding to the new technologies (Mabweazara, 2014), the increasingly networked media environment presents relatively new socio-cultural news consumption and reproduction contexts. Thus, devoting attention to news sub-genres provides a more holistic understanding of not just the motives and gratifications sought, but also the contextual needs that drive specific or multiple sub-genre consumption. In addition, this chapter sheds light on the broader questions about what these sub-genres mean in young people news consumption.

In **Chapter 9**, I analyze young people's perceptions of media trust (Social media, messaging applications and traditional media), and how these shapes news content trust. Miller et al. (2016) argue that social media and messaging applications should be understood as content. The point here is, the architecture of the platform(s) not only have the potential to shape the form and format of the content (including news), but they also enact different scales of socialities which shape the kind of relationships and levels of sociability, based on the trust levels between and among young people. Importantly also, the recent upscaling of discourses of fake news have triggered a torrent of studies. However, the Global North has increasingly received attention, inadvertently, positioning 'fake news' as a new phenomenon yet it is not. Thus, this chapter moves the debates

beyond the broad-brush generalizations and assumption on 'fake news' to the specific analysis of individual platforms and how their architecture enhances or constrains trust. By so doing, this chapter contributes theoretically and empirically to the scarce literature on trust in media and content consumption.

5.1 Tracing young online news consumers: who are they and where are they?

The physical, technological and social contexts profoundly shape news consumption. They are often hinged on the nature and form of the 'physical and virtual settings as well as the social relationship' (Davis & Fullerton, 2016), within and through which news access, consumption and reproduction are enacted. Gadliardone (2015) contends that the increasing access of ICTs should be studied in "relations to the variety of actors, networks and languages that do matter in a specific locality rather than the idealized conception of the state-society relations (1).

The theoretical tools adopted in this study aim at shedding light on the motivations ***why***, and through scalable sociality demonstrate ***how*** news as social media content materializes through, and within the scales proposed by Miller et al., (2016). It is against this background that this study seeks to explicate how young people as social actors, seize the available network opportunities in specific contexts to unpack news consumption and production patterns. Put differently, this section blends the ***why*** and ***how*** of the theoretical lenses with the ***who*** and ***where*** of contextual news consumption. I now turn to the demographics, albeit in a descriptive way, to provide a bird's eye view of the respondents and participants. Although this study generated data on respondents' sex, age and year of study, these data were not in any way aimed at correlating young people's news experiences, but rather they were useful in achieving balanced news consumption experiences. The plan as earlier hinted was to avoid compartmentalizing respondent's and participants views because this is part of the problem in modern-day research. Users and respondents, in no small extent, interact with new media technologies in an environment where multiple actors (visible and invisible) shape these experiences. Therefore, irrespective of their age, sex and years of study; for example, if there is no internet access and the cost of owning mobile devices is inhibitive, such demographics may not be helpful.

In this regard, eight hundred questionnaires were distributed randomly to 400 students in each institution[21]. Out of the 800 questionnaires, 45 were rejected because they were inappropriately

[21] This study was conducted in two public universities in Kenya between November 2017 and March 2018.

filled. From the remaining 755 valid questionnaires, 380 were from university of Eldoret (UoE) and 375 were from the Technical University of Kenya (TuK). Out of the total students sampled 451 (59.7%) were male, while 304 (40.3%) were female **(see figure 3 below)**[22]**.** Although gender was not the focus of this study, some studies have explored gendered contours between young people and mobile phones. They are, however, limited in Sub-Saharan Africa (Gustafson & Nielsen, 2017; Lesitaokana, 2017), and news has not received considerable attention even where gender has been the focus[23]. The population of male and female as shown below does not in any way suggest that male students are more than female in both institutions. This is because the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement (KUCCP) centrally distributes university students[24]. KUCCPs matches the student preferred university choices and courses based on the available spaces within public universities. As such, though gender is taken into consideration, the student's choices mostly inform where they will be placed[25]. Thus, it is not unique to find a slight variation in the number of male and female students in some universities.

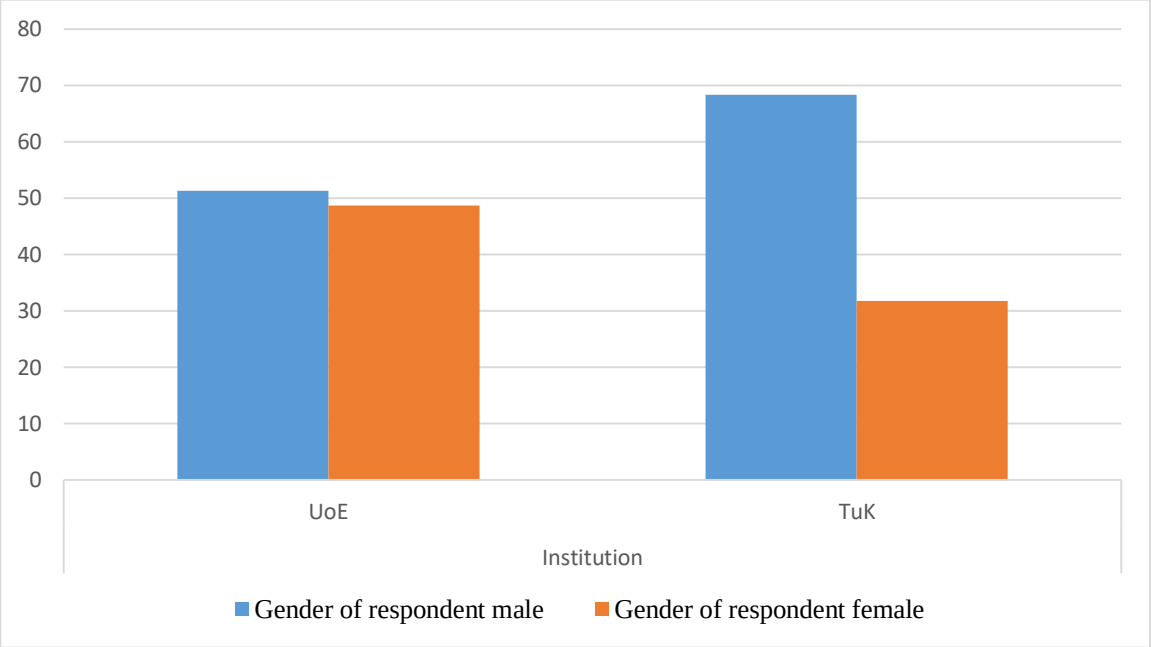
[22] Please note that data in the bar graph are broken down per institution, though the discussion section embraces a summative format for easy discussion

[23] A closer look at the findings reveals a fairly balanced representation of both male and females. Perhaps, the disparity between male and female could be attributed to the Lecturers strike in Kenya that lasted from November to December 2017, with many guardians and parents preferring to stay with their daughters at home rather than allowing them free time to idle on campus

[24] The Service is governed by the Placement Board. In the performance of its functions, the Placement Board seeks to promote equity and access to university and college education, by among other things, developing criteria for affirmative action, for the marginalized, the minorities and persons with disabilities (http://kuccps.net/?q=content/about-kuccps).

[25] The placement Board also seeks to establish a criterion to enable students' access the courses for which they applied taking into account the students' qualifications and listed priorities.

Figure 3: Bar Chart showing the distribution of respondents by sex



Although age has been found to determine news consumption patterns and practices in other contexts (Antunovic, Parsons & Cooke, 2016), its dynamism and fluidity makes it difficult to make concrete conclusions. As earlier mentioned, age has been used over time to categorize segments of the population. This move has attracted heated debates on the limitations of age to accurately describe a generation as a group of people within the same age bracket (Mwangola, 2007). Thus, young people are not just as a homogenous group, but a distinct heterogeneous socio-cultural group (Ito et al., 2009; Lietrat et al., 2018).

5.2 Mainstream understanding of mobile phone access in Kenya

Mobile phones are considered relatively cheap, fast and a convenient means of accessing news as compared to the traditional media (television, radio, newspapers). Mobile devices seem to have relived users of the relatively high initial costs of owning a television set as one participant said, "Yeah, the cost of smartphones has drastically reduced". The participant further added," You can get a smartphone let's say china made, for only 999 shillings, that smartphone you can install WhatsApp, you can get information from the internet, so, it has drastically reduced". Etzo and Collender (2010) contend that mobile devices are "almost always the cheapest and quickest way to communicate" (147).

This view introduces yet another dimension of the significance of messaging applications such as WhatsApp in the whole process of news access and consumption. As will be shown in the next

chapter, news consumption seems to be scaling down to more private platforms as envisioned in the concept of scalable sociality (Miller et al., 2016). Young people affirmed that mobile phones had become more portable and relatively cheap multimodal devices (Donner, 2015; Lesitaokana, 2017), endearing itself to the audience in developing societies, particularly the youthful Kenyan population. Kibere (2016) found out that, even in *Kibra* informal settlement in Kenya, an overwhelming majority of inhabitants owned mobile devices, thus reinforcing the centrality of mobile phones as central tools of communication in Kenya (Gagliardone, 2016; Omanga & Chepngetich-Omanga, 2013).

> Mobile phones are portable. So, you can have a mobile phone, like, you cannot buy a television, so that that is it, so these mobile phones you can use it somewhere, anywhere you are (FGD 2: UoE).

> As for me accessing news through mobile phone, it is cheap because you can get information in various ways, for instance, you can live steam, you can read newspapers online, you can get it through some social sources like Facebook and WhatsApp and then it is portable, you can carry it around and get information at any time you need it and then it is very fast, something that has just taken place you can get it instantly through mobile phones (FGD 3: TuK)

The ubiquity of mobile devices in Kenya has been attributed to several factors: First, the initial move by the government to scrap taxation (though it was later re-introduced in 2013) on ICTs, including computers and mobile phones, significantly lowered the cost of mobile phones (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). Secondly, a raft of policies were developed progressively to position ICTs at the centre of Kenyan vision 2030 policy document (Kavikuru, 2017; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). Most significantly, mobile devices do not 'require a network of landlines' (Ekine, 2010). Comparatively, many homesteads as hinted by young people, particularly in the rural areas had no electricity. At the same time, where there were television and Radio, reconciling the varied interests and needs of the audience was problematic. Mobile devices, therefore, have profoundly offered young people the opportunity to gratify their own individual and specific needs through multiple platforms as will be explained in the next chapter. Most of the participants voiced their concerns on the increasingly rigid nature of traditional media; they stifled and suppressed individual media needs. Mobile phones were also widely viewed as a symbolic artefact that apart from positioning one in a social class, profoundly made one appear knowledgeable.

> It is updated. I think it is the easiest way to get news. It is faster, like, if you check, access to television is very expensive.so the phones remain the primary source of news. Yeah, then like most of the times it is there (FGD 3: UoE)

Mobile devices were also considered the equivalents of computers, useful for accessing not just news but other information, as well as watching movies, sending and receiving money among other functions. Young people pointed out the inbuilt software such as android phones. In their views, the operating system of the phone determines the processor speeds; the slower the processor, the higher the cost of surfing while the faster the processor, the lower the costs of surfing. Mobile devices can archive information; through the various features, such expandable memory sticks as well as other forms of information storage and retrieval opportunities offered by the service providers such as google drive.

> I think mobile news an important because you may be interested in getting news of last week that happened about something, you may not want it to be brought on TV because it will not, it will be easier to access it on your phone, than on any other article (FGD 2: TU-K)

The view depicted in the excerpt above challenges the often-conventional understanding of news as a perishable or depletable product (Tuchman, 1978). Through mobile devices, young people can bookmark or search information online on subjects of interest a possibility that is relatively new. This finding resonates well with the relatively new features of interactivity and convergence (Ruggiero, 2000), as well as hybridity. As Lesitaokana (2017) notes, 'mobile telephony has become one of the most important personal media devices today' (p.340). Correspondingly, young people argued that through online news they get diverse news compared to traditional channels, for instance, one said "with online news, I get diverse information, diverse news, from different sources" (FGD 1: UoE). Probed on what they meant by diversity, one participant mentioned, "some mainstream radio, television and newspapers, were biased in their news presentation". This, therefore, raises the question of trust, which will be explored further in the last chapter of this study. Also, young people noted that there were some topics like sex and sexuality which hardly featured in the mainstream media, for instance, one participant added that diversity in the content includes "...stories of sex, stories you cannot find them on television. They cannot air that". This view positions online news at the centre of sexual identity negotiation within the university space (I will come back to this in the next few chapters).

A mobile phone was also a form of financial security, as one could quickly cash on mobile phones by selling them to fellow comrades during difficult financial times or through the various contacts one could borrow money from 'friends', which if approved were received through M-Pesa account. This was exemplified by the presence of M-Pesa shops within the university spaces (**see photo 9 below).** This motivation for owning mobile phones connects well with the view advanced by Etzo and Collender (2010), that mobile phones were useful in production i.e. selling mobile

devices and related services. Similarly, among male students, the commodification of sports through gambling has proved to be the increasing motivation to own mobile devices, as they are central in the overall process of placing bets. For instance, depositing a betting stake requires that one deposits the money through mobile services providers (e.g. Safaricom M-Pesa, Airtel money among others). It further echoes the findings of Tufte (2017) who established that young people consider eking a living as hustling; through online opportunities of connecting with potential employers as well as innovating ways of earning income to meet their daily needs. This broadly fits and sits well with economic motivation as established by U & G studies (Sundar & Limperos, 2013)

Photo 9: Mobile money transfer services available within university spaces



Mobile phones allow the consumption of news on the go, due to their compact size; young people can carry as multiple mobile phones in their pockets. “I think the use of phones is high because phones are easy to get and you can get news faster, you do not have to go home sit wait for seven o’clock to get the news”. The idea of sitting down to watch news does not seem to go well with the young people, who prefer to multitask trying to accomplish so many activities at the same time online, through such actions attention becomes increasingly challenging to sustain. The same respondent further added, “With a phone, you can get news instantly and again there is a variety of news if you want entertainment news, sports news—they are all there. That is why we use phones” (FGD 3: 2).While this view connects well with the findings on contextual mobility (de Bruijn et al., 2010; H. M. Nyamnjoh, 2013), young people seem to conceive mobility enabled by

mobile devices to be a function of the news content. Without making a sweeping statement, the idea of walking with multiple mobile devices as it emerged through focus group discussions and observations was potentially to avert and minimise the chances of being disconnected just in case power runoff in one.

The recent debates across Africa and the world revolve around the mobilities enabled by internet-enabled mobile devices, with migrants heavily using mobile devices to imagine the opportunities in the west, while those who are overseas use it to connect with their relatives back at home(de Bruijn et al., 2010; H. M. Nyamnjoh, 2013). Mobility in time and space is one of the hallmark of the postmodern society, primarily enabled by mobile devices (Dimmick et al., 2011). Thus news is consumed and absorbed in fragments 'on the go' in the course of daily activities. News is becoming increasingly less a planned, deliberate and purposeful exercise but somewhat incidental or accidental, 'distracted rather than purposeful'. While similar distractions were recorded by earlier uses and gratification studies (Katz, 1993), the nature of distraction and disruption in news consumption has been extended and amplified beyond expectations. Within the university premises, it was common to come across students walking along the streets and corridors with their eyes glued to their smartphone's screens, while at the same time, in some instances earphones tucked in their ears

5.3 The enablers of mobile phones and internet access in Kenya

Although statistics have often indicated relatively high internet and mobile penetration rates in Kenya (CA, Q4, 2017), these statistics have been uncritically celebrated thus obfuscating a nuanced understanding of the possible enablers. In the same vein, young people have not received considerable attention. Little attention has been devoted to understanding the emerging and receding patterns of mobile devices and internet access among young people, particularly the social and psychological motivations for weaving such new technologies in daily news consumption patterns and practices.

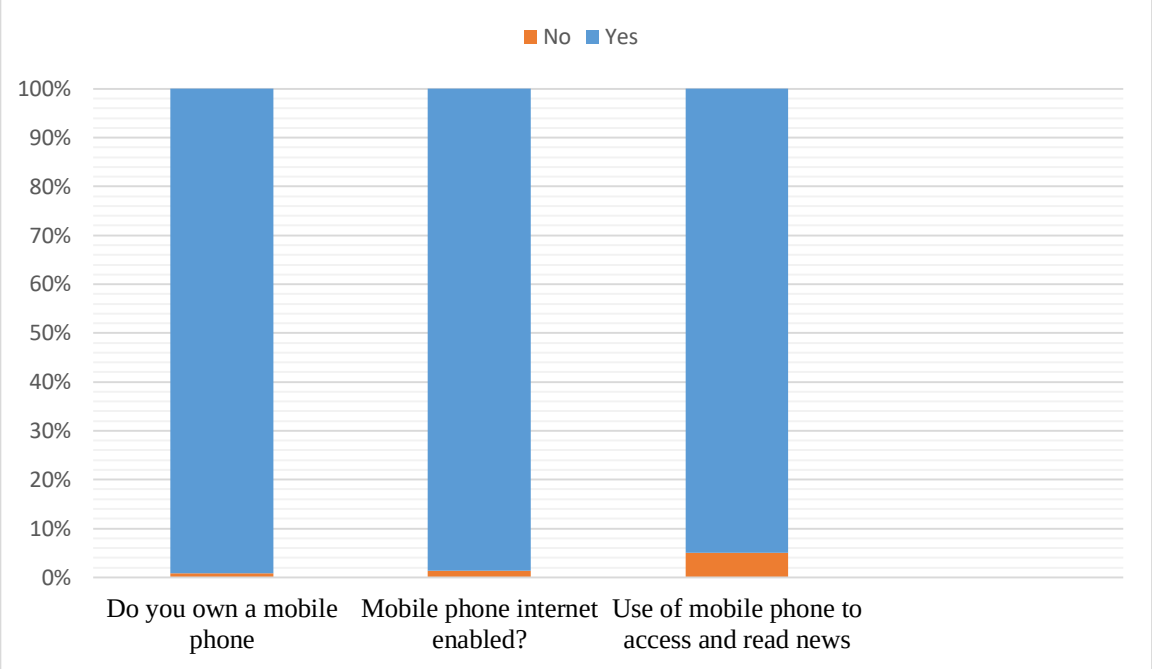
In the qualitative phase of this study, participants were probed on the varied motivations of not just owning mobile devices, but using them mainly to access news. This section questions the 'blanket' generalization of youth as drivers of innovation (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017) by evaluating and offering a nuanced understanding behind the figures that have often indicated high mobile and internet penetration rates. Survey findings reveal very high mobile and internet penetration rates. **Figure 4** below shows that, out of the 755 respondents, 749(99.2%) owned mobile devices, which could broadly be interpreted as mobile phones access. These statistics confirm what we have

known for a while now in Kenya. Indeed, mobile phones, which a few decades ago was a preserve of the wealthy and rich, is now an essential tool not just for making and receiving voice calls and text messages, but also incredibly useful multimedia devices used for interaction and socializations-including sharing news stories. Based on these findings, mobile devices have become important tools of communication among young people (Gagliardone, 2016a; Faith Njeri Kibere, 2016; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017; Omanga, 2015; Wasserman, 2017a). Indeed as Etzo and Collender, (2010) observed: "Africa has become the crucible for mobile phones innovation and entrepreneurship"(1). Were it not for the economic constraints and unforeseen incidences such as loss of a mobile phone explained, perhaps mobile phone access would have hit one hundred per cent. Those who did not have mobile phones because of the reasons as mentioned earlier, felt their physical world, together with its sub-domains were pulling apart, thus intimating that in such cases they borrowed mobile phones from friends as stop-gap measures to keep communication flowing.

Mobile phone access cannot be delinked from internet access. Internet connectivity is crucial in making news access a reality online, therefore this study sought to establish the percentage of mobile devices, which were internet-enabled among university students. Mobile phones that were internet-enabled were 745(98.7%). This means that the difference between those who owned mobile devices (99.2%) and those whose mobile devices were internet-enabled (98.7%) gives us 0.5% of users whose phones were not internet-enabled. These findings remind us and show us what we have known for some time now in Kenya. They are consistent with statistics released by different research bodies such as Communication Authority of Kenya (CA, Q4, 2019), Jumia online store report (2018) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2017), which show high mobile phones and internet penetration rates in Kenya[26]. The latest data from the Communication Authority of Kenya shows that Kenya has a mobile and internet penetration rates of 100.1% and 99.2% respectively.

[26] In developed countries, 94% of young people aged 15-24 use the Internet compared with 67% in developing countries and only 30% in Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The proportion of young people aged 15-24 using the Internet (71%) is significantly higher than the proportion of the total population using the Internet (48%)
(https://www.itu.int/en/ITUD/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2017.pdf.)

Figure 4: Mobile phone ownership, internet connectivity and use of mobile phones to b access and read online news



Among the various reasons mentioned, mobile phones were widely embraced because of their communicative functions (such as connecting and disconnecting people). Mobile phones connect people through the various affordances that are inscribed in it, enabling the exchange of information among, between and within young people'. Hugely, the relatively cheap cost of internet among university students has driven the demand for mobile news. Basically, on phones, "everybody needs to own a phone for communication, students to own a phone is for communication, not necessarily for internet, but the basic thing is communication" (FGD 3: TU-K). This view is not new. It speaks directly to mobile devices as the new points of news exposure.

In the same fashion, young people admitted that sometimes mobile devices are used for snobbing other people who are perceived as nagging. One participant said '…sometimes I like looking at my smartphone, to avoid talking to people who just want to talk to me' (FGD 4: UoE). As Turkle, (2016) contends, mobile devices in the digital age guarantee three things: "That we will always be heard, we can put our attention where we want it to be, that we will never be alone"(28). Arguably, young people use their internet-enabled mobile phones to connect and disconnect from public and private spheres of sociality. Yet in the process of switching between and within these broad spheres of sociality, they could stumble upon unsolicited news online. In addition, the above view shows the scarcity of attention in an increasingly networked mediascape. There are both

intended and unintended disruptions and distractions. These realities mediate news consumption experiences; for instance, young people strive to strike a balance between expressing themselves through face-to-face interaction, and the increasing demand to perform their lives online. With so many activities competing for attention, mobile devices become central in disconnecting and diverting their attention to issues, people and events.

Through the focus group discussions (FGDs), young people outlined the various strategies that they employ in order to access and seize online opportunities, key among them news consumption and reproduction. Both institutions have free WI-FI for their students.

> First institution wise, they provide free WI-FI, like speaking from experience, we have WIFI, in the library…near some departments, so we go there and browse the internet (FGD 1: UoE)

> Most university students have access to WIFI, it's all over the institution, you can just log in and get the news wherever you'll be (FGD 3, TuK)

As shown in **photo 10 below**, students can be seen accessing the internet from behind the library. There was a preference of WI-FI hotspot behind the library as it was deemed faster and efficient. For instance, Lecture halls as observed in both institutions have structural provisions for electricity power sockets, yet a handful of these sockets were operational. This, however, did not stop young people from tapping the WI-FI networks around lecture halls using either their phones or laptops.

> I think most of our assignments nowadays, lecturers have moved from the era of go to the library and look for this and this book, they just give you general question and tell you go and research, so at any point in time there is a university student on the internet trying to answer a question to research (…) thus high internet use in the university, because people a moving to a self-sufficient education system (FGD 3, TuK)

In one lecture hall, I observed a group of students working on a computer programming assignment, and due to the limitation in terms of power sockets for each laptop, they had their own multiple plug extension cable that was serving their laptop power needs during their group discussion. Lecture halls thus become 'mediatized' spaces, in which personal autonomy and control or privacy become embedded and enacted through the connection to power. However, unlike the empirical findings by Livingstone and Julian Sefton-Green (2016) on classes in the UK becoming increasingly mediatized, in Kenya, lecture halls become avenues for getting plugged in online for self-performance including news exposure and subsequent consumption, Of course

besides regular lecture gatherings, which makes the lecture hall space a public space bringing young people together.

Photo 10: Young people accessing free WI-FI behind the library



Photo 10 above shows that whereas free Wi-Fi was common in both institutions, such facilities were limited in speed and strength across the university spaces. Both institutions seem to have made progress in achieving free WI-FI in line with the government vision 2030 policy document[27]. However, the demand to stay plugged online outside university spaces, particularly in spaces with weak Wi-Fi signals had driven young people to seek alternative ways of staying plugged in. Young people increasingly mentioned the availability of offers by mobile services providers, for instance, taking advantage of bundle offers provided by service providers such as Safaricom, Orange, Airtel and Telkom orange. Although several network masts were visible within the university space, black market bundles- commonly known as bundles *mwitu* in young people's parlance-are complimentarily used with the free WI-FI provided by the universities and

[27] https://www.researchictafrica.net/countries/kenya/Kenya_Vision_2030_-_2007.pdf

mobile service provider's bundles (*Mwitu* used literally to describe the data acquired from the booming parallel markets).

Comparatively, while the internet among college students in the USA is within their comfort zones (Antunovic, Parsons &Cook, 2016), university students in Kenya creatively maneuvered data access obstacles to stay connected by tapping the booming parallel markets for data. Ethnographic methods revealed that there were so many posters advertising cheap bundles on the student notice boards and lecture halls whiteboards (**See photo 11 below).** These bundles were mainly distributed by their comrades, highlighting the vulnerability of universities and learning institutions to local and global market structures. Universities not only become valuable spaces for its educational mandate, but it presents a ready parallel market for data bundles, which are considered relatively expensive. Also, the ingenuity of young people in tapping into the robust parallel markets regardless of the inherent risks affirms that they are 'hustlers' as established by Tufte (2017).

Photo 11: Snapshots of observation on the bundles *mwitu* in both universities



Apart from the proliferation of bundles *mwitu*, some young people indicated that they had creatively come up with ways of hacking WI-FI passwords, mentioning some online applications specifically designed to execute such commands. This form of creative appropriation of

technologies echoes what Nyamjoh (2005) argued, "Africa's creativity simply cannot allow for simple dichotomies or distinctions between old and new technologies since its people are daily modernizing the indigenous and indigenizing the modern with novel outcomes" (54). Young people increasingly consider themselves as Hustlers (Tufte, 2017), negotiating options available for them to stay connected for longer hours. The internet in this context becomes the means to access not just news but a network of sustaining the relationship between friends. Young people, compared to their middle-class counterparts, have no disposable income to invest in internet bundles. Through, their creativity, they seem to have negotiated the barriers such as insufficient funds, which stand as impediments to universal access to the internet.

> There are some applications like the android hamper, of which to hack Wi-Fi you have to be a super-user to the device you use, to be a super-user you have to route everything like you route or command everything, not the manufacturer or anything else. You hack some apps can give you Wi-Fi, the passwords and you can share with other guys like if you do not have the money you remain with that, like me I do that. Nevertheless, it depends, we hustlers we have ways to access the resources. Not everybody can hack, they do not have resources to hack, and they do not know those staffs so they depend on parents to get money from them (FGD 1: TuK)

The above excerpt shows that, despite the data constraints, young people mostly go online to check news or what goes around them. Data from FGDs indicate that young people might go online to utilize bundles subscribed for to avoid losing data through expiry. This implies that maximizing subscriber service bundles remains a relatively great motivator and determinant of the number of hours spent online. This consistent with the ITU (2017) findings that established such as zero-rating (providing free internet access to social sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp etc.) had significantly increased the number of hours young people spend online. Apart from zero-rating, which was established to be rare in Kenya, the subsidized bundles seem to be the most used among students as demonstrated in the excerpt below.

> Sometimes you may subscribe to bundles that expire after a short time, so instead of waiting for the bundles to expire, I utilize the bundles, and sometimes you may have a content you looking for on the internet, so you try to find out then you get tired and say ah, let me get some staffs, in the process you find yourself spending more time online because you do some different things online not because you have the bundles but because you have something you have to find on the internet… FGD 2: TuK)

As demonstrated by the FGD excerpt above, the number of hours spent online is useful in unpacking the motivations as well as the gratifications derived from. From the excerpt above, young people spend a significant amount of time trying to gratify their need to connect, interact and share with friends. However, this does not imply that every time they are online, they are

accessing news. Others indicated that they go online to download notes and search for information regarding their assignments. Finally, others go online to get value for their bundles that come with expiry dates. Uses and gratifications studies have in the recently established that motivations for mobile devices access has in the recent past been categorized into three, namely: "incremental (increasing the speed and efficiency of what people do), transformational (offering something new) and production (Selling mobile phones and related services)" (Etzo & Collender, 2010:4).

5.4: Conclusion

The first section of this chapter presented demographic findings from the Survey findings. Although the demographics were not central to the overall study, I used them to delineate my target population using their age brackets. In addition, demographics were useful in achieving a balanced and representative sample. To achieve this, the strategy adopted during data collection allowed for respondents, participants and research site triangulation. These forms of triangulation yielded representative findings and at the same time, offering a more nuanced understanding of news consumption. Findings show that over 95% of young people use their mobile to consume news (See **Figure 4 above**). However, despite the relatively affordable data costs, young people still experience challenges purchasing data to sustain them in digital spaces for long. Due to the relatively high cost of the internet, young people navigate these data complexities by creatively hacking Wi-Fi passwords. There is a booming parallel market for data bundles hawked within university spaces and on digital platforms. Although these data bundles are from major mobile service providers such as Safaricom, Airtel and Telkom, it remains unclear, how such bundles are acquired and who are the principal perpetrators. Perhaps this offers a more nuanced understanding of the 'rosy' statistics that have often indicate a relatively high internet and mobile penetration in Kenya. In addition, findings reify the concept of scalability of online news as content that sometimes is shared through a wide range of platforms, including social media.

CHAPTER 6: WHAT IS NEWS? UNDERSTANDING NEWS FROM A YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE

Exploring how young people understand news provides a useful starting point in accommodating their 'voices'. It allows us to see broadly how news content and sub-genres are understood and how the varied conceptualization (s) shape the frequency of access and the quantity of consumption. By questioning, what news is or is not among young people, we open possible areas of considerable agreements as well as disagreements. The objective here is not to arrive at one single definition of news, but rather to allow for competing claims and counterclaims of news to penetrate the discourse of defining news. It is only by acknowledging such diversity of viewpoints and the multiple competing meanings that we can appreciate the complexity of news and how such complexity should be treated with the seriousness it deserves

In a study aimed at unearthing the drivers of traffic data in the USA, Hindman (2009) established the dominance of 'news and political sites' online in comparison to other online content. However, Hindman (2009) unearthed a big surprise—pornography websites generate about 10.5% of the web traffic as compared to 2.9% that goes to news and media sites (60-61). Drawing insights from Hindman's findings, it may be useful to demystify how young people understand or define news in their terms. Thus, finding out what news is or is not, could help us reconcile the tensions and contradictions by accommodating the surprises that may emerge. It helps us appreciate that, often, the reality of researchers and scholars when framing research questions may not necessarily be a true reflection of the reality on the ground.

This chapter responds to the question: what is (the) news to you? Posed to FGD participants at both UoE and TuK. The responses elicited were as diverse as the participants of the study. However, there was some level of agreement and saturations where news was described and understood to mean the same thing across the spectrum, albeit using different wordings and terminologies to mean the same thing. News mean different things and its consumption is a complex multi-layered process. In the next sections, I present the dominant themes on what news is as captured by the voices of the participants. These themes include news as a window to a socially differentiated world, news as politics, news as a form of knowledge, and news as a reinforcement of time.

6.1 News as a window to a socially differentiated world

News was described as anything from the personal to the public that happens within and without the environment—their immediate locales, regions, countries and continent as captured by this statement: "To me, news is the information about events that are occurring around us or anything in the world or global" (FGD 1: TUK). Young people's voices captured in the qualitative phase of this study positions news at the interface between one physical world with a multiplicity of sub-domains and sub-worlds. They perceived the world as a fluid space, which often keeps changing, thus necessitating news access and consumption to keep abreast with what is 'new'. Correspondingly, they weaved internet-enabled mobile devices in mediating the construction of the social world and its sub-domains, consistently with arguments advanced by Couldry and Hepp (2016).

There was considerable agreement in both institutions among the participants; with a shared understanding of news playing out UOE as well. At UOE, one participant said news is "Information about what is going on currently in the world, in the whole country" (FGD 1: UoE). Unsurprisingly, these descriptions of news are resonant with earlier descriptions suggested by various scholars (Tuchman, 1978; Schudson, 1979). For instance, news has been described as a window of the world; through its frame, the audience develops a deeper understanding of themselves and others, their organisations, their leaders and their ways of life (Tuchman, 1978; 1). Even so, it emerged that the current understanding of the 'world', is slightly different from the conventional understanding of the physical world-one solid physical world, which was often believed to be static. Thus 'social world' borrowed from sociology is more appropriate to mark a departure from the often-static world. The social world broadly includes the 'sociality', 'socialization', 'social order' and 'society' (Couldry & Hepp, 2016). Tuchman further suggests that the explanation of news events provides the much-needed context for consumers' debates. Inherent in this description of news is the unsettling view of news as a useful tool in making sense of our immediate surrounding and keeping in touch with the 'outside world.'

Although media institutions were framed and implicated on how audience made sense of the world (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016), new technologies have enhanced young people's agency. Internet-enabled mobile devices mediate the expressive forms of young people with the social world (Couldry & Hepp, 2016), thus acting as a "conduit for news consumption and engagement" (Litrerat et al., 2018). In light of this, young people conceptualized news as a necessary component, which is useful in reconciling, and in some instances contending with

contradictions in their immediate, and often mediated subdomains. This is resonant with the earlier suggestion by U and G scholars, that audience social environment significantly perceived problems and solutions in as far as needs gratification are concerned (Rosengren, 1974). While new technologies mediate the social world, news as content shapes the construction of the social world in varied ways, and at the same time complicating the existing social relationships within the same world. These tensions and contradictions played out in the gradations of sub-domains, namely: local, regional, national and global domains of news consumption. While this demonstrates and resonates with the concept of scalable sociality, it is worth mentioning that this kind of differentiation can co-occur in any given news engagement moment. For instance, local news domain can metamorphose to national news domain. Similarly, national news can mutate to regional or international news domains. These overlapping social-world domains make it challenging to attribute each news sub-genre to a specific domain. News could be understood as the window to these differentiated but largely overlapping domains.

6.1.1 Local news domain

Local news domain in this context refers to the university space and its immediate surrounding where students mostly reside; for instance, in both institutions, local news was mainly about what was going on within the University spaces and its surrounding. This is consistent with the findings of other news consumption research (see Lindell & Sartoretto, 2017) which found out that 'local news had more 'personal relevance and more expressive…and mainly included events that may affect traffic such as accidents and events involving people known to them' (15). As one respondent said:

> "It helps in decision making. Let us say I want to go to Westlands today (a place in Nairobi City), and then the weatherman says because of the heavy rains, the roads will be closed because of heavy water flows. If I did not have this kind of news update, then I would be stuck on the road. Also, maybe there is a strike by the public service vehicles (matatus), maybe *matatus* from Ngong (a town in the outskirts of Nairobi) are not operating today, and perhaps I want to go to Ngong, without this news, I will waste time waiting on the road. News helps in decision making" (FGD 3: TuK).

The excerpt above is reflective of the dynamics of urban life, where so many activities could affect (directly or indirectly) the lives of the students. The city or urban setting, where TuK is located, presents unique challenges and opportunities which are somehow different and, in some instances, similar to contextual experiences at UoE. For example, external factors such as a change in weather patterns often disrupt transport due to heavy traffic in and out of town particularly in cases where respondents reside far from town and rely on public means to get to

the university. At UoE, the contextual realities may not necessarily involve traffic jams, but student being held up in their halls of residence, as they cannot walk to campus when it is raining heavily. These contextual dynamics drive the consumption of local news among university students as a way of planning and coordinating their activities.

6.1.2 Regional news domain

This constitutes the immediate counties (Kenya has 47 devolved units/counties) where the universities are located, and the larger eight provincial administrative units for instance (Rift valley, Nyanza, Central, Eastern, Northeastern, Nairobi, Western and Coast provinces). UoE and TuK are located at Uasin-Gishu and Nairobi counties, respectively. Administratively, counties may enact laws within their jurisdiction that directly or indirectly affects the university. Additionally, through student support programs such as the issuance of bursaries to needy students as well as offering internship and employment opportunities to young people makes counties as a source of regional news increasingly significant among the students.

As participant observed, news is "something that you do not know then you hear your friend saying something might be happening in a place, maybe an immediate county" (FGD 3: UoE). Probed on why this kind of news was important, the majority of the participants highlighted among other things one incident "For example at UoE, the local community lead by the county senator stormed the institution with some demands on the university administration", a move that temporarily paralyzed learning[28] . Therefore, news within these counties has a bearing on the activities of the institution and the students. This example is useful in enhancing the overlaps within the domains, whereby local news has the potential to become regional, national and even international news. After all, all news is local, meaning that, if news is about events, then these events do not occur (concurrently, sequentially or abruptly) in vacuum but specific locations. Although, (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016) contend that 'public and private spheres have become blurred', scalable sociality (as will be discussed in the next chapter) introduces new lenses of understanding how news consumption is enacted through public/large groups platforms (Traditional media and social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter) and private/small group platforms (mostly made up of emails, memos, and social media, messaging applications such as messenger and WhatsApp) in a network environment (Miller et al, 2016).

[28] https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000152381/senator-out-of-order-for-storming-university-of-eldoret

6.1.3 National and international domain news

National news domain could be described as the totality of all the regional/county news; in other words, it is news within the borders of the nation-state. International news largely refers to news without the border of the nation-state. As one participant said "news is not only about your country. Like it is so diverse, you can talk about USA…through news we get to know what is happening for example, in the USA" (FGD 3: TuK). As will be discussed next, the various genres of news such as politics, business, fashion and lifestyle manifest themselves within the domains mentioned. For example, the same participant said: "we can be told what is happening in sports for example in politics what president Trump is doing and in sports news maybe about Olympics or English premier league". Couldry and Hepp (2016) contend that the social world is 'differentiated into various domains, with each domain defined by the shared practical orientation of the humans acting within these domains' (20). A nation embodies the common aspirations and values of people living within a geographically defined area. Nation and national values present the social order; 'social class, nationality and ethnicity'(Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016:21), which increasingly shape the intensities of performativity and news consumption among young people. More specifically, there is a global world, where Kenya as a country forms part of it and at a contextual level, UoE and TuK are located. However, Couldry and Hepp point out that the boundaries between various domains are increasingly becoming blurred, with notable overlaps, intersections, and contradictions evident. As will be explored in the next few paragraphs, these sub-domains present different realities to young people as social actors, thus profoundly shaping the broad and specific ways of fashioning and refashioning their own identities within their contextual environment (Livingston & Sefton-Green, 2016). Therefore, through news consumption, they engage in continuous acts of constructing their realities of the social world.

Universities as spaces of studying embody the social and structural place where young people spend most of their time with comrades and university employees (Such as lecturers, administrators, among other staff). The social realities presented by such spaces positions news as an increasingly vital component in addressing and responding to the intrinsic information needs, from the most private kind of needs such as sustaining and maintaining social relationships on campus to the most public such as what is happening in the subdomains far away mediated by mobile devices. One participant opined that "maybe through news, I hear there will be a demonstration in town; maybe you can decide tomorrow I won't come to school, I may not be safe" (FGD 3: UoE). Students, therefore, experience and perform their lives within relatively new spaces where they meet new friends not just within the university, but in the surrounding

communities as well. These relatively new spaces eventually cease to become 'new' as young people with time master their surrounding and form a habitus, where their lives evolve. These findings are consistent with the arguments advanced by Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016) that young people increasingly turn to the media as a way of restricting and sifting the resources that speak to their self-biography. Boyd (2014) argues that they resort to online and offline collective action in negotiating their identities. At the same time, embedded in the excerpt above, young people are widely believed to enjoy some degree of autonomy, particularly from guardians or parents, thus individually and collectively making decisions based on the news received, as exemplified by the excerpt below:

> News is what you do not know… then you hear your friend saying something might be happening in a particular place, maybe an immediate county (FGD 1: UoE).

Apart from the geographical differentiation of the social world and its subdomains, socio-cultural capital increasingly featured in the understanding of news as a window to the social world. Young people's news consumption practices, arguably, coalesce around their 'social and cultural capital', increasingly mediated through mobile devices. Embedded in the voices captured above is the intertwined nature of the various elements that make up the social world. The excerpts inadvertently speak to the sub-domains, whereby in this context, young people drawn from various corners of Kenya, find themselves in a shared space with other students (From far and within). Within this shared space, young people locate and position themselves as 'natives' (Born and raised within the local context). In contrast, others locate themselves as 'people in transit' (born and raised in different contexts).

News, therefore, becomes the common denominator in providing a common understanding of not just the physical world but the often conflictual and contradictory forms of 'self'. Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016), contend "the project of the self" has in the recent past been widely viewed as 'a task to be performed (22). As one participant said, "News affects us directly because there is some kind news, we need them directly and other indirectly, like what is happening outside the world, what is happening in your locality, in your area. You need news about everything" (FGD 4: UoE). Those who came from distant places consumed local news to be aware of incidences that may jeopardize their peaceful stay in the institution. Thus, news becomes a stabilizer in and around campus by taking precaution from any harm that may be occasioned by the local community where the university was located. This mainly applied to UoE participants. As earlier explained, UoE is in the North Rift parts of Kenya, which featured prominently during

the 2007/2008 post-poll chaos. The use of the word 'the world around us' in the excerpt above denotes an increasing recognition of the 'we' culture among the young people, whereby, through their various networks of friendships and relationships, their state of action and inaction is widely informed by the strength and weaknesses of such social bonds. News, therefore, is understood as something communal, and its veracity or the communicative impacts is widely based on the views of friends concerning the same information.

News, particularly online news accessed online, is deeply imbricated in the broader spectrum of constructing a common domain within a larger physical world. The University as a context served the purpose of one such domain. At the same time, the geolocation of such a university presented another domain, the place of birth, ethnicity and citizenship emerged as subdomains in the overall news consumption exercises (will be revisited in the next chapter). These domains resonate with the descriptions advance by scholars; for instance, Elvestad, Phillips and Feuerstein, (2017) describe news as a lens of viewing the society while Fletcher and Park, (2017) describe news a window of viewing the world. While the commonality of these descriptions emphasises the centrality of news as a window of viewing the world or a window to the world, the scope and nature remain vague, with the world often assumed to be static. Although young people perceive news as a form of a fixed window, their understanding of news further indicates the scalability of news depending on the 'what is of the whatness (….), what matters, what has value, what is right to respect and look at twice' (Boltanski, 2011:56).

6.2 News: New Knowledge?

News is also understood among university students as knowledge about the social world. News is rooted in daily sociality and Knowledge of young people. Human knowledge is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations (Beger & Luckmann, 1966:15). As one participant said, "I think news is new ideas that happen somewhere and you get to hear about it, its new information or ideas" (FGD 2: TuK). News consumption expands young people's worldviews (and in some instances equally collapse). The increasing wave of mediatization (Couldry & Hepp, 2016) across the social world has invited debates on the growth of "international news flows" (Nyamjoh, 2005). The increasing association of news to globalization emerged in this discussion . This, they argued, could have an impact on their lives. As a participant opined: "As for me I think news is important because it makes you be informed, it creates awareness, and it makes you knowledgeable (FGD 1: TuK). This is consistent with the early U and G findings which showed that audience turn to available media to satisfy needs such as acquiring new knowledge,

entertainment social interaction and reward (Ko et al., 2005). This is particularly true if young people mostly access online news through a wide range of social media platforms, as Miller et al., (2016), argue that social media can widely be understood as the content posted therein, as demonstrated by the excerpt below:

> Yes, news is informative, you can get information about certain things…I have learnt a lot if things businesswise, the business market, how things are happening out there… also, just the current state of affairs or maybe development, how different areas in the country are faring on (FGD 1: UoE)

The above excerpt is also reflective of Tuchman's (1978) description of news as knowledge. Through news consumption in specific contexts, the audience is pricked and provoked to engage in public debates, even though they might hold diametrically opposite views of the same occurrence (Halloran, Elliot & Murdock, 1970). This description goes beyond the flat-footed belief of news as private texts with uniform or universal meanings. Instead, it suggests that news is public occurrences laden with a variety of meanings, which can elicit debates in different contexts. It is also consistent with the Habermas concept of the public sphere, where media encourages debates on issues that are deemed relevant to the population (Wasserman, 2011). Through these debates, the most plausible meanings are assigned to the texts, leading to a new form(s) of knowledge. Most significantly, it raises the question of what qualifies as public occurrences and who decides the nature and character of such occurrences.

News as 'knowledge' emerges from the recognition of ICTs role in economic growth. This recognition saw the spirited efforts of the government in zero-rating ICTs, a move that was widely perceived to increase access. What followed these were the deliberate efforts to connect public universities with fiber optics as a way of nurturing innovation, among young people within institutions of higher learning. Many colleges (private and public) were established to offer the much-needed training on the use of ICTs such as computers. However, Blum-Ross and Livingstone (2016) observe that such ICT discourses where young people were mainly taught on how to use new technologies effectively has significantly shifted to a new approach of providing opportunities "fairly to everyone in the knowledge that some will prove more useful in gaining the tangible skills required to 'get ahead' and not be 'left behind' in an increasingly competitive and precarious "new world"(1). In the same fashion, Ndemo and Weiss (2017), capture the potential of ICTs in Kenya transformation journey, highlighting the new wave digital entrepreneurship. Apart from knowledge from debates about news disseminated on multiple channels, news about recent technological innovations as well as the agency to seize social media

affordances in day-to-day activities is knowledge, at least according to the participants. The connotation about 'new' technologies is deeply entrenched in the discourse of ICTs as an enabler of a Knowledge economy in many African states. The Kenyan Vision 2030 policy document, embodying the long-term plans for the nation-state positions ICTs including mobile devices and the internet as enablers of economic prosperity.

From the preceding discussion, news consumption, arguably, is one form of the communicative exchanges that is relevant not just to making sense of the social world, but an essential pillar in the overall process of mediated construction of reality. However, FGD findings reveal that young people are increasingly disengaging from online debates, mainly due to increasing pressures to perform online, a move that is widely viewed as conflictual to their identity.

> Among your followers, you'll find that there are those who know you in person, not everyone is a stranger, so if a friend posted something on politics and you gave a negative comment, your friend won't comment on your post but when you get to campus they'll start telling you your comment was not right. Because of these incidences and many others on digital spaces, one may decide to keep it opinions to oneself, because if such will attract negative energy, personally am against negative energy. If you tend to complain much about something, I tend to leave the group, if I know saying this will attract negative comments, I would rather not say it (FGD 3, TuK).

The 'negative comments' and the increased confrontation online has significantly altered the form and nature of engaging in 'public debates' (will come back to this in the next chapter). As Miller et al., (2016) observe, the kind of information whether private or public, informs the kind of platform employed to receive the news and share with 'others. This view is supported by the works of Couldry and Hepp (2016) who contend that the 'social world is not just a mediated but mediatized space. Through private messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Public platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, young people access and consume news to gain deeper insights about their social world (inclusive of the multiple domains). Most importantly, as will be demonstrated, young people in some instances resist the information that comes their way in the form of news, thus engaging in alternative forms of appropriation to create and co-create their social realities.

6.3 News as politics

The word politics is broad and amorphous; it means different things to different people. What is more, Wasserman (2011) cautions that 'the effectiveness of new media technologies, including mobile phones, to facilitate political participation and create social change has long been

contested' (146). Young people seem to suggest that politics punctuate and decorate news accessed and consumed via a wide range of media (traditional and social media platforms). Findings from the focus group discussions reveal that young people increasingly consume political news, though in some cases incidentally, majorly because of the institutionalization of politics by the traditional media. Data from the survey indicate a relatively high (62%) political news access.

Politics in this context was widely understood to be mainly news about the political class and elites in Kenya. Although this study was conducted shortly after the heated 2017 political campaigns in Kenya, participants observed that even when no elections are at sight, the media will always be filled with political news featuring key political figures and their activities including those of the government and the opposition. One participant said news was the "Daily happenings. The daily happenings." When probed further on what daily happenings were in this case, he explained that daily happenings include, politics, new research, there is a new technology, and government policies that even we as individuals require to adhere to aah, yeah that is news (FGD 1: UoE). This view is resonant with the findings of scholars (Mare, 2014a; Wasserman, 2011; White & Mabweazara, 2018)who established a significant relationship between news, politics and democracy.

> Okay, in my opinion politics builds a country to some extent. For example, I'm a business person and through political news I will know when next to have new stock shipments. Political news will help me predict political stability which will inform my decision; with political stability my business is going to progress, if there is political instability, then am not going to ship more of my products because most likely they are not going to be bought or the profit margin will be reduced, so I think politics and political news correlate directly with business and the economy because political stability as a factor affects all of them (FGD 3, UoE)

News has often been hailed as a critical pillar of civic engagement and democratic deepening. News and democracy have always been viewed as constants. Nyamjoh (2005) contends that the kind of democracy shapes the understanding of journalists and their roles in such contexts. He argues that in liberal democracies, where individuals are considered as independent social actors, a journalist is assumed to be free from bias in the overall process of news gathering and dissemination, while in Africa, competing for cultural solidarities are realities that journalist must grapple with. Competing cultural solidarities, therefore, shapes the understanding of news relayed by the journalists.

Embedded in this view is the understanding of political news in the broader spectrum of political socialization. Political socialization has been described as 'an essentially psychological issue' as well as 'a developmental process by which adolescents acquire cognition, attitudes and behaviours relating to their political environment' (Atkin & Gantz, 1978:184). However, any meaningful evaluation of media in specific contexts invites a close examination of the political history (Ogolla, 2011), because therein lies competing narratives of the 'highs' and 'lows' of news production and consumption**.** A critical reflection on Kenyan history, shows that the scarcity of resources in many families made a significant difference in media access as well as news consumption. Until recently, the cost of television sets was relatively high, and many parts of the rural areas were not connected to the electricity grid. Consequently, news disseminated and often received through the traditional channels was mainly laced with political news targeting adults who were widely assumed voters. This political socialization seems to have been institutionalized by the traditional media and naturalized by the immediate family set up.

Mobile devices, arguably, have exacerbated political news access and debates among young people. For instance, one participant said, "Politics is viral for me political news, I can just get it anywhere" (FGD 1: UoE). Wasserman (2011) argues that mobile phones do not only relay "political information needed for rational deliberation in the public sphere, but also transgresses cultural and social borders and hierarchies in the way they refashion identities and create informal economies and communication networks" (146). A significant segment of the respondents also indicated that political news is life, and they are living and enjoying it. One participant said, "We could judge that, news is politics, I think of news, I think of politics" (FGD 1: UoE).

News as politics reifies the connotations developed over the last few decades in post-independent Kenya. The nexus between young people as the active segment in many African countries, including Kenya, has increasingly attracted debates on their roles in the national politics and governance structures (Njogu, 2013). Njogu notes that in Kenya, young people have increasingly remained marginalised in national discourses on politics and governance. However, with internet-enabled mobile devices, politics seem to have been shifted, expanded and intensified by the social media platforms (Mukhongo, 2014:2015). Although this may be true, young people remain ambivalent with some arguing that they have no choice, but to consume political news contrary to their news consumption needs.

6.4 News as a reinforcement of time

Through the qualitative phase interaction with the participants, the intricate relationship between time, news and media played out. As one participant said "My opinion is, news is current events, anything happening at some point in time, either near or far from you. It can be relevant or irrelevant to you, it does not matter, as long as it is current and it is affecting the society, that is what is news to me" (FGD 1: TuK). This shows that, whether the news received has value or not, whether it was about nearby or far news events, it was profoundly inconsequential, provided it was timely. This finding is resonant with the social dimension of time. Couldry and Hepp (2016) identify two broad ways of conceptualizing time: inner time, i.e. time that everyone has on this earth and the social dimension of time (101). Time in this sense is conceptualized both as the individual time in the overall life process (i.e. time because of contextual realities such as the four years students are expected to be in the university). For instance, one respondent said "I think it is the information that is given to a specific group, at a specific time, that it either affects them directly or indirectly (FGD 2: TuK). Embedded in this view is the idea is the perishability of news. Tuchman (1978) portends that 'news is a 'depletable' consumer product that must be made fresh daily' (21). While this view reinforces the significance of time as a critical pillar in the ordering of the social world, social media platforms have shaped the static understanding of news. Mobile devices and the internet have become relatively affordable, thus significantly allowing young people to stay connected. Most importantly, mobile devices such as smartphones come with huge storage capacities (expandable memory) which can accommodate multiple applications, including the social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp etc.) simultaneously. Couldry and Hepp (2016) argue that 'the spatial extensions of our social world through social media platforms also change the duration of the sequences that are considered measurable (the time of Facebook newsfeed, is one very recent but now pervasive construction of sequence' (111).

News for ages, or at least in the last few decades, has often assumed a uni-linear process, involving the methods of gathering, editing and broadcasting (Mabweazara & Mudhai, 2014). Internet-enabled mobile devices are believed to have intensified and shaped in varied ways the temporality of news events, thus the increasing demand for up-to-date information of what is going on elsewhere. Such conventional models of journalism used to be done at specific times and hours of the day. This was linked to homogenous sociality. Specific institutions disseminated homogenous news to a widely dispersed group of audiences. These institutions had particular hours of operation; for instance, in Kenya media institutions used to stop broadcasting at 2400hrs

and resume at 0500hrs. Couldry and Hepp (2016) explicate the nexus between media institutions in three dimensions: media institutions operate following the clock, they reinforce the awareness of the passing clock time and thirdly mobile devices have extended the domestication of timekeeping. Although Couldry and Hepp attach more significance to the media as an institution, their view helps extrapolate how news as content formed the basis of such conceptualization, contextualization and operationalization of time. News as a reinforcement of time can be understood in three broad ways: Individual, social and reference.

While on the one hand, news as a reinforcement of time seems to position the dominance of the traditional media in the contemporary social world, it inadvertently speaks to the complementarity of both the traditional media and new media in advancing the classical understanding of news temporalities. To begin with, digital clocks are embedded in mobile devices. As such, news accessed through the wide range of platforms becomes news through an assessment of the time that they occurred. This resonates with the conventional canon of journalism that identified timeliness as a key determinant of news. Mobile devices have become the central tools of communication in Kenya and other parts of the world (Omanga, 2015). Couldry and Hepp note that they have become the means for focusing attention to a large dispersed population around shared reference points. These views, apart from amplifying the role of mobile devices as enablers of communicative actions, also speak to the potential of 'mobile devices in domesticating timekeeping in new ways' (Ling, 2012). Mobile devices have been appropriated as tools not just for accessing timely news, but also as alarms and watches that play an essential role in the concretization of time and the overall co-ordination process.

Young people's understanding of news as a reinforcement of time has significantly been intensified and extended by mobile devices that are plugged in where possible. This can be largely attributed to networked mobile devices which encourages a new sense of time (Turkle, 2017). Through periodic news alerts, young people plan and co-ordinate their activities in and around campus, for instance, one said: "to me, news is current information that is coming out like maybe a class, just information like a lecturer is coming from class representative" (FGD 2: UoE). News in this context triggers a communicative action within the social context in varied ways for instance, as per the excerpt, if the lecturer is not coming to class, and then the student does not turn up. Another group indicated that news is "information that has an impact on our lives makes sense in our lives" (FGD 1: TuK). They indicated that their actions, particularly within the university space, were mainly shaped and reshaped by news received via various platforms. As will be explored further, news received was mainly received through the two broad scales as

foregrounded by scalable sociality. Through the wide range of platforms, young people experience disruptions in their social life as individuals, deeply embedded in a complex social world. Weltervrede et al., (2014) point out that 'online media encourage us to operate in a distinctive time of required reactions related to normal rhythms of platforms interactions: the Facebook timeline, twitter hashtag stream. News therefore because of its intrinsic time value becomes useful in making sense of the complexities and the tensions forming part of the environment of the individual students, triggering certain communicative actions as captured by the excerpt below. Couldry and Hepp contend that "many platform devices are designed to train people to re-join the flow of what has been called 'social media time" (135). For example,

> I think news; I can generalize and say that is important in the way we behave or carry out our activities in our daily lives, we need news because for us to wake up each day and have a routine that we have to go to work, achieve specific goals, the information we get from the news will affect how we will achieve these goals and whether they will be achievable or not like. For instance, you might wake up and find that the government has decided to sack some people in a particular institution and maybe you are one of those who work there, so your routine shall be changed entirely for that day, you will not go to work, you will always have the anxiety to know what happened; why did the government decide to take such an action, for me I think news entirely shapes the way we carry out our activities daily (FGD 4: UoE)

6.5 Conclusion

Findings support the conclusion that the conventional understanding of news has profoundly been altered by rapid innovations, particularly the high mobile phones and internet penetration rates. As shown in chapter 4, young people consume news through their internet-enabled mobile phones. Findings show that the prevailing social, economic, political and in some instances, cultural realities trigger and shape the kind of news gratifications sought and obtained. News intersects with a wide range of young people's needs and materializes through a variety of platforms (Private and public). The ambivalence evident in young people's conceptualization of news is reflective of the dynamic society within which internet and mobile devices are critical catalysts in accessing and consuming news. While previous studies described news as a window to the world (Tuchman, 1978; Schudson, 1979)-one disconnected solid world, news today is the window to a socially differentiated world. The social world, as argued by Coulrdy and Hepp (2018), is made up of subdomains. Through local, regional, national and international sub-domains, news percolates and shapes the understanding of the social world. At the same time, news helps to construct the social world consistent with the contextual and lived realities. While including traditional media (which have re-invented themselves online) has extended the points of exposure to news across the various domains highlighted, audience motivations intersect with

distinct contextual information needs to yield news gratification. In addition, findings reify the concept of scalability of online news as content that sometimes is shared through a wide range of platforms, including social media. Local news, as will be demonstrated, is often accessed and consumed through more private or small group media, while regional, national and international news is mainly accessed through large groups and public media.

CHAPTER 7: NEWS ACCESS, CONSUMPTION, AND REPRODUCTION

This chapter builds on the motivations for news access via mobile devices and the understanding of news from a young people's perspective, as explored in chapter five and six. Aware of the saturated mediascape and their potential in shaping news consumption, it is useful to examine various strategies embraced by young people in their daily news consumption. More so in their quest to harness the enormous possibilities of a wide range of social media, messaging application and traditional media available to them. This chapter shifts focus to the various ways young people combine a wide range of media in their daily news consumption and reproduction in the selected contexts. While U and G unpacks motivations and gratifications sought, scalable sociality was useful in understanding how these combinations occur in daily news consumption patterns.

Motivations of mobile devices use as well as social media choice, is tied to the distinct features of news sources (New or traditional). Distinct social media and private messaging applications affordances determine the scales of sociality enabled. As embedded in the concept of scalable sociality suggested by Miller at al., (2016), media historically used to populate two broad spaces; public and private. The evolution of social media and the significant rise of internet-enabled mobile devices, arguably, has seen the scaling down of communication from often-public spaces dominated by traditional media to more private spaces initially dominated by telephones, emails and other forms of dyadic communication (communication between two individuals). News users combine a diversity of media platforms, depending on which news gratifications they are seeking (Yuan, 2011). As highlighted in the previous chapter, empirical studies on the patterns of news consumption remain mostly unknown in Kenya and many other Global South states.

This chapter begins by highlighting the multiple ways through which young people combine a wide range of media in their daily news consumption patterns. A closer look at the findings indicates that contextual realities (such as the geographical location as well as the structural designs of the universities infrastructures) influence the choice of media used and the kind of news accessed. There were disparities in access to traditional media at TuK and UoE, partly confirming the notion of the accuracy of generalizing studies, particularly on social media. More specifically, structural realities within the university and without the university shaped the information-seeking motivation. For instance, whereas in the urban and cosmopolitan CBD, Television was the most

accessed medium, radio was the most accessed medium in peri-urban UoE. On the other hand, a considerable percentage of participants commute from home at TuK since student accommodation within the university was limited. FGD interviews show that, TuK participants accessed television at home, a place where they have access to family television. At UoE, participants resided in university hostels within the campus and some in the surrounding community, a reality that constrained them as a significant number suggested that Television was relatively expensive compared to Radio. As Couldry (2007) reminds us, "we must not ignore the long-term nature of the process by which media technologies get embedded in daily practice" (Couldry 2007 in Elvestad & Phillips, 2018:114).

Findings reveal that news consumption is increasingly shifting to ephemeral private messaging application that is less confrontational. Platforms that are considered public are contested spaces, with all sorts of bullies attempting to seek relevance by vitriolic comments full of hate. Such moves cause disengagement among young people. Building from the insights in the previous chapter, news consumption arguably is no longer a planned activity but rather an individual and `group practice, often mediated through a variety of social media platforms[29]. Local news was widely consumed via more private and ephemeral platforms (e.g. messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Messenger, public noticeboards, and face-to-face interactions). While regional, national and international news was increasingly accessed and consumed through public platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Radio, Television, newspapers). These findings are consistent with the recent survey results released by the Reuters Digital Institute news report (2018), which indicated that news consumption is increasingly gravitating towards more private and ephemeral platforms. This is consistent with the concept of Scalable sociality which espouses a gradation of information along with two broad scales, for instance, the most public to private and small to large group communication channels (See Miller et al., 2016).

7.1 Complementarity of news media: online news consumption, offline news confirmation

Young people increasingly consume news from a wide range of platforms to gratify diverse needs. These needs can be broadly approached from content and process gratification perspectives. While

[29] "News consumption refers to every contact with news items: both news seeking and unintended contact. News is thus interpreted in the widest possible meaning, including hard news (e.g., politics, economics, and crime), soft news (e.g., showbiz and health), and service news (weather and traffic). This includes both editorial news, whether or not completed with interpretation, and short news updates"(Van Damme et al., 2015:202).

content gratification (news and entertainment content) was the primary motivation for news access, process (enjoying browsing and socio-technical affordance of social media) and content gratifications (news and other content posted online) were the two broad motivations for news access via mobile devices[30]. The rapid spread of social media alongside mobile devices has significantly transformed news access and consumption among young people. Equally, young people consumed news in different formats enabled and processed by mobile interfaces. For this reason, arguably, mobile phones are the new anchor points, where other multiple news consumption patterns and practices are shaped and reshaped. Hahn and Kibora (2008) rightly observed that 'mobile phone has become a necessary tool for the expression of identity and for keeping track of social relations in daily lives' (cited in De Bruijn, 2009:14), through the contacts, content, and sociality enabled by these digital devices.

Findings reveal that mobile devices, particularly smartphones, are the main ways of accessing and consuming news among university students. Whereas 99% of young people owned internet-enabled mobile phones, 95% often consumed news via their mobile devices (**see Chapter 5**). Not surprisingly, as will be explored in the next paragraphs, young people's motivation for mobile devices ownership is mainly to access social media and messaging applications. The motivation to plug into social media seems to reify the 'concept of media convergence, which emphasises that diminishing technological boundaries of media enable content to travel across media platforms (de Sola Pool, 1983; Ruggiero, 2000). Cognizant of the displacement-complementarity debate which has continuously bothered scholars particularly in the global north (Meyer, 2004; Ahlers, 2006); findings reveal that mobile devices have become the anchor points of the traditional media. Traditional media have tapped technical affordances of social media to 'push' their news stories, and get timely feedback in the comments sections of these platforms. Contrary to the displacement debates, where it had been suggested that mobile devices would eventually replace traditional media, traditional media have seized online opportunities. This supports the arguments by De Bruijn, Nyamjoh and Brinkman eds (2009), that mobile phones have facilitated the 'production, reproduction and transformation of social networks, social status, and hierarchies'(15).

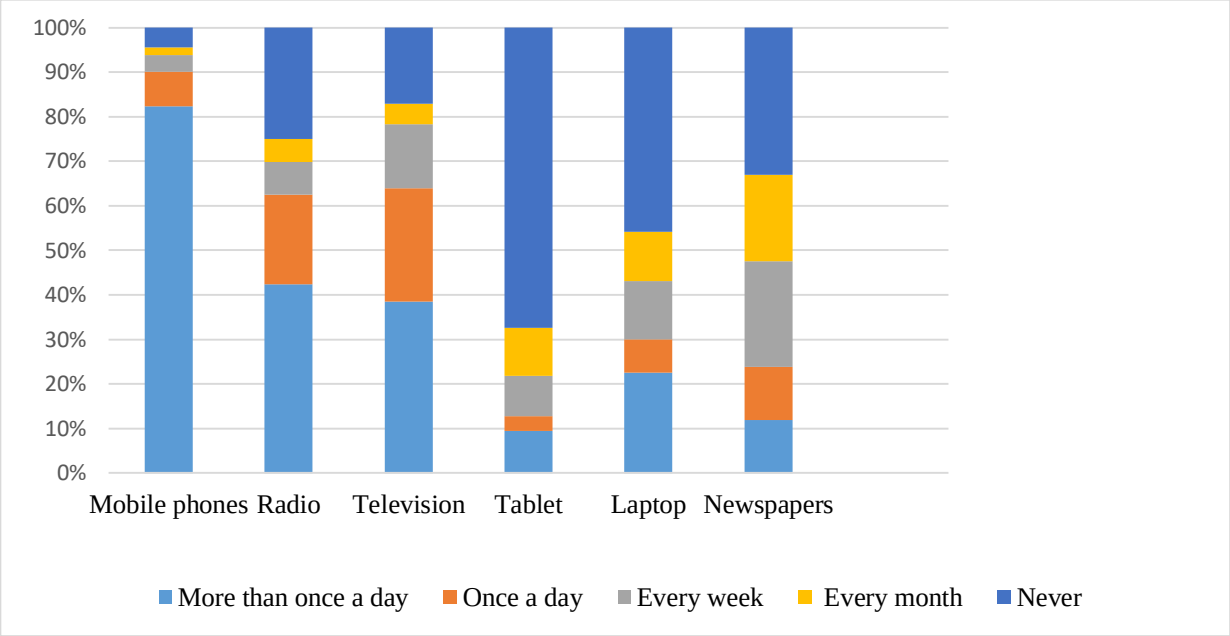
[30] Content gratifications concern the *messages* carried by the medium (Cutler & Danowski, 1980) while process gratifications concern *actual use* of the medium itself (Cutler & Danowski, 1980). Results from existing U&G research suggest that people use media either for the content carried by a medium (e.g., information or entertainment), or for the simple experience of the media usage process (e.g., playing with the technology, browsing); these two broad dimensions are characterized as content gratifications and process gratifications (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Stafford & Stafford, 1996).

In both universities as shown in **Figure 5 below,** 82.4% of young people access news more than once a day using their mobile devices, significantly displacing digital media such as laptops (23%) and Tablets (9.4%) as frequently accessed sources of news. From a uses and gratifications perspective, distinct features of the mobile devices such as portability and mobility, convergence and hybridity and customization and usability motivate young people. Comparatively, 42.3% of the respondent's access radio news more than once a day, while 39% access television news more than once a day. Newspapers were read more than once a day by 13% of the respondents.

With a cumulative percentage of 93% (summation of access to the medium more than once a day and those who access it once a day), mobile devices are the main news gateway among young people. However, traditional media (particularly radio and television) remain resilient in the face of digital disruptions with a reasonably high cumulative percentage of 63% and 64% respectively. These findings dovetail with a vast body of research which has often indicated that young people are increasingly accessing news via their mobile devices (Antunovic et al., 2016; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017; Newman et al., 2018; Rosengard, Tucker-McLaughlin, & Brown, 2014; Yuan, 2011). At the same time, these findings show that radio and television are useful news sources despite the prolific spread of social media and mobile devices. Nonetheless, although radio is slightly accessed more than once a day compared to television as shown above, on average daily access, television is accessed more than Radio (see Figure 5 above). The embedded nature of radio receivers on mobile devices makes it relatively easy to access it more than once a day.

On the other hand, while modern televisions are smaller, they are still considered cumbersome to carry around compared to radio. While traditional media has re-invented themselves online through a wide range of social media platforms, young people are constrained by data bundles. They, therefore, turn to the available television sets at home or in semi-public places (e.g. hostels standard rooms, restaurants, student's halls, Public service vehicles, etc.). A respondent, for example, said, "It's like during the day depending on where you are in campus you access this kind of information and then later on when you go home, and you have a television set, you can still watch the same news" (FGD, 3, UoE). Plausibly, the distinct feature of portability shows that, while many may have access to Radio during the day, later in the evening they turn to television for news and entertainment. The next few paragraphs delve into the distinct features of mobile devices and how they were found to constrain or inhibit news consumption, (Traditional media will be re-visited in a later chapter).

Figure 5: Comparative chart showing the frequency of news access via different channels



To begin with, mobile devices as earlier elaborated (see Chapter 5) are widely believed to be portable within the university as well as spaces outside the university (real and virtually), thus enhancing the consumption of news on the go. News as a reinforcement of time is, as earlier explored, crucial in the coordination of young people's activities and the overall social order in their social contexts "mobile phones are portable (…) you can use it somewhere, anywhere (FGD 2, UoE). The consumption of news on the go signals how social media has operated at the intersection between private and public spaces. At the same time, while news was accessed and consumed for a variety of motives, the boundaries of places where such news consumption occurs (e.g. public, semi-public and private spaces) is increasingly becoming blurred. The other side of this is the increased scarcity of attention to primary activities among students. Participants hinted at the internet and social media addictions, particularly spending resources and person-hours online at the expense of primary activities like studying and meeting basic needs.

In the Global North, mobile phones seem to have moved people from local to national domains (Elvestad & Phillips, 2018). However, commitment to local news and information, as will be argued in this chapter cannot be ignored. Mobile devices are inextricably linked to the bodies as well as the specific locations of the users, embedding them as useful communication tools in social-cultural, political and economic contexts. The overall design and architecture of mobile devices reified the earlier arguments of scholars of bridging the Spatio-temporal possibilities of time, place and the social context. Mobile phones and news are entrenched in specific social

settings in these case TuK and UoE, located in urban and peri-urban, respectively. These social spaces inadvertently trigger news consumption needs through a wide range of online platforms. These motivations were widely influenced and determined by three factors, consistent with the suggestion of Couldry and Hepp (2007): Time, space and social context.

News consumption habits on the go are tied to the mobility of mobile devices. As participants in the focus group mentioned, "A laptop is portable but cumbersome to carry around because of the size and weight, but a phone is convenient, I can use it anywhere" (FGD, 2 TuK). Mobility in the social class was tied to the economic position of young people. Owning expensive brands as well as the ability to purchase bundles in large quantities was a measure of one's economic capital. Comparatively, mobile devices do not consume a lot data bundles compared to laptops and tablets, rubbing it in, the respondent said if you use a laptop to browse you "must be a chief executive (C.E.O) somewhere". This reifies the notion of young people as 'hustlers' as established by Tufte (2017), with economic and financial position, as a critical determinant in the choice of medium in news consumption. Relatively cheap cost of ownership also came up, for instance a participant said "you can have a mobile phone, like, you cannot buy a television" (FGD 3, UoE). Nyamjoh (2005) argues that Africans are busy indigenizing the new and modernizing the old with novel outcomes. For example, the economic capital to own a mobile device, buy data bundles as well as meet the various competing information, entertainment and prosocial needs, resulted in alternative ways of news access, consumption and reproduction. For example, the emergence of black-market bundles (bundles *mwitu*). These finding seats well with the earlier findings of Pelckmans (2009) who found out that:

> The mobile phone is gradually becoming a tool of changing access to people and generates new forms of relating through appropriation in the economic realm (e.g. flashing credit distribution), the socio-cultural realm (e.g. reshaping hierarchies and private-public division) and the personal realm (30).

Due to media convergence made possible by the internet and mobile phones, young people have a vast pool of news to choose from, which inadvertently causes information overload. A participant opined that 'I do not get news from one site, but because I am using various sites…then my level of trust is based on the way those pages present their news (FGD 1, UoE). Giving examples of how they had 'liked' traditional media pages online on Facebook; For instance, "if it is information about politics, and then the same information is on Nation Television (NTV) it's on Kenya Television Network (KTN) it is on Kenya Broadcasting Television (KBC) then I get to trust the news more" (FGD 1, UoE). This view exemplifies convergence and hybridity of

functionalities such as the ability to download and run multiple applications, including social media platforms, among others (**see chapter 8**). Combining a wide range of media or platforms in news consumption has partly led to a plurality of content, while at the same time inviting attention on the diversity of such content. 'Liking' or 'following' specific channels indicate a plurality of views, while at the same time leading to selective exposure to diverse viewpoints. While plurality might be a significant motivator for social media news consumption on mobile devices, it inadvertently reproduces the dominant narratives, which are often assumed the 'truth', even in situations where they ought to be challenged or verified.

News, therefore, is no longer scarce or a perishable commodity disseminated by hierarchical news organizations, but rather a dialogic and collaborative process involving alternative journalistic actors. Individually and collectively, young people seem to adopt various channels and platforms consistent with their inherent needs such as the need to have social capital, for instance, operating multiple accounts to fit and belong within the group of influential young people. There is a need and a desire among young people not to be left out in the offline discursive interactions, which is partly performed online. News consumption thus becomes enmeshed in a web of technical and social networks online and offline.

This resonates well with the arguments advanced by Yuan (2011), that 'news consumption is not simply a choice between the new and the old; audiences actively combine different news sources into complex patterns of media use' (998). News can be consumed via traditional media and later verified through social media and vice-versa. A participant said, "I compare the news that I get from traditional media by verifying on social media". By way of an example, the participant explained that "let us say I have been listening to a radio and I hear breaking news happening, I have to go back… maybe to another platform like YouTube or twitter or any other device that I can use or media" (FGD 2, UoE). The main reason for this move was to get more details of the story in an audio-visual format, which can help tie the pieces of the information, mainly how a news event occurred. Through social media such as Twitter and Facebook as well as online news platforms such as YouTube I get to confirm that the news I read, heard is accurate". This complimentary pattern shows that the conventional news disseminated by traditional media focuses the attention of what young people can pursue further in online spaces and further engage within their discursive interactions. This can be looked at in terms of the agenda-setting model of mass media (See McCombs & Shaw, 1972); through framing of salient features in the society. For instance, through breaking news stories, focuses the attention of the audience not to what they should think, but rather what they should think about.

News consumption habits are increasingly forming around the materiality of mobile devices as well as the socio-technical affordances of various social media and messaging applications platforms[31]. This finding emphasizes McLuhan's (1964) view of the medium as the 'message'. In this case, the distinct materiality and embedded social-technical affordances potentially 'extend' and 'amplify' human communication. A participant said: "I have liked various pages on Facebook for which some are TV channels and the reason as to why I follow those pages is because while being at school, I do not have access to the actual television so it helps me to get information" (FGD 4, UoE). This shows that the affordance of creating a Facebook page alongside the possibility of liking (equivalent to following) shapes and at the same time constrains exposure to unsolicited news on social media platforms. Social media affordances enact either private or public sociality, which inadvertently shapes how news is accessed for instance, through private platforms or public platforms. The fuller the pool of news as it is the case in the public-facing platforms, the higher the chances of getting a diversity of views. On the other hand, private or small group platforms tend to limit the exposure of young people to diverse content. This further suggests that 'Liking' specific pages carrying specific content reify the concept of selective exposure (Anspach, 2017). In this case, young people selective exposure enabled by the affordances of social media serves to create a favourable bias towards pro-attitudinal sources (Lord, Ross & Lepper, 1979), at the same time cushioning them against disinformation from unreliable sources (I will come back to this in the next chapter).

From the focus group discussions, young people mentioned that traditional media online accounts were their news sources online. One participant mentioned that through Facebook pages of channels such a Kenya Television Network (KTN) and Nation Television (NTV)…. I go to Facebook because they have articles, there is no text limit on Facebook, and they can post, add a video there, a photograph, so it is more detailed (FGD, 3 UoE). This indicates a complimentarily between social media platforms and traditional media. While traditional media are often limited by space and airtime, social media offers the opportunity to give further details on a news story. Furthermore, social media spaces have expanded the opportunity for news consumers to engage with the news by commenting on the live news streams or video and news texts online. This affordance shows that comments provide a more nuanced account of news, which would

[31] Materiality in this sense is not limited to the distinct features of mobile devices as communication gadgets; it also includes materiality of the infrastructures (network and software or applications). The concept of affordances has in the recent past, gained prominence in media studies. Ingrained in the concept of affordances (Gibson, 1967), is the distinct media features or characteristics which trigger specific actions as part of its usability

otherwise not have been possible through traditional media. This connects with the arguments by Yuan (2011), that news consumption surpasses the dichotomy "traditional versus new" news media, both on the level of technology (traditional versus new media) and content (established news brands vs. market players). As one respondent said, I browse the comments maybe there is some information someone has added, eye witness has posted something there or something humorous out of topic, to ease the tension because you cannot just read about a bombing and get stuck there (FGD 3, TuK). The kind of news accessed through such traditional media pages online was mainly national news or information that is more public. Through the comments section, young people could read and find out more about a news event or news story. Participants noted that some comments offer eyewitness information and others are relevant, so it is always good just to read the comments, it tends to build a bigger picture of what is being reported up there (FGD 3, TuK)

Although news was largely free of charge service, with only newspapers offering subscription services for the e-papers, news access was increasingly predicated on meeting some basic requirements. Such requirements include (but are not limited to) having access to a mobile device and subsequently having some data bundles. This connects with Bourdieu's concept of economic capital; whereby the availability of financial resources indirectly influenced young people's news consumption. As a participant explained, in my opinion, let us assume the issue of WI-FI …windows operating system consumes more bundles compared to android operating systems, which mainly runs on a significant number of mobile devices (FGD 3, TuK).

Finally, the distinct feature of mobile devices storing battery charge for long hours was mentioned as a significant attraction to mobile devices as sources of news. A participant said, "A mobile phone requires minimal charge compared to laptop and tablet" (FGD 1, UoE) the same participant explained that structural limitations within the university space was a major barrier due to inadequate power sockets. In some cases, where there were sockets, they were faulty. As the participant said, for a laptop, you will not get a socket everywhere you go, and there power banks for mobile phones, there a no power banks for laptops. Important to note, while charging might be a requirement for the minimum function ability of the mobile devices, this was tied to the embeddedness of electricity in a social context. Therefore, significant limitations exist, mainly where this kind of infrastructure is limited, and where it is available, it is quite expensive to meet the bills. These shape the choice of mobile devices and how they are utilized in the daily news consumption patterns. Mobile devices, particularly smartphones, are well-positioned to adapt to socio-technical constraints, particularly electricity. While this may sound like an impediment to

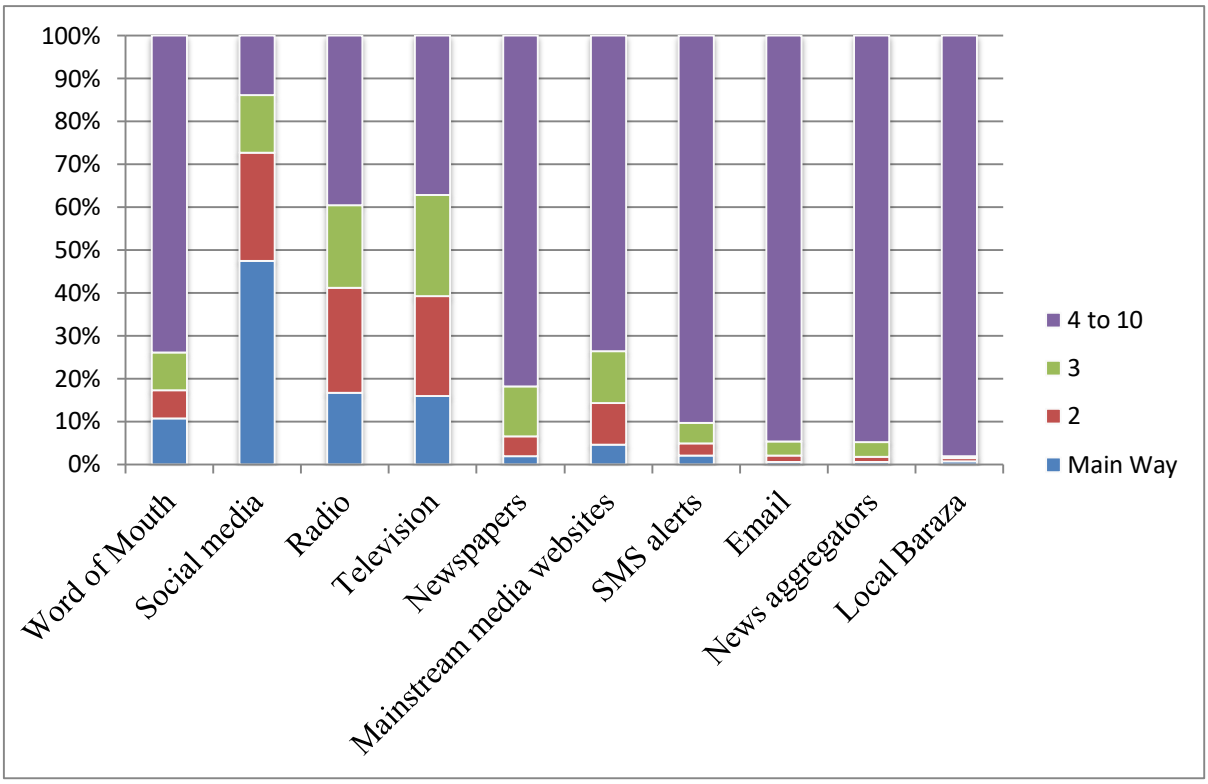
mobile phones adoption and news consumption, it is against this background that the ingenuity of young people in negotiating alternatives individually and collectively is brought to the fore. Through the acquisition of multiple back up phones as well as power banks, young people could ensure the uninterrupted flow of communication, particularly in news consumption (See chapter 5)

7.2 Social Media news consumption: Colonizing public and private spaces of sociality

Asked to rank their main ways of accessing news online, Social media (47.4%) became the widely used platform. This was followed by radio (16.7%), television (15.9%), word of mouth (10.5%), mainstream media websites (4.5%), SMS alerts (2%), newspapers (1.9%), email and news aggregators at 0.5% each and finally local *Baraza* (0.7%) (**See figure 6 below**). These findings partly demonstrate the significant rise of social media as the main way of accessing news. This dovetails with the arguments of Schroder (2014) who noted that 'news audience access, navigate in and make sense of a wide range of messages across print broadcasting, online, and mobile media platforms. Traditional media, particularly Radio and Television, though they have considerably fallen down the pecking order, remain stable sources of credible news (will be explored this in the next chapter).

These findings further lend credence to the argument of Elvestad, Phillips and Feuerstein (2017) who argue that 'news exposure from alternative news sources does not imply a rejection of mainstream news sources". Word of mouth seems to be the most preferred source of news after social media, radio and television. A dismally low number of respondents due to the cost implications used newspapers and SMS as the main way of accessing news. These findings connect with the observation by VanDamme et al. (2015) "news is increasingly being consumed on a multitude of media devices, including mobile devices (…) mobile news consumption has permeated individuals' news consumption repertoires" (196). In fact, through the FGDs, one participant said, "Owning a smartphone is necessary for one to access social media" (FGD 1, UoE). This view partly signals that the motivation for owning smartphones is for social media access. Mundane functions of sending and receiving Short Medium Messages (SMS) has partially been replaced by social media and messaging applications (**See figure 6 below**).

Figure 6: Graph showing the main ways of news consumption



Social media and messaging applications were described as useful tools for connecting families and 'friends'. These platforms offer not just opportunities for accessing and consuming news, but also provide ways of challenging the helplessness and vulnerable narratives as well as false hopes often peddled by the ruling class. Individually and collectively, young people gratified their news needs mainly through contents posted on social media, and private messaging applications. This reifies the concept of scalable sociality, but also raises the potential challenge of promoting a polarised audience by sorting and exposing 'like-minded' individuals and groups to news that does not challenge what they value or believe in.

Besides, the significant rise of social media highlights the critical role of user-generated content in the overall social media architecture. This is consistent with Miller et al.'s (2016) description of social media as the contents posted on the platforms. Miller et al., (Ibid) bemoan the shift of terminologies from social networking sites to social media, arguing that socially and historically, all media were social, perhaps with the degree of sociality varying from dyadic to public channels. It is against this background that this study adopted social networking sites (SNS) and messaging

applications to reflect the kind of sociality enabled by each platform[32]. SNS are largely public-facing platforms, while Messaging applications have a more personal or private orientation, consistently with the concept of scalable sociality, which argues that media populates two kinds of paces (public and private). SNS in this study refers to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, among others. Correspondingly, messaging applications broadly refers to the applications specifically designed for private messaging; these include but not limited to WhatsApp, Telegram, and Snapchat, among others. Although Miller et al. (2016), suggest that social media should be understood as the content posted and carried by these platforms, considerable percentage of young people were disengaging from these platforms (will be explored further in the next chapter). Mobile devices are the gateway to a wide range of online platforms. However, there seems to be a more radical disruption within the digital space, comparatively with radio and television. Save for newspapers whose readership has nosedived over time, radio and television remain credible news sources among young people.

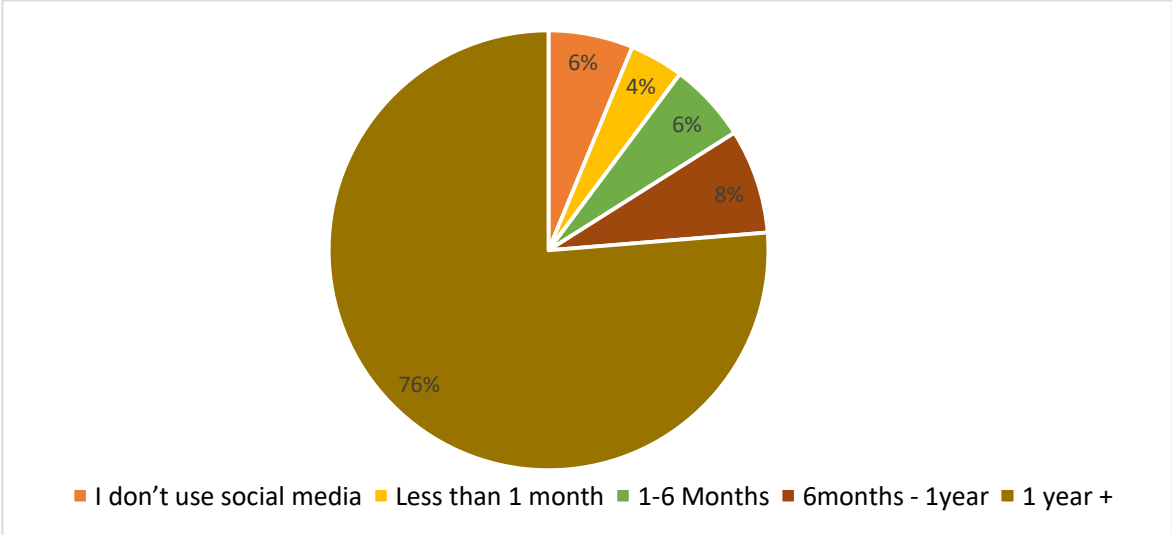
On the other hand, radical disruptions have significantly been experienced within and between digital platforms. Websites as crucial sources of news and information have partially been abandoned for more personal and interactive social media and messaging applications. Arguably, SMS and mainstream media websites caused some significant disruptions within the last two decades in Kenya and other countries in the Global South (See Ndemo and Weiss, 2017). However, a glimpse of the findings indicates that more disruptions have occurred and possibly more disruptions are taking shape behind the scenes of technological innovations. Important for this study is the significance of such disruptions in the realm of news consumption and reproduction. As it emerged, young people do not attend the more indigenous local Baraza in Kenya, yet they are still useful in the overall local news dissemination. Nevertheless, such information motivations were gratified through public/private and small/large group channels (Miller et al., 2016). This connects with the argument advanced by Wadbring and Bergstrom (2015) that mobile devices have not only succeeded in moving people from print to the internet but also from the public to private.

Although the news media environment seems to be saturated, young people get exposed to news for a variety of reasons through a wide range of platforms, with such access more inclined to social

[32] A networked communication platform in which participants 1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-provided data; 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user generated content provided by their connections on the site. (Ellison & boyd, 2013:157)

media. Findings reveal that an overwhelming majority of the respondents have been using social media for more than a year, with 95% accessing social media through their smartphones. Although the experience of time is relative, it is useful in understanding how prolonged exposure to social media shapes news consumption patterns over time. Out of the 755 respondents, 576 (76.3%) had been using social media for more than a year, 58 (7.7%) respondents had been actively using social media between six months and one year, while 30 (4.0%) had been using social media for news purposes for less than a month. There were 47(6.2%) of the respondents who indicated that they do not use social media for news (**See figure 7 below**). The duration of operating active social media accounts lends credence to the overall findings by demonstrating that a significant percentage had weaved social media into their daily news consumptions habits. However, social media use is primarily shaped by the contextual and lived realities of young people within and outside the university. Through the social media (SNS and Messaging applications), young people gratified several needs as it emerged from the FGDs. These motivations can be categorized broadly into four: News and information seeking, socialization and interaction, entertainment and relaxation, individual and collective identity expression (See **chapter 5**).

Figure 7: Doughnut showing the duration of social media use



Arguably, the duration of social media and messaging applications use indicates a stable news consumption pattern. Miller et al. (2016) note that social media platforms are increasingly adopted across different contexts in tandem with the lived realities of the users. Under these circumstances, it emerged that those who have been using social media for over six months (84%), had developed routine news consumption patterns, though in most cases incidentally. Social media was used for

a variety of reasons such as for self-expression, forging identities and social interaction. This connects with the suggestion by Miller et al., (2016) that 'social media is today a place within which we socialize, not just a means of communication'(x). As will be explored further in the next section, young people had a diverse range of social media accounts used complimentarily in their daily lives. This partly confirms the high adoption rates of social networking sites and messaging applications. Ndlela and Mulwo, (2017) argue that social communication has significantly been altered "owing to the proliferation of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp" (27). In this context, young people weaved social media into their daily interactions as well as news consumption practices, thus reinforcing Millers' (Ibid) argument that 'social media has colonized the space of group sociality between private and public'(x).

Social media has significantly shifted news consumption from offline to online, while at the same time concretizing the place of traditional media as credible sources of news. This is partly evidenced by a considerable percentage (47%) who indicated that social media was their primary source(s) of news (**see figure 5 above**). Motivations for the shift varied and were inextricably tied to the distinct channel or platform affordances (Will come back to distinct affordances shortly). The increasing need to access social media is a social need tied to mobile devices as a material object that inadvertently gratifies a wide range of needs, thus exacerbating the 'news grazing habits' of news consumers as argued by Shiller (2015). Consistent with the arguments advanced by Miller et al., (2016), online spaces mainly afforded by social media, have become the new places where people spend and perform their lives. Perrin (2015), in a study of young adults in the USA, found out that young adults (aged 18-29 years) 'have the highest adoption rates (90%)'. At the same time, Perrin (ibid) observed that teenagers and older adults exhibited exponential growth. For example, from the study findings, young people mentioned the technical assemblages forming the critical component of social media in 'faking' life, by utilizing affordances such as locations to forge individual and social identities by indicating that they were in high-end places in the country or abroad. What this means therefore in the context of this study, is that news is imbricated in a web of individual and collective needs to belong to a group. Better still, it could suggest an intersection between social media and the hegemonic power struggles in online platforms, where there is an increasing need to be visible as a way of making an impression among social media 'friends'

> 'so when I post there, at the University of Eldoret with 2-10 others, I want to show people, one, am in the university, two I have a group that I associate with, so that means am a very influential person distinct feature' (FGD 4, UoE).

Further, it can be argued that news was a secondary consideration, particularly to young people who were enthusiastic about performing their lives on social media spaces. This partly contradicts Miller et al. (Ibid) rejection of the virtual that separates online spaces as a different world. Although it might be true that young people's lives are increasingly lived and performed on social media, the kind of self-projected identities online to a large extent is wishful. For example, the posting of the best photos taken in very serene and beautiful places, with amazing people always dressed to impress, is not a daily but a once-off activity. Young people admitted faking their locations to position themselves in a specific class.

> People love class, status; you want people to know you were at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), so what come in your mind, and you say it, and also that you are associated with a particular class of people, people love being associated with a class. People love class (FGD 4, UoE).

The magnification of this once-off activities shapes the perception of 'friends'/Followers/fans online on the social and economic and in some instance cultural capital of the user. Inadvertently, this kind of one-sided posting of wishful or successes in life of young people becomes an incidental conduit exposure of news. It generates traffic to the wall or page by incidentally allowing individuals' lives to be the source of news to others who are following or stalking them. News and information are meant to paint an image of a young person living large or rather eating life with a big spoon as they say. More specifically, public-facing platforms such as Facebook and Twitter had more pronounced affordances useful for young people in performing their lives. Through affordances such as status, profile picture update, young people could enact and express multiple identities using multiple accounts, status updates, tagging, among others. In addition, they said they often seek to intimidate others by bragging about real and fake achievements. While these spaces provide avenues for self-expression, they also expose young people to news stories. Some tap the potential of these spaces to share news—which can take a wide range of forms such as links, memes, and clips, among others.

> I may be spreading information that requires an urgent measure to be taken; maybe it's an accident, you don't just say an accident has happened somewhere, maybe if I say at Hawaii, junction or if I say the specific place I might help in one way or the other, but personally tagging am not for that (FGD 4, UoE).

Broadly, social media (SNS and Messaging applications) have expanded news exposure in a myriad of ways, while at the same time leading to a confluence of real and fake identities, arguably leading to real and fake news, a debate that remains unsettled in many contexts. The possibility of

using pseudo names to mask identities undermines the tenets of social interaction, news consumption and the trustworthiness of social media in sealing business transactions. News in and of itself as earlier explored (See chapter 5) is laced with ideologies, which often are socially constructed, to resist or reinforce the already existing hegemonies. As Mano (2015) argues, 'African identity is still in the making. There is no formal identity that is African' (7). More private platforms like WhatsApp have introduced live status updates with the possibility of monitoring the number of viewers, among others. This raises questions on the traditional assumptions on the varied ways through which young people navigate their news needs online. Some believed that, by tagging friends, particularly on Facebook, one was adding credibility and increasing the visibility of the message posted:

> It is to show that you are genuine, what you are sharing is not a hoax, it is not fraud, so when I say that being in the university of Eldoret with this others, Of course, in case someone else wants to get the truth of that matter, maybe they can access my other friends. Therefore, it adds to that credibility, it becomes more genuine, more realistic, you become more convinced that this is not an idea that came from nowhere, and it is valid (FGD 4, UoE)

However, other participants were irritated by online activities such as tagging (**see excerpt below**). Ndlela and Mulwo (2017) argue that 'affordances that social media channels present complicate identity negotiation process in online relationships compared to offline situations' (280). Arguably, social media affordances are the motivations behind their use among young people. Miller et al. (2016) note that social media have scaled-down public media, which often populated two kinds of spaces, private and public. It can be argued that through news as content, social media has shaped daily socialities as well as the 'construction and articulation of identities at various social and spatial scales from gender to generation and from the local to the global' (Zaleza, 2009:19)

> I feel irritated when being tagged in something that I was not informed of, maybe it is something even not making sense, not necessary, maybe in a photo that you really do not like (FGD 4, UoE)

What is more, through such affordances, young people access information, which inadvertently shapes their discursive interactions as well as their worldviews. Undoubtedly, whereas many studies have argued for the potential of social media platforms to amplify social connections and communications, it also undermines the exposure to a wide range of views. It emerged that the lived realities widely inform the use of social media in a social context. TuK, which is in an urban area, had a high percentage of social media users compared to the peri-urban UoE. This could be attributed to the booming parallel data markets in Nairobi city as compared to Uasin-Gishu (see

Chapter 5). News consumption is a function of the 'friends', 'followers', 'fans', 'group members', thus partly limiting the exposure to like-minded people. This is further complicated by algorithms, which filters and exposes news consumers based on their digital footprints as well as those of their 'friends online'. This kind of news exposure poses a legitimate threat to democracy (Turkle, 2015), particularly in the context where democratic ideals are contested (Nyamjoh, 2005).

Although findings support a complementary relationship between social and traditional media, the dynamics of news consumption seems to largely lean on the scales proposed by Miller at al., (2016). This raises the question on the possibility of news integration online, a role that had, for so many decades, been executed by traditional media. As Elvestad and Phillips (2018) observe, "solidarity is promoted when social media and mass media reference one another, but is likely to be damaged when social media silos are left un-bridged" (100). As previously, explained, traditional media have re-invented themselves online, through the various online media, particularly social media platforms.

The interface between social media and traditional media enacted through mobile devices, demonstrates the evolution of traditional media 'into diverse institutions with local, national and international dimensions' (Obonyo, 2011:8). Although findings in this study suggest a decline in newspaper readership among young people mainly due to cost related issues; young people hinted that that they occasionally read newspapers online. Yet in other contexts, newspapers have often been associated with an active community and political engagements. In the USA, it has been found that 'people who lose their newspapers become less engaged in their communities' (Shaker, 2014 in Elvestad & Phillips, 2018:100). Therefore, though news consumption via traditional media is on the decline among young people in the USA and Europe (Antunovic, Parsons &Cook, 2016), traditional media dominate online 'credible news sources' in Kenya. Through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and WhatsApp, traditional media institutions have weaved these platforms for their news gathering and dissemination practices. This lends a lifeline and challenges the pessimistic view that traditional media will soon be a thing of the past.

7.3 Inter-platform scalable sociality: News migration between social media and messaging applications

In a rejoinder question, when probed on the main ways of accessing news via various social media platforms; WhatsApp emerged as the main source of news, with 46.5% of young people using it daily. Facebook was second with 27.5%, Twitter 12.7%, Google + 3.6%, Telegram 2.5%,

Snapchat 2.3%, Instagram 1.9% and finally Yahoo and LinkedIn at 1.6% (**See figure 8 below**). These findings indicate that young people prefer small group and more private media in their daily news consumption patterns. Through online links, young people hinted at the possibility of synchronizing news alerts in instances where they had more than one messaging application installed on their phones.

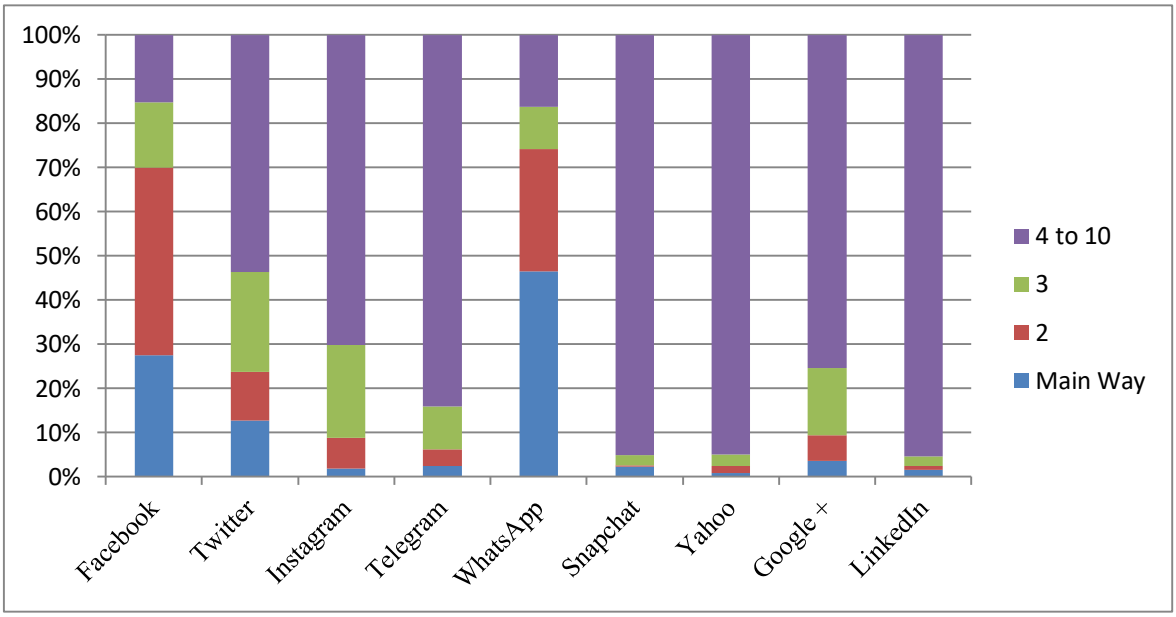
Consistent with Millers' (Ibid) description of sociality, these platforms and most importantly the kind of news and information they carry, shapes how young people 'associate with each other to form social relations and societies' (1). Private messaging platforms scale down discursive interactions to close friends, while public-facing platforms (social media) provide visibility and access to a broader pool of heterogeneous users. However, these platforms have profound overlaps despite some notable differences. Using the case of WhatsApp, the possibility to create WhatsApp groups make this a significant motivator among young people. Important to note, Facebook, which was founded in 2004, has experienced exponential growth over the years and now has estimated 2.2 billion monthly users[33]. It has further added WhatsApp (1.5 billion users) and Instagram (1 billion users) as its subsidiaries[34]. These subsidiaries complement each other in varied ways due to their distinct socio-technical affordances. Nyamjoh (2005) notes that "new media mogul empires are empires[35] of image and of the imagination" (50).

[33] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook

[34] https://techcrunch.com/2018/01/31/whatsapp-hits-1-5-billion-monthly-users-19b-not-so-bad/ https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/

[35] New media moguls mobilize a proliferating array of communications technologies to deliver a plurality of cultural products across a widening range of geographical territories and social spaces and are directed from the center by proprietors who rule their domains with shifting mixtures of autocracy, paternalism and charisma (Murdock 1994:3)

Figure 8: Comparative bar graph showing the main way(s) of news access via social



Facebook and WhatsApp remain popular news sources among young people, with both platforms being used either as the main way of news consumption or supplementary second source (see **figure 8** above). While Facebook is perceived as a public platform, WhatsApp, on the other hand, is increasingly designed to bring close people together, not necessarily close in relation to physical proximity, but people who have each other's contacts from within and far places. Important to note, Facebook through Facebook messenger has the potential to scale down to private spaces of sociality while WhatsApp has tried to expand discursive interactions to online groups, which sometimes can be joined through online links. Facebook has continuously and consistently innovated; adding new(er) features aimed at attracting and sustaining interactions online. Alhabash and Ma (2017) argue, "Facebook, as well as other social media platforms, evolved in such a way where other motivations are advancing in salience" (4).

The introduction of my story profile page, live news streaming, birthday reminders, tagging, among others, has positioned Facebook as a preferred public social media platform. Partly, these technical features motivate young people first to create Facebook accounts. Subsequently, they find themselves connecting with friends by sending friend requests [36]. Through the kind of

[36] "Even in 1970s, the term "friend" was used loosely to capture relations of sociability, in which people visited, went out together discussed shared past times, participated in an organization together and so on. To some extent, they were also intimate relations, ones in which respondents discussed personal matters- but not ones in which respondents sought serious advice from the other" (Fischer, 1981:306)

friendships established on Facebook and other social media platforms, young people position themselves in the social space, thus partly constructing identities (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016). For example, through accepting or declining friend requests, one deliberately forms a social network that inadvertently serves as sources of information, news or entertainment through their Facebook walls, status pages among other technical affordances.

Facebook doesn't have news of its own, but rather through online activities such as commenting, liking, sharing images, copying and sharing links, live streaming, status and profile updates, among other affordances, make news content more visible. Sundar and Limperos (2013) contend that these affordances offer users opportunities "not just to experience media in new ways, but also actively contribute to their content, given the rise in interfaces and applications premised on user-generated content (UGC)" (505). Embedded algorithms make suggestions based on the geo-location of the users as well as the contacts of an individual. More adventurous young people noted that they sometimes send a friend request(s) and at the same time accept applications from people unknown to them. Through the connections, established, young people expand their social boundaries beyond their small circles of friends (Miller & Edwards, 2007). The implication of the connections enacted through Facebook broadly on the scale of very close friends (strong ties) and unknown people online (weak-ties) shapes the choices of news platforms for news access as well as the credibility of the news. Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016) contend that the 'explosion of "weak ties" in the digital, networked age, everyone is connected to someone else' (87). The sociality enacted through Facebook connects with the findings of other scholars who found that motivations for accessing Facebook were mainly for connecting with people, family and acquaintances; maintaining social ties among other motives (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Raacke & Bonds-Racke, 2008).

Perceived public nature of Facebook as a news exposure platform, an overwhelming majority of young people were exposed to news as they entertained themselves and as they stalked their friends. This demonstrates that based on the scales of strong-weak ties, young people were exposed to a plurality of news genres (Political, Business, Sports, Fashion and lifestyles) across overlapping social domains (local, regional, national and international). Through Facebook links, arguably, news percolates through the vast social possibilities that young people find themselves embedded in and within online. Facebook, therefore, collapses the mundane boundaries between the social domains, consequently enacting a vibrant blend of local to international news (solicited or unsolicited). However, through geo-tagging affordances, Facebook has problematised the

whole concept of boundaries and location. Young people in a quest to express their identities were fond of performing their lives consistently with the kind of desired or preferred identities.

Strikingly, though, Facebook was perceived to be a more accessible platform for news access and consumption compared to twitter owing to its overall technical architecture. A participant opined that "Facebook was easier to use compared to twitter" (FGD 4, TuK). This resonates with the findings of Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016), who found that 'Facebook was a unified and simple way of making arrangements and of knowing what is new.' (94). Further, they noted that Facebook, as a medium, has become more 'functional than expressive'; this is partly because communication on Facebook is considered public' (93). It resonates with the arguments advanced by Miller et al., (2016) that Facebook currently populates what would be called public spaces because of its more extensive range of affordances. Therefore, news accessed through this platform was reflective of the diversity of social connections already established. Young people accessed news through Facebook in two broad ways: Incidentally and purposeful news consumption. Incidental exposure was mainly unplanned news exposure, where for instance, through visiting Facebook for entertainment, socializing, interaction or passing the time, young people stumbled upon the news. News consumed incidentally, could after that, based on the ego involvement determine the kind of engagement with the news. Purposeful news consumption was deliberate, and young people mentioned that as a way of verifying online news, they could visit traditional media social media pages.

The kind of news as hinted by Miller et al., (2016), mutates from a wide range of social media platforms and some incidentally, thus partly confirming the blurring of boundaries between various online platforms. Arguably, news mutating through these platforms, significantly lead to news consumption habits where young people consume news in bits and pieces, a move that has widely been argued to lead to news 'impressions' not knowledge. For this reason, in as much as WhatsApp was mainly used to access local news, the overlaps and intersections between various online news sources could incidentally lead to the consumption of regional, national and international news. This resonates well with the arguments advanced by Elvestad and Phillips (2018), "while local media function as a tie between lifeworld and system in local communities, national media tie citizens to society at the national level" (99).

Instagram can be described as a photo album, where one creates an account and shares the latest posts and clips; it has provision for sending private messages. Young people noted that due to data constraints, they hardly used Instagram, but female participants hinted that they mainly used

Instagram for self-documentation. It was, therefore, commonly used for fashion and lifestyle news consumption. Twitter, founded in 2006, is considered a micro-blogging platform, where users share information using 140 characters tweets to their 'followers'. In the context of this study, young people, particularly at UoE, perceived Twitter as an elite platform, whereby those who belonged to a 'certain class' shared their views. Considering this, many young people operated dormant twitter accounts, with active alerts for breaking news stories. Although Facebook has this distinct feature to form a closed and open group, it was perceived to be more public. Twitter was perceived to be public too, but unlike Facebook, its news was perceived to be more credible compared to Facebook, which many pointed out were more of 'gossips.'

WhatsApp has personalized experienced chatting, a participant said, "I think WhatsApp has come first because it's like chatting with somebody, but it is more 'live' because you can see someone is online, is typing, so it's more live". Furthermore, the participant added, "WhatsApp allows us to send a large variety of messages and media", and more recently real-time profile status update that has a twenty-four hours shelf line "when you posting a status, you know who sees, and you can select whom to view" (FGD, 2, TuK). Due to WhatsApp maximum group limitations, telegram a messaging application has been found as an alternative in situations where a large group (Usually more than the 256 allowed by WhatsApp) wants to maintain their conversations. WhatsApp is 'more interactive, more personal and allows for real-time chats compared to other platforms (FGD, 3, TuK)'. Unlike Facebook, WhatsApp allows users to connect with genuine friends or people they knew at a personal level. For a successful connection on WhatsApp, both parties ought to have each other's cell phone numbers. Another participant added that "I think that is why most people would prefer using WhatsApp compared to Facebook and Twitter, and again for WhatsApp, I think it is easier to use". This distinct feature has positioned WhatsApp as a flexible medium, which can cater to the interpersonal needs of self-expression and can be scaled up or down through creating groups of 'like-minded' individuals. For example, university students could form a class WhatsApp group; at the same time, those who were in the same group for class assignments could form their small group. At a more personal level, those in intimate relationships could still interact one on one via the same platform.

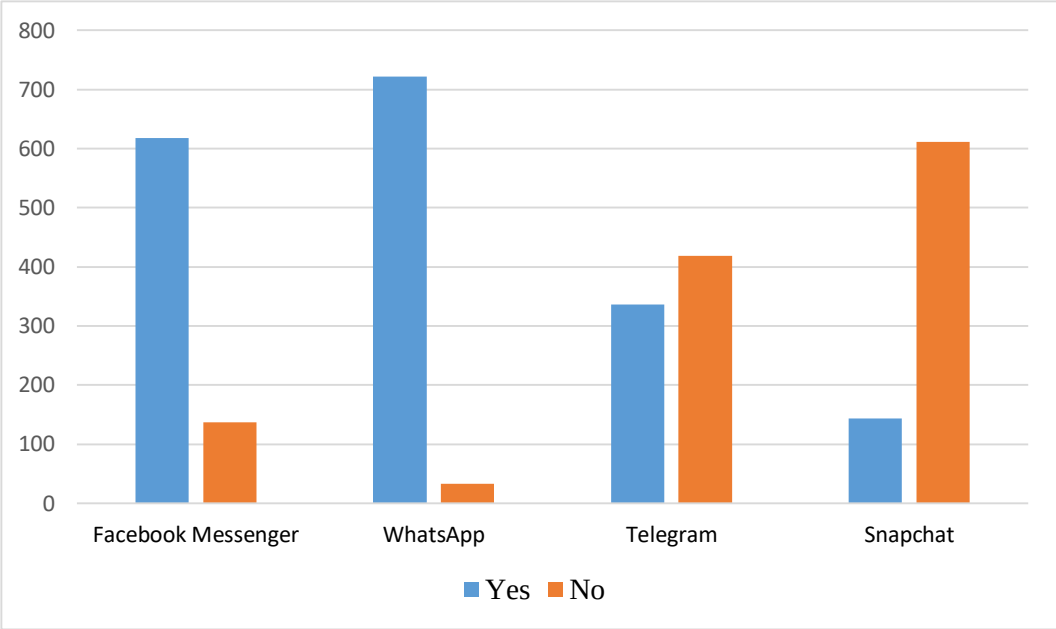
Comparatively, the motivation to own mobile devices to orient themselves with the wide range of online platforms was evident. The various news domains earlier identified (Local, regional, national and international) informs the consumption being exposed to news across a wide range of online platforms. It emerged that, the news genre informs the choice and use of a platform or

medium online. As will be unpacked shortly, channels considered public and with less privacy, as envisaged by the concept of scalable sociality was used to mainly access regional, national and international news. On the other hand, platforms or channels that were perceived to be small group and private were used to access local news and personalized or private information. In as much as information may flow globally in the networked spaces, "our attention tends to be highly local and highly tribal; we care more deeply about those with whom we share a group identity and much less about a distant other" (Zukerman, 2013:58). Further, the orientation towards local news among university students seems to be the foundation for all the other genres of news and domains of consumption. This is contrary to findings in the global north that seem to point to a dwindling orientation towards local news. Elvestad and Phillips (2018:112) found that "even where people do have access to local news, as well as other news sources, they seem to be shifting towards national and international news. This is the Global North context, particularly the USA and the UK, closure of local news organisations and a reduction of local coverage has been witnessed (Nielsen, 2015a).

7.4 Intra-platform scalable sociality: Rhizomic nature of online news

Miller et al. (2016) note that scalable sociality can exist just as well within a single platform (4). This study sought to establish news consumption on messaging applications and how intra-platform scalable sociality possibly played out. This section shows how young people used news and the frequency of such use on five messaging applications: WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, telegram and Snapchat in their daily news consumption. Findings revealed that WhatsApp was the most dominant news consumption platform, with 96% using it for news. Facebook messenger 82%, Telegram 45%, and Snapchat was a source of news to 19 % of the respondents (**see figure 9**). These findings partly confirm that small group and private platforms are increasingly becoming reliable and trusted news sources. However, perceived interactivity, as well as the ease of use of platforms, informs young people's decisions on what platform to use and for what purposes.

Figure 9: Young people's use of messaging applications for news



While WhatsApp and Facebook messenger are the most used platform for news consumption, Telegram was significantly gaining ground among young people. Telegram is a messaging application like WhatsApp; its advantage over WhatsApp is the ability to transcend the limited group chats (maximum 256 group members) in WhatsApp. A Telegram group has the potential to scale up small groups to large groups alongside the private conversation among close friends or contacts. Furthermore, it was relatively easy to share unlimited music and videos due to the huge memory space available for users. This contrasts with WhatsApp that has these affordances, but due to limited memory space for users, it becomes useful for chats that are more intimate. A participant made a comparison: -

> In other words, WhatsApp has more convenient features compared to Facebook, convenient features in term s of status, security app as compared to Facebook, even the cost of using WhatsApp is cheaper like you can use only 5mbs but Facebook you use 5mbs to update status only. (FGD 3, TuK)

Therefore, young people can have both messaging applications (WhatsApp and Telegram) and use them simultaneously, but in a complementary manner. For example, when a WhatsApp group reaches the maximum number, members are asked to migrate to Telegram to accommodate more people. Another example is Facebook and Facebook messenger, whereby one can scale down conversation from the public-facing Facebook platform to more private/personal oriented messenger, young people can send private texts within the same platform. In the same fashion,

while intimate and personal chats can be carried out on WhatsApp, young people can share movies and clips with others through telegram. All these signal intra-scalable within messaging applications. The rise of WhatsApp among university students contrasts with the findings of Duncan (2016), Lang (2015), and Mathews (2014), who established that Facebook was the most popular platform among young adults. Although they observe that teenagers were abandoning Facebook for Instagram and Snapchat, in Kenya, all these seem to be abandoned for WhatsApp, which is estimated to have 1.5 billion active monthly users[37].

Snapchat was not a popular news consumption platform among young people due to several factors such as the perceived 'truthfulness' or 'facticity' of the platform as well as the relatively high cost tied to the amount of time and data bundles required to facilitate the uploading and making real-time conversations. Young people embrace social media not just for news, but also for identity expression, thus very close friends whose mediated conversation through Snapchat will not jeopardize the desired or often expressed identities mainly used Snapchat. This is consistent with the findings of Miller et al., (2016) who found that Bestie or BFFs (Best friends forever) used Snapchat (6). Snapchat, therefore, is perceived to constrain such identity expression, by the need to make a real-time phone call with one's selfie image, thus aiming it a preferred platform by those who had established some level of trust. Then again, the economic capital of sustaining such conversation mainly where image or video is concerned makes it increasingly difficult to sustain. As will be further explored in the next chapter, trust and privacy are perceived to be higher on messaging applications compared to social networking sites that are primarily perceived to be public or large group platforms as envisaged by Miller et al. (2016).

Although social media was the most dominant for news consumption, consistent with the argument by Gottfried and Shearer (2016); it emerged that social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook were perceived as public platforms with less privacy (will be explored in chapter 9) compared to the messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, telegram and Snapchat. This connects well with the arguments of Miller et al., (2016) that based on the concept of scalable sociality; regional, national and international news would be accessed via public platforms such as Facebook and Twitter as well as traditional media. Local news would be accessed via private or small group channels with perceived high levels of privacy. This finding reinforces the arguments of Napoli (2015) who argued, "Social media have evolved to become significant means by which news of social, political and economic significance are produced, disseminated and

[37] https://techcrunch.com/2018/01/31/whatsapp-hits-1-5-billion-monthly-users-19b-not-so-bad/

consumed". However, as earlier mentioned, young people information seeking habits inadvertently exposed them to related news. For instance, young people who used Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp for non-news related purposes incidentally are exposed to news. Arguably, it is safe to conclude that incidental news exposure took place both in public/Large group and private/ small group as envisioned by the concept of scalable sociality

Complimentarily, young people may be exposed to news via social media and as a way of verification resort to searching the same news on traditional media platform online or offline. This is consistent with the argument advanced by Elvestad and Phillips (2018) that "we may be virtual and connected, but we still mainstream mass media at a local and national level, to tie each other and their communities" (114). In the same fashion, young people could be exposed to news on traditional media and go online to get information that is more elaborate on a news story of interest. Traditional media brands are increasingly popular among young people online, particularly in the verification of news amidst the rise of dis-information. Traditional media are the most trusted news source online and offline (will come to this in the next chapter). Young people perceived traditional media as credible sources of information. However, news verification could culminate in the catching up of news from conventional television channels offline for those who had accessed as well as listening to the radio and reading newspapers. News content in this context was found to mutate from one platform to another (Miller et al., 2016), thus echoing what has been described as 'snacking and grazing'[38] (Miller, 2007; Molineux, 2018). Further, these patterns support the view that mobile devices have not only given traditional media a lifeline but have further provided them with the much-needed readership online making them survive the tide of dwindling advertising fortunes.

7.5 Conclusion

Findings show that young people are increasingly scaling down their news consumption to smaller, ephemeral messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat, and SMS), while at the same time, disengaging from a large group or public platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) often associated with gossips, rumors and propaganda. These findings portend serious ramifications to news organizations and political campaigners. Whilst social media exposes young people to a variety of news genres, they equally hamper rather than encourage constructive debates online. Social media emerged as the main source and escalator of fabricated news, thus

[38] Snacking and grazing connotes a lack of attention to news; attributed to the availability of remote controls and multiplicity of personally owned media(McArthur, 1993)

inadvertently increasing the levels of trust on traditional media. Young people's needs largely drive news consumption habits at different scales; heterogeneous needs mainly at the personal level as well as collective homogenous needs at the group level. As explicated in this chapter, such habits are quite unpredictable in instances where news exposure is relatively new. As it emerged, with time, young people develop their own repertoires of news consumption, thus minimizing the exposure to unknown sources of news as well as the time wasted in search of news.

Therefore, news consumption is no longer a planned routinized activity but rather a haphazard, or what has been described as incidental exposure. What this means to contemporary young democracies and media ecologies is, young people are increasingly forging new and alternative ways of making sense of their world. The availability of news online is quite useful in a democracy, yet at the same time, it causes significant challenges, particularly in situations where young people are increasingly exposed to fabricated news online. Although social media has been studied and many other studies are underway in various parts of the globe, social contexts shape how these platforms are used in news consumption. The lived realities at TuK and UoE, both of which are public universities exhibited some diverse contextual needs, including political and cultural, which shaped daily news consumption patterns. Therefore, this makes it increasingly difficult to make an assumption about the generalizability of findings to a wider population. This echoes the findings of Miller et al., (2016) who found that; social media was refashioned differently across nine research sites.

CHAPTER 8: THE DOMINANCE OF POLITICAL NEWS GENRE AMIDST FEARS OF 'FAKE NEWS'

This chapter builds on online news access, consumption and (re)production as explored in the previous chapters. As shown in Chapter 7, social media and private messaging applications enact public and private spaces of sociality; they operate at the intersection of public and private spaces. With this in mind, this chapter sought to transcend mobile and internet access in Africa by focusing on context-specific studies aimed at understanding how African users refashion not just technologies, but also the content carried by technologies—including mobile devices and more recently social media applications (Gagliardone, 2016; Wasserman, 2017). It does so by presenting survey findings showing the most accessed news genres, namely: politics, business, fashion and lifestyle, sports, and weather. In attempts to provide a more nuanced understanding of the motivations for news access, this chapter builds on findings from both focus group, online and offline observations. It also sheds light on young people's engagement with these genres amidst the rise of 'fake news' online, paying significant attention to the August 2017 elections in Kenya. Findings indicate that social media and messaging applications have exponentially expanded news exposure avenues, with such avenues increasingly being used to consume political news. According to the survey, business is the second most consumed genre followed by fashion and lifestyle, sports and lastly weather news.

As findings show in this chapter, news sub-genres are consumed for varied intrinsic and instrumental needs. However, there is a common thread underlying the motives of each sub-genre consumption. For example, political news was consumed intrinsically because of the abundance of politics online while at the same time, it was suitable for entertainment value. However, instrumentally, there was an element of economic or business whereby politics is viewed as a ticket out of poverty. The historical connection between connectivity and economic geography shows the underlying economic undertones; 'information flows and data in new forms of standardized and monitored products and processes' (Foster et al., 2018). Similarly, for sports news, there was an instrumental motive to make money through betting. In the same fashion, fashion and lifestyle were instrumental in immersing young people in the world of beauty to earn money through their social capital online.

The dominance of political news shows the heightened significance of politics in public discourses in Kenya. Such discourses expose young people to the function of the state, while at the same time affording them opportunities to navigate geographical contours of power by

inserting themselves into the news production and circulation processes through liking, commenting and sharing. However, there seems to be a disparity between young people who access specific news genres and those who actively engage with the same news, raising a fundamental question on the causes, nature and form of such 'silences'.

Internet-enabled mobile devices may have partly succeeded in collapsing the old hierarchical barriers, but equally, they have profoundly enacted new barriers. The openness of the internet has allowed ordinary people–including young people–to publish information, thus accommodating their often 'marginalised voices'. However, there seems to be a new crop of political and social elites who strategically seek to filter and control online political discourse. These actors are equipped with enormous material resources (time, money) and skills required. Both actors have a robust social capital build overtime which earns them digital influences positions across several platforms. However, political elites are on a 'pay-roll' from their patrons to maintain a favourable image and 'crush' dissenting voices online that may not be congruent with the views of the patron. These emerging forms of gatekeeping in part enacts and entrenches exclusivity. For example, 'dissenting voices' are trolled by an 'army' of loyal lieutenants to the system establishments and political elites. They leverage on their troll accounts to bully out those whose legitimate concerns are considered disruptive or radical to the mainstream views.

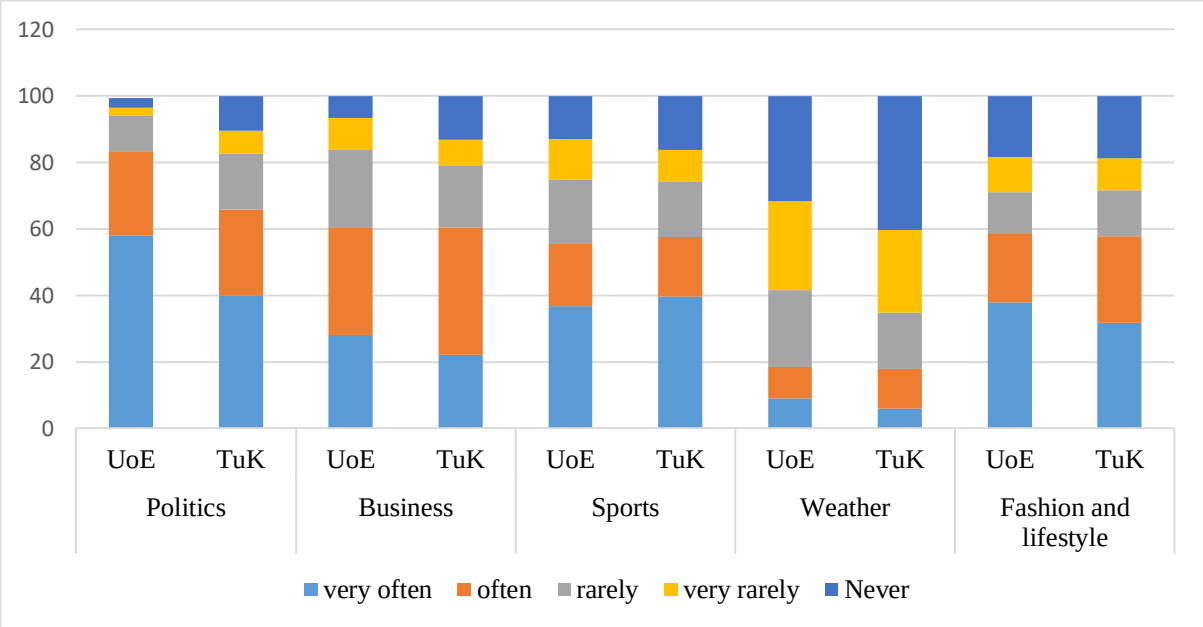
8.1 Motivations for news consumption among young people

In the first phase of this study, respondents were asked to indicate their favourite news genres from five broad categories, namely: politics, business, sports, weather, and fashion and lifestyle[39]. Although these categories have inherent limitations, they still provide useful starting points in the process of mapping the contours of the mediascape in Kenya. Cumulatively, the percentage of respondents who indicated that they **very often** and **often** access these genres in their daily news consumption was as follows: political news was consumed by 76% of respondents across both institutions. Business news was consumed by an average of 60 % of the respondents across both institutions. Interestingly, there was an almost same number of respondents who consumed fashion and lifestyles news and sports news; with 58.3% and 56.6% respectively across both institutions. Finally, 18 % of young people accessed weather news (**See figure 10 below**).

[39] News genres (politics, business, fashion and lifestyle, sports and weather) fall under content needs as encapsulated in the U &G theory. It refers to the gratifications derived from the messages or content carried by the media (Including social media and messaging applications),

From the FGDs, it emerged that these news genres are accessed, consumed and (re)produced purposefully or incidentally, based on a wide range of individual and group motivations such as the need to eke a living (will unpack these motivations below). As earlier shown in Chapter 5, young people have diverse interpretations of news. These needs, I argue, partly speaks to the diverse individual and collective needs. To recap, young people, conceptualize news as a window to a socially differentiated world and its sub-domains. This chimes with the second description of news as new information and Knowledge. News in this context, as it emerged, is widely understood as 'politics', implying that anything that happens in the society reflects the body politics

Figure 10: Chart showing the frequency of news genres access



As shown above, political news is the most dominant news genre in Kenya; accessed and consumed incidentally or purposefully. From the cumulative percentages (very often and often), approximately 85% of young people at UoE and 66% at TU-K mentioned that they frequently access and consume political news (**See figure 10 above**). Young people stumble upon political news while they are browsing the internet, checking their social media pages and chatting on private messaging applications. As exemplified by the excerpt "I think sometimes, news just comes your way…you log onto a WhatsApp group; you find somebody has shared a story about what is happening in the country…thus you are hit by the news you did not solicit" (FGD 3, UoE). Purposefully, political news is consumed based on the contextual realities. For instance, a participant said, "Since January 2017 we have been in a political season to date. That is why I

think the majority of the people are looking for political news. It is because of the season". Thus, political news animates and punctuates social discourses, particularly in the campaign periods. These discourses often take place in private enclaves consistent with the private or small group scales of sociality enacted by messaging applications as suggested by Miller et al. (2016). This connects well with the earlier conceptualizations of news as politics, as shown in **chapter 5**. Besides, this reinforces and positions political news as a key ingredient in facilitating convivial conversations consistent with the Habermasian public sphere (Mare, 2014b; Wasserman, 2011; Wasserman & Garman, 2014).

Most compelling evidence shows that politics, and by extension political news, is inextricably linked (locally and internationally) with the prevailing economic structures. Cumulative percentages (Very often and often) shows that 60.3% and 60.5% of young people frequently access and consume business news at UoE and TuK, respectively **(See figure 10 above**). Embedded in these findings is the intricate and intertwined nature of politics and the economic buoyancy of the state. Cloete, Bailey, and Pillay, (2011) argue that universities are influenced by 'local circumstances and conditions such as the nature of the economy of a country, and its political and governance tradition and culture' (8). These resonate with the arguments advanced by Foster et al. (2018) that connectivity in East Africa is deeply imbricated in the Global Value Chains (GVC)[40].

In Kenya, public universities have been struggling to meet their overhead expenditures due to a significant reduction of funds by the government(Okioga et al., 2012). This has been compounded by the highly toxic power struggles that seep through from the political elites in the national government seeking to micro-manage universities by implanting their stooges. As a participant opined, "Based on the prevailing political condition, I can tell when to order for my business goods, based on the prevailing political realities" (FGD 4, UoE). This resonates well with existing literature (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017; Tufte, 2017) on the reinvigorated digital entrepreneurial spirit in Kenya, particularly among young people. It also echoes the famous statement of the Pan-Africanist, Kwame Nkrumah (Mboya, 1963). At the twilight of colonial emancipation, Nkrumah urged African leaders to seek the first political kingdom, and economic freedom will follow. This example partly illustrates the increasing significance of the news, particularly political news genre in the process of socially constructing the 'modern state'. At the same time being a useful

[40] Global Value Chains(GVCs) are key medium through which export-oriented production is operationalised in the Global World (Gereffi 2004 cited in Foster et al. 2018:69)

ingredient in stimulating debates resisting or reinforcing the existing social orders within the local, national and global news consumption domains. From a Uses and Gratifications perspective, young people make choices of what news genres to consume based on their diverse news needs. For instance, the dramatic presentation of political news transfigures it to entertainment news. Thus, the value of political news could be its entertainment value.

Universities structural designs–alongside a host of other contextual realities–shapes the kind of relationships forged; they determine the scales of sociality based on the existing bonds (Weak or strong ties). Through the internet, including social media and messaging applications, young people not only scout for business opportunities within the various domains and sub-domains of the world but also seize the potentialities of online spaces to reach out–inside and outside–of their world sub-domains to interact, negotiate and transact. This process of establishing networks beyond the local domains of news consumption signifies another level of trust; trust based on converging business interests and needs. News consumption thus becomes relational and circumstantial. For this reason, business news becomes enmeshed with the prevailing political realities.

As shown by the survey data, sports news is popular among young male students across both institutions. For example, a participant said "…and on sports I really don't watch sports but I think most people watch sports news, mostly the young people because they want to bet…" (FGD3, TuK). The significant rise of betting companies has profoundly led to the commodification of sports in Kenya. This intersects with the political and economic news genres as earlier explored. The motivation for sports news access was mostly to circumvent the present realities, for instance, the lack of opportunities in the labour market, and in a way, invent the future by engaging in varied ways of gambling. Schmidt (2019) chronicles the story of Jack and Daniel; she notes, "Jack who studies law at one of Nairobi's universities, had, e.g. founded a 'betting group' in order to secure side income' (6), while Daniel "a 25-year old Master of Business Administration (…) referred to betting as his 'work,' i.e. an economic activity rather than a leisure pursuit" (6). These excerpts reify the intricate link between politics, economics and sports, particularly among university students. While the Government of Kenya is seeking to regulate the fast-growing sector, it appears that young people are increasingly tapping their analytical

skills to engage in a game of probabilities, gambling the existing scarce resources in an attempt to secure a future that is visible, palpable and within reach, yet so far away and highly elusive[41].

Thus, the commodification of sports, i.e. the need to make extra money through sports, is the primary motivation for consuming sports news individually and collectively. I observed that there were active social media pages, particularly on Facebook, where soccer and sports analyst advertise their services to potential gamblers. Most strikingly, the adverts would attempt to persuade online users to join a WhatsApp group. As exemplified by the screenshot below, the provision of cell phone numbers by these 'experts 'could be interpreted as a move to scale down sports news consumption, to private spaces of sociality (**See photo 12 below**).

Photo 12: Screenshot showing how sports news is scaled down from public to private platform



[41] Betting Control and Licensing Board (BCLB), was formed through an Act of parliament i.e. betting lotteries and Gaming Act Cap 131 of the laws of Kenya. This is in stark contrast with the approach-adopted president Daniel Arap Moi in 1989; in a move aimed at regulating the industry, Moi banned the use of Kenyan currency in gambling, and all gamblers were expected to produce their passports at the entrance of casinos (See Schmidt, 2019). This move was aimed at making gambling a 'tourists' affair, and at the same time a revenue earner. Paradoxically, foreign owned firms have penetrated the Kenyan market collaborating with natives as conduits to reap from gabblers in Kenya and use part of the profits to sponsor English premier league teams. Examples of companies in Kenya currently sponsoring English premier league teams include Betway, SportPesa, and BetIn among others.

Thus, it is possible to find WhatsApp and Telegram (both messaging applications) groups formed with the main aim of analysing upcoming matches and sporting events across the world, of course at a fee for the gamblers (**see photo 12 above**). This also connects to the entrepreneurial spirit of young people as earlier shown (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017; Tufte, 2017). Young people have little disposable income, thus resorting to gambling and betting as alternative ways of eking a living. However, the profound rise of social ills associated with gambling triggered a tug of war between the government and the betting firms. For instance, in its quest to discourage betting among young people, it has increased the taxes on betting rewards to winners by 20%, maintaining a 15% tax for the betting companies (Kenya Finance Bill 2018). However, this could also be interpreted as a desperate move by the Kenyan government to balance its revenues deficits. To this end, in July 2019 the government declined to renew betting licenses of twenty-seven betting companies for tax evasion and money laundering claims[42].

Nevertheless, this has not stopped young people from betting or gambling. Some of the arguments advanced against gambling is its potential to drive young people deeper into poverty. At the same time, this has sparked fear of increased incidence of theft and suicides among university and college students, who place bets using their school fees with the hope of reaping big. While some consumed sports news because of their inherent motivations primarily tied to their interest in sports, a considerable number of FGD participants mentioned gambling as a strong motivator. Arguably, the commodification of sports is shifting the purpose of sports news, for instance, from mere news for information to the embellished value of the sports news content.

In addition, survey findings show that 58.70% and 57.80 % of the respondents access and consume fashion and lifestyle news at UoE and TuK, respectively (**See figure 10 above**). Young female students mainly accessed fashion and lifestyle news, as compared to their male counterparts. The motivation to know what is trending within the global domain of the social world connects with the para-social needs as established by previous studies. Female participants mentioned the need to be trendy and fashionable, which was widely mirrored in their choices of clothing and other apparels. Fashion and lifestyle is also consumed not just for the intrinsic needs––to be fashionable and trendy—but there is an underlying instrumental need to leverage the knowledge of the 'what is happening' to create personal and business brands to make profits. Some dress well, modelling their fashion and lifestyles along those of local and global celebrities,

[42] https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Betting-firms-licences-halted/1056-5188482-xqhnf2/index.html

a move that earns them the much needed social capital to endorse similar brands or promote products and services along those lines.

The internet has caused unprecedented disruptions in the realm of commerce; The Amazons, Ubers, Alibabas, e-bays among dozens more of digital applications have trans-nationalised and facilitated a cross-border exchange of goods and services. Thus news ceases to be just local information about these domains but instead becomes a critical link for survival in expanding income generating avenues. Through online fashion pages alongside newspaper pullouts, both male and female '*fashionistas*' consume fashion and lifestyle with the hope of belonging to the global arena of beauty and fashion. This trend reifies the intersection of globalization and individual needs to 'belong' by fitting-in through the mode of dressing. Through news media, young people easily browse a multiplicity of sites and subscribe to these pages on social media sites for continuous updates on what is trending. Finally, due to the stable weather patterns, coupled with a past tainted with inaccurate weather predictions, young people were least bothered with weather news. Although they hinted at a significant improvement by the national meteorology on their accuracy of weather predictions, they further mentioned the availability of weather applications that offered instantaneous weather news at the click of a button with an unmatched degree of accuracy.

8.2 Politics and Political news genre: The serial killer that kills 'what matters to me.'

Young people seem to understand politics as 'anything' that matters to them' (FGD, 3. TuK). First, this suggests that politics and political news are deeply intertwined, and are thus used interchangeably. Also, embedded in this description is the significance of intrinsic and instrumental needs in shaping political news consumption. However, unlike conventional traditional media needs established in earlier Uses and Gratifications studies; these needs are multifaceted and increasingly fluid.

Against this conceptualization of political news among young people, the nature and form of politics seem to have shifted from the conventional institutional politics to more grassroots form of politics. This partly highlights the interconnected nature of intrinsic needs with the prevailing realities. For instance, by focusing on what 'matters to them', young people affirm the peculiarity of needs and the inherent possibilities of gratification in a diverse range of platforms. In part, this can be attributed to the reconfiguration of governance structures through decentralization made possible by the constitution passed in 2010. Decentralization, though studies continue to show

subsidiary shortfalls, was premised on bringing resources closer to the grassroots for meaningful development.

In this case, issues that matter to a considerable number of young people relate and revolves around government policies on education, sports, employment and salaries, taxes, gender equality among other issues, yet paradoxically these sectors are characterised by perennial corruption scandals, directly or indirectly. For example: "if it touches on my interests, let us say education, sports, employment and salaries, taxes and gender inequality and things like that…I'll listen" (FGD 3, TuK). Although young people face a myriad of challenges, these issues partly show the deep-seated fears of unpredictability and uncertainty of government policies in addressing youth challenges. Arguably, this uncertainty and unpredictability sow and entrenches a state of fear and insecurity among young people. It further shows that political news only makes sense individually and collectively among young people, if the subject matter is highly consequential or considered relevant in shaping their lived realities.

Political stability is partly linked with (un)certainty in government policies. In addition, the abundance or scarcity of peace within and without the borders of the nation-state shapes stability. The media has been accused of "dividing citizens into the righteous and wicked, depending on the political parties, ideological, regional, cultural or ethnic belonging" (Nyamnjoh, 2006:33). For example, a participant mentioned, "am an entrepreneur, by watching political news, I can predict the favourable time to order new stock" (FGD 2, UoE). More specifically, the regional and tribal nature of Kenyan politics played out when a participant said, "So if you are supporting a certain political party, and you want to venture into business in a stronghold of a rival party, then you have to be more careful on political stability" (FGD 3, UoE). There was considerable agreement among young people on the significance of politics on the overall economic stability of the nation-state. For instance, a participant mentioned, "the last elections which we had, it was not good. There were two big parties across the country" (FGD 3, UoE). Studies have shown that "media had assumed a partisan, highly politicised, militant role in Africa" (Nyamjoh, 2006:33). A good example is the 2007/08 post-poll chaos in Kenya, where some roads were barricaded, and some sections of the railway uprooted, paralyzing economic activities within Kenya and the neighboring landlocked countries.

By watching political news, young people are exposed to the internal dynamics of the state, particularly in relations to policies that influence the short-term and long-term economic plans of the state. A participant said, "I follow political news because, in Kenya, politics shapes policy"

(FGD 3, TuK). She further explained, “When there is political instability, investors are affected and may pull away from the country”. This is consistent with the argument by Abbink and Van Kessel (2005) that challenges faced by the youth in Africa are inextricably linked to politics (3). Political news, therefore, becomes a lens through which young people imagine their futures, through an active process of surveillance of political landscape. This resonates well with the findings by Antunovic et al., (2016b) who established that young people consume news mainly for surveillance purposes. By so doing, they partly diffuse inherent contradictions, and tensions brought about by societal expectations and uncertainties. There is a sense of uncertainty among young people, bearing in mind the high unemployment and underemployment rates affecting university and college graduates. Evidently, the need for employment after graduation is a key motivation for watching political news.

In “Africa, political news is given prominence more than any other news” (FGD 2, TuK). This view contradicts the international news domain where international news is news about the dominant USA. Paradoxically, in the USA ‘political websites constitute a much smaller part of the online universe than do news websites–only 0.13% of non-adult sites (Hindman, 2008: 74) News from African countries, as earlier observed, are not considered as international news. This highlights the gaps and silences, particularly in the African media landscape. The imbalance in news flows, perpetuated by global brands such as CNN, ALJAZEERA, BBC and the Chinese CGTN, have inadvertently ‘silenced’ news from Africa. The mentioning of Donald Trump and news from the USA as classic examples of international news exposes these gaps. Africa, unlike the USA, Europe and Asia, lacks dedicated news channels aimed at covering news stories from Africa. However, even in cases where such channels exist, they find it increasingly difficult to compete with these global conglomerates.

Consequently, the silence and the perceived misrepresentation of Africans and their stories by these corporate giants, has seemingly triggered an increase in online news consumption (social media and private messaging applications). Thus, it is safe to argue that, the reference of political news from Africa reifies the extant literature (Mare, 2014b; Lynete Lusike Mukhongo, 2014; Nyabuga & Mudhai, 2009; Paterson, 2013; Wasserman, 2017b), that social media have become the “new talking drums of Africa”(Mirjam De Bruijn, 2009). Socially and culturally, the state is a social construct bringing together people with some common or diverse aspirations, united through their diversity such as race, gender, cultural values and beliefs, among others. Historically and socially, the dominance of political news can be attributed to a few factors,

namely: political surveillance, prediction of the economic state of the nation, globalization and political economy of the media among others.

As shown in the introduction of this chapter, young people are acutely aware of the potential of politics to build, destroy or maintain the status quo in Kenya. As a participant mentioned, politics can "build or destroy a country" (FGD 4, UoE). This view connects well with the argument by de Bruijn & Both, (2017) that young people can 'break' or 'make a society'. Despite the dominance of politics in Kenya, the primary motivation for watching or following political news as mediated through a wide range of platforms was partly because it was considered a 'serial killer'. A participant opined, "Politics is what kills our nation" (FGD 2, TUK). This evokes the memories of unfulfilled promises among young people. For instance, Young people have often been branded as "leaders of tomorrow", an ever-elusive tomorrow that has kept them waiting and following political news only for them to get more frustrated on what they see; mismanagement, nepotism, wanton waste of government resources, poorly thought out government policies among other 'serial killers'. These challenges compounded together positions young people as the victims of bad leadership and governance, yet at the same time shedding light on their docility and complicity, particularly in being lured by the same political elites to help them get re-elected.

Expanding the view "politics builds a nation", then how does this shape the roles and positions of political news? This view can be looked at in two ways; first, the nation-state is a social construct, which is made up of disparate groups coming together with standard and equally diverse aspirations. However, the rapid spread of internet infrastructure has invited questions on the roles of borders and boundaries of the nation's states. Elvestad and Phillips (2018) ask for example "has the internet and globalization allowed us to participate in a cosmopolitan democracy operating not only within states but also among states and at the global level? (81). Therefore, the state becomes a socially constructed entity, legitimized through the presence of borders and sovereignty to exercise force to defend and protect its internal and external borders. Secondly, the mainstream media still wields varying degrees of influence online, therefore perpetuating agenda-setting roles of the media.

A participant said, "You find that TV and radio stations always invite politicians for talk shows thus setting the political agenda" (FGD, 2 UoE). Giving an example of the 2017 elections, the same participant explained that "last year around the time of elections, as 90 per cent of the news was on politics…headlines of major media houses was dominated by politics" (FGD 2, UoE). This shows the role of media, both traditional, social media and messaging applications, in

picking up and reinforcing the already existing public discourses. In this reflection, there seems to be a convergence and divergence of media and audience needs. Convergence in this context is exhibited in the need to update the audience on the latest political news in the country. Yet at the same time, the dramatic part rather than the informative part of political news received much attention. This perhaps explains the low levels of engagement as will be shown in the next section.

Young people mentioned that politics had become some entertainment. The inoculation of huge dosage of political news, arguably, ends up normalizing the excesses of bad governance. Consequently, the dominance of political news does not produce the desired responses; such as imbuing fortitude among young people to engaging in convivial debates on these excesses. Thus, through making humorous memes and focusing on the dramatic side of political news, change becomes a mirage. This is particularly true in cases where politicians try to outdo each other in public rallies often mediated through prime-time news. This shows the 'dirty' side of politics. A participant said, "For me, the reason I go for politics is not necessary to know what is happening but to see the bursting side of politicians" (FGD 2, TuK). This makes politics—the fodder for political news—the arena where voters and potential voters get to learn more about the political contestants, as they transgress their private lives in public platforms, further affirming the blurring of boundaries as espoused by the concept of scalable sociality. Reading political news gratifies entertainment needs, and at the same time shows a section of young people who keenly follow political news. This section, banks on their news reading habits to transgress the lives of the political elite, often dramatized through memes and funny satirical clips spread and posted on social media

University as a place and space where public political discourses take place; the alignments within the national realm influences the kind of politics alignments and re-arrangements within the university spaces. A participant said, "Politics helps us practice our democratic rights…like my friend here wants to be a student leader in future" (FGD 2, TuK). Through student's politics, young people mimic political elites and national campaigns by offering themselves as candidates for student's representatives through a competitive election process. University spaces offer opportunities to young people to actively interrogate their peers, as a participant pointed out "before we choose our leaders, we have to read their manifesto" (FGD 3, UoE). This partly reifies the position of the university, as an incubation space for leaders.

Young people described politics as "a ticket out of poverty", yet inadvertently exclusion and marginalization have buried them deeper in the pits of misery. To some young people, politics is

the most lucrative career in Kenyan. University politics becomes the arena for honing political skills in preparation for national politics. A participant said, "When you are in a political position, you don't have to look for a job". Politics, therefore, becomes a solution to unemployment to young people who had a 'passion' for bringing change as individuals by contesting in leadership positions, "personally, I do have that urge to be a politician and that is only to solve the issues occurring in our country" (FGD 2, TuK). Through genuinely earned salaries and privileges as well as the shoddy corruption deals perpetrated by the officeholders, young people have reasons to believe their "turn to eat is now". Politics is tied to the ego of the contestants.

While one would expect young people to participate in political discourse, locally and nationally actively, some have resigned to their fate. At the same time, a few see opportunities for changing the narrative when the time comes through taking up leadership positions. In Kenya, young people's hope of taking over leadership of the country from the old guards has not been fruitful, at least in practical terms. Politically powerful elites have shown significant interest in forging the youth agenda—through progressive government policies and legislations—young people have often been relegated as "placeholders"; they are not involved in decision making. Instead, young people are involved within structures and frameworks designed by the power brokers, cartels and elites. "We follow politicians on social media platforms for us to bring change, and also articulate our opinions on whether the government is doing the right thing or wrong" (FGD 3, UoE).

Although social media has been hailed as a democratic platform where marginalised voices can find spaces to articulate their views (Ligaga, 2012), old hierarchies that characterised traditional media news dissemination have re-invented themselves online. Some expressed fears on the resurgence of powerful political forces, within media as institutions and state as a significant player. This presents a contradictory view of technologies, particularly at a time when studies seem to celebrate their democratic potential. While tremendous progress has been made in securing the freedom of the press in Kenya, some indicators point towards indirect ways of the state to intimidate through arrests and in some overtures amending laws to instill fear on whistleblowers and bloggers that criticize the state.

8.3 Young people (dis)engagement: Significant rise of misinformation, disinformation and Malinformation

The preference and dominance of the term 'Fake news' in online news consumption debates have obscured the three kinds of information: Misinformation defined as information that is false but

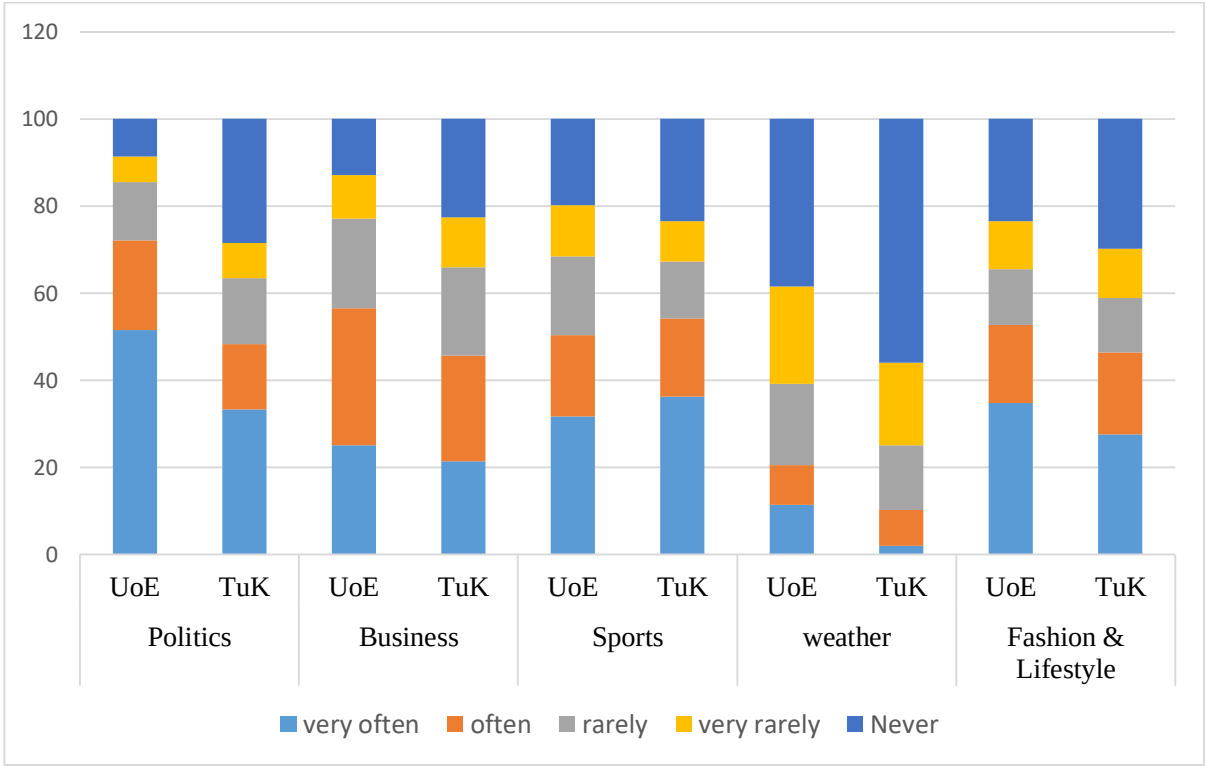
not created to cause harm; Disinformation is information which is false and intentionally meant to cause harm; finally, Malinformation is factual information which ought to remain private findings it's way to public platforms with intentions to cause harm (The LSE Truth, Trust and Technology Report, 2018). With these analytical differences, it emerged that young people use the term fake news to mean all the three (Misinformation, Disinformation and malinformation). This serves to show that the term 'fake news' is ambiguous, and thus it is not easy for young people to identify fake news out rightly. For example, while referring to the legitimacy of traditional media, a participant opined, if they 'lie/mis-inform audiences, they can be held accountable later" (FGD 1, UoE). As I will show in the next paragraphs, this could be attributed to the fact that young people were least concerned about fake news because it does not offer them an opportunity to earn profits, and neither does fake news occasion direct losses to them as compared to specific news sub-genres such as politics. Although these facets of information can appear simultaneously, there is a very thin line separating them; they are more pronounced in political discourses and business news where vast opportunities of scamming innocent users are unlimited

Scaling down, in Kenya, unlike other African countries, "politics runs the entire five years, from elections to elections, there is always politics in between" (FGD 3, TuK). This indicates that politics is part of the day-to-day lived experiences of young people, often mediated through a wide range of social media platforms and private messaging applications. The most unsettling part of this view, however, is the limited level of engagement. News engagement, which could take the form of "liking", "sharing", "commenting" and originating news content through writing and posting, was left to a minority group. Paradoxically, the content produced by the minority is shared and circulated with a huge web of networked others. Thus, social media and private messaging applications have expanded news exposure avenues, but they have not been quite successful in facilitating open, deliberative engagement. Whereas news exposure, consistently with the concept of scalable sociality, occurs across public and private platforms, deliberative engagements take place in 'safe' private messing applications.

When asked about their levels of engagement with the news sub-genres, for instance through clicking the 'like' button, leaving comments or sharing news accessed with networked others on social media and private messaging applications, there seem to be a slight decline in the cumulative percentages of those who indicated they 'very often' and 'often' accessed the five news genres. As earlier shown, an average of 76% of the respondents across both institutions access political news across a wide range of social media and private messaging application, yet

60.3% actively engage with the same genre. This shows a 15 % decline in the number of users who access news but prefer not to engage. Further, an average of 60.4% of respondents across both institutions accesses business news, with 51 % actively engaging with the same news. Interestingly, there seems to be almost the same number of respondents who consume fashion and lifestyles news and sports news with 58.3% and 56.6% respectively across both institutions, but 52% participate in the discursive interactions on the news consumed across both institutions. Finally, 18.2% access weather news, yet 15.4% actively engage with the news (**See figure 11 below**). As earlier shown in Chapter 5, though news exposure takes place across public and private platforms, deliberative engagements take place on private ephemeral messaging applications.

Figure 11: Frequency of news engagement, i.e. through liking, sharing or leaving comments



From the above findings, young people seem to be disengaging from social media platforms, preferring instead to read news on any platform, but would rather discuss news on private messaging applications. Paradoxically, this kind of (dis)engagement is virtual in the sense that, traditional media are increasingly acting as sources of credible news sources online. This is contrary to the exhortation that social media and private messaging applications have fostered the inclusion of 'marginalised' voices in the public sphere, thus enacting an expanded democratic

space. Young people are the antithesis of this belief, and they seem to live outside this idea. They would instead scale down any news engagement to private or ephemeral messaging applications. For example, a participant opined "but if I get myself in a situation whereby I do not understand the meaning of a news story (i.e. either I do not understand words or sentences used), I share with my friend for clarification." (FGD 3, UoE).

While some participants mentioned that they hardly read news, a significant number of participants hinted that during the 2017 campaign period in Kenya, they made deliberate efforts to keenly follow politics and consume political news on various social media platform such as Facebook and Twitter. A participant said, "We look for political news to be updated on what is trending" (FGD4, UoE). This reifies the view that social media has generally become a useful tool for exposing young people to a multiplicity of political news. It further shows how political campaign messages present a critical period in the electoral process, offering opportunities for young people to be informed on various candidates. This reverberates with the works of other scholars who have found that political news offers voters and potential voter's opportunities to make informed choices (Elvestad & Phillips, 2018; Jarvis et al., 2009; Westlund, 2014, 2015b). However, such exposure may not have necessarily yielded the desired engagement, as shown above. Whereas social media has been hailed as democratic platform affording marginalized voices spaces to articulate their views, this has obfuscated the emerging realities. As demonstrated by the findings, old hierarchies and structures, which not long ago characterised traditional media news dissemination, seem to have re-invented themselves online. As a result, young people seem to avoid the vicious confrontation with 'on-line soldiers' hired by the political elites to protect their 'image' and reputation on social media platforms. As a participant opined: "whatever we get, these people filter. There is no democracy amongst our leaders, they think about themselves, and they feed us what they want us to get, not what we want to know (FGD 1, UoE). This is indicative of the intertwined nature of the state, its patrons and the media, whereby the media is a precarious institution often vulnerable to the authorities.

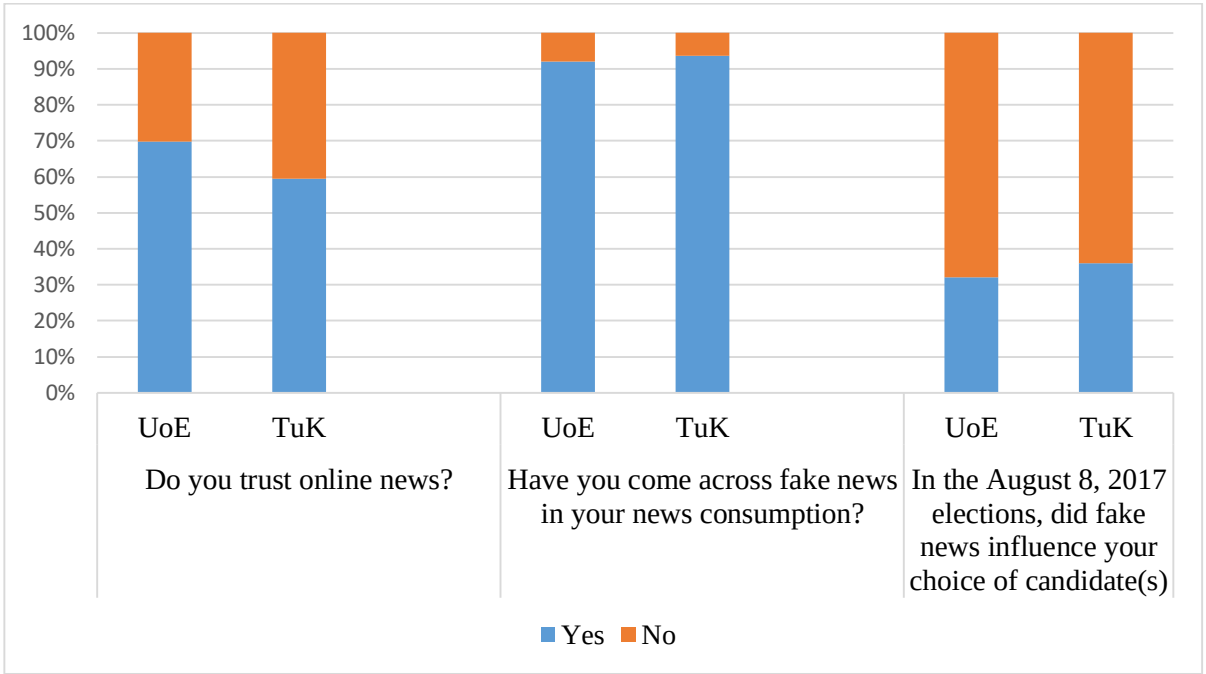
Therefore, through social media platforms, young people navigate the contours and the geography of power; paying attention to how political elites shape and construct what they consume in networked spaces. Contrary to the widely-held notions on the potential of the internet to shutter elite dominance in determining what (is) news, the digital spaces have increasingly witnessed the mushrooming of social and political elites. These revelations invite a profound reflection on what these actors portend to an informed citizenry and their commitments to civic duties in emerging democracies. Hindman (2008) argues that 'true participation requires citizens to engage'; more

so bearing in mind that news sub-genres–politics, business, sports, weather and fashion and lifestyle–explored in this chapter intersects with the domains and sub-domains shaped by the internet, namely: "economic, social and political life" (Hindman, 2008:5).

8.4 Awareness of fake news and impacts on political decisions

Probed further on their awareness and perceptions of fake news, 722(95.6%) respondents indicated they had come across fake news online, while 33(4.4%) indicated they had not seen fake news online. Asked whether social media or mainstream media is the main carrier of fake news, 646 (78.4%) seem to believe that social media carries a lot of fake news. In comparison, 102 (13.5%) respondents believed that fake news was mainly carried by the mainstream media, while seven (0.9%) were ambivalent on fake news (**See figure 12 below**). These findings reveal interesting insights concerning fake news. 78.4% believed that fake news was mainly carried by online news via the various social media platforms, 69.5% trust news received online. Paradoxically, trust levels seem to be relatively high, despite the awareness of the prevalence of fake news online. This could be attributed to the re-invention of traditional media online. As it emerged, radio, newspapers and television are the most trusted sources of news online (**See chapter 9**).

Figure 12: charts showing the level of trust, awareness of 'fake news' and whether such news influenced voting decisions in the 2017 General elections in Kenya



Surprisingly, the much-hyped fake news debate does not seem to bother young people in Kenya. Asked whether their perceptions of fake news influenced their voting decision in the August 8, 2017, general elections, 257(34%) respondents indicated that fake news played a role in shaping their voting patterns, while 498(64%) were not influenced by fake news to vote in a particular manner. 34% is a significant number, and this shows the dangers associated with fake news. The lack of capacity to distinguish between credible or truthful news stories and fake or untrue stories remains a big challenge. In part, this can be linked to the scaling down of news engagement to the private messaging application, whereby consuming news shared by a trusted online user or friend easily persuades one to believe the news as credible. Nevertheless, 64% of young people have their ways of navigating the online spaces in search of credible news, and in some instances verifying news received. As a participant mentioned: -

> For that I will use my example, how I do it? most of the time I am online, on Facebook and most bloggers use Facebook platforms to publicise their blogs. The moment I see news on a blog or something, immediately I will move to Twitter and look for a tweet from a mainstream media, maybe Citizen, Nation or KTN, and if those mainstream media have not posted about it, then I will perceive its fake news…until I see mainstream media house posting about it, so that is how I'll differentiate fake news from real news on social media (FGD 1, TUK)

Although truth and falsehood have attracted fierce debates in the past decades, for instance, Bennett (2005) argues that "constructing news reality frames out of context may be easier than constructing stories that might help voters separate truth from falsehood" (Arechavaleta, 2010:68). A participant opined, "Fake news is rampant on social media because of the mechanisms and framework used to control are not efficient" (FGD 3, TuK). The participant further added, "The problem with social media is that not like other platforms, everybody is a news anchor, everyone is a source of information, so control is complicated, and that is why there is fake news". These views partly speak to the expanded news exposure avenues as well as an increase in the number of news or information producers. Also, these views speak to the "technical architecture and levels of control" (Garman & Wasserman, 2017:41) of social media. Through Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Telegram, among others; active social media users consistently churn out information, post or share them within their networks. Young people, like other online users, exercise their agency by filtering, editing and blocking what would have been a seamless flow of free information (Garman & Wasserman, 2017:41). While there is nothing wrong with sharing information, posting false news stories misleads or misinforms the readers. Mis–and dis-information, though not new, has gained significant

multiplier effect through social media. Inadvertently, this has led to disengagement from public social media platforms. As exemplified by the excerpt:

> You see the idea of fake news relies on the policies the government has put in place; there is the freedom to share information and access information, but there is a point where the freedom is unspecified, maybe to what extent (FGD 1, TuK)

A conflation of factors such as the increasing role of the state informally and informally marginalizing and excluding young people; for instance formal exclusion in active decision making, not just within structures designed by the 'old guards', but also within structures which they were not part and parcel of its formation[43]. Unsurprisingly, politics has the potential to "build or destroy a country" (FGD 4, UoE). From a young people's perspective, it is increasingly difficult to point a finger on any tangible benefits from institutions mandated by law to address their social, political and economic needs. For example, between 2015 and 2018, the National Youth Service (NYS) was hit by two major scandals dubbed NYS I (estimated $7,650,000) and NYS II (estimated $ 100,000,000)[44]. Under these circumstances, as earlier shown, young people's hopes of taking over leadership of the country from the old guards have not been fruitful, at least in practical terms. This reifies Mwangola's (2007) argument that immediately after independence, "youth were officially relegated to *watu wa mkono* (Swahili for casual labourers) in Kenyan politics" (147).

In addition, the use of social media to source, distribute and receive feedback among users, has potentially affected how young people connect. As earlier elaborated in Chapter 7, the comment section, far from facilitating convivial debates, particularly on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, have become spaces where young people vent out their frustrations. In contrast, for others, it has seemingly become a space for consolidating social capital by posting humorous comments. Inadvertently, this has anchored traditional media as partially credible news sources online, yet at the same time undermined professionalism and creativity that punctuated traditional news media. As a participant said: "If the source maybe is NTV, and it is on social media. I still have to trust because, what is in the Television, is what they have posted on social media" (FGD 1, UoE). This suggests a complementary role between social media and traditional media. However, while a considerable number of traditional media had active social media accounts, they were not

[43] There have been no interventions on youth challenges in Kenya, however, even in cases where policies have been developed such as the National Youth Service Policy (NYS) (see Mwangola, 2007; Njogu, 2013) to address the plight of young people, such government institutions have been tainted by corruption cases thus depriving millions of young people lifetime opportunities.
[44] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Youth_Service_scandal

fully trusted. Young people mentioned that: "99% of information disseminated by traditional media is verified, for example, if NTV has to share information about the death of somebody, they have to verify". The same participant added, in cases where they 'lie/misinform audiences, they can be held accountable later" (FGD 1, UoE). These views sharply contrast with what they thought of social media and blogs where they said, "Bloggers just write anything, if somebody has been rushed to the hospital, they say he/she is dead". This raises the ethical challenges posed by social media as well as the quality of information available online. While news exposure has expanded the quantity of political information, the lowering of barriers of news production has threatened the right to accurate, credible, reliable political news necessary for making informed choices in a democracy. Furthermore, it resonates with Bakir and McStacy's (2017) argument that fake news has complicated democratic deepening; by 'production of wrongly informed citizens, who stay wrongly informed in echo chambers and are emotionally antagonized because of the affective and provocative nature of fake news' (6). However, young people may not stay in the eco chambers as suggested, for they continuously seek to verify information online through parallel processes.

On the other side, traditional media were accused of focusing on the political drama, rather than asking pressing questions on behalf of the audience. As a participant observed: "That's all they have just been airing out. Not even things that will shape my political mindset in terms of the manifesto and all that stuff, it has just been the political war; Jubilee (political party) vs NASA (political party), not even, what NASA is offering me and what Jubilee is offering me. It is just the war, how they are fighting each other. (FGD 1, UoE). This implicates traditional media in exacerbating the already delicate peace among supporters of different political parties whose 'war of words' is amplified more than their political ideologies.

On the positive side, traditional media brands are increasingly popular among young people online, particularly in the verification of news amidst the rise of disinformation. However, though traditional social media pages and sites are perceived to be credible online, young people hardly engage with news through commenting or giving feedback. Nevertheless, the rise of disinformation on various social media platforms have cemented by partly restoring the waning trust in traditional media. A participant conceded: "traditional media can lie/misinform us, but they can be held accountable to it later (FGD 1, UoE). This kind of circumstantial trust does not suggest that traditional media in Kenya do not have a frosty relationship with news consumers including powerful political elites. However, the stage of verification could culminate in the catching up of news from conventional television channels offline for those who had access to

traditional media offline. News content in this context was found to mutate from one platform to another (Miller et al., 2016), thus echoing what has been described as 'snacking and grazing' (Molineux, 2018)[45]. Further, these patterns support the view that mobile devices have not only given traditional media a lifeline but have further provided them with the much-needed readership online making them survive the tide of dwindling advertising fortunes.

Consequently, 'Politically inactive' youth have contended with marginalization and exclusion, particularly in social media platforms where they feel their views do not matter. A participant said: "for me, the reason I go for politics is not necessarily to know what is happening but to see the bursting side of politicians" (FGD 2, TuK). A significant population of well-informed young people deem no important entry port to political life (Couldry, 2010). This has the danger of triggering the fear of feeling isolated online, thus threatening the need to belong (Mano, 2015; Williams & Nida, 2011). While a few see opportunities for advancing personal interests as social media managers for the elites active social media use seem to have majorly favoured activists, loyal and political sycophants, elected and aspiring representatives, government and corporate agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other forms of collective agency; this has broadly been described as alternative politics (Garman & Wasserman, 2017). As a participant explained, "I do have that urge to be a politician, and that is only to solve the issues occurring in our country" (FGD 2, TuK). This marginalization and exclusion from the formal structures of power and active decision making have partly shaped the kind of 'me politics', whereby young people put their interests first. Here, the kind of political news engagement on WhatsApp is closely tied to 'personal meaning, identity processes and issues that have to do with cultural matters' (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013 in Garman & Wasserman, 2017).

Through their social capital, elites, directly and indirectly, shape the discursive interactions online: "if a politician stands and says this is a table (the participant tightly holding onto the chair he was sitting on) no one will ever come and say this is a chair am sitting on, everyone will say this is a table am sitting on. If I stand and say this is a chair, I become a social pariah, people will say…aaah this young guy is always contradicting our politician, there is something wrong with him or he plays for the other team" (FGD 1, TUK). Embedded in this view is the silencing of minority voices by the patron sympathizers or sycophantic followers of the elite politicians. This dovetails with Gagliardone, (2016) argument that through links of a network node could "indicate

[45] Snacking and grazing connotes a lack of attention to news; attributed to the availability of remote controls and multiplicity of personally owned media (McArthur, 1993)

relations between patrons and clients, shared belonging to a same ethnic group or clan, the connection between voters and their elected representatives". Similarly, Westlund, (2015) found out that, there was a significant relationship between the informed citizenry and the quality of democracy, as well informed citizens or heavy consumers of news were likely to make wise decisions in democratic processes such as voting.

There was a perception of the state interference or infringement on the media. A participant said, "I also think political elites are the ones who control the news that we will get because if you look at the financiers of this political parties we do have, most of them are businessmen, they are billionaires, so these are the people who control the news that we get" (FGD4, UoE). This is not new in Kenya (see Mboya, 1963, Murunga & Nasong'o, 2007), past regimes have had acrimonious relationship with the media, for instance, the raiding of the Standard Media Group offices (which owns Kenya Television Network, and The standard newspaper) in 2005 by a cabinet minister (G. O. Ogola, 2010), came at a time when Kenyans had unanimously voted to end the rule of a regime that had been in power for 40 years. Most recently, In January 2018, the move to switch off television signals in unclear circumstances surrounding the swearing-in ceremony of opposition leader Raila Odinga[46], to the hegemonic power of the incumbent regime to muzzle the media. Cognizant of social media in rapid news exposure, the state agency National Commission and Integration Commission (NCIC) fired a warning to WhatsApp group administrators (admins) that they would be held culpable for hate speech made on their WhatsApp groups[47]. While the state has to protect the rights of all Kenyans as enshrined in the bill of rights under article 21 of the Kenyan constitution, such moves cultivate an atmosphere of fear and tensions thus possibly affecting free deliberative engagement with news online for fear of being arrested[48].

[46] "The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights has earlier today received reports and information to the effect that the broadcast airwaves for the local television networks were switched off by Communications Authority of Kenya to disallow the live coverage of the swearing-in activity of the opposition leadership at Uhuru Park. The Broadcast Television networks include; Kenya Television Network News NTV and Royal Media Services' Citizen TV and its other affiliate broadcast stations". (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, Press release on 30th January 2018)

[47] "NCIC chairman Francis Kaparo warned that the commission would be coming for WhatsApp groups administrators for spreading hate speech" https://www.nation.co.ke/news/WhatsApp-Why-you-should-think-twice-becoming-admin-/1056-4063744-8xboe0z/index.html

[48] "It is the fundamental duty of the State and every State organ to observe, respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights and fundamental freedoms in the Bill of Rights."

8.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, social media has exponentially increased exposure to a wide variety of news genres. Notably, political news genre emerged as the most dominant genre among young people in Kenya. In their description, young people seem to consider "politics as anything that matters to them". At the same time, they were acutely aware of its potential to build or destroy a country, thus necessitating political news consumption as a precautionary surveillance measure. Besides, politics and political news seems to have attracted new descriptions. These descriptions revolve around resisting the dominant ideologies perpetuated by the existing social orders and societal power structures. This was followed by business news deeply intertwined with political news sub-genre. Young people consider themselves as 'hustlers', and therefore they spend considerable time scouting for online business opportunities to meet their financial needs. Interestingly, almost the same number of respondents consume fashion and lifestyle and sports news. Lastly, weather news is the least consumed genre in Kenya, with young people citing the availability of weather updates through search engines and mobile applications. Thus, young people have a vast pool of information to deliberately, and in some instances incidentally choose from. However, there is a disparity between those who access news and those who actively engage with it. The significant rise of dis/misinformation online has partly triggered the need for verification of news through multiple platforms. Thus, it is now common to find young people hoping from one platform to the other searching for the same news story, all to establish its veracity.

Important to realize, news accessed is sometimes directly the outcome of the digital footprints of a user(s), thus raising fundamental questions on the security of data and the user's privacy. Lived experiences and the contextual realities shape and inform the kind of discourses that are built and sustained within a society-- social media terminologies such as 'what is trending' have become part of everyday experiences in rating what to consume and why. Through social media and private messaging applications, young people express their personal alternative views or attempt to negotiate how they experience the world through news, albeit in private messaging applications. However, this is seemingly far from the point. There abound inherent contradictions that emerged, confirming that the motivations for accessing and consuming political news is not static. With the slightest change of context, medium, form and format of news content, news needs emerge or submerge. The resulting impact is nullification or amplification of the already existing needs. News genres are interwoven and there is a universe of intersections and overlaps. They compete and complement each other in the process that seemingly oscillates between various (sub) domains of the social world: local, regional, national and global. Finally, it is safe

to conclude that the decades of exclusion and social marginalization of young people directly by the elites, power brokers, and indirectly through rigid societal structures (and in some cases poorly thought out policies) have partly led to apathy and cynicism among young people. This kind of apathy can be described as positive, for it has ignited digital entrepreneurship among young people, where social media platforms are tapped for marketing services and products online, personal branding, creating online networks, self-documentation among other possibilities.

CHAPTER 9: INTER/INTRA-PLATFORM SCALABLE SOCIALITIES: TRUST AND PRIVACY IN ONLINE NEWS CONSUMPTION

This chapter maps young people's perception of trust and privacy and shows how the two concepts are deeply intertwined, and profoundly shape the institutional and networked news trust. It does so by highlighting the paradoxes that reify the complexity of trust and privacy in an increasingly internet-mediated society. It further shows how trust and privacy are mutually constitutive in and of each other; they are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. Yet at the same time embedded within the broader global discourses of surveillance and cybersecurity debates.

Trust and privacy are broad and multi-faceted; they are conceptualized in varied ways in different contexts. Among a vast corpus of descriptions, Quandt (2012) briefly describes trust as a "social and communicative concept, aimed at specific connections between two or more actors" (8). On the other hand, privacy a concept that has remained a legal concept in journalism for a very long time is now being threatened by the blurring of boundaries between public and private spaces of sociality. However, they have not attracted much attention in the African context, even when several African states are experimenting on the digitization of services and governance structures. Going forward, I adopt the distinction by Quandt (2012) between institutionalized and network trust to structure this chapter. Institutional trust refers to trust in traditional media institutions (television, radio and newspapers) while networked trust is trust based on personal connections made possible by social media and messing application or what Castells (2000) describes as 'networked society'. My argument here is that trust in media institutions lends credence to specific genres consumed by young people. At the same time, the ties of socialities existing between individual and groups connected online shapes how news shared or produced by such actors are received.

Across East Africa, different regimes are experimenting on various ways of reclaiming control of the often-perceived 'volatile' social media and private messaging spaces. Paradoxically, as shown in the previous chapters, these platforms are the main ways of news exposure, thus calling attention to how these tactics manifest in the patterns and practices of news consumption. In Kenya, the recent launch of National Integrated Identity Management System[49] (Huduma

[49] https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2001314408/state-has-no-right-to-deny-you-services-for-lack-of-huduma-number

Number) by the government came under sharp scrutiny – and has generated heated debates– with questions on the invasion of privacy through data harvesting. The hashtag #ResistHudumaNamba was formed to persuade Kenyans to resist the whole exercise, with issues of the absence of clear legislation to protect the data collected from ordinary Kenyans forming the crux of the debates.

The bottom-up approach to news access and consumption is useful in providing insights on the emerging and receding news consumption patterns, paying attention to users perceptions of trust and privacy traditional in Kenya. One point which is often overlooked is that, news is more than just 'news' (see chapter 6); it connects the 'self' to the immediate 'world', and at the same time brings the 'world' to the 'self'. The inherent tensions, for instance, how much information about the 'self' the world needs to know, and how much of the world the 'self' needs to know. These raises fundamental issues of trust and privacy. This chapter demonstrates how the significant rise of misinformation, disinformation and malinformation; widely described as 'fake news' has strengthened traditional media offline as credible news sources.

Findings show that news consumption is primarily shaped by perceptions on the level of trust and privacy enacted by specific news channel(s) or platform(s), at and across different time and places. As will be shown, these perceptions are shaped by social-technical affordances of various social media platforms as well as a plethora of other temporalities within and without university spaces where the 'self' is located. This is particularly true if news as earlier shown in chapter 5 is critical in forming and sustaining the 'self' in a socially-culturally-politically differentiated context such as Kenya. Sociologists have described 'Self' as a viewpoint associated with an embodied consciousness (Couldry & Hepp, 2016). Thus, through individual and group interactions, young people form a viewpoint of the 'self' (see Chapter 7). The merging themes reflect an increased blurring of boundaries between the private and public spaces, thus inadvertently positioning trust and privacy as fluid concepts as far as news consumption is concerned.

9.1 Mapping institutional and networked trust in Kenya

9.1.1 Institutional/vertical trust: The significant rise of institutional (Television, radio and newspapers) trust

Survey findings (**See figure 13 below**) indicate that traditional media (radio, television and newspapers) are the most trusted news sources (online and offline) as compared to social media, messaging applications and other internet sources such as blogs. As a respondent opined "there are too many bloggers on the internet…so when you read you must confirm with the news on the

television if it is true because the news on the television is legit, the news on the internet, is too much blogging (FGD 2, TuK). Despite the emerging realities on the waning traditional media (Institutional) and news trust particularly in the Global North (see Elvestad et al., 2018; Fletcher & Park, 2017a; Newman, 2019; Quandt, 2012), institutional trust seems to be rising steadily in Kenya with radio and television emerging as fairly trusted news sources. However, institutional trust in Kenya is not absolute but somewhat circumstantial or driven by prevailing news needs at a particular time. This means that media trust is relative to the perceived independence in reporting and news framing of 'issues that matter to young people'. This means that depending on the perceived level of trust (high or low), specific genres of content influences the choice of the medium at each news consumption instance.

In addition, the above excerpt reveals how networked trust enacted by a robust web of connected individuals and groups, tap the 'openness' of the internet to manipulate information for their gains. In this case, blogs seem to be the primary carriers of unverified information and thus were least trusted, yet paradoxically——just ten years ago—blogs were framed as the sources that, because of their independence and possibilities for citizen journalism, could be more trustworthy. In his reflection, Githongo (2008) notes that the 2008 post-poll chaos was "transmitted in real time-televised live from the controversial tallying of votes at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC), transmitted by text message, and blogged to despair on the internet" (366). This partly shows how blogs and bloggers seized online platforms to gather and disseminate information, even when Facebook and Twitter were already available. It also evinces notions of time, space and place; where all technologies emerge and seemingly complement or displace the already existing ones.

Overall, institutional trust (trust on TV, radio and newspapers) seem to be high among young people (**see figure 13 below**). This seems to be at odds with a litany of studies which have shown a decline in traditional media trust across America and Europe (Newman, Fletcher, Levy, & Nielsen, 2016; Swift, 2016). Further, these findings seem to reverberate with the pockets of studies on media trust conducted in Africa. In a survey conducted in three African countries (Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya), local and international channels enjoy significant levels of trust among the audience (Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2018)[50]. Also, the survey established that local channels are trusted in South Africa, while international channels seem to be the most

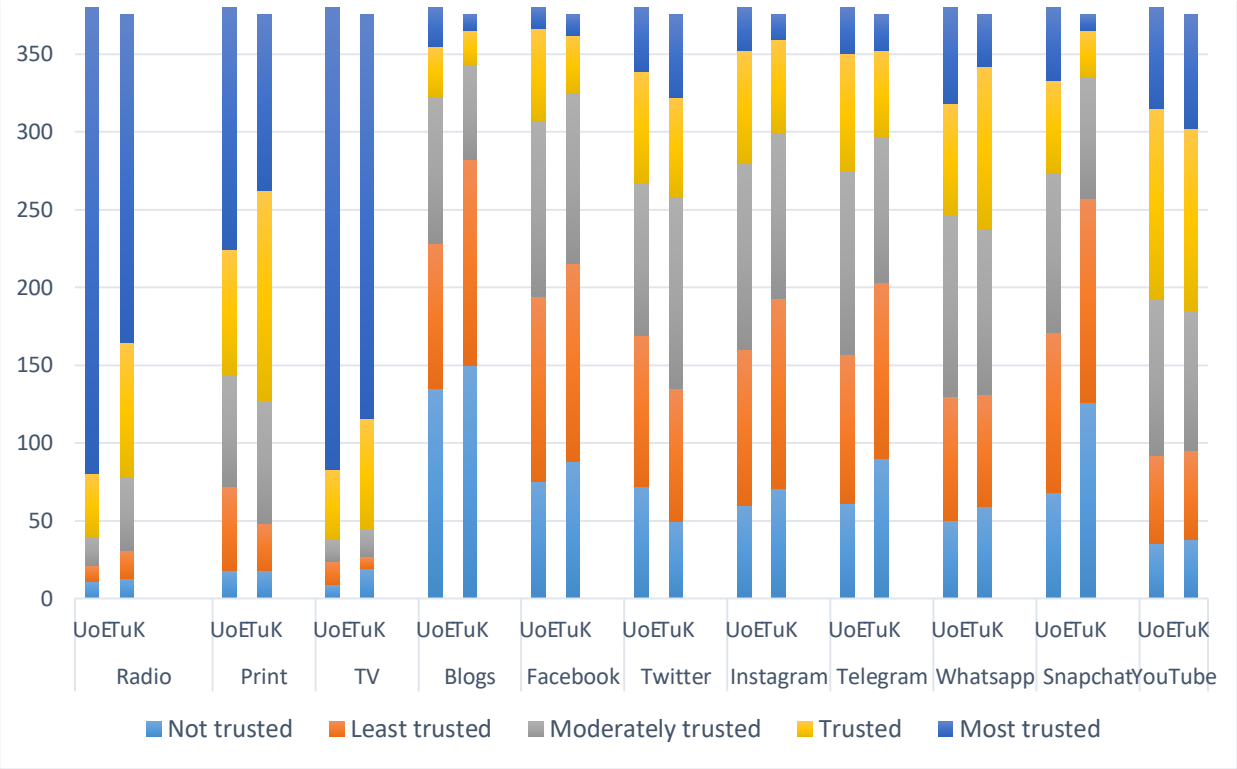
[50] https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2018-11-22-fake-news-damaging-media-trust-in-africa

trusted sources of news in Kenya and Nigeria. Contrastingly, this study found out that young people mostly trust local channels in Kenya.

In the same fashion, complementarity between local and international channels creates a rich news consumption experience. Young people affirmed that they blend local channels and international channels such as the CNN, Aljazeera and BBC to be informed on what is happening in the international domain of news. As earlier quoted, a participant said, "news is not only about your country. Like it is so diverse, you can talk about USA…through news we get to know what is happening, for example, in the USA (FGD 3: TUK)". In part, the significant rise of international channels has been attributed to perceived government interference as and when necessary. Kareithi and Kariithi (2005) note that "even in Kenya and Nigeria where governments did not own all the media institutions, they sought to control-albeit remotely- content in the private media by bringing it in line with the government definition of national interest" (5). This argument speaks partly to the long-standing tensions between having a free liberal press and the need to exercise control through government-imposed or self- censorship. These control measures, however beneficial they are deemed to be, erodes trust between the audiences and the media. Perhaps this is the genesis of the frosty relationship between the audience, the media and the state.

Institutional trust is no longer limited by the limitations of geo-locations and physical structures, as was the case more than two decades ago in Kenya. Institutional trust has shifted online signaling the re-invention of traditional media, with major local brands in Kenya such as KTN, NTV, K24, and CITIZEN commanding a substantial online presence, as shown by focus group discussions. Media institutions in Kenya have tapped online opportunities to disseminate their news in real-time, allowing them to set the agenda online partly. Of course, with the government digital transition in 2015, there are so many free to air television channels. Thus, social media has made traditional brands more visible, even in situations where young people could not afford the traditional media sets, they could easily stream news online. Visibility of traditional media brands arguably is partly intertwined with its contents including news. Thus, while increased visibility has widened news exposure among young people, young people also have an opportunity to engage in news landscape surveillance by crosschecking various news platforms usually instantaneously. This thus affirms the paradox of surveillance, whereby it is not just a possibility enhanced or constrained by news content, but also a potential afforded to young people to monitor media brands and the quality of their news content.

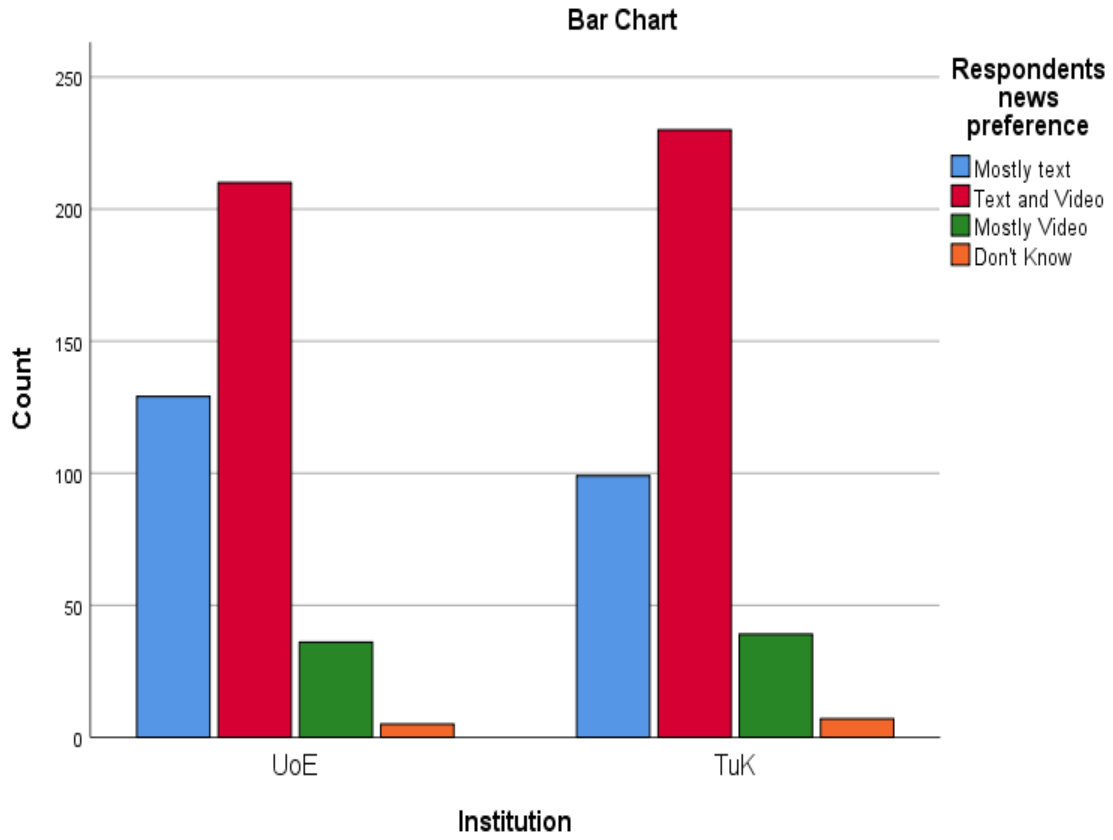
Figure 13: Comparative Chart Showing perceived levels of trust



9.1.1.1: Television

Television is the most trusted medium, with 672(89%) of the respondents across TuK and UoE rating it as trusted and most trusted respectively. Plausibly because respondents indicated that they preferred audio-visual formats (news that blends texts and video) (**See figure 14, below**). This could be an affirmation of the adage "seeing is believing", which equally applies to social media platforms. For instance, a participant said "most people trust news on social media because they have photos attached…you cannot believe what is written" (FGD 2, TuK). In addition, it reverberates with the findings of Geniets (2011), which established that Television was the most trusted traditional media news source, particularly in Nairobi, where electricity is widespread. While this may be true, structural and infrastructural limitations constrain power access within university spaces even in the city, as it was the case for TuK. This calls attention to the unique contextual realities in Nairobi and Eldoret, where TuK and UoE are located respectively, which seemingly informs the kind specific choices of traditional media used to consume news. While these realities may not be a matter of choice but rather circumstantial, findings show that dominance or rather popularity does not necessarily, mean trust as in the case of WhatsApp (Will come back to this shortly)

Figure 14: Bar chart showing preferred news format



9.1.1.2: Radio

Radio was the second most trusted with 637(84.3%) across both contexts. Although television was the most dominant and trusted news medium, it is worth noting that in Eldoret, radio emerged as the most dominant and equally the most trusted news channel. This resonates with the findings of other scholars (see Geniets,2011; Gustafsson & Nielsen, 2017). Radio, as already explored in the preceding chapter, is mostly portable and with the spread of FM enabled smartphones, young people listen to radio news as they attend to other activities online and offline. Also, the prolific increase in the number of vernacular and community radio stations has in no small extent bolstered listeners trust, particularly on local news stories aired on a language that they can understand well. This, however, is a contradiction since a significant percentage of young people indicated that they prefer news aired in English. Participant observations in both institutions showed that, although vernacular radio stations embraced indigenous language in its broadcasts, their social media pages mainly attracted comments in English and Kiswahili alongside the vernacular language.

> When you, compare maybe the information from radio and information from the internet… you may find the internet is prone to manipulation. Somebody can code something and post anything (FGD 1, UoE)

9.1.1.3: Newspapers

Newspapers were the least accessed media among respondents in both institutions. 484 (64.1%) respondents indicated that they trust newspapers for news. Yet, paradoxically less than 5% of the total respondents have access to newspapers. Young people who read newspapers in both institutions relied on the university libraries to access them, though the number of copies was appallingly low. Though there is limited empirical data, perhaps this decline could be attributed to the disruption brought about by digital technologies in the process of newspaper distributions. Nevertheless, the relatively high level of trust in newspapers reify the concept of vertical or institutional trust. This is reinforced by the adoption and adaptation of social media platforms by newspapers institutions for a timely relay of news to a diverse group of online readers. The attrition of trust on individual and groups social media pages online have seemingly solidified the perception of trust on newspapers as also seen on radio and television on its news content. Although The Daily Nation online and The Standard Digital were highlighted as the most accessed digital news platforms, ethnographic methods revealed contradictory views. Online participants were seemingly unimpressed by the framing of headlines in newspapers such as the Daily Nation (**Figure 15 below)**, blaming this kind of journalism on a decline of professional norms and values. This speaks to professionalism, which is embedded within journalistic roles and conception as the key defining feature of journalism by media institutions. Therefore, the decline in institutional trust is partly linked to how the audience perceives the framing of news stories and the professionalism demonstrated by the journalist and the broader editorial team.

Figure 15: Screenshot showing a participant's comment on news framing by The Daily Nation



9.1.2 The nexus between Institutional and Networked trust: How 'abuse' of social media and messaging applications have helped traditional media regain trust

Traditional media in Kenya, with varying degrees of success, have embraced social media. As already shown by the data collected from online participant observation (**see photo 13 below**), findings seem to point to a slow but steady rise in traditional news brands offline and online. This reifies the arguments by Quandt (2012) that institutional trust is mainly based on the specific roles of media institutions context. As captured by the excerpt "I think I trust traditional media because it is the same information that they are airing live, is what they are giving on social media" (FGD 2, UoE). Therefore, it is safe to argue that the significant adoption of mobile devices and social media have inadvertently problematised trust and privacy, yet at the same time provided a myriad of ways of maneuvering this complexity. Quandt (ibid) gives an example of the way messengers from the rudimentary forms of communications in the past centuries could be regarded as "being part of institutionalised human 'media' system" (10). While relaying messages was solely the role

of trusted individuals within the community, social media has reconfigured conventional functions of the traditional media by expanding communication actors connected through a web of complex networks.

Expanding Quandt's (2010) argument, it also emerged that the close ties between and among young people shaped the overall trust in the news shared interpersonally through face to face communication or the available messaging applications become delegated to other 'actors' anticipated selection (4). This highlights and reinforces the vitality of trust in building and sustaining communities and the sustenance of social ties (Bourdieu, 1983; Coleman, 2002; Tsafti, 2011). Also, the ties between and among young people and their communities anchored mainly on the social capital enacted through the gradations of relationships (Miller et al., 2016). However, the extent to which other actors are trusted with their selections is mostly predicated on the existential relationship (online and offline), thus bringing to the fore the spaces populated by the channels or platforms used to share one's selection.

> For me, on TV, the broadcasting stations are verified by the government. I think they cannot put anything false; if they do, people sue them. So if you get news from the TV you know, it is true, because if they do not bring true news, there are penalties. But in the internet, I can decide to post anything I want, and nothing will happen to me, so most likely I can post a false ting, so television news is more trusted, rather than the internet (FGD 4, UoE)

Respondents who expressed their ambivalence on the level of trust on traditional media were skeptical of the erosion of journalistic ethics and norms. Arguably, the expanded news exposure on social media has cast doubts on the conventional tenets of journalism such as accuracy, credibility and objectivity. This reverberates with the argument by Otto and Kohring (2018), that a decline in journalistic ethics and normative guidelines could partly be linked to the "loss of trust in the media" (2). Further, media and ICT policy reforms (see Kavikuru, 2017; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017) have partly emboldened the independence of the media in Kenya thus earning significant trust among the audience (Geniets, 2011). Correspondingly, this seems to have solidly anchored the roles of traditional news media (online and offline) as the most trusted news sources as exemplified by ethnographic methods (**See screenshots taken from online participants**).

Photo 13: Screenshots of participants retweets of traditional media brands online

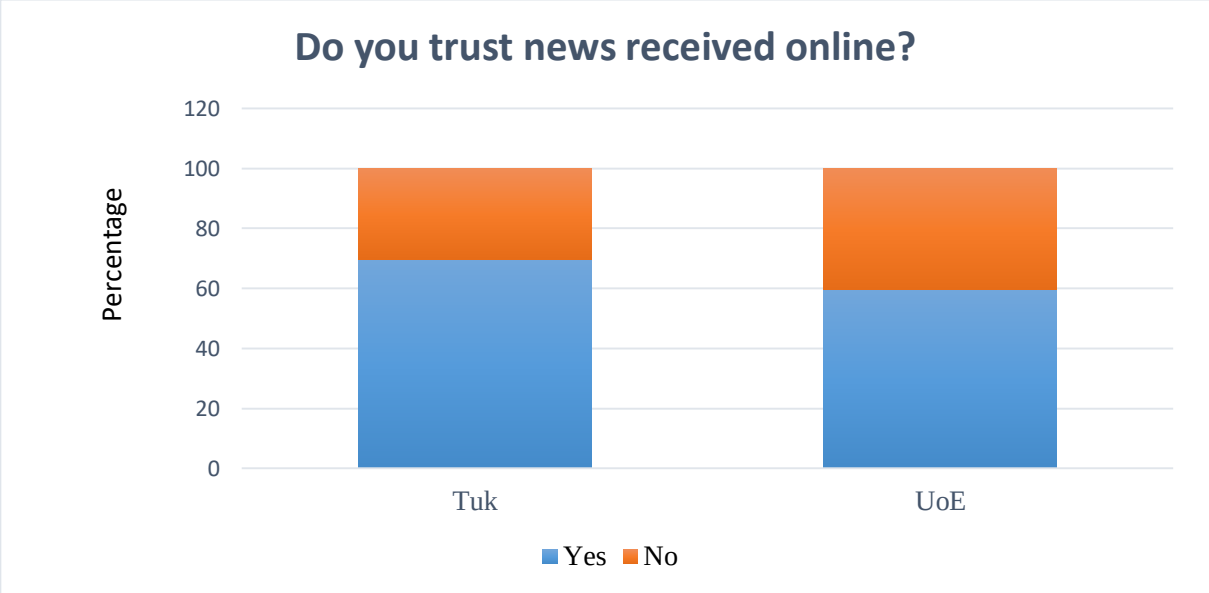


9.2 Networked (online versus offline) trust: Tensions and contradictions

More broadly, respondents were asked whether they trust news received online without referring to any specific platform; a total of 618(81.9%) respondents in both institutions affirmed that they trust news received online, while 137(18.1%) respondents indicated they do not trust online news (**see figure 16 below**). Although these responses were later contradicted by the perceptions of trust on each specific platform as will be shown in the next section, further highlighting the paradoxes in understanding trust and privacy. While young people seemingly trust news received online, the perceptions of trust and privacy are dismally low. Traditional media pages on various social media platforms have higher levels of trust, challenging private messaging domination such as WhatsApp. Thus, contrary to the arguments by scalable sociality, it is indeed possible for public

platforms; irrespective of their sizes to command relatively, high levels of trust comparatively with private messaging applications (Will come back to this shortly).

Figure 16: Comparative chart showing levels of trust in online news



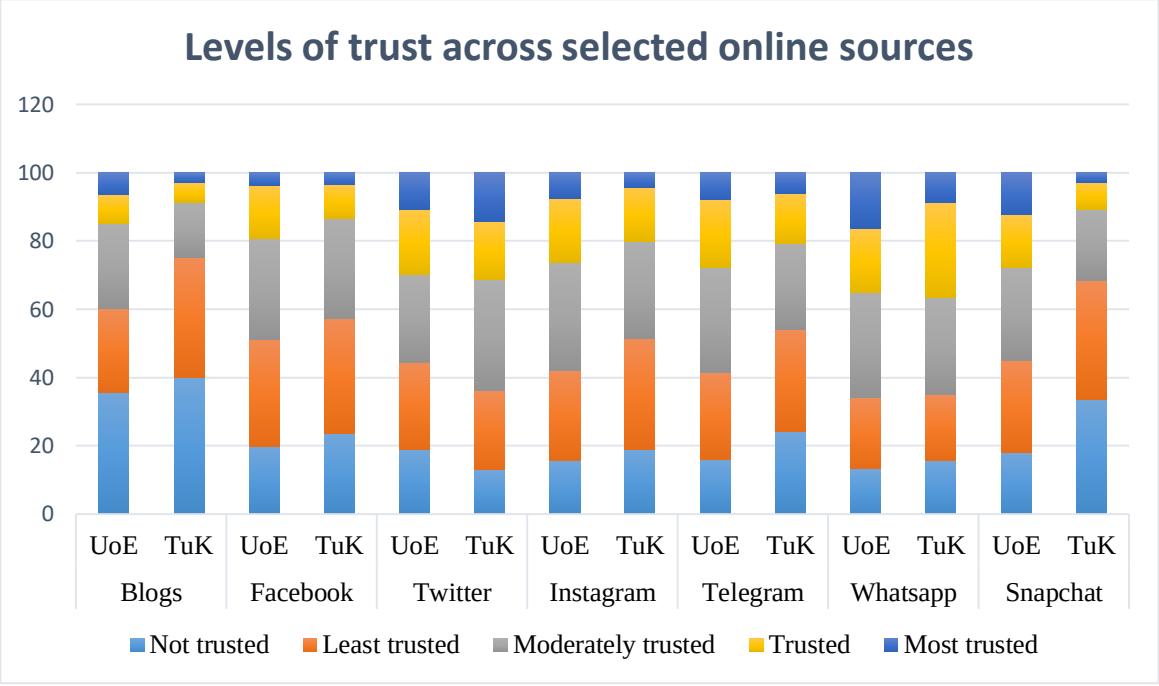
These findings also highlight the active process of news search, contrary to the passive news consumption experiences enabled by traditional media barely two decades ago. It also affirms the theoretical argument of continuity rather than complete rapture from past technologies as argued for by Livingstone (2004). These trends are not new, mainly if Quandt's (2010) argument is extrapolated to the Kenyan context, albeit with a degree of caution due to a difference in contextual realities. Media in Kenya co-evolved with the state (See Oloo, 2007), and the relationship between the state and media from 1963 when Kenya attained independence to the year 2002 highly reflective of the 'authoritarian regimes' in power. While the audience least trusted news before 2002, the commitment by the NARC government in 2003 to fully liberalize the airwaves by removing the barriers such as reducing the high licensing fee significantly boosted institutional trust in the media. This is, however, debatable today. Trust in traditional media, could be a choice between two 'evils', with traditional media becoming the lesser evil.

9.2.1: Mapping networked trust on social media and messaging applications

Probed on the most trusted social media and private messaging applications, 271(35.9%) respondents indicated that they trust WhatsApp, 230 (30.5%) trust twitter, 183(24.6%) trust telegram, 175(23.2%) trust Instagram, 146(19.3%) trust Snapchat and 123(16.3%) trust Facebook. Paradoxically, the dominance or the popularity of messaging applications for news access,

consumption and self-expression do not necessarily mean they enjoy a high degree of trust, comparatively with traditional media (**See figure 16 below**). For example, a participant opined, "You cannot generally rely on news from social media sites because people are now after money those who spread news spread with different motives…. I do not trust social media sites for news. I rely maybe, mostly on radios" (FGD 1, UoE). Perhaps, this calls attention to the complexity of trust and its fluidity across time, space and cultures. Embedded in this view is the commodification of news and the diverse motivation for news production, therefore, comparatively, it is safe to argue that young people in Kenya still trust traditional media although the recourse to traditional media for news has drastically reduced.

Figure 17: Comparative chart showing the levels of trust across selected online news sources



WhatsApp as earlier shown in **chapter 6** is the most popular messaging application among young people; it is, in fact, more popular than other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Paradoxically, while young people indicated that they trusted it because of its user-friendliness as well as the privacy, and the trust cultivated through offline ties, it is rated way below traditional media such as television and radio. Most importantly, it is the most dominant news source (See chapter 6). Under these circumstances, one would expect WhatsApp, to be the most trusted platform for news access and consumption. Thus, WhatsApp and other social media and messaging applications are shaped by the various needs and motivations for use in context. This seems to reinforce the concept of scalable sociality whereby "social media has colonized the space

of group sociality between the private and the public" (Miller et al., 2016: X). WhatsApp contacts unlike Facebook friends, Twitter and Instagram followers have an existential relationship offline; whether weak or strong ties exist, it at least brings individuals or groups of people with some degree of likes, tastes and preferences. Put differently; social media enacts two broad scales: the most private to the most public and the smallest group to the largest (Miller at al., 2016).

A closer look at these findings shows that traditional media (social media pages) remain the most trusted online news sources. While messaging applications, particularly WhatsApp, enact strong-ties socialities, young people are aware of the potential threats of hackers and the surveillance practices of the government in online spaces. For instance, while they were aware of technical affordances such as end-to-end encryption, they were also alive to the fact that government surveillance initiatives could still decrypt and expose private messages. Towards the August 8, 2017 elections, the government published guidelines on social media and text messages usage, sending a warning to WhatsApp group administrators that they would be held liable for any form of hate speech spread in their WhatsApp groups. Plausibly, this explains the contradiction between privacy and government surveillance. Social media have complemented traditional media organisations in news dissemination. For instance, young people check verified twitter handle, Facebook and Instagram pages for credible news. Although the form and content of news is essential, the level of trust shapes the final process not just of news access but how the meanings are assigned to the text. A broad spectrum of studies in the recent past has established that trust is positively correlated with knowledge, opinion sharing (Andrews & Delahay, 2010) and online political debates (Mon et al. 2011).

As shown above, social media and messaging applications received the lowest ratings as far as trust is concerned. As a respondent said, "If I hear breaking news on the radio, I have to go back maybe to another platform even YouTube or twitter or any other device" (FGD 2, UoE). This partly shows that the boundaries between the most trusted platform offline and online are increasingly blurred. While radio is widely trusted, as shown by the survey findings, the need for depth and breadth of information drives young people to relatively trusted social media platforms for a more elaborate and comprehensive news story. For example, a participant argued, "the government regulates television. Thus they post specific news…but they hide so much stuff, so I think that is why students trust online sources because they post everything" (FGD 2, TuK). This aspect of indirect control by the government connects well with the broader concept of surveillance as earlier mentioned. Although this sounds maddeningly immoral, it shows how powerful institutions and organisations still wield enormous power through 'cognitive science, micro-targeting and other sophisticated manipulations (…) to influence the motivations of ordinary people, and to coarsen and thereby control public debate and opinion. Thus, social media is not immune to remote manipulation and surveillance by 'individuals, groups and institutions.

Young people seem to pay significant attention to the kind of agency afforded by various social media platforms. For example, perceived user-friendliness of the platform could shape the overall credibility of a social media platform in context. The WhatsApp was considered relatively easy to use as compared to twitter, Instagram, and to a small extent Facebook. Comparing WhatsApp and Facebook, a participant said: "compared to something like Facebook where you can post things that are more entertaining, it is not a place where you put things that are more serious, or things that are so private, because someone can hack them or see them" (FGD 2, TuK). Although social media enacts different scales of socialities, young people creatively appropriate these scales paying attention to the levels of privacy. As the same participant further explained, on Facebook, "a person you did not want …a person can get to your profile and check the things you have been doing for the last five years, unlike a place like Instagram where a person must have your permission first before checking on you, I think security is guaranteed" (FGD 2, TuK).

> Therefore, pertaining maybe to Kenya as a nation I listen to the radio and about the university, we go to social media; it is more reliable and quite specific because it is within the immediate environment. If I get news, for example on WhatsApp, I have to verify it by maybe checking on the internet Facebook and now according to how many social media sites and news platform I get the same information then I credit it (FGD 2, UoE)

9.3 Networked 'Privacy' and news engagement

Privacy is often disguised in the semblance of care on public and private platforms, necessitating the positioning of trust in a continuum rather transcending public/private dichotomy. As earlier argued, privacy, just as trust varies from one context to another. The last two decades have seen the evolution of privacy along with the size of the hardware, for instance, the scaling down of telephone conversations from the famous call boxes, to the walkie-talkies, to stylish and more sophisticated smartphones. This evolution largely viewed as a way of enhancing private conversations, mainly by allowing users to make calls within the confines of their 'private' spaces. Within this evolution of telephones to mobiles phones lies the paradox of scalable sociality. While there was unchecked optimism on the potential of smartphones to facilitate private conversations, it has equally brought about the possibilities of opening private spaces to public others online.

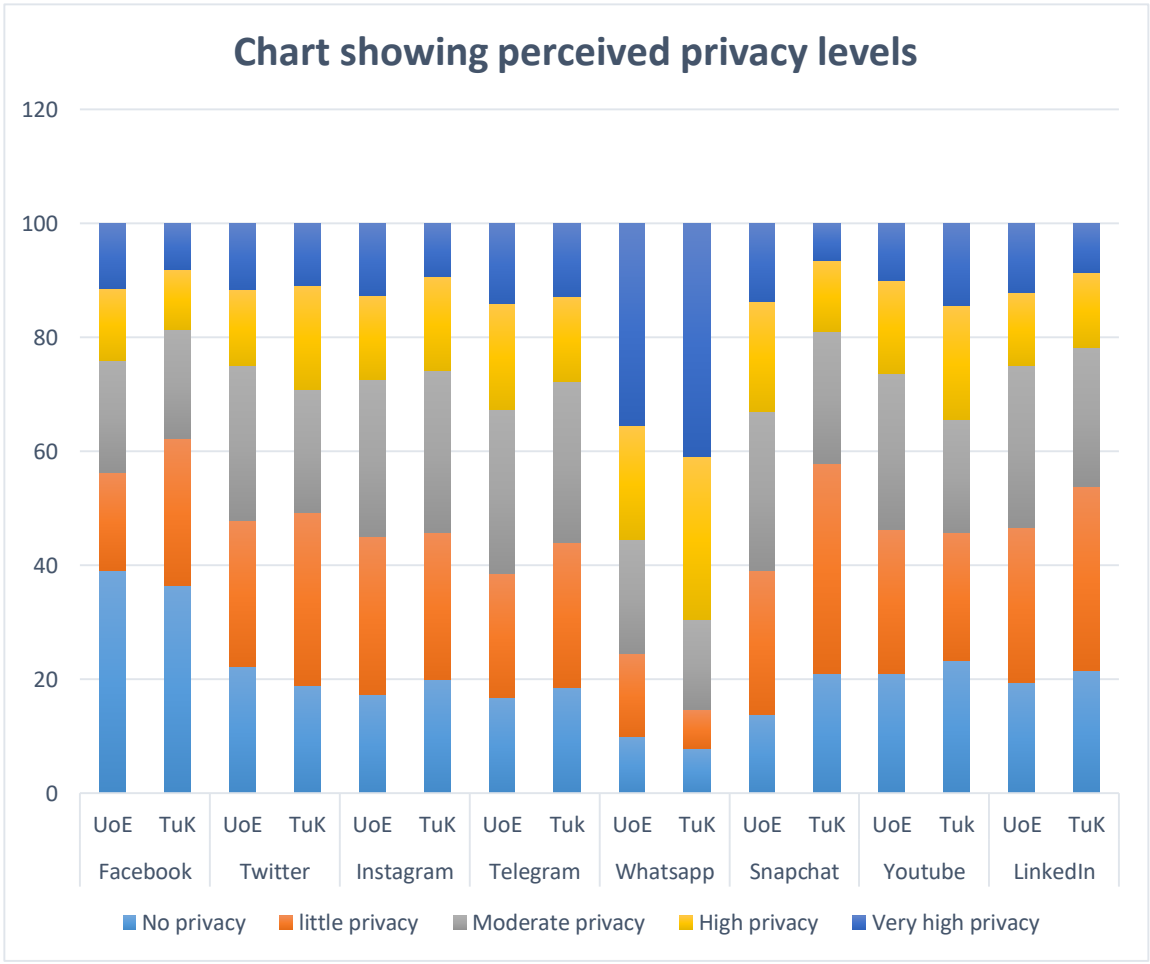
Amidst these developments, social media and messaging applications have increasingly evinced debates on digital coloniality. These platforms have primarily been viewed as the new wave of neo-liberal colonialism; where 'techno-oligarchs' such as Twitter, Yahoo, Google, Amazon, Alibaba, Facebook, mine data from the global south users (Arora, 2019). While these platforms have technical affordances aimed at enhancing privacy, young people in Kenya seem to believe that these features are ploys to ensure they continue using the platforms, and never about securing their digital data. Paradoxically, the motivation to own a mobile phone is to enhance one's privacy. As a participant opined: "the most important motivation for me to buy a mobile phone is the privacy; that you can be sure any phone call for you comes to you directly" (FGD2, TuK). However, while mobile phones are perceived as enhancing privacy; they facilitate communication within private spaces; embedded applications are perceived as the primary conduits in harvesting user's data.

Young people were acutely aware of the varying degrees of privacy enacted by different platforms "I think when it comes to security, each kind of social media has a way in which you can provide privacy" (FGD 2, TuK). Privacy was widely understood as a process of external responsibility of the 'self'- read young people-towards the social world and its sub-domains constructed through the news genres consumed. Couldry and Hepp (2018) contend that the 'self' recorded performance becomes its data to be protected, edited and managed. Thus, while news exposure takes place across both public and private social media platforms, the tension of what to access where as well as engage with, with whom and why remains quite complicated. This is consistent

with the view expressed by a young South-Sudanese university graduate who opined, "mobile phone was the most important reason for him to buy a mobile phone" (77).

Survey findings reveal that messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat enjoy relatively high levels of perception on privacy compared to other social media platforms recording 287(75.5%), 233(61.3%) and 231(60.8%) respectively. Instagram recorded 209(55%), Twitter recorded 198(52.1%) and finally, Facebook recorded 166(43.7%) (**See figure 18 below**). These findings reify the concept of scalable sociality with young people seemingly safeguarding their privacy through private messaging applications to share and engage with news consumed online. Young people celebrated WhatsApp as "the most secure" due to its "end-to-end encryption", which safeguards the conversations between participants. Another participant mentioned that "WhatsApp is more secure to me; I have to know you, you have to have my number to access information" (FGD 2, TuK).

Figure 18: Chart showing perceived levels of privacy



A participant mentioned that "WhatsApp is the most secure…everything is encrypted-end-to-end" (FGD 3, UoE). Although Telegram and Snapchat enjoy significant levels of trust, they hardly featured in the course of FGD interviews. This could partly mean that young people were aware of the existence of these platforms as a back up to WhatsApp**.** In addition, young people mostly believed that WhatsApp was not as vulnerable to attacks from hackers as compared to Facebook. A participant argued that "WhatsApp you need my phone, even if you want to scan my code…but my Facebook you can just go to the computer in town, if you know my username then you can hack my account password". However, while WhatsApp enjoys relatively high levels of privacy as compared to other private messaging application such as telegram and Snapchat, a participant revealed a creative way of hacking WhatsApp.

> If I want to hack your chats through WhatsApp, I only use maybe I can use, GB WhatsApp or FB WhatsApp. GB WhatsApp allows more than one account. Therefore, I use your number, and then I log into the account on my phone. Then, or you scan the code, if you scan the code of WhatsApp, then it starts relaying the information to me. But not the previous. It starts from now, henceforth (FGD 3, UoE).

Social media platforms reveal the paradox of the "publicly private" (Lange, 2008:369), whereby in as much as young people are not actively involved in content production, they somehow believe that they can create accounts and follow others and be followed without necessarily posting content. This reinforces Peters et al. eds. (2018) argument that "social media watching and being watched are bundled together, as are curating a visible and private 'self'" (467). In regards to public social media spaces; young people consider Instagram (55%) more secure, followed by Twitter (52.15) and Facebook (43.7%). These statistics show that in as much as these are, in no small extent, considered public platforms there is a sense in which young people creatively weave them into their private lives by making them publicly private. Although, as previously shown, Instagram is considered a relatively expensive platform owing to the constraints of data bundles; it is surprising to see that over half the respondents think that it is more private and secure. This is contradictory, mainly if the public nature of the platform is anything to go by. Twitter though the public has provision for sending direct messages and at the same time; its architecture does limit non-followers to follow ones' conversations. Similarly, Facebook received low privacy levels owing to its public nature, with participants mentioning that it is vulnerable to attacks "Facebook is prone to attacks" (FGD 1, UoE).

Popular privacy narratives seem to evolve and mutate consistently with technological discourses, with young people mainly using privacy and data security interchangeably. This is consistent with

Arora's (2019) argument that privacy and trust are "evolving and moving targets" (373). Young people in their daily social interactions tend to scale down conversations relating to their sexual lives by appropriating terms such as "passwords and opening servers". While passwords were considered incredibly useful in securing private information from third parties such as hackers, it was interesting to note that the use of the word password had sexual connotations, particularly when one asks a female 'friend' for her 'password'. Asking for a password in the literal sense denotes asking for access to what is seemingly private, yet at the same time in their daily appropriation asking for password meant asking for access to the private parts. In part, this suggests the kind of socialities enacted through public and private spaces. Therefore, by privacy, young people in their news consumption would want to secure sensitive news and information about themselves and others. This is driven by the fear of private information leaking to public platforms. These platforms have embedded in them the technical affordances of privacy that allows young people to customize and filter what remains hidden and what is concealed. Participants mentioned that "each kind of social media has a way in which you can provide privacy, even on Facebook there is a setting you choose when or something will be accessible to everyone, there is that choice".

This connects well with Peters et al. eds. (2018) argument that 'users may first consider privacy on social media when configuring their so-called privacy settings. These settings enable the user to choose with whom they consent to share a specific type of information'. Sundar and Limperos (2013) observe that technical capabilities such as agency, interactivity and navigability are underpinned by cues and heuristics that influence judgement of credibility. While technical affordances such as relationship status on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can be made public, young people seem to navigate these complexities by hooking up on public social media platforms and scaling down their subsequent conversations to private platforms. For instance, through public platforms, young people exchange cell phones contacts through the messaging provisions, in what Miller et al. (ibid) have described as intra-platform scalable sociality. Subsequently, from the cell phone numbers exchanged on public platforms, conversations can become more private and trust is built over time. This is not to say that young people are immoral, but instead, this is reflective of the role of social norms and value system in being discreet in engaging in such conversations without attracting the wrath of those who are within your circles. Similarly, a word which emerged after the Supreme Court ruling nullified the 2017 general elections in Kenya, was the instruction of the court to the electoral body to open its computer 'servers' to the petitioner in order to confirm whether third parties had hacked the electoral system. Young people seemingly

have appropriated ‘opening of servers’ to exclude other people when they are dating and engaging in sexual discourses. Opening of servers thus means engaging in sexual intimacy, a further hint on how Privacy and intimacy and trust are widely interweaved with the discourses of technology in a context.

Young people seemingly seize online opportunities to (dis)connect with peers and networked institutions with a degree of caution on the potential risks of over-exposure of the self in online spaces. News access thus becomes a ‘risky’ shared social experience (Fisher, 2018; Purcell et al., 2010), particularly with family, friends and acquaintances. These relational aspects of news consumption signal the significance of offline relationship ties as determinants of trust, for instance, by helping young people focus their attention on news stories. News endorsement by peers within social network platforms boost news to trust. Sundar (2015) described this as the ‘bandwagon heuristic’ (83). Plausibly, by forming a tightly knit circle of friends, acquaintances and family, young people deliberately attempt to minimise the adverse effects of overexposing the ‘self’. Choi (2016) described this as ‘news personalising’, where young people receive news from users they carefully follow on Facebook, Twitter, or WhatsApp contacts such as journalists, politicians and other opinion shapers in the society. This argument confirms the nature and form of the ‘double absence of trust’; relying on networked others within the public and private social media spaces to filter and direct attention to ‘interesting’ news stories. The consumers will believe such news, whether real or false, because of the existing relational trust. However, the significant rise of algorithms has further exacerbated the ‘crises of trust, particularly on its potential to recommend news based on a user’s digital footprints (see Chapter 6). Trust algorithms have become useful in predicting and measuring ‘trust and distrust’ online (DuBois, Golbeck & Srinivasan, 2011; Kim & Ahmad, 2013). As discussed in the previous chapter, incidental exposure primarily driven by algorithms limits exposure to diverse views, significantly leading to a polarised young news consumer. Pariser (2011) argues, “User’s news feed has raised concerns about limiting an individual’s curiosity and exposure to alternative perspectives” (Pariser, 2011 in Fisher, 2018:28)

9.4 Elements that influence networked trust and privacy in news consumption

Moving beyond technical affordances shaping trust and privacy, young people consider privacy (or the lack of it) as a function of the level(s) of trust between and among individuals, groups or institutions; meaning the way young people conceptualise, locate and practice privacy varies. Agency, as it emerged, was largely viewed in terms of the source of news disseminated or shared

on the platform; for instance, news recommended by algorithms or newsfeeds, a credible author, peers in a social network or a news organization. Also, the technical appeal of social media applications, their navigability as well as the cost-effectiveness concerning data needed to stay plugged in. In this regard, trust becomes relational based on the "inherent" or objective characteristics of communicative products" (4). Put differently, media and social networks enact scales of socialities from the most private to the most public, thus allowing for the gradations of relationships based on the ties already in existence online and offline. Young people trust news from traditional media institutions (online and offline) as well as news shared in their networks by individual and groups considered or perceived to be credible. This variation is largely consistent with the scales espoused by scalable sociality, with a deficit or excessive trust having the potential of dislocating or solidifying news consumption experiences. Thus, even though young people may trust news from traditional media organisations, these organisations make use of social networks online, which are not trusted among young people as will be shown shortly.

While a host of social media platforms has enhanced news exposure, increased connectivity has inadvertently enhanced offline social ties. Young people opt to perform their daily news consumption lives within the confines of platforms with perceived high levels of trust and privacy. The decision to access, consume and even in some instances, engage with the news becomes partly dependent on the ties (strong or weak) developed over time. As a participant opined, "I think I trust the same information because some of these local stations are doing it because of technology. As technology advances, it means that you must embrace what technology is giving on the ground" (FGD 3, UoE). Young people living within university spaces continuously intermesh with other networks of individuals and institutions. Thus, news consumption is a complex process involving decisions that are sometimes made for young people by 'trusted 'people online.

As exemplified by the excerpt "let me tell you, the society is changing…maybe you were friends with a thief, and you have since changed and adopted new ways of living, when such a person tags you online, you will unfriend or block that person". Embedded in this view is the social and cultural norms and values surrounding the conduct of people in a context. Young people seem to suggest that societal norms determine the kind of bond between and among individuals. For instance, stealing is considered a vice in the society, this in part, shapes how young people relate with such 'friends' online, the kind of news shared notwithstanding. The participant further added, "you can choose to unfriend or block such a person because you don't trust him/her or the news shared ". Distinctive social media affordances such as unfriending and blocking, serve to

delineate the boundaries between interpersonal and group spaces. Altman (1997) argues that the way people practice privacy in its various forms such as "verbal, non-verbal, environmental and cultural mechanisms" is in no small extent culturally specific and contextual (82). Further, this sits well with the argument by anthropologists including miller et al., (2016) who have shown that privacy is a social construct which is to large extent reflective of the contextual values and norms of individuals and groups.

Through social media platforms (Public and Private), different scales of privacy are enacted. The levels of privacy are largely predicated on the nature and form of the existential relationship between and among young people as well as among young people and their institutions. Arguably, the bond whether-weak or strong- (see Gross & Aquisiti, 2005:2) determines the level of trust. In this regard, young people consider privacy as an intrusion of their intimate and private social lives by third parties. Private platforms messaging applications are perceived as enacting 'strong ties' between contacts who have social relationship offline.

On the other hand, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram seem to play a significant role in the performativity of young people's online activities such as news access, self-documentation, intrinsic and instrumental surveillance among other gratifications. The gratifications derived from both public and social media platforms seem to outweigh the isolated incidences of privacy invasion by hackers and other third parties, as mentioned by young people. While social conversations have been scaled down to ephemeral private platforms such as WhatsApp, young people continue to maintain multiple accounts, particularly on public social media platforms. This reifies the argument by Debatini et al. (2001) who argued that social media allows young people to socialize without being social. Put differently, young people maintain accounts in all platforms though they may not actively participate in the conversation going on in these platforms.

Though public and private social media platforms have their distinct features, they are highly interlinked and mutually reinforcing. As a participant said, "privacy starts with me, so if I know am susceptible to online threats…I cannot open links shared with me by anybody". While this view reiterates the significance of the 'self' in setting the privacy standards online, it further shows the complexity in constantly monitoring news emanating from the network of friends on social media platforms while there seems to be considerable agreement that the nature of the relationship will determine whether the shared linked will be clicked or not. As succinctly captured by the excerpts "you do not share or open links that you don't trust…there are those links you know are shared by people you do not trust" (FGD 1: TuK). This partly shows that,

whereas the self-defines what is private and what is public, trust inadvertently becomes an increasingly useful component in making such decisions particular regarding online news consumption. It, therefore, means that, if young people receive news links from people, they share strong ties, they are likely to trust the information. Unknown links or links from untrustworthy sources could lead to online malware or scammers "stealing information and publicizing for their ends", what has been described as 'mal-information' (FGD 1: TuK).

Besides, whereas trust and privacy are mutually interlinked, social media platforms have increasingly blurred the boundaries separating public and private spheres of life. There seems to be a struggle to keep private information within the confines of private spaces, against an increasing pressure to scale up the private to public spaces (and in some cases public to private spaces as in the case of news engagement). As young people hinted, "the other reason for blocking is because someone could bring a personal issue to public social media". Probed further on how these could relate to online news consumption, the participant explained, "there are characters who decide to bring private information to public media…for example, somebody tweets private information which could have been passed directly through WhatsApp" (FGD 3, TuK). This has been described as Mal-information; it "occurs when information based on reality is used to inflict harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere" (Wardle & Derakshan, 2017). Distinct security and privacy feature influence the choices made by young people in what platform to use, how, why, where and with whom. WhatsApp end-to-end encryption feature seems to have partly enhanced the security of private chats. As a participant opined "everything in WhatsApp is encrypted end to end". This feature minimized the risks of hacking. The participant added that "unlike Facebook which is prone to online hacking because it is not encrypted". These features speak to the platform technical architecture, whereby through embedded security features.

Blogospheres (blogs) seem to be popular in online spaces in Kenya, yet paradoxically the least trusted. As earlier shown, just a decade ago, blogs were the most trusted news sources before the significant rise of social media and private messaging applications. Perhaps this reifies my argument that trust and privacy are never static and simultaneously co-evolve with technological discourses. Across UoE and TuK, *Tuko,* an online news platform was mentioned as one of the most reliable for breaking news stories. However, its news was subject to verification from other platforms and channels. "Like when you log in to *Tuko,* which is the most trending, they post everything even before TVs get it" (FGD 2, TUK). Although blogs were the least trusted (**See figure 16 above**), young people were ambivalent on the credibility of news shared by a few blogs.

Credibility from participant's perspective emerged from their local news approach as a participant observed "But at times the bloggers write what is actually on the ground". Therefore, as a way of verifying information and ultimately making a decision, young people straddle various blogs to establish the truthfulness of the news. As a participant said, **"**so you see the same information with different bloggers on different pages, then definitely, it is the truth, I take that as the truth." (FGD 3, TuK). However, some participants were skeptical of the newsgathering techniques whereby blogs widely published sensational news stories for gaining traffic and clicks on their pages. For instance, "Of course, you know these bloggers, most of what these bloggers do, they just spark you, they want to hear what you think, and they want to get your views" (FGD 2, TuK).

9.5 News genres and content trust

News genres (politics, business, sports, weather, fashion and lifestyle) consumed by young people shape the texture of their online risks and opportunities in regards to trusting news sources as well as the content of news in their everyday lives. This texture is woven, primarily out of mediated materials, enacted mainly by the full range of private and social media spaces forming an emotional partnership with networked others within the physical space in the university as well as the online-mediated spaces. This resonates well with Bergers and Luckman's (1966:50) distinction of primary socialization where a child becomes a member of society through relations with parents and guardians as well as secondary socialization in which young people are introduced to new domains of the social world including the university, news media organizations among others. Couldry and Hepp (2018) argue that the basic structure of platforms and their commercial imperatives create certain distinctive conditions that affect how young adults can exist in public.

Young people through the web of public and private social media spaces become increasingly dialogical; with news consumption partly becoming a discursive communication process established with others and with oneself. Young people largely viewed news texts and contexts (with its inherent specificities in its various forms and format) as 'politics', meaning social media spaces become an arena for political news consumption, though as will be explored, with minimal engagement on public platforms. News consumption, therefore, becomes enmeshed in with the tensions of performing the self, while consciously attempting to protect, defend and in some instances detect threats to their privacy. This further affirms the complex nature of information needs among young people-at a basic level where they have a greater scale of actions across space and time on which to pursue their needs (Couldry & Hepp, 2018). This view invites questions on

the nature of news consumption as part of the larger social, cultural and political contexts. Young people as earlier explored use various social media platforms for a variety of reasons key among them socialization. However, the concept of friendship that young people have online seemed to suggest that, technical or emotional engagement is fundamental in their day-to-day news consumption experiences.

9.5.1 Motivation for news consumption

One key element that influences news trust is the motivation for news consumption. As discussed in chapter 5, young people consume news for different purposes. These purposes were deeply tied to their understanding of news such as; news for understanding the social world, news for gaining new knowledge, the need to reinforce time among other motivations. This resonates with the argument by Tsafti and Cappella (2005) that "people access media for a range of reasons…it is not just the referential function of news that drives news consumption" (30). Therefore, young people's inclination to trust news is partly influenced by the motivations for news access. For example, news aimed at creating awareness about a social issue is mainly consumed motivated by the need to stay informed. As a participant opined, "I think news is important because it makes you be informed, it creates awareness, your knowledge, like for example what he has said about an outbreak of a disease, so you get to know about it and do what it takes to avoid it, so it increases your knowledge and awareness" (FGD 1: TUK). This reverberates with the findings by Rieh and Hilligoss (2015) who found that "the student's goal-or need-for the information sought played an important role in determining the credibility of the information they were looking for" (in Fisher, 2018:29). However, motivations for news consumptions are not static; they vary from one news consumer to another. This competing and sometimes contradicting motivation for news access could make trust less relevant (Tsafti, 2005:254)

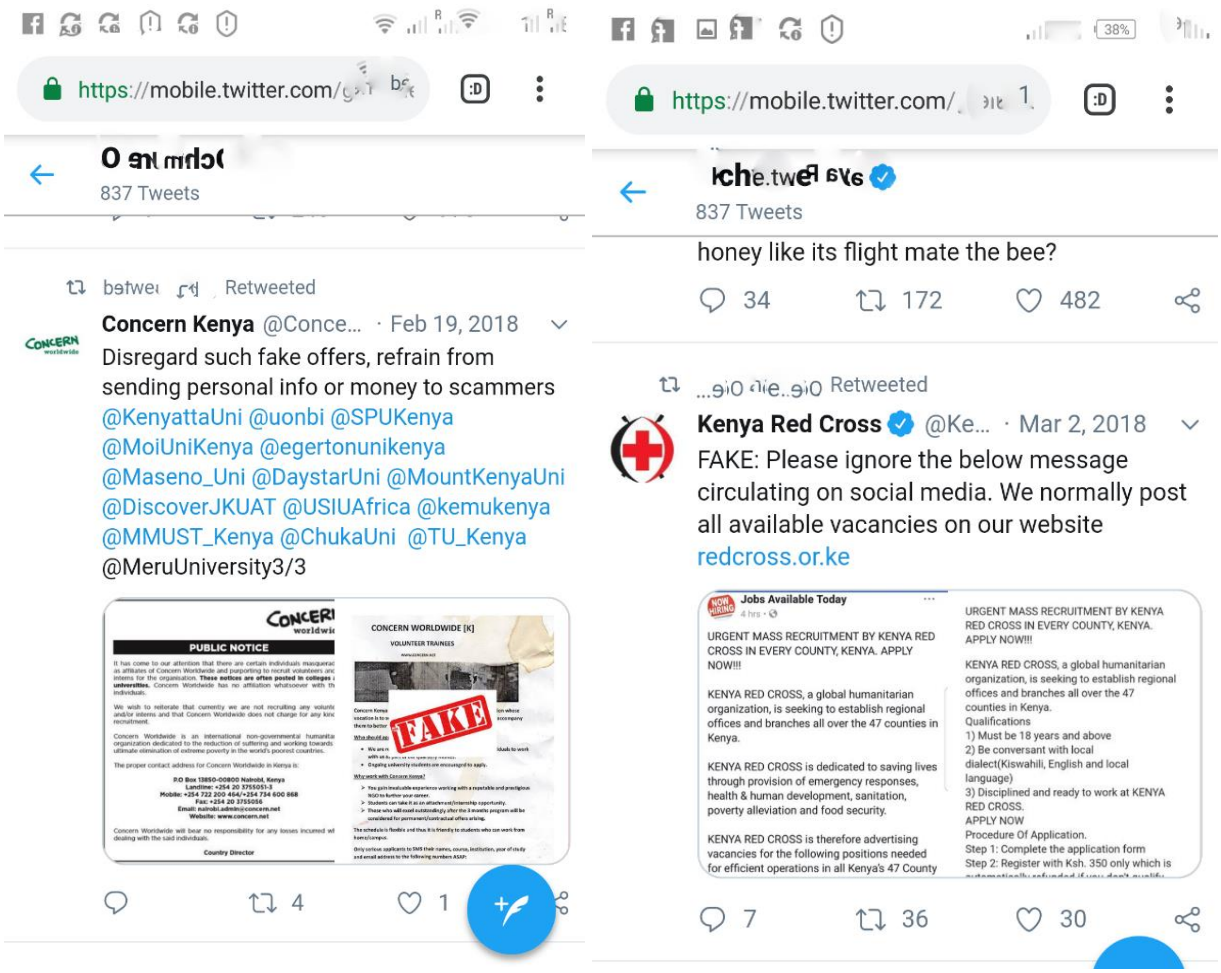
9.5.2 Consistency and availability of a news story in a host of platforms

As a way of cushioning themselves from innuendos, rumours, mis– and disinformation, young people have devised parallel ways for cross-checking news posted on individual social media platforms against the news carried by the traditional media (Online and offline). For instance, a respondent opined that **"**traditional media do not carry the news which we do not trust …say the information that we get on Facebook if someone posted and the same news then we cannot trust **(**FGD 3, UoE). This contrasts starkly to the "era of blogs", whereby blogs were trusted to tell the 'truths' that traditional media could not tell. For example, in 2007/2008 during the disputed presidential elections in Kenya, blogs and bloggers established themselves as the sources of

"truths" traditional media would not tell. Mäkinen and Wangu Kuira (2008) note that 'Kenyan bloggers were critical of the role of the mainstream media' (330). However, Mäkinen and Wangu Kuira (2008) further observe that some blogs and some bloggers were not politically innocent; they were used to spread rumours leading to polarisation and fragmentation. Similarly, the prevalence of 'fake news' today has inadvertently allowed traditional media to reclaim its dominant role as credible news sources

As a result, though traditional media have been accused of focusing on 'non-issues'– issues that does not matter to young people, they suffice as the relatively trusted news sources compared to the wide range of social media and messaging applications. The significant rise of social media platforms has inadvertently increased the instantaneity of the spread of information, while at the same time exacerbating the rapid spread of unverified information or half-truths. While I have argued that fake news is not new in African societies, social media has significantly increased the exposure of young people to such news. As the participant observed, young people, though "use social media, because this generation is a generation of technology. People have gone digital. Thus, they are trying to get closer to people, using social media channels (FGD 3, UoE). While this reifies the expanded avenues of news exposure, it is worth noting the recurrence of politics even in the examples used by the participants, significantly reinforcing the dominance of political news genres. A participant opined that, if someone posts 'Raila has been arrested, I cannot trust such news' meaning politicians and political brokers significantly shape news discourses in Kenya.

Photo 14: Screenshots showing cautionary retweets against fake news



9.5.3 The wisdom of the 'crowds'? Groups with many followers as a determinant of trust

While social media plays a vital role in young people's daily news exposure and partly engagement, young people seemingly trust social media pages with many subscribers or followers…" I only trust those traditional media social media pages that have the most followers". Traditional news media have re-invented themselves online, though they significantly face challenges in situations where their brands are imitated or illegally used by other social media users to their ends. Research shows that traditional news brands still enjoy a significant amount of trust among respondents in over 37 countries spread across America, Europe, Asia, and South America (Newman et al., 2017). Traditional brands reinforce the significance of institutional trust whereby; young people filter news using the lenses of institutional credibility. This does not suggest that if young people trust the brand, and then automatically read the news. As a participant pointed out "let us take an example of KTN news, you find that there are when you search for that page, you find so many KTN pages. Then the one that you trust, okay the one that I trust, is the one that has many followers. That is when I have to trust the news that is being conveyed by

those pages on social media (FGD 3, UoE). This reverberates with studies, which have shown that whereas young people have gone online, they still find themselves in some occasion consuming traditional media news, especially where they feel they need to confirm the accuracy of the information (Rosengard et al., 2014).

9.5.4 Verifying the sources of information

Through Social media and private messaging applications, news exposure avenues have expanded manifold, necessitating a filtering process to ascertain the most accurate and verifiable news. However, at the same time, the platforms through which news are consumed, shared, re-purposed have the potential to expose young people beyond their immediate locales and circles of networked 'friends'. As shown in Chapter 5, over 95 % of young people use their smartphones to access news on a wide range of social media platforms. A point often overlooked, is the unique socialities enacted by social media platforms and private messaging applications (Miller et al., 2016); mainly through the affordance(s) of creating personal profiles. Haggerly and Erickson (2000) describe profiles as quasi involuntary construction of the self, yet the term 'profile' refers to other data doubles' (606). Thus, young people in their news consumption, engage in a continuous process of managing 'risks' that may be occasioned by under and over-exposure of the 'self'.

Couldry and Hepp (2016) contend that the 'risks' is not just about being too 'generous' or friendly, but instead failing to strike a balance between 'self-sharing' and 'self-exposure'. This denotes the inherent tensions in online performativity of the 'self', whereby young people attempt to strike a balance between 'what to put out there' on their social media platforms and what to keep away or conceal from their networked 'peers'. Then how does this shape news consumption? Trottier (2012) concedes that social media has pushed personal private information into the public eye. In order to surmount these challenges, trust becomes incredibly useful when navigating social media spaces for news and socialisation. As Peters et al. eds. (2018) argue, "when reputations become less tangible, social actors-including young people-seek additional measures to ensure trust" (emphasis added:465).

The wisdom of the crowds also informs the kind of news young people will trust in their daily news consumption. Interestingly, as a participant said, **"**I think some of the sources that we use, you may compare the information that you look at social media with the actual site". This partly shows that young people were aware of the online risks, particularly on the potential networked peers and institutions abusing it "you know someone may fake the site of a given social media of

a given source" (FGD 3, UoE). Another participant said, "Okay as for me, the way I can verify whether news is genuine or fake, is by not relying on only one source. I get to listen to news from one source, and then listen from another source, and another source, so at the end of the day, if the news is being broadcast in many sources then I know that this thing is genuine and not fake (FGD 1, TuK). Nevertheless, young people seemingly agree that social media is their primary source of news, even when there are enormous risks and great opportunities.

> But you may get that information then you go and check it on the actual site of that source to find out the information given out on that site is it accurate and is it the same to the given site. Yeah, that is what you determine if the information is accurate or not accurate (FGD 4, UoE).

9.5.5 Anonymity and use of fake social media accounts

Social life is largely shaped by an array of the element, including the networked digital infrastructure (Elias, 1991:26-27). Through a multiplicity of social media platforms (public and private), young people tactically and strategically position the 'self' to watch-read-listen to news as well as the 'sharers' of the news. In the same vein, other news consumers within their networks watch them.

> I think when it comes to online platforms, the ability for people to remain anonymous makes them more confident to forward their opinions in a straight forward manner, without any filtering. Yeah. They want to put everything the way you understand it (FGD 2, UoE).

The above view is consistent with Peters et al. eds. (2018) argument that "watching and being watched are bundled together, as are curating a visible and private self" (:467). Partly, this underscores the lack of trust in the 'other', bearing in mind 'traditional etymology of trust is primarily concerned with the individual' (Peters et al., eds., 2018). Thus, trust becomes a quality 'whose presence is felt as 'double absence' since young people heavily rely on the recommendation(s) by peers and machine filters(algorithms) for 'credible' news (Peters et al., eds, 2018:22).

This signal tectonic power reconfiguration in and within social media spaces, particularly where young people do not just consume news for surveillance and information purposes, but also tap online opportunities to connect and engage in active surveillance. Young people understanding of privacy seems to reverberate with the dystopian literature, particularly the concept of the 'panopticon' advanced by Foucault (1977). Panopticon is a prison model in surveillance studies in George Orwell's 1984: The animal farm, whereby 'prisoners can be viewed from a central

tower whose guards cannot be seen' (Peters et al. eds., 2018), thus 'surveillance becomes both all-encompassing and uncertain as inmates never know when prison guards are watching them. This uncertainty pushes inmates to watch over themselves' (Foucault, 1977:221). This summarises the understanding of privacy according to the FGDs and ethnographic methods. As will be shown, while private messaging application held promises such as secure end-to-end encryption, young people seemingly cared less about the back-stage performances enabled by digital infrastructure as well as the global conglomerates such as Facebook and its subsidiaries, twitter, google among others.).

9.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has shown how trust and privacy are two peas in a pod; they are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. From the findings, two broad understandings of trust emerged, namely: institutional trust, i.e. trust in societal institutions and networked trust i.e. trust in each other. On the one hand, technical affordances, for instance, privacy settings and other provisions such as the use of passwords, personal identification number (PIN), fingerprint, voice commands among other security features emerged as the technical measures of guaranteeing online privacy and security. On the other hand, young people had their creative ways of circumventing the technical affordances in what would be described as the social affordances, such as avoiding online engagement, use of coded language that could be understood by a close circle of networked peers, among others. Further, the emerging themes reflect an increased blurring of boundaries between the private and public spaces, thus inadvertently positioning trust and privacy as fluid concepts as far as news consumption is concerned. Findings show that traditional media (radio, television and newspapers) have gained significant levels of trust as compared to social media platforms and messaging applications. Interestingly, WhatsApp enjoys relatively high trust levels among young people compared to public platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. BlogSpot is least trusted, as they were perceived as the main carriers of rumours and false news stories. Undoubtedly, social media have become part of young people's social lives because of the diverse gratifications that accrue to young people as previously explored in chapter 7. Furthermore, as I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, WhatsApp has significantly gained prominence as the main way of news access among young people. Important to note, this does not imply that young people have deleted their profiles on other platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, among others. Thus, public and private social media platforms, in part serves the purpose of fulfilling diverse young people gratification needs ranging from socialization, entertainment, informational needs, self-documentation and

surveillance of their various sub-domains of the world (see chapter 6). However, all these platforms, with their wide-ranging affordances, profoundly enact different forms of socialities largely based on the perceived privacy and trust levels. It is safe therefore to argue that, both traditional and social media, at least based on the scales suggested by Miller at al., (2018) are deeply engrained in the daily social lives of young news consumers in Kenya. Social media, thus, have added a new level surveillance alongside the old tropes, albeit paradoxically. Arguably, social media platforms have catalyzed datafication of sociality by blurring boundaries between socializing and surveillance.

CHAPTER 10: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The general objective of this study was to find out how mobile connectivity is changing dynamics in news consumption by mapping and analysing how young people in Kenya access and consume news. The first research question paid attention to the motives that inform specific media or platform choices, the enablers of internet and mobile devices access, and finally how they combine a wide range of media in their daily news consumption. The second question sought to understand the understanding of (the) news from a young people's perspective, paying attention to the dominant news sub-genres. The last question sought to provide insights on perceived levels of trust and privacy across these platforms, highlighting elements that influence trust in the information received online, comparatively with traditional brands such as television, radio, and newspapers.

To respond to these questions, this study drew insights from uses and gratifications (U and G) theory and the relatively new concept of scalable sociality developed by Miller et al., (2016). Both conceptual lenses foreground the audience agency in selecting the most appropriate media and media content in their daily lives. U and G provided the framework for exploring how young people make choices of the available media in order to satisfy their needs, thus enabling them to experience some gratifications such as acquiring new knowledge, entertainment, social interaction, and reward.

However, U and G has been challenged, particularly on its relevance in a fast-changing mediascape. Critiques argue that U and G has not adequately addressed the choices made by media consumers about media content, choosing instead to dwell more on the media devices such as the radio, television, newspapers, etc. U and G as explored in Chapter 3, attempts to tie media consumption to unique audience needs, without necessarily paying attention to the kind of sociality promoted by the contents carried by these platforms, particularly news. Cognizant of this limitation, the concept of scalable sociality was embraced to unpack how social media and messaging applications shape news consumption through the public and private scales of sociality. Miller et al., (2016) observe that social media affordances have significantly shaped the form and content of the information posted, with audio-visual formats increasingly becoming dominant compared to traditional media. Unlike the U and G, scalable sociality recognizes the distinctive socio-technical features in shaping not just news formats but also the kind of experiences derived from news consumed.

Both U and G and Scalable Sociality have one limitation in common; they lend themselves to Global North assumption, which quite often than not are at odds with the lived experiences in the Global South. African contexts are dissimilar from the Global North; 'Africans have always transgressed the limitations of the public sphere (Willems, 2010:56). In this regard, I embraced non-normative Global South studies to explain unfamiliar behaviour in young people's news consumption experiences. Context specificities play a critical role in news consumption experiences; they, directly and indirectly, trigger the audience needs to be gratified.

Considering these theoretical insights and the limitations, this study scaled-down the conventional wisdom by the U and G scholars by moving beyond the technologies *per se* to unpacking social media and messaging applications as genres of news content (Miller et al., 2016). However, in response to the non-normative wave of African scholarship, this study specifically focused on two public universities in Kenya rather than an idealized broad-brush generalization of Global South. More specifically, this study sought to understand news genre consumption experiences among young people as a specific segment of the population. It further narrowed down to understanding the dominant news sub-genres (politics, business, sports, fashion and lifestyle, and weather).

By doing so, this study pays attention to social relationships as well as the socio-cultural, political, and economic realities where these technologies are embedded. de Bruijn, Nyamjoh and Brinkman (2009) argue that 'technologies are not just re-shaping African social realities, but they are equally shaped by societies within which they are embedded". In Kenya, like many African states, a myriad of social, cultural, economic and political factors shapes the social relationships between and among individuals, groups, and institutions. Taken together, these competing factors shape perceptions of trust and privacy in context. At the same time, they determine the needs of the audience, thus the motivation to turn to various media outlets and news exposure avenues for gratification. The next few sections summarize the key findings in each chapter as per the research questions.

10.1 Empirical contribution

10.1.1 Mobile and internet access: Enablers and motivations

Findings show that there is a high internet and mobile penetration within university spaces. Participants with mobile phones that were internet-enabled were 745(98.7%) out of which 717(95.0%) confirmed using their devices to access online news. These statistics seem to reify the dominant discourses on the high internet and mobile penetration rates in Kenya. In addition, 82.4%

of young people access news more than once a day using their mobile devices, significantly displacing Laptops (23%) and Tablets (9.4%) as frequently accessed sources of news.

These statistics show that material devices, mainly internet-enabled mobile phones, have become embodied in the day-to-day young people news consumption experiences. In addition, portable digital devices such as laptops and tablets have seemingly ceded ground to mobile phones which are considered portable and versatile. In this regard, mobile phones were considered the equivalents of computers, useful for accessing not just news but for entertainment, sending and receiving money (M-Pesa) among other functions. Consistent with arguments advanced by U and G scholars (Rayburn, 1996; Ruggiero, 2000), the motives to own a specific brand of a mobile device is mainly informed by the underlying economic opportunities that may accrue to the user. These opportunities are intricately linked to the efficiency of the mobile phone in terms of its processing speeds. The faster the processing speed; the fewer data bundles consumed, means more savings to young people who are mostly unemployed 'hustlers'(Tufte, 2017).

Among various reasons mentioned, mobile phones were widely embraced because of their communicative functions (such as connecting and disconnecting people). However, it emerged that young people have varied motivations and creative ways of navigating the complexities of news access, including mobile phones and internet access. First, the relatively affordable cost of smartphones in Kenya has afforded young people opportunities to tap into the potentialities of digital spaces. Besides, the materiality of mobile devices, for instance, their portability has significantly made these gadgets not only useful for news access but a catalyst of enacting different scales of socialities among young people. Mobile phones are also considered a relatively cheap, fast and convenient means of accessing news as compared to the traditional media (Television, Radio, newspapers). Important to note, young people mentioned that they access television, listen to the radio and read newspapers through their mobile devices. Thus, this shows that traditional media have reinvented themselves online lowering the barriers to physical access, including the cost of purchasing televisions, radio receivers and newspapers.

These findings partly show that news consumption habits are increasingly forming around the materiality of mobile devices as well as the socio-technical affordances of various social media platforms. Mobile phones are by nature designed to connect people through the various affordances that are inscribed in it, enabling the exchange of information among, between and within young people. Consistent with the U and G theory, owning a mobile device was a function of two broad motivations linked to the inherent distinct features. Smartphones by and of

themselves were a symbolic form of the news; young people used mobile devices symbolically as 'news' to their peers and networked others. In other words, the brand chosen by young people was used to convey information, albeit subtly, on one's social status. Secondly, Mobile devices were mentioned as sleek, reliable and multi-faceted communication devices facilitating various forms of interactions and information access within and without university spaces.

Thus, while statistics show relatively high internet penetration, findings seem to point to the realities of the digital divide. Whereas free Wi-Fi was provided at TuK and UoE, such provision may not adequately meet the needs (individual and collective) of young people. For example, young people were observed behind the Library at UoE enjoying free Wi-Fi, meaning such facilities were limited and inadequate in some places within the university. Nonetheless, both institutions seem to have made progress in achieving free WI-FI in line with the government vision 2030 policy document[51].

However, the demand to stay plugged online within and outside university spaces, particularly in spaces with weak Wi-Fi signals had driven young people to seek alternative ways of staying connected. Strikingly, as a way of navigating the barriers to internet access, young people mentioned the availability of cheap black-market bundles, commonly known as bundles *mwitu*; signaling a robust parallel data bundles market in Kenya. This provides a fresh perspective on why there is a very high internet penetration rates in Kenya (99.2%) These bundles were readily available, evidenced by the screaming posters on noticeboards and banners within university spaces.

Also, young people mentioned that they had devised ways of hacking WI-FI passwords using available mobile applications such as android dumper. This, they opined, was vital in their daily news access and consumption habits. Taken together, mobile news consumption is predicated on internet access, which comes with some costs implications to young people. Therefore, their economic and financial positions become a substantial motivating factor to device ingenious ways of staying connected not just for news consumption but also to tap into underlying economic motives brought about by specific news sub-genres consumption as will be shown below.

10.1.2 What is news?

News access was increasingly predicated on the above enablers and motivations for news access. The main objective of exploring how young people understand or describe news is not to arrive

[51] https://www.researchictafrica.net/countries/kenya/Kenya_Vision_2030_-_2007.pdf

at one definition, but rather to trigger a conversation on how digital disruptions in Kenya have shaped news consumption—allowing claims and counterclaims to emerge that might be incredibly useful in explaining unfamiliar news consumption experiences in Kenya. If technologies are disrupting social, economic, political and cultural spheres in the Global South, then equally there is an urgent need to establish how such disruptions have not only shaped the speeds and formats of content but also how they are defined and understood as an embodied social practice in context.

Findings show that young people weave internet-enabled mobile devices in mediating the construction of the social world and its sub-domains, consistent with arguments advanced by Couldry and Hepp (2016). A significant number of participants defined news as anything from the personal to the public that happens within and without their immediate locales, regions, countries, and continents. Young people's voices captured in the qualitative phase of this study positioned news at the interface between one physical world with a multiplicity of sub-domains or sub-worlds. News was described as a window to a socially differentiated world, new knowledge, a reinforcement of time, and finally, news was described as politics.

To begin with, the description of news as a window to a socially differentiated world highlights the multiplicity of domains and sub-domains, contrary to the long-held belief of one static world. These domains and sub-domains are distinct, yet they overlap in a few ways. This is consistent with the concept of scalable sociality; news was consumed in scales from the smallest to largest sub-domains, i.e. local, regional, national and international news sub-domains. Local news was accessed and consumed through small social media groups and messaging applications such as WhatsApp and telegram; this is triggered by the motivation of social integration and the need to belong to the community.

Young people in a university space consume local news to reconcile the inherent tensions and contradiction in their spaces, arguably, having a collective experience. Put differently, the natural feelings of attachment to the community was a significant motivation for local news consumption. It also shows, though partly, that the interest to participate in local politics, should not be equated or viewed as signs of low cultural capital. Regional news, on the other hand, could mean news consumed from the not distant neighbourhoods, in this context neighbouring counties (devolved units). Regions, in this case, emerged as a loosely used sub-domain to account for the news that emanated from places that were not far from the institution, but at the same time not within the university locale. National news was described as news accessed from mainly mainstream media

and social media platforms or forwarded links on private messaging applications on what is happening in the country. International news domain refers to news from the Global North.

As I have argued, these domains of news consumption are not fixed; they could co-occur in an overlapping manner. There is a need to pay attention to the context where the news event occurs and where the consumption takes place. By so doing, it allows us to know how both time, space and place can shape and inform the domain within which the news can be categorized into. Paradoxically, International news was seemingly news from other countries outside the African continent. For instance, the USA, Europe, and China featured prominently on what young people understood as international news. This partly shows the decades-old debate that showed an imbalance in the news flows from the north to the south. With the rapid spread of mobile devices and the internet, young people and African users can circumvent the dominance of global conglomerates in following and consuming newsworthy events and Africa.

Secondly, young people conceptualized news as new knowledge. Although news as a window to a socially differentiated world seems to override this description, it resonates well with the surveillance and information function of news as established by earlier uses and gratification theories. However, an essential difference between earlier findings and findings established here is that knowledge seems to mean several things to young people. Through information or ideas obtained, young people expand their world view(s), (and in some instances collapse) through an active process of cross-fertilizing ideas and information about what is happening in other spaces, which they argued, could have an impact on their lives

Thirdly, news was described as reinforcement of time. For a long time, news has been linked with time and was broadcast at specific time intervals. Thus, through news, young people get to know the time a news event occurred. Inadvertently, weather a breaking news story or any other newsworthy event; there is an element of time, which allows young people to plan their daily activities accordingly. For example, television was found to be intertwined with everyday life and an accompaniment to domesticity. Lull (1982) described this as the structural dimension of media usage; media were providing a period for domestic activities or what Mendelson (1964) described as ‘bracketing the day’. These arguments show that social media and messaging applications have not entirely replaced the ‘domesticity’ and ‘bracketing’ roles of television and radio respectively, but rather have created more avenues of news exposure and varied forms of domesticity and ways of bracketing the day that comes into play in news consumption experiences on social media.

Lastly and most importantly, news was described as politics. This is perhaps weighty because it later emerged that indeed the most consumed news genre is politics. Young people affirmed that news in Kenya mainly revolved around political news stories and events that had political themes. Thus, the dominance of politics over other sub-genres, arguably, shows the intricate nature of human needs and the current socio-political landscape. Probed further as will be explored in the next section, young people seem to understand politics as anything that 'matters to them'. This is a contradiction since; by describing news as 'politics', young people assert that their personal life stories and experiences do not qualify. Therefore, politics is the news aired by traditional media, while political news is what they primarily consume on social media and messaging applications; particularly news stories that touch on their day-to-day social lives.

10.1.3 News consumption in a saturated media landscape: How young people combine media platforms in their daily news consumption

Social media (47.4%) have become the most widely used platform for news access and consumption, followed by radio (16.7%), television (15.9%), word of mouth (10.5%), mainstream media websites (4.5%), SMS alerts (2%), newspapers (1.9%), email and news aggregators at 0.5% each and finally local Barraza (0.7%). More broadly, these statistics reveal the complementarity between a wide range of media, platforms and communication avenues in young people's daily news consumption experiences.

The significant rise of social media in news access and consumption shows the dynamic nature of the mediascape, where waves of innovations quickly relegate today's technological masterpieces to 'old-school' kind of devices. For example, Short Messaging Services (SMS) commonly used in the formative years of mobile phones in Kenya, has ceded ground to private messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat, among others. However, it is important to note that regardless of their novelty, new technologies do not entirely replace the existing technologies but rather build on them as shown by the small but significant percentage of users who indicated that they still prefer traditional media (radio, television, radio), SMS, websites, news aggregators, and local baraza (informal meetings convened by local chiefs in their administrative spheres) in their communication.

From the focus group discussions, young people mentioned that traditional media online accounts were their news sources online. To many young people, social media meant the world in their hands. Social media was necessary for connecting to family, friends, and the world at large. It was a way of challenging the helplessness and vulnerable narratives as well as false hopes often

peddled by the ruling class. Individually and collectively, young people gratified their news needs mainly through contents posted on social media. This reinforces the significance of user-generated content in the overall social media architecture, consistently with Miller et al.'s, (2016) description of social media as the contents posted on the platforms. Yuan (2011), argues that that news consumption surpasses the dichotomy "traditional versus new" news media, both on the level of technology (traditional versus new media) and content (established news brands versus market players). The kind of news accessed through such traditional media pages online was mainly national news or more public information, and through the comments section, young people could read and comment on news stories.

Facebook and WhatsApp remain popular news sources among young people, with both platforms being used either as the primary way of news consumption or supplementary second source. While Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were perceived as a public-facing platform, WhatsApp, on the other hand, is increasingly designed to bring close people together, not necessarily close in regard to physical proximity, but people who have each other's contacts from within and far places. In the context of this study, young people, particularly at UoE, perceived Twitter as an elite platform, whereby those who belonged to a 'certain class' shared their views. Considering this, many young people operated dormant twitter accounts, with active alerts for breaking news stories. This is paradoxical in that, Kenyans on twitter (KOTs) have made a name for themselves by seizing twitter affordances in articulating, challenging and mobilizing-local, national and international actors. Twitter mainly embraced as a 'breaking news' platform among young people in Kenya. This is evidenced by the 'silence' or the minimal tweets by those who participated in the ethnographic phase of this study. This partly confirms the perceived elitist nature of Twitter conversations among young people

10.1.4 Dominant news genres and their frequency of access

Political news genre emerged as the most dominant genre among young people in Kenya. This positions universities as a place and space where public political discourses take place. Political news was consumed by 76% of respondents, Business news by an average of 60 %, fashion and lifestyles news 58.3%, sports news 56.6% and weather news 18 %. These findings show that though young people have been framed as a homogenous group often with universal needs, they have distinctive heterogeneous needs. They have unique needs that differ based on the prevailing realities and goals. Also, these sub-genres were just a conduit in fulfilling and gratifying diverse needs. It emerged that the need to tap the underlying economic opportunities primarily motivated

young people to consume all subgenres. As they say, information is wealth, young people who are at the point in their lives where they are starting to position themselves career-wise consume specific sub-genres not only to meet their 'hustling' needs but also to imagine their future and plan appropriately.

Young people seem to understand political news as 'anything' that matters to them, affirming though not explicitly; young people's individual needs are also 'political'. Inadvertently, this description defies the conventional wisdom that has for a longtime framed politics around political elites and the spectacle of political events. Political news was also watched or read for its entertainment value; for instance, the bursting side of politicians was mentioned as a critical motivator. This was also through making humorous memes and focusing on the dramatic side of political news, satire and making fun of politicians. At the same time, young people are acutely aware of the potential of politics to build, destroy or maintain the status quo in Kenya. Thus, by watching political news, young people are exposed to the internal dynamics of the state, particularly in relations to policies that influence the short-term and long-term economic plans of the state. Therefore, though dominant, political news sub-genre highlights that young people no longer pay so much attention to national discourses that have little in terms of resolving their predicaments, such as high unemployment rates.

Similarly, business, sports, fashion, and lifestyle were consumed not only for the information but also as nodes to connect and where possible leverage on their creativity to earn a living. The monies received from the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) in Kenya, partly meet the tuition and upkeep needs, prompting a majority of them to seek alternative ways of supplementing what they receive. In this regard, they consider themselves 'hustlers' for instance, they consume business news to engage in surveillance of the current market trends actively a well as emerging opportunities and threats in the realm of business. Sports news was popular among young male students across both institutions. The significant rise of betting companies has profoundly led to the commoditization of sports in Kenya. This intersects with the political and economic news genres as earlier explored. The motivation for sports news access was mostly to circumvent the present realities, for instance, the lack of opportunities in the labour market, and in a way invent the future by engaging in varied forms of gambling

When asked about their levels of engagement with the new genres, for instance through clicking the 'like' button, leaving comments or sharing news accessed with networked others on social media and private messaging applications, there seem to be a slight decline in the cumulative

percentages of those who indicated they 'very often' and 'often' accessed the five news genres. In this regard, though young people seem to be disengaging from social media platforms, preferring instead to read the news on any platform, they indicated that they would rather discuss news on private messaging applications. This is contrary to the widely held belief that social media and private messaging applications have fostered the inclusion of marginalized voices in the public sphere, thus enacting an expanded democratic space.

10.1.5 Trust and Privacy

Findings show that news consumption is primarily shaped by perceptions on the level of trust and privacy enacted by specific news channel(s) or platform(s), at and across different time and places. These perceptions are shaped by social-technical affordances of various social media platforms as well as a plethora of other temporalities within and without university spaces where the 'self' is located. This is particularly true if news as earlier shown in chapter 5 is critical in forming and sustaining the 'self' in a socially-culturally-politically differentiated context such as Kenya. Sociologists have described 'Self' as a viewpoint associated with an embodied consciousness (Couldry & Hepp, 2016). Thus, through individual and group interactions, young people form a perspective of the 'self' (see Chapter 5). Also, while fake news has dominated global discourses, young people do not consider the whole discourse of fake news to be harmful to them. In this regard, though news genre and its sub-genres are nodes of reaching other needs mainly economic in nature.

Probed on the most trusted social media and private messaging applications, 271(35.9%) respondents indicated that they trust WhatsApp. A further 230 (30.5%) respondents indicated that they trust twitter, while 183(24.6%) respondents indicated that they trust telegram. Also, 175(23.2%) respondents said they trust Instagram and 146(19.3%) respondents indicating that they trust Snapchat. Finally, only 123(16.3%) respondents said they trust Facebook. These findings show that although young people prefer to scale down news deliberation to private messaging applications, this should not be confused for trust. Comparatively, Young people trust traditional media– television (89%), radio (84.3%) and newspapers (64/1%) than social media and messaging applications. Contrary to empirical evidence showing waning levels of trust in the Global North (Dahlgren, 2018; Elvestad et al., 2017; Fletcher & Park, 2017; Newman, 2019; Quandt, 2012; Tsfati, 2010) and partly in Sub-Saharan Africa (Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2019), this study shows that social media and messaging are considered conduits in the spread of false information

and are susceptible to manipulation. This, inadvertently, has increased institutional trust (radio, television and newspapers).

However, institutional trust is relative to individual audience needs; this means that it is possible to trust and mistrust a specific channel news channel at the same time depending on the perceived authenticity of specific news sub-genres. WhatsApp has significantly gained prominence as the primary way of news access among young people. Important to note, this does not imply that young people have deleted their profiles on other platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, among others. Thus, public and private social media platforms, in part serves the purpose of fulfilling diverse young people gratification needs ranging from socialization, entertainment, informational needs, self-documentation and surveillance of their various sub-domains of the world (**see chapter 6**). It also enjoys relatively high trust levels among young people compared to public platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Blogspots are least trusted, yet a decade ago, they were the most revered and trusted alternative sources of news. Within the university spaces, blogs are perceived as the leading carriers of rumours and false news stories.

Messaging applications limit news engagement to a small number of contacts, thus partly enhancing the privacy of the users. Survey findings reveal that messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat enjoy relatively high levels of perception on privacy compared to other social media platforms recording 287(75.5%), 233(61.3%) and 231(60.8%) respectively. Instagram recorded 209(55%), Twitter recorded 198(52.1%), and finally, Facebook recorded 166(43.7%). In the case of WhatsApp and Telegram groups, a community of users with converging interests are brought together. Also, while messaging applications are considered safer spaces for news deliberations, young people are aware of malinformation–the potential of private chats or conversations to spill their way into social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. This implies that due to the perceived privacy levels of messaging applications, young people with converging interests are at risk of remaining in the eco-chambers, thus leading to polarisation. Put differently, trust among and between close contacts enacted by messaging applications could potentially lead to staying uninformed even with robust deliberations existing within these platforms. The limited nature of alternative views to challenge or questions the news received convinces young people that they are right yet their position could be skewed towards narrow news angles.

These findings reify the concept of ICTs–including social media and messaging applications-as double 'articulations'; they are technical machines and media useful for the negotiation of public and private meanings (Gagliardone, 2016:14). For the same reason, Peters et al., eds (ibid) contend that what makes social media social is the 'digitization of pervasive social relations', which inadvertently facilitates surveillance practices" (465). Social media surveillance infringes on privacy; the guise of freedom online and the algorithmic prompts, for example, Facebook's 'what is on your mind' as bait or ploy to deride users to perform the 'self' in public and privately mediated online spaces. Trust thus becomes quintessential in an increasingly complex society, characterized by heightened urbanization and the increasing complexity of communication networks and networked 'others. While, earlier uses and gratification studies established the use of traditional media for information and surveillance needs (Rayburn, 2009), findings show that social media has partly shifted the balance by affording young people opportunities to engage in interpersonal, group and institutional surveillance. Put differently, young people in their daily news consumption engage in an active process of surveillance, yet deep within the digital infrastructure, their visibility to networked others (individuals, groups and institutions) exposes them to digital surveillance which seeks to exploit personal data for digital gains. This supports the argument by Tuner (2004) that social media adaptation has integrated into the daily lives of ordinary people, hence increasing their visibility (2).

10.2 Theoretical contribution

The precarity of the media ecology at the interstices of a fast-moving world and the web facticity remains an empirical and theoretical challenge. Although distinct social media and messaging applications affordances have significantly increased information transmission speeds at the same time expanding the space for news deliberations, it has also profoundly shaped the form and content of news. The distinctions between traditional and modern-day citizen journalism predicated on professionalism and news as an institutional production is increasingly becoming blurred. As earlier mentioned, this study drew insights from the rooted Uses and Gratifications (U and G) and the relatively new concept of scalable sociality developed by Miller et al., (2016). Both conceptual lenses foreground the audience agency in selecting the most appropriate media and media content in their daily lives. Uses and Gratification was useful in mapping the needs and the motivation of informing young people choices, both media and the news genres consumed. Complimentarily, scalable sociality was useful in analysing how the inherent social-technical affordances trigger young people needs on different scales. The public-private scales of

sociality were useful in unpacking how news engagement as well as the perceived levels of trust and privacy in online spaces

As findings have already shown, mobile and internet connectivity has expanded avenues for media and content access. Thus, against these recent developments, Uses and Gratifications provided the framework for exploring how young people make choices of the available media in order to satisfy their needs, thus enabling them to experience some gratifications such as acquiring new knowledge, entertainment, social interaction, and reward. Yet embedded in this argument is the assumption that audiences or in this case young people have set goals in their daily media consumption. By so doing young people gratify their inherent needs.

Criticism abounds on the relevance of conceptual lenses for studying a phenomenon. In this regard, U and G has been challenged, particularly on its importance in a fast-changing mediascape. Owing to its historical past and its significance in unpacking uses and gratification of traditional media (radio, television, and newspapers), U and G studies conducted in the late 80s and early 90s dwelled more on radio, television, newspapers, etc. As explored in Chapter 3, scholars attempted to tie media consumption to unique audience needs, without necessarily paying attention to the kind of sociality promoted by the contents carried by these platforms; more so news that was widely associated with an informed citizenry.

Against this backdrop, the concept of scalable sociality was embraced complimentarily to unpack how social media and messaging applications shape news consumption through the public and private scales of sociality. The public and private scales of sociality as proposed by Miller et al.,(2016), provides a useful analytical lens in understanding how the socio-technical affordances shapes the nature and form of news content, and how the embedded social relationships enacted by these platforms enhances or constrains the sociality of news within specific consumption spaces.

Miller et al., (Ibid) observes that social media affordances have significantly shaped the form and content of the information posted, with audio-visual formats increasingly becoming dominant compared to traditional media. This study further scale down this argument, by moving beyond the technologies per se to news content, paying attention to the social relationships as well as the socio-cultural, political, and economic realities where these technologies are embedded. de Bruijn, Nyamjoh and Brinkman (2009) argue that 'technologies are not just re-shaping African social realities, but they are equally shaped by societies within which they are embedded". In Kenya, like many African states, a myriad of social, cultural, economic and political factors

shapes the social relationships between and among individuals, groups, and institutions. These competing factors shape perceptions of trust and privacy in context. At the same time, they determine the needs of the audience, thus the motivation to turn to various media outlets and news exposure avenues for gratification.

Thus, this study submits that Uses and Gratifications is still a useful theoretical tool in mapping user choices and motivations. Scalable sociality presents a new(r) approach in providing insights in locating news as a window in an online setup, with the possibility of various windows being opened simultaneously by different actors from different regions. Most importantly, as earlier observed, these platforms cannot be studied in isolation; there are so many overlaps technically provided for enabling a seamless vacillation of news. For example, a news story can be posted in multiple platforms simultaneously, or the user can carefully pick a platform based on the scales of the most private to the most public.

10.3 A critical reflection on the future of news and news consumption in the Global South

A mixed study of this kind often yields large data sets which makes it challenging to weave a neat conclusion. In attempting to map and analyse emerging and receding news consumption patterns among young people, a study of this nature finds itself challenging normative assumptions that often constitute research findings. Also, with the findings presented in this study, the reader will make their conclusion based on their theoretical and philosophical orientation. This is perhaps is the first significant contribution; that findings were not aimed at arriving at absolute outcomes but trigger further debates in the discourse of news consumption.

Focusing on young people in two public universities flips the coin from the litany of studies that have increasingly perpetuated epistemological subjectivity—focusing on adoption and adaptation of the internet and mobile devices in informal urban settlements and rural areas in Kenya. Omanga and Mainye (2019) recount how North-South collaborations are skewed towards achieving project funders and collaborators objective(s); “Kibera and Mathare (two biggest slums in Kenya) were not just informal settlements, but for ‘Kenyan studies’ a prized symbol in the overall claims of knowing the city of Nairobi, and possibly Africa in General” (275). Though these studies provide incredible insights, they limit debates of new technologies to their transformative potential rather than illuminating how people are refashioning not just technologies but the content (including news) as well. This study recentres universities as a useful public sphere in and of itself for it allows young people to represent themselves to each other and negotiate social, cultural and political values. Put differently; news consumption is part of the broader social and

cultural context. Therefore, focusing on universities, contrary to the broadly held assumptions, offers fresh perspectives on how news consumption contributes to this process of negotiation, and how it mirrors in the day to day lives.

The news media environment is saturated in Kenya. Young people are increasingly exposed to news for a variety of reasons through a wide range of platforms, with such access more inclined to social media. Nevertheless, even with the widespread use of mobile phones and the internet in daily news access experiences. News intersects with a wide range of young people's needs and materializes through a variety of platforms (Private and public). Social media and messaging applications have gained prominence as major news access platforms. Social media affordances enact either private or public sociality, which inadvertently shapes how news is accessed, for instance, through private platforms or public platforms. Therefore, whereas young people have been framed as a homogenous group with universal needs, their news consumption habits are increasingly motivated by their distinct heterogeneous needs.

Despite their economic limitations, young people have devised ways of navigating and circumventing the barriers to access. Their ingenuity in hacking WI-FI passwords portends serious cybersecurity. This ingenuity perhaps accounts for the booming parallel data markets sustained by a robust underground network. This form of resilience has its positive and negative sides. On the positive side, a country with such a creative segment can tap the energy and creativity for young people to achieve its desired goals. While these findings reify the creativity of African, users (see Nyamjoh, 2005); they portend serious cybersecurity risks. The vast population of unemployed young people could use their creativity to challenge power and economic structures in Kenya, a move that could bring about serious security threats, and occasion huge losses. Rather than view young people as ignorant, cynical and apathetic, young people should be allowed to experiment by putting into practice their skills in solving endemic societal challenges.

The architecture of social media is partly responsible for the dormancy of a group of young people online. Based on the nature of the ties (strong or weak); 'friends' would not want to jeopardize the already existing relationship by opposing, going against or contradicting the messages posted by their 'friends 'online. As pointed out, it is safe to conclude that the decades of exclusion and social marginalization of young people directly by the elites and power brokers and indirectly through rigid societal structures (and in some cases poorly thought out policies) have partly led to apathy and cynicism among young people.

Nevertheless, social media and messaging application have significantly shifted news consumption from offline to online. Inadvertently, this has partly restored trust on traditional media as credible sources of news. The perception of social media and messaging application as the conduit for spreading 'fake news' have inadvertently led young people to an active news verification process between traditional media and a variety of online news sources. However, these needs are not static, but rather dynamic and fluid; like a jellyfish, they squirm in different directions. They are triggered, shaped and influenced by the socio-technical affordances of social media and messaging applications. By themselves, social media and private messaging applications are increasingly mutating and evolving, yet it appears such processes shape news formats. This reverberates with the content dimension as earlier explored in the preceding paragraphs. In addition, they select these channels based on their perceived process experiences of adopting and adapting specific channel for their news consumption

In consonance with the concept of scalable sociality, young people are scaling down their news consumption to private messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat, and SMS), while at the same time, (dis)engaging from a large group or public platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) often associated with gossips, rumours and propaganda. Paradoxically, social media and Messaging applications have expanded news exposure in myriad ways, while at the same time leading to a confluence of real and fake identities, arguably leading to real and fake news, a debate that remains unsettled in many contexts. Tensions and contradictions abound in the daily news consumption patterns of young people. While there is widespread exposure of news on a wide range of platforms and channels, there seems to be decreasing the use of social media for news access and messaging applications for deliberative engagement.

Also, whereas many studies have argued for the potential of social media platforms to amplify social connections and communications, it undermines the exposure to a wide range of views. It emerged, with time; young people develop their repertoires of news consumption, thus minimizing the exposure to unknown sources of news as well as the time wasted in search of news. A complex mix of social media, messaging applications and traditional media forms an intricate pattern of news exposure. Traditional media were mainly used as sources of credible news, and complimentarily social media was used to find out more about a news story. In some cases, social media was mainly lauded for breaking news stories. Still, young people often turned to either radio or television (or both) in ascertaining the credibility of such news.

News consumption is not a direct function of the universal needs to be gratified, but instead needs shaped by the immediate surroundings and lived realities within such context. Thus, news is a node that connects young people to themselves and to the social world. News and its sub-genres were consumed for a variety of reasons, but a common thread running across these motives is that they are primarily consumed for underlying economic opportunities. This is consistent with the content gratification dimension, as suggested by the uses and gratifications theorists (Sundar, 2008). Against this conceptualization of political news among young people, the nature and form of politics seem to have shifted from the conventional institutional politics to more grassroots form of politics. This partly highlights the interconnected nature of needs with the prevailing realities. For instance, by focusing on what 'matters to them', young people affirm the peculiarity of needs and the inherent possibilities of gratification in a diverse range of platforms.

Politics seems to have attracted new descriptions. These descriptions revolve around resisting the dominant ideologies perpetuated by the existing social orders and societal power structures. Politics is no longer understood to mean politicians and political events. Instead, it is understood broadly to mean anything that connects with the personal needs of young people through social media and private messaging applications, young people express their personal alternative views or to speak back to power. However, this is seemingly far from the point. There are inherent contradictions that emerged, confirming that the motivations for accessing and consuming political news are not static. With the slightest change of context, medium, form, and format of news content, news needs emerge or submerge. The resulting impact is nullification or amplification of the already existing needs. Even within these differences, lies tepid indifference. These sub-genres are interwoven, and there is a universe of intersections and overlaps. They compete and complement each other in the process of oscillating between various domains of the social world: local, regional, national and global (See Chapter 5). Most importantly, there is a need to understand how these popular news discourses animate social media conversations in context. This also suggests that individual needs are first a function of the prevailing political, social-cultural, and economic domains and sub-domains.

Yet there seems to be a new crop of social and political elites controlling news discourses online. With the creation of anonymous and troll accounts online, it becomes increasingly difficult to engage objectively. This kind of apathy can be described as positive; it has ignited digital entrepreneurship among young people. Nonetheless, the dysfunctions in governance structures seem to have catalyzed the emergence of new forms of civic and political engagement among young people. Seemingly, there has been a significant focus on national politics, to a more grass-

roots kind of politics. Although alternative politics has gained traction in the recent past, particularly on Twitter, an engagement that is more private has further served to strengthen oral forms of communication within and among young people.

At the same time, the increased use of mobile phones and the internet have further problematized the notions of trust, particularly if news, as earlier, is understood alongside individual and collective needs in context. The asymmetrical power relations between users and enforces of these privacy measures hardly read or engage with the complexities of the terms and conditions. This makes the application of privacy control difficult. For example, the use of cookies by search engines as well as the geolocation patterns among other backstage tactics by technology companies obfuscates the surveillance capitalism and internet logic. Social media, thus, have added new level surveillance alongside the old tropes, albeit paradoxically.

Arguably, social media platforms have catalyzed datafication of sociality by blurring boundaries between socializing and surveillance. This reifies the concept of ICTs—including social media and messaging applications—as double 'articulations'; where they are technical machines and media useful for the negotiation of public and private meanings (Gagliardone, 2016:14). For the same reason, Peters et al., Eds (ibid) contend that what makes social media social is the 'digitization of pervasive social relations', which inadvertently facilitates surveillance practices" (465). Social media surveillance infringes on privacy; the guise of freedom online and the algorithmic prompts, for example, Facebook's 'what is on your mind' as bait or ploy to deride users to perform the 'self' in public and privately mediated online spaces. Trust thus becomes quintessential in an increasingly complex society, characterized by heightened urbanization and the increasing complexity of communication networks and networked 'others. Social media has partly shifted the balance by affording young people opportunities to engage in interpersonal, group and institutional surveillance. Put differently, young people in their daily news consumption engage in an active process of surveillance, yet deep within the digital infrastructure, their visibility to networked others (individuals, groups, and institutions) exposes them to digital surveillance which seeks to exploit personal data for digital gains.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics clearance by the University of Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Tallam

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H17/10/21**
PROJECT TITLE	Appropriation of on-line news via mobile devices: A reception analysis of online news among the Kenyan youth
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr E Tallam
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	School of Literature, Language and Media/
DATE CONSIDERED	20 October 2017
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved
EXPIRY DATE	30 November 2020

DATE 01 December 2017 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr I Gagliardone

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature

21 / 10 / 2017
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix 2: Research Authorization by National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone:+254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax:+254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website:www.nacosti.go.ke
Whenreplying pleasequote

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

Ref: No. **NACOSTI/P/17/37072/17923**

Date: **18th July, 2017**

Edwin K. Tallam
University of the Witwatersrand
SOUTH AFRICA.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on ***"Digital News in Kenya,"*** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi and Uasin Gishu Counties** for the period ending **18th July, 2018.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioners and the County Directors of Education, Nairobi and Uasin Gishu Counties** before embarking on the research project.

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

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

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

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

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.

Appendix 3: Research Authorization by the Regional Coordinator of Education, Nairobi County

Republic of Kenya

STATE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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

When replying please quote

Ref:RCE/NRB/GEN/VOL.1

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

DATE: 30th August, 2017

Edwin K. Tallam
University of the Witwatersrand
SOUTH AFRICA

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

We are in receipt of a letter from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation regarding research authorization in Nairobi County on "**Digital News in Kenya,**"

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted for a period ending 18th July, 2018 as indicated in the request letter.

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

REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION NAIROBI 31 AUG 2017

MAINA NGURU
FOR: REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION
NAIROBI

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

Appendix 4: Research Authorization by the County Commissioner, Uasin-Gishu County

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE PRESIDENCY

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND COORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

Telegrams: "DISTRICTER" Eldoret
Telephone: Eldoret 31421/2
Email-dccturbo2016@gmai.com
When replying please quote

DEPUTY COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
TURBO SUB-COUNTY
UASIN GISHU COUNTY
P.O. BOX 30-30100
ELDORET

Ref. No. ADM.15/4/VOL.VI/15

23rd August,2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION: EDWIN K. TALLAM

This is to confirm that the above named is a student at University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. He has been authorized to carry out research in Uasin Gishu County on "***Digital News in Kenya***" for the period ending 18th July, 2018.

Kindly give him the necessary assistance.

DEPUTY COUNTY COMMISSIONER
TURBO SUB - COUNTY

I.N.OGATO
For: Deputy County Commissioner
TURBO SUB COUNTY

C.C

County Commissioner
Uasin Gishu County.

Appendix 5: Research Authorization The University of Nairobi (UoE)

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE - CHANCELLOR
(Research, Production & Extension)
Prof. Lucy W. Irungu B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D.

P.O. Box 30197-GPO.
00100,Nairobi-Kenya
Telephone: +254-20-2315416 (DI), 318262

Fax:0202317251
Email:dvcrpe@uonbi.ac.ke

UON/RPE/3/5

August 31, 2017

Edwin K. Tallam
P.O. Private Bag 2050
JOHANNESBUG

Dear Tallam,

AUTHORITY TO COLLECT DATA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

I refer to your request dated August 30, 2017 to collect data at the University of Nairobi your PhD in Media Studies at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa entitled: "***Digital News in Kenya".***

I write to inform you that your request has been approved.

You are however required to share the findings of your study with the University of Nairobi by depositing a copy of your research findings with the Director, Library and Information Services on completion of your study.

LUCY W. IRUNGU
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
(RESEARCH, PRODUCTION AND EXTENSION)
&
PROFESSOR OF ENTOMOLOGY

Copy to: Director, ICTC
Director, Library & Information Services

Appendix 6: Research Authorization University of Eldoret (UoE)

University of Eldoret
flame of knowledge and innovation

P. O. Box 1125 - 30100, Eldoret, Kenya
Tel: +254 53 2063257 /2033712/13 Ext. 2352/3
Mob: 0736 493555; Fax: +254 53 206 3257
E-mail: dvasa@uoeld.ac.ke
Website: www.uoeld.ac.ke

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
Academic & Students' Affairs

Our Ref. UoE/B/DVASA/DRIV/034 **Date: 23rd August,** 2017

EDWIN K. TALLAM
University of Witwatersrand,
P. O. Private Bag 2050,
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Mr. Tallam,

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FROM UNIVERSITY OF ELDORET

Reference is made to your letter dated 22nd August, 2017 on the above subject.

This is to inform you that your request to collect data for your PhD Research topic: "***Digital News in Kenya***" has been granted.

You will be required to report to Director of Research and Innovation for briefing on protocol adherence when carrying out research as stipulated in our policies. Kindly note that data collected shall be used for research purposes only.

Yours Sincerely,

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR
Academics & Students' Affairs
University Of Eldoret

PROF. RUTH N. OTUNGA
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
ACADEMIC & STUDENTS' AFFAIRS

cc Director, Research & Innovation

Appendix 7: Research Authorization the Technical University of Kenya (TuK)

THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF KENYA
Haile Selassie Avenue, P. O. Box 52428, Nairobi, 00200, Tel: +254 (020) 343672, 2249974, 2251300, 341639,
Fax: 2219583, E-mail: vc@kenpoly.ac.ke, Website: www.tukenya.ac.ke

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Academics, Research and Students

TUK/DVCARS/ReKE/010/Vol.III 29th November, 2017

Edwin Tallam
University of Witwatersrand
P.O. Private Bag 3, 2050
Johannesburg.

Dear Mr Tallam

RE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA

Reference is made to the above subject and your letter dated 7th November, 2017 addressed to the Vice-Chancellor of the Technical University of Kenya.

Your request for authority to collect data from the Technical University of Kenya, has been carefully considered and reviewed on the basis of your promise to treat all information given to you by the Institution and/or Students of the Institution with utmost confidentiality and anonymity.

In view of the foregoing, I am pleased to inform you that the institution has granted you the sought authority to collect data, purely for academic purposes. We also wish you all the best in your endeavors and particularly, your academic pursuit.

Yours sincerely

Prof. Paul M. Shiundu
DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR- ACADEMICS, RESEARCH & STUDENTS AND
PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY

Copy: Vice-Chancellor

PMS/ims

Appendix 7: Research Questionnaire

DIGITAL NEWS IN KENYA

Brief instructions to the respondents (Please tick on the box once you have read)

Please note that by filling and submitting this questionnaire is taken to mean you have consented. Do **NOT** write your name anywhere in the questionnaire.

Please answer all questions (**where necessary**)as per the instructions provided in the brackets after each question.

1.0 Demographic Data

1.1	Sex of respondent	1	Male
		2	Female
		3	Other

1.2	What is your age (in completed years)? [Please note students **below the age of 18** are not eligible to participate]	

1.3	Which year of study are you in? (Tick where appropriate)	1		First
		2		Second
		3		Third
		4		Fourth
		5		Other (specify_____)

2.0 Access to mobile devices and other media

2.1	Do you own a mobile phone?	1	Yes
		2	No (**please skip to 2.3**)

2.2	If Yes in 2.1 above, is it internet enabled?	1	Yes
		2	No

2.3	Apart from mobile phone, which of the following do you have access to on a daily basis?(Tick where appropriate)	√	**Media**
		1	Radio
		2	Television
		3	Newspapers

2.4	Have you ever used your mobile phone to read online news?	1	Yes
		2	No(**Skip to 2.6**)

2.5	How many hours (**per week**) do you access news using your mobile phone? (**Tick where appropriate**)	0 hrs.	5 hrs.	6-10 hrs.	11-20 hrs.	21-30 hrs.	31-40 hrs.	40+ hrs.
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2.6	Which medium/device do you frequently use to access news (**Tick where appropriate**)	**Media**	**More than once a day**	**Once a day**	**Every week**	**Every month**	**Never**
		Radio	1	2	3	4	5
		Television	1	2	3	4	5
		Tablet	1	2	3	4	5
		Laptop	1	2	3	4	5
		Newspapers	1	2	3	4	5
		Smart watch	1	2	3	4	5
		Mobile phone	1	2	3	4	5

2.7	How long have you been using social media to access news (e.g. Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, etc.)**(Tick where appropriate)**?	√	**Duration**
		1	Don't use social media
		2	Less than 1 month
		3	1-6 months
		4	6 months-1 year
		5	1 year +

2.8	What account(s) do you have(**Tick all that apply**)	√	**Social Network site**
		1	Facebook
		2	Twitter
		3	Instagram
		4	Yahoo
		5	Google+
		6	Linked in
		7	Other(**please specify)** **……..**

2.8.1	What account(s) do you have(**Tick all that apply**)	√	**Messaging Application**
		1	Facebook messenger
		2	Telegram
		3	WhatsApp
		4	Snapchat
		5	Viber
		6	Imo
		7	……..

2.8.2	In any news reading/watching instance (t**hrough either mainstream or social media**), what do you usually remember afterwards?	√	**News memory**
		1	Media channel/Social media platform(eg facebook, whatsapp, twitter etc)
		2	News author /News anchor
		3	News story
		4	News anchor

2.9	Which of this was the **MAIN** way you accessed news in the last one week?(**Using numbers 1(main)-5(Least), please rank the Main ways you access news**)	√	**Platform**
			Word of mouth
			Social media
			Radio
			Television
			Newspapers
			Mainstream media websites/Live streams
			SMS alerts
			Email
			News aggregators
			Local Baraza
			Other……..

2.9.1	In order of your preference, which of the following platforms would you say is your **FIRST**, **SECOND,THIRD** to the last sources of news in order of your preference? (**Please use numbers, e.g 1-first, 2-Second, 3-Third…)**	**No.**	**Social media platform**
			Facebook
			Twitter
			Instagram
			Telegram
			WhatsApp
			Snapchat
			Yahoo
			Google+
			Linked in
			Other(**please specify**)

3.0: News accessed online and its appropriation in daily live

3.1	What kind of news do you **read/Watch** online (**tick where appropriate**)	Type of news	**Very often**	**Often**	**Rarely**	**Very rarely**	**Never**
		Politics	1	2	3	4	5
		Business	1	2	3	4	5
		Sports	1	2	3	4	5
		Weather	1	2	3	4	5
		Fashion/lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5

3.2	What type of news do you **share/comment** (**tick where appropriate**)	Type of news	**Very often**	**Often**	**Rarely**	**Very rarely**	**Never**
		Politics	1	2	3	4	5
		Business	1	2	3	4	5
		Sports	1	2	3	4	5
		Weather	1	2	3	4	5
		Fashion	1	2	3	4	5

3.4	Which of the below statements best describes your activities online	√
	I read information online but don't comment	1
	I read, comment on and share information received online	2
	I don't read information received online, but I share	3
	I use my phone to originate news and share with others	4
	I write and post, read what others have posted, make comments and share them with others	5

3.5	Thinking about your online news consumption, which of the following **captures your preference**?(**Tick where appropriate**)	√	**News preference**
1			Mostly text
2			Text and Video
3			Mostly video
4			Don't know

3.6	Which language do you prefer when writing/reading/commenting?(**Tick where appropriate**)	√	**News preference**
		1	English
		2	Kiswahili
		3	Mother tongue
		4	Sheng(Slang)

4.0Trust and Fake news in online spaces

4.1	Do you trust news received online (e.g. news from social media, websites, blogs, etc.)?		Yes
			No

4.2	On a scale of 1-5, how much do you trust **NEWS** received from the following sources **(Please Tick all that apply to you**)?					
		Not trusted				**Most trusted**
	Radio	1	2	3	4	5
	Television	1	2	3	4	5
	Print media	1	2	3	4	5
	Blogs	1	2	3	4	5
	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5
	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5
	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5
	Telegram	1	2	3	4	5
	WhatsApp	1	2	3	4	5
	Snapchat	1	2	3	4	5
	YouTube	1	2	3	4	5
	Google+	1	2	3	4	5
	Viber	1	2	3	4	5

4.3	On a scale of 1-5, what is the level of **PRIVACY** afforded by the below social media platforms? (**Please Tick all that applies to you**)? **No privacy** ⟷ **High privacy**					
	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5
	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5
	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5
	Telegram	1	2	3	4	5
	WhatsApp	1	2	3	4	5
	Snapchat	1	2	3	4	5
	YouTube	1	2	3	4	5
	LinkedIn	1	2	3	4	5
	Wechat	1	2	3	4	5

4.4	While consuming news (online and via mainstream), have you come across fake news?(**Tick where appropriate**)	√	**Application**
		1	Yes
		2	No (**Please skip to 4.7**)

4.5	In your opinion, which channels do you think fake news is more prevalent?(**Tick where appropriate**)	√	**Application**
		1	Mainstream media(e.g. Radio, TV and Newspapers)
		2	Social media(e.g. Facebook, twitter etc)

4.7	As a Kenyan voter, do you think fake news shaped your opinion on your preferred candidates before the August 2017 elections?(**Tick where appropriate**)	√	**Application**
		1	Yes
		2	No.

******END****** Thank you for participating in this survey ******END******

Appendix 8: Focus Group Discussion Interview Schedule

1. What motivates you to catch the latest news via social media, messaging applications or mainstream media?

   (Probe: Understanding of news, specific channels of accessing such news, reasons for their choice of news)

2. How would you define news in your own words?

   (Probe: efficacy of the channels/platforms used, appropriateness of the language, relevance of the news in their daily lives)

3. After reading/watching or listening to news, do you discuss them with your peers in your ordinary conversations (online or offline)

   (Probe: Engagement with the news, context and preferred platforms)

4. From the exploratory survey, political news seems to be the main news accessed, followed by business, fashion, sport and weather. How do meanings assigned to each category of news mirror in your daily lives?

   (Probe: The preferred channels for each category of news, frequency of accessing each category, how they navigate, interpret and interact with the news)

5. What motivates you to post/share/comment on news online?

   (Probe: tagging, curation, aggregation and re-distribution)

6. Traditional media (radio, television and newspapers) seem to be the most trusted news sources, do you trust the same news disseminated by traditional media via their mobile applications and social media platforms (such as Facebook, twitter etc.)?

   (Probe: Use of news applications for news, affordances such as Facebook live and the role played by user comments in the overall meanings assigned)

7. Based on the survey findings, majority of you trust news received online, yet at the same time you believe fake news is more prevalent online. How do you verify information received online?

   (Probe: incidental news exposure through online communities/groups, resources available to them for news verification if any)

8. When sharing news, what informs your decision on what kind of news to share, where and for whom?

   (**Probe: how perceived privacy levels influences user's interactivity, use of geotagging affordances to add credibility)**