

THE USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
AMONG YOUNG ADULTS LIVING IN NAIROBI, KENYA

Only entertainment or contributions to societal change?

Master's thesis
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Social media usage has been found to have increased all over the world, also in the so-called developing countries. Although the percentages are still rather low, it can be argued that the use of social media is becoming increasingly important also in African countries. Kenya has been found to be one of the leading countries regarding social media usage in East Africa. Although research on social media has been conducted, for instance, on the use of social media in protest movements and in the areas of users' motivation, less emphasis has been placed on their developmental aspects. Thus, to gain a deeper understanding of the usage of social media in the so-called developing countries, this study will focus on the perceptions of the actual users. Through the users' own reflections, the study will not only look at which platforms the interviewees were using and how, but also examine the users' motivation for the usage. Furthermore, the study will explore whether the interviewees perceive social media as channels to have an impact on civic life related issues, and therefore use them for developmental purposes.</p> <p>In order to answer these questions, thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted among young adults in Nairobi, Kenya. Half of the interviewees were living in an informal settlement and half were from middle class families. Young adults were chosen as the target group, since they can be assumed to be more familiar with social media than the older generations. Furthermore, they are the coming generation to take over the civic responsibilities from the older generations and therefore, their perceptions and attitudes can be said to reflect the future developments in the country. The data was analyzed by utilizing qualitative content analysis.</p> <p>The information gained through the interviews exemplifies that social media have been used in many ways and for various purposes, depending on the user. However, also some differences were found between the groups. Middle class young adults were found not only to use a wider variety of platforms but also to use these platforms for more specified purposes. It seems that although the digital divide between people with access and people without seems to be slowly closing, there might be a second level divide emerging in relation to the digital literacy skills of the users from different socioeconomic groups. Furthermore, even though social media were found to be used mainly for entertainment, social and informational purposes, the interviewees seemed to utilize social media also to manifest different forms of civic and political participation. Although often accused of being passive, this study supports the argument that young adults merely have new ways of participation. All in all, despite being used mostly for entertainment, social media usage was also perceived to contribute to concrete changes in the community or in the society.</p>	
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Sosiaalisen median käyttö on lisääntynyt eri puolilla maailmaa, niin myös niin kutsutuissa kehitysmaissa. Vaikka käyttöaste on prosentuaalisesti katsoen vielä melko alhainen, sosiaalinen media on kasvattanut suosiotaan myös eri Itä-Afrikan maissa. Kenia on sosiaalisen median käyttöä tarkasteltaessa yksi Itä-Afrikan aktiivisimmista maista. Sosiaalisen median käytöstä on tehty paljon kansainvälistä tutkimusta, jossa on tarkasteltu muun muassa sosiaalisen median käyttösyitä sekä sen käyttöä protestiliikkeissä. Sosiaalisen median hyödyntämistä kehitystyössä ei kuitenkaan ole juurikaan tutkittu. Saadaksemme lisää tietoa sosiaalisen median käytöstä nimenomaan kehitysmaissa, tämä tutkimus keskittyy haastateltavien omiin kokemuksiin sosiaalisen median käytöstä. Sen lisäksi, että tutkimus pyrkii selvittämään mitä eri sosiaalisen median sovelluksia haastateltavat käyttävät ja miten, tutkimuksessa paneudutaan siihen miksi sosiaalista mediaa ylipäätään käytetään. Käyttäjien omien kokemusten kautta tutkimus pyrkii vastaamaan seuraaviin kysymyksiin: Mitä eri sosiaalisen median sovelluksia haastateltavat käyttävät ja miten? Mistä aiheista haastateltavat keskustelevat sosiaalisessa mediassa? Miten haastateltavat näkevät sosiaalisen median vaikutuksen yhteisön sekä yhteiskunnan tasolla?</p> <p>Tutkimusaineisto koostuu kolmestatoista puolistrukturoidusta haastattelusta, jotka tehtiin Keniassa kesällä 2013. Haastateltavat olivat nuoria aikuisia, joista puolet asuivat slummissa ja puolet tulivat keskiluokkaisista perheistä. Nuoret aikuiset valittiin kohderyhmäksi siitä syystä, että heidän voidaan olettaa käyttävän sosiaalista mediaa vanhempia sukupolvia enemmän. Lisäksi nuorten aikuisten asenteiden ja mielipiteiden voidaan katsoa heijastavan tulevaisuudessa tapahtuvaa kehitystä. Aineiston analysointiin sovellettiin laadullista sisällönanalyysiä.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen löydösten perusteella nuoret aikuiset käyttävät sosiaalista mediaa monin eri tavoin ja eri tarkoituksiin. Eroja ilmeni kuitenkin myös käyttäjäryhmien välillä. Keskiluokkaisista perheistä tulevat haastateltavat käyttivät sosiaalisen median sovelluksia laajemmin sekä tarkemmin määriteltyihin tarkoituksiin ja heidän sosiaalisen median käyttönsä oli tavoitteellisempaa. Vaikka niin sanotun digitaalisen kuilun, eli ihmisten jakautumisen niihin, joilla on käytössään tietokone sekä pääsy Internetiin ja niihin, joilla ei, voidaankin katsoa pienentyneen, tutkimustulokset viittaavat siihen, että eri sosioekonomisten luokkien välille olisi muodostumassa niin sanottu toisen asteen digitaalinen kuilu. Toisen asteen digitaalisella kuilulla viitataan ihmisten erilaisiin valmiuksiin ja taitoon hyödyntää käytössä olevaa teknologiaa sekä erilaisia teknologisia sovelluksia, eli eroihin ihmisten informaatio- ja medialukutaidossa.</p> <p>Vaikka suurin osa haastateltavista katsoikin käyttävänsä sosiaalista mediaa pääosin viihteeseen, tiedonhakuun ja sosiaalisten suhteiden ylläpitämiseen, sosiaalinen media nähtiin myös yhteiskunnallisen osallistumisen kanavana. Vaikka nuoria syytetään usein passiivisiksi, tutkimuksen tulokset viittaavat siihen, että nuorten osallistumisen muodot ovatkin vain erilaisia aiempiin sukupolviin verrattuna. Kaiken kaikkiaan haastateltavat kokivat, että viihdekäytön lisäksi sosiaalinen media pystyy luomaan muutoksia sekä yhteisössä että yhteiskunnan tasolla.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords Kehitysviestintä; sosiaalinen media; käyttötarkoitus tutkimus; yhteiskunnallinen ja poliittinen osallistuminen; digitaalinen kuilu, medialukutaito	
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1 INTRODUCTION

Currently, technology is a vital part of everyday life for many people, and mobile networks as well as the Internet have enabled people to communicate globally in real time. For many of us, mobile phones, laptops, tablets and other technological devices have become inseparable part of our daily lives. In addition to merely finding information online, the Internet is used as a platform for creating new information collectively. Social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs give people the possibility to network and share, discuss and create information together. In 2012, roughly one fourth of world's Internet users were also using Facebook (Internet world stats, 2012a). The usage of Facebook has increased also in Africa, although the continent still has lower penetration rate than many other continents, such as North America or Europe. However, particularly when coupled with the increase in the use of mobile Internet, it has been claimed that a so-called 'social media boom' has started also in Africa (Essoungou, 2010). In December 2012 the number of Facebook users in Africa was 51,612,460, which had almost doubled from March 2011 (Internet world stats, 2012a). Although reliable data regarding the use of social media in Africa is rather hard to obtain, the number of Facebook users seems to be constantly increasing. In relation to other African countries, Kenya ranks as the seventh when counting the number of Facebook users, having the most users in East Africa (Internet world stats, 2012a). In addition to Facebook, also the usage of Twitter is growing. According to Portland (2014), Nairobi is "the most active city in East Africa and the sixth most active on the continent" when it comes to tweets. Indeed, Kenya has been described to be the leading country regarding technology adaptation and recent studies have suggested that it is showing the way also in terms of social media use (Macharia, 2015). However, one should keep in mind that not everyone can access these platforms. When looking at the statistics, it has been estimated that still only 42.3% of the

world's population has access to the Internet (Internet world stats, 2014). In Africa, the Internet users represent 26.5% of the continent's population, which shows that access to the Internet is still luxury in many African countries (Internet world stats, 2014).

Although the percentages are still rather low, it can be argued that the use of social media is becoming increasingly important also in so-called developing countries (Thompson, 2008). It has been pointed out that the use of social media is increasing also in African countries, young people being the most active users of the platforms (Ephraim, 2013). The use of social media has been noted to be growing particularly among urban residents of the developing countries (Wyche, Forte, & Yardi Schoenebeck, 2013a). In Kenya, young adults (under the age of 30) represent more than 77% of the country's population (UN-Habitat, 2014). Furthermore, although Eastern Africa is still mainly rural, with its urban growth of 5.35% it is rapidly urbanizing and this trend has been predicted to merely increase in the future (UN-Habitat, 2014). Thus, it is both relevant and timely to study the use of social media among young adults particularly in Nairobi which is one of the largest cities in Eastern Africa.

Even though research on information and communications technology (from here on referred to as ICT) in Africa has been conducted increasingly, the main focus has been on the implementation of technology instead of examining the possibilities how ICT could contribute to broader developmental objectives (Thompson & Walsham, 2010). In terms of social media, research has been conducted, for instance, in the areas of users' motivation, users' personal characteristics and their adaptation to new online contexts and on the use of social media in protest movements. To gain a more comprehensive overview of the usage of social media for development, it is also important to look at individuals' experiences. By looking at the perceptions and authentic examples provided by the young adults themselves, this study aims to give the users a voice in this discussion. Although generalizations cannot be made based on a

limited number of individual experiences, by examining the perceptions and opinions of the users, this study aims to contribute to the general understanding of the use of social media platforms particularly in a developing country context. The purpose is not to judge whether ICT and social media have positive or negative effect on the society or the lives of the individuals being interviewed. Instead, the object is to try to gain an in-depth understanding of how these people perceive social media and the possibilities and dangers attached to their usage. It has been also pointed out that if aiming to gain a deeper understanding of the use of social media for development, it is beneficial to examine the ways platforms are currently being utilized (Wyche et al., 2013a). Indeed, it has been suggested that studying the use of already popular platforms and building on the existing practices is more beneficial than implementing new ones (Wyche et al., 2013a). Indeed, by enhancing the existing platforms to fit the usage and by building on the actual usage, one is more likely to find sustainable ways how social media could be utilized for development (Wyche et al., 2013a).

Furthermore, although the use of social media in the field of development and its impact, for instance, on civic engagement has been studied to some extent before, the research has concentrated mainly on Europe and on South and North America (e.g. Valenzuela et al., 2012; Waller, 2013; Wyche et al., 2013a). Studies in Africa often seem to concentrate on the most popular platforms, primarily on Facebook and Twitter. Although research has been conducted on social media in general, little qualitative research has been conducted on users' perceptions and experiences of social media particularly in Kenya (see e.g. Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008; Simon, Goldberg, Aharonson-Daniel, Leykin, & Adini, 2014; Tully & Ekdale, 2012; Wyche et al., 2013a; Wyche, Yardi Schoenebeck, & Forte, 2013b). Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, only one study that focuses on the use of social media has been conducted in an informal settlement in Nairobi (see Wyche et al., 2013a) and no studies comparing the usage between

different socioeconomic groups in Kenya have been published before. Thus, to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of social media in a so-called developing country context, further research is needed.

To address these gaps in previous research and to contribute to a more in-depth understanding of social media use in Kenya, this study will focus on the perceptions of the actual users. The study has two main aims. First, it will seek to discover which kinds of social media platforms young adults living in Nairobi use, why they use them and for which purposes. Second, this study will examine whether these young adults see social media as channels to have an impact on the community and society they live in, and therefore use them for developmental purposes. All in all, the main focus will be on the question whether social media serve as channels for young adults with different socioeconomic backgrounds to contribute to societal change.

The present study consists of eight chapters. The first two chapters present the literature that will serve as the background for this study. The main focus will be on *development communication, social media, and civic and political participation*. In the fourth chapter, a comprehensive overview of how the study was carried out will be introduced. In chapters five and six, the information gained through the interviews will be introduced, analyzed and the main findings will be contrasted with the existing research. In chapter seven, a summary of the main findings will be presented. Finally, in chapter eight, the limitations and directions for further research will be introduced.

2 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Although rarely emphasized, communication plays a vital role in the field of development. It can be even the determining factor contributing to the success of a development effort. One of the suggestions made to explain why many development projects do not seem to have long-term impact is the lack of two-way communication between development workers and so-called beneficiaries (Gumucio Dagron, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008). In other words, it has been pointed out that there is often little input from the side of beneficiaries and the primary focus has been placed on the contributions of the experts. The communication thus remains primarily a one-way process where development workers function as senders and beneficiaries as receivers. It has also been argued that many development programs and projects have failed mostly due to the lack of participation of the beneficiaries of the projects (Mefalopulos, 2008). Moreover, if the communication remains one-way, it is extremely hard to establish a community ownership of the project and it easily lacks sustainability. Development communication is a field of communication that focuses on how communication can be utilized to support development efforts. Its main aim is that all the selected communication methods and techniques support the efforts made to obtain the goals set (Vilanilam, 2009). Since the main focus of this study is to examine whether social media can serve as channels for young adults to contribute to change in their own community and in the surrounding society, it is a central to have an overall understanding of this field of communication.

In this chapter, an overview of the field of development communication will be presented to the reader. First, the concept of development will be examined. Second, the concept of development communication will be defined and discussed. Then, three main paradigms of development communication, *modernization paradigm*, *dependency paradigm* and *participatory paradigm* will be introduced respectively. Since social media platforms can be said to facilitate

participation, the most recent paradigm of development communication, participatory communication, is particularly relevant for this current study. Thus, in the final section of this chapter it will be looked at in more detail.

2.1 Development

It has been pointed out that when discussing development communication, one should not do it without defining the concept of development (Melkote, 2002). Since the aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of the interviewees without imposing any predefined definitions, the usage of the concept depends on each interviewee's understanding of it. Thus, the purpose of this section is not to define how development should be understood, but instead merely introduce some of the possible definitions in order for the reader to become aware of the vast variety of the definitions the concept can have depending on who is using the term and in which context.

Although the word development is a familiar concept, commonly used in conversations, it is still rather hard to define. It has been pointed out that the definition of development depends not only on the context in which one is using it but also on the person or entity using it (Herath, 2009). Thus, it is central to have an idea how the concept is dealt with in any particular study. Koponen (2007a) argues the concept of development has two interconnected aspects: the content of the term and its structure and function. The content refers to the meaning of the term. In other words, it incorporates what one understands as development. The structure and function are wider terms that involve how the development has been applied, for instance, whether it is seen as means or as a goal in itself. Furthermore, one can perceive development as something that happens independently or as something that is consciously facilitated (Koponen, 2007a). Moreover, Koponen (2007a) mentions that "development can be seen to consist of three different dimensions: development as a goal, development as an empirical social process, development as

an intervention, advancement” (p. 50). For instance, economic growth can be understood as one goal of development. Alternatively, some scholars have pointed out that development should be understood as “the attainment of new knowledge and skills, especially in a modern knowledge society for maintaining the progress achieved so that the progress of the future generations is sustained” (Vilanilam, 2009, p.94). Furthermore, Koponen (2007b) stresses that when dealing with issues related to development, one has to keep in mind that there are major ideological questions underlying them. These questions can include, for instance, issues related to unequal distribution of resources or power. Indeed, it is always an ideological choice how one understands development and therefore, these ethical aspects should not be ignored. All in all, depending on which aspects are emphasized, the concept of development can be used to describe a variety of different actions and intentions.

2.2 Defining development communication

Development communication is a broad interdisciplinary field of study and therefore hard to define. According to Wilkins (2000) it is “the strategic application of communication technologies and processes to promote social change” (Wilkins, 2000, p. 197). Mefalopulos (2008) claims that the main purpose of development communications is to “support sustainable change in development operations by engaging key stakeholders” (p. 5). Some scholars have even suggested that in today’s societies “whatever comes to the aid of communicating the development of this new consciousness worldwide is to be considered as ‘development communication’” (Vilanilam, 2009, p. 94). Since development communication concentrates on the real life problems people are facing in the developing countries, it strives to combine both research and practice (Waisbord, 2008). In this way, the academic scholarship has been able to keep strong ties with the practitioners (Waisbord, 2008).

Development communication has been referred to by using multiple terms, such as *communication for development*, *development support communication* and *communication for social change* (Mefalopulos, 2008). In this study, this field of communication will be referred to as development communication. There are three major paradigms that have been dominating the field of development communication: *modernization*, *dependency and multiplicity/another development* (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). As pointed out already above, there is quite a lot of inconsistency in the usage of different terms, and, for instance, Mefalopulos (2008) labels the last paradigm as *participatory paradigm*. However, most scholars in the field agree with this threefold division. In the next sections, these three major paradigms, modernization paradigm, dependency paradigm and participatory paradigm will be introduced respectively.

2.3 Modernization paradigm

The interest in development communication grew in the 1960's and several scholars conducted research in the field (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). This period can be called "the First Development Decade" (Melkote & Steeves, 2001, p. 19). Modernization, which was the first dominant paradigm, originates from the period that began after the Second World War (Mefalopulos, 2008). The underlying idea behind the modernization paradigm was to advise and aid the developing countries to become more like the countries in the Western world (Mefalopulos, 2008). The so-called traditional societies should follow the example of the modern societies in the West to be able to reach the same level of development (Melkote, 2002). In other words, from the Western point of view, the so-called Third World countries needed to be modernized (Mefalopulos, 2008). Melkote (2008) argues that development was essentially equivalent to economic growth, which was measured by the Western standards. Furthermore, the modernization of a society was thought to follow the development outlined in social evolutionary

theory that was based on the work of Darwin (Melkote, 2002). All in all, the philosophical underpinnings of modernization can be said to be in behaviorism and functionalism (Huesca, 2002). According to the modernization paradigm, the underdevelopment is caused by the citizens of the country, not by external factors (Huesca, 2002). Communication was fundamentally seen as a one-way, top-down process and mass media was thought to be courier of the modern development (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008; Waisbord, 2008). One dominant theory of the 1950's with this approach to communication was the Diffusion Model, which originates from the field of information engineering (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). In this model, communication was seen as a one-way action to transfer information from the experts to the beneficiaries.

One could argue that the theory and practice of modernization paradigm did not reflect the social conditions of the developing world, but instead aimed to replace them with the models from the West (Huesca, 2002; Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). All in all, it seemed to adhere to the conventions of colonization and both theory and practice related to modernization paradigm had a strong Western bias. Servaes & Malikhao (2008) assert that in some cases modernization only made the situation worse by increasing inequality instead of reducing it. Frank (1969, in Servaes & Malikhao, 2008) summarizes that modernization theory is faulty in three ways: "The progress paradigm is *empirically untenable*, has an *inadequate theoretical foundation*, and is, in practice, *incapable of generating a development process in the Third World.*" (p. 160). Essentially, promoters of the modernization paradigm seem to see the societies in the Western world as role models for the developing nations, ignoring the conditions at the local level. However, in the 1970's, the modernization paradigm started to get increasingly challenged (Huesca, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). Due to the strong criticism alleged to paradigms of development communication that saw communication more as a one-way activity, new ones started to emerge

(Huesca, 2002). The resistance was particularly strong in Latin America, which led to the emergence of the dependency paradigm (Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes & Malikhao, 2008).

2.4 Dependency paradigm

In the late 1960's, the ideas of modernization started to be replaced by dependency paradigm, which originates from Latin America (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). The founder of the theory is said to be an American professor Paul Baran who claimed underdevelopment is not caused by the people themselves, but instead the social, economic and political structures that primarily promote the Western interests (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). Baran stressed the structures in the developing countries, which maintain the existing dependence on the Western powers and therefore hinder the development, are beneficial to the capitalist world. Thus, in his opinion, the only way to get rid of the inequality and end the existing imperialism is to abandon the capitalist system completely (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). Mefalopulos (2008) states that in contrast to modernization, the dependency paradigm takes into account also the external factors affecting the development. These are, for instance, social, historical and economic variables affecting the process. Thus, the dependency paradigm abandoned the way of seeing the so-called developing countries merely as early versions of the so-called developed countries.

However, dependency paradigm has also been criticized. Servaes & Malikhao (2008) critique that the research conducted in this area has been varying in relation to which variables have been emphasized or taken into account. Although not as strongly as under the modernization paradigm, it has been claimed that communication was still treated as one-way activity (Mefalopulos, 2008). Though the dependency paradigm succeeded in pointing out the faultiness of the Western domination in development, it failed to provide any feasible solutions to cease it (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). Thus, new approaches were called for.

2.5 Participatory paradigm

In today's world nations are in many ways linked and therefore have become increasingly dependent on each other. Thus, also the underlying assumption of modernization about the superiority of the Western societies has been increasingly challenged (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). This has led to fundamental changes also in the field of development communication. As a response to the failure of one-way, top-down model of communication under the modernization paradigm, the understanding of communication as a horizontal, two-way action between beneficiaries and experts has become increasingly accepted within development communication (Mefalopulos, 2008). Mefalopulos (2008) points out that there are several different concepts used to label this approach to development communication. Different scholars use terms such as, "*another development*," "*empowerment*," "*participation*," and "*multiplicity paradigm*" (Mefalopulos, 2008, p. 7). Despite the multiplicity of the terms, all these approaches share similar main ideas: They acknowledge that there are various paths to development that can vary among societies and the development can be said to be "an integral, multidimensional, and dialectic process" (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008, p. 163).

Despite the conceptual debate, participatory communication can be said to emphasize egalitarian opportunity to participate, at levels ranging from an individual to universal (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). In contrast to modernization or dependency paradigms, participation approach does not concentrate on the economic aspects of development, but instead stresses, for instance, the importance of the cultural identity of the local community (Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). Participation is seen as vital when promoting sustainable development and contributing to social change. For a genuine participation to take place there needs to be mutual respect, trust and commitment (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). Mefalopulos (2008) argues that two-way communication is a prerequisite for participation, which unfortunately is still often ignored

even in community-driven projects. Without meaningful dialog, engagement often remains superficial.

It has been suggested that conceptualization should be the key concept of development communication (Melkote, 2002). This means that people should be aided to become conscious of the structural inequalities in their society (Melkote, 2002). The term conceptualization originates from the work of Paolo Freire, whose efforts in the field of pedagogy have influenced also development communication greatly. He has been said to have affected the shift from modernization to a more participatory approach to development (Blanchet, 2001; Huesca, 2002, 2008). According to Freire, the aim should not be to uphold the vertical relationships, but instead to move into a more horizontal approach that concentrates on praxis (Huesca, 2002). He states that the aim should be “to close the distance between teacher and student, development agent and client, researcher and researched to enter into a co-learning relationship guided by action and reflection” (Huesca, 2002, p. 502). Fundamentally, the focus has moved from seeing development workers as builders to considering them more as catalysts (Blanchet, 2001).

In addition to horizontal communication, participatory communication stresses redistribution of power at all levels. This can and usually does cause resistance among actors who currently possess the power, since the changes would affect their status quo in the society (Huesca, 2002; Melkote, 2002; Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). According to Freire (2008), in participatory communication people are seen as agents of change who actively participate in promoting development. The agency is then moved to the communities who should be leading their own development (Blanchet, 2001). Although many researchers agree that for genuine participation to take place beneficiaries should be involved at all levels of the projects, there are still many ways how participation has been incorporated. Moreover, some scholars have pointed out that “the beauty of participatory communication is that it can adopt different forms according

to need, and that no blueprint model can impose itself over the richness of views and cultural interactions” (Gumucio Dagron, 2001, p. 6). It has been argued that different levels of participation can and should be applied in different projects depending on their goals (Huesca, 2002). The main focus when looking at the development initiatives should thus be the relevance and importance of the actions to the community involved (Gumucio Dagron, 2001).

All in all, the change from modernization to participatory paradigm has been fundamental and it has moved the focus from the external actors to the internal processes within the community. The participatory approaches acknowledge the diversity in the ways development can take place and emphasize the need for genuine dialog between different actors (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). This shift cannot only be seen in the projects but also in scientific thought (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). However, although the focus has moved away from the dominant paradigm, all the paradigms can still be said to exist (Waisbord, 2008). Despite the criticism addressed to modernization paradigm, there are multiple examples of development projects where communication is still fundamentally seen as one-way action and information is merely diffused to the public in order to cause change in their behavior (see e.g. Waisbord, 2008).

2.5.1 Research on participatory communication

Research carried out in the field of participatory communication has been noted “to vary in terms of level of abstraction, issue of attention, and topic of interest” (Huesca, 2002, p. 506). In a more abstract level, attention has been paid, for example, to concepts of multiplicity and of power (Huesca, 2002), whereas in a more concrete level, several researchers have concentrated, for instance, on identifying “different levels and intensities of participation in development projects” (Huesca, 2002, p. 509). Another major subject of research which has arisen from the criticism addressed to the modernization paradigm has been the use of media in participatory development

(Huesca, 2002). Huesca (2002) notes research has been concentrating on areas, such as “audience involvement in message creation”, “identity construction” and “institution building” (p. 509).

Since this study will be looking at the use of information and communication technology, and social media in particular, the focus will be on development projects involving these tools and channels. Although there are several examples of the projects including ICT and participatory communication, these rarely deal with social media in particular. Indeed, what we understand as social media have been there just for a few years and therefore research related to it started only emerging around the 2010s. Gumucio Dagron (2008) offers several illustrative examples of projects using ICT and involving participatory communication: for example, community radio stations (for instance, in Guatemala, Philippines and in South Africa), projects using video, theater and the Internet (For instance, regarding computers and the Internet in India, Uganda and in Peru, and TV in Brazil, Cuba, India, Egypt, Nigeria, Columbia, Honduras and in Bolivia). Although these projects do not directly involve social media, they showcase how participatory ICT projects have been implemented in the field of development already in the past. Altogether, case studies seem to be very common when doing research in the area of participatory communication.

Community radios are one common form in which ICT has been implemented into many villages across Africa. Radio has been suggested to be an effective channel for participatory communication, since it is said to have several advantages over other types of ICT: it is comparatively affordable and implementable, often already familiar to the members of the community and accessible even to the analphabetic people (Gumucio Dagron, 2001; Megwa, 2007). It has been pointed out that even though many of the community radio stations may have the technology and access to the Internet for instance, attention has not been paid to how these ICT resources could serve the surrounding community as a whole (Megwa, 2007). Furthermore,

relevance of the content has been pointed out as one of the central requirements when aiming to reach the members of the community (Megwa, 2007; Zhao, 2008). Radio's broadcast content that is interesting and relevant for the people often aids the radio to establish a significant position in the community, which significantly contributes to the sustainability of the station (Megwa, 2007; Zhao, 2008). It has also been suggested that community members see community radios as channels that enable them to voice and share issues that are important for them (Megwa, 2007). Thus, community radios can be claimed to create a public sphere for general discussion concerning issues relevant for the community (Megwa, 2007). All in all, it seems that existing research has mainly concentrated on the more traditional channels of communication and thus more research in terms of new media is needed.

Although research has been conducted, participatory communication has been criticized for the lack of research carried out at the field level (Gumucio Dagron, 2008). It has been claimed that even if the studies have been conducted, they usually have severe shortcomings (Gumucio Dagron, 2008). Studies have, for instance, been accused of failing to provide enough evidence for their findings or introduce in enough detail how and where the data was collected. That naturally hinders the reader's ability to assess the validity of the findings (Morris, 2005). Moreover, Gumucio Dagron (2008) claims that most of the studies rely on already available publications or information found on the Internet, which limits the research to include the experiences of only limited number of people. It has been also frequently argued that participatory communication does not have established theoretical underpinnings and that the majority of the literature cited in articles are sources written in English (Chitnis, 2005; Gumucio Dagron, 2001). In addition, most of this research is conducted either in Europe or in North-America, although the findings often concern people living in the so-called developing countries. Due to financial and time constraints, many of the researchers only visit the countries concerned, which not only limits their data but

also their understanding of the local culture (Gumucio Dagron, 2008). Moreover, one could question whether a researcher who is not a member of a particular culture can give an in-depth analysis of the situation after only a short stay.

2.5.2 Critiques addressed to participatory communication

Although widely acknowledged as the dominant paradigm, participatory communication and participatory paradigm in general have also faced heavy criticism. Development communication scholars have been widely criticized for the inconsistent use of the terminology in the field (Melkote, 2002). Although participatory communication might be mentioned in the project documents, it might still be overlooked at the field level (Huesca, 2008). Furthermore, research on participatory communication has been accused of being inconsistent, rarely exhaustive and not able to answer to the fundamental problems in African societies (White, 2009). It has been claimed that forms of participation are often added to projects that are fundamentally adhering to the modernization approach merely to answer to the criticism addressed to them (Huesca, 2002). On one hand, some projects incorporate the beneficiaries at all levels of decision making and share the power between all parties involved, and can thus be said to promote genuine participation (Ascroft & Masilela, 1989). On the other hand, however, several projects still primarily strive to meet externally given development goals directed by the experts instead of promoting actual empowerment of the people (Melkote, 2002). In this way, participatory communication can be said to be “old wine in new bottles” (Melkote, 2002, p. 429). It has even been accused that participation is being used to disguise the reproduction of the existing unequal structures in the societies (Huesca, 2002).

Although participatory communication stresses the redistribution of power at all levels, it has been claimed not to genuinely address the barriers within the societies (Melkote, 2002).

Indeed, instead of tackling the results of these inequalities within the social systems, one should concentrate on influencing the underlying causes. Melkote (2002) claims that although these barriers are acknowledged to exist, they are not adequately focused on. In addition, participatory communication has been accused of being “time-consuming and symbolic”, which hinders its applicability in many development organizations (Huesca, 2002, p. 510). It has been argued that development organizations seem to easily lose their connection to the real-life experiences which should be guiding their work (Gumucio Dagron, 2008). Indeed, the concept of development should include not only the process at the national level, but also the development at the community and individual levels (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009).

The participatory paradigm has faced criticism also within development studies. One of the most well-known critiques has alleged participation paradigm of entailing “three tyrannies” (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). These three tyrannies are: “the tyranny of decision-making and control”, “tyranny of the group” and “tyranny of method” (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 7-8). The tyranny of decision-making and control criticizes the possible misuse of power of the facilitator over the decision-making. The tyranny of the group addresses the concern that participatory group decisions might merely end up reinforcing the existing power structures by creating decisions that are in favor of the already powerful ones. Finally, the tyranny of the method discusses the argument that participatory method has become almost a default choice, which would mean that other, maybe even more appropriate methods are possibly overlooked due to the lack of consideration (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Cooke and Kothari (2001) have claimed that although not always, all these concerns made on participatory paradigm do appear in some circumstances and therefore should be considered carefully. However, also critical counterarguments responding to the criticism have been voiced (see e.g. Hickey & Mohan, 2004).

Despite facing a great deal of criticism, participatory communication can still be said to be the most prominent paradigm in the field of development communication. Moreover, although many scholars have criticized the ways participation has been incorporated into the development efforts, the significance of participation has rarely been questioned. As the main focus of this study is to examine whether social media can function as channels for young adults to contribute to societal change in Kenya and thus, work as channels of development communication, one needs to also address the concepts of social media and civic and political participation.

3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

The available evidence suggests that the usage of social media is increasing all around the world, also in Africa. It has been even claimed that a so-called ‘social media boom’ has started in many African countries. Consequently, an increasing number of studies have been conducted worldwide and particularly in Africa in relation to these platforms. Since the main focus of this study is to examine whether social media serve as channels for young adults to contribute to societal change, it is central to examine the concepts of social media and of civic and political participation. Thus, to provide background for the present study, this second part of the review of literature will focus on these three concepts and on the research that has been conducted on them. First, the concept of social media will be defined and its history will be briefly introduced. Second, different reasons for the use of social media will be examined and the phenomenon of digital divide and its influence on this study will be discussed. Third, two central concepts, civic and political participation will be examined and elaborated on. Since this study focuses particularly on young adults, studies concerning young adults’ civic and political participation will be presented to the reader. Then, research conducted on social media and civic participation will be introduced. Finally, the connection between social media and participatory communication, and particularly how social media could answer the critique addressed to participatory communication, will be discussed.

3.1 Social media

Social media is generally a well-known concept among Internet users and the usage of social media platforms seems to be increasing all around the world. Although almost all the users share a similar idea of how social media can be defined, it seems that the usage of these platforms varies rather greatly according to the user. In this section, the concept of social media will be

introduced and defined first. Then, different reasons and motives behind the usage of social media will be discussed. Finally, the concept of digital divide and its relevance for this study will be elaborated on.

3.1.1 From Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 and beyond

Although the Internet started as a network to share information among university scholars, it has developed a long way since. However, since this study concentrates particularly on the usage of social media, giving a comprehensive history of the Internet falls out of the scope of the study. (see e.g. Abbate, 1999; Hauben & Hauben, 1997; Internet society, n.d.). Thus, the next section focuses on the latest shift impacting how the Internet is currently used, which was the move from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, and recently to Web 3.0 (see e.g. Kidd & Chen, 2009).

Web 1.0 is sometimes described as the informative or participatory web, whereas 2.0 can be characterized as the social Web (Williamson, 2011). In contrast to Web 1.0 where limited number of users were creating the content for the sites and most users were regarded as consumers, in Web 2.0 platforms opportunities for content creation are practically limitless (Krishnamurthy & Cormode, 2008). Good examples of this user-generated content and network structure of the Web 2.0 are, for instance, Facebook and Twitter (Williamson, 2011). Web 2.0, which can be said to be the foundation on which social media sites are built, can be defined as follows:

Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an ‘architecture of participation’, and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences (O’Reilly, 2005; also cited in Williamson, 2011).

By encouraging and enabling sharing, commenting and creation of knowledge among the users, the Web 2.0 can be said to have influenced the way users communicate. Furthermore, it has been claimed that Web 2.0 technologies, such as social media platforms, have affordances that can affect people's actions (Macleod, 2014). They have been even argued to have the potential to revolutionize communication theory and practice to the extent comparable to the advent of printing press (Macleod, 2014). However, since Web 2.0 can be said to encourage the creation of user-generated content, some scholars have pointed out that Web 2.0 is fundamentally bringing the Internet back to its roots (Figallo & Rhine, 2001). Indeed, also at the time of the initial stages of the Internet all content was created by the users (Figallo & Rhine, 2001). The newest development in the field is the emergence of Web 3.0. which has been characterized as the collaborative Web (Williamson, 2011).

Since this particular study concentrates merely on social media platforms and not on Web 2.0 based sites in general, it is important to be able to differentiate these two terms. The terms Web 2.0 and social media are often used interchangeably and there is confusion about the difference between the two concepts (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The definition of social media that is used in this study understands them as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). However, although this study acknowledges the distinction between these two concepts, the emphasis is placed primarily on the users' experiences of these platforms, not on how they understand the concept of social media.

3.1.2 Social media and the uses and gratifications theory

Since the study aims to understand why and for which purposes young adults are using social media, one needs to look at the reasons and motives behind the usage. It has been noted that

people use social media and particularly social networking sites, such as Facebook, for many purposes. Some of these are

making friends; posting status updates on one's profiles (telling people what you are doing, feeling, eating, about to do, etc.); posting comments, videos, and/or pictures on other persons' profiles (on people's wall); linking other persons' status; sending messages to people; playing games or quizzes; posting links to events, news, or websites; inviting people (posting web links); creating events and extending invitations; creating groups for people (some of whom share common interest) to join as well as posting links to these events (Waller, 2013).

One theoretical framework scholars have used to analyze people's use of media is the uses and gratifications theory (from here on referred to as UGT). The theory has been granted to Blumler and Katz (1974) who claimed that instead of being mere receivers, users of media actively participate in the communication process. They argued that people actively guide their media usage and choose the media source that best satisfies their needs. Studies utilizing the UGT can either aim to identify media users' gratifications without any initial assumptions or apply an existing list of gratifications to be evaluated by the users (Ling & Pedersen, 2003). One of the most cited lists of gratifications have been created already in the 70's and 80's based on studies conducted on television viewing (Greenberg, 1974; Rubin, 1983). These studies found nine different gratifications for the media usage: relaxation, companionship, entertainment, social interaction, information, habit, passing time, arousal and escape (Rubin, 1983). After these initial lists were created, studies have found numerous other gratifications, such as problem solving, persuasion, relationship maintenance, status, and insight (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001). Later on, it has also been pointed out that gratifications should be separated into gratifications sought and gratifications obtained (Miller, 2005). In other words, the gratification sought can differ from the gratifications obtained.

Although earliest studies concentrated on traditional media, the UGT has also been used to analyze people's use of the Internet and social media (see e.g. Brandtzæg & Heim, 2009; Flanagin, 2005; Ebersole, 2000; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Song, LaRose, Eastin, & Lin, 2004). Studies have, for instance, discovered three dimensions of usage when examining the use of social networking sites: information dimension, friendship dimension, and connection dimension (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). Furthermore, some studies have concentrated on gratifications of specific needs. For instance, Chen (2011) looked at the usage of Twitter in relation to person's need to connect with others and found that people used Twitter to actively gratify their need to connect with others. Based on their review of research, Sundar and Limperos (2013) argued that new media and their development have not only created new gratifications but also made the already existing ones more nuanced. For instance, although information-seeking can be seen as a well-established gratification, it is not detailed enough to fit the context of new media (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Sundar and Limperos (2013) further criticize that the UGT research has mostly concentrated on social and psychological motivations behind the usage leaving out the technologically-driven needs. Furthermore, they point out that new media do not only satisfy new gratifications, but it has also been claimed to have created them (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Thus, to be able to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the gratifications offered by new media, Sundar and Limperosa (2013) propose four new classes of affordances offered by newer media: modality (realism, coolness, novelty and being there), agency (agency-enhancement, community building, bandwagon, filtering/tailoring and ownness), interactivity (interaction, activity, responsiveness and dynamic control) and navigability (browsing/variety-seeking, scaffolding/navigations and play/fun) (p. 518).

In addition, some studies have examined the cross-cultural differences in the gratifications. For instance, in their cross-cultural analysis between the U.S. citizens and

Nicaraguans on the motives of usage of the Internet, Spencer, Croucher and Hoelster (2008) discovered that there can also be cross-cultural differences in the usage. Differences were found in five out of nine gratifications used in the study, Americans scoring higher in relaxation, companionship, habit, to pass time and entertainment (Spencer, et al, 2008). The other four gratifications used in the study where no significant differences were found were interaction, information, arousal and escape (Spencer, et al., 2008). In their study comparing Korean and American college students' motives and usage of MySpace and Facebook, Kim, Sohn, and Choi (2011) identified five primary gratifications among all the participants: seeking friends, social support, information, entertainment, and convenience (p. 370). Although Americans tended to use the sites more for entertainment and Koreans for social support, there were no major differences in the motives between the two groups (Kim et al., 2011). Although studies have looked at the motives of usage in several different countries, studies conducting cross-cultural comparisons are still scarce (Kim et al., 2011).

Even though UGT has been used to analyze the usage of social media across the globe, only one study that also looks at users' motivation has been conducted in an informal settlement in Kenya (Wyche et al., 2013a). In their study, Wyche et al. (2013a) found that young adults living in an informal settlement were using Facebook mainly for chatting, gaining local news, searching for romantic partners, and engaging in activities aiming at income generation. Particularly activities directed towards earning money were found to be of great importance for most of the users (Wyche et al., 2013a). Some studies have also found evidence that age and socio-economic status can affect the efficiency to gain the gratifications sought online, young and higher in status being strategically better and more efficient (Cho, de Zúñiga, Rojas, & Shah, 2003). Even though some information has been gathered on the use of social media among young adults living in an informal settlement, no studies have yet compared the usage of social media

among two distinct socioeconomic groups in Kenya. Thus, although limited in scope, this study aims to contribute to a deepened understanding of the motives behind the usage of social media in the country.

3.1.3 Digital divide

Although social media can be used to satisfy different kinds of needs, one should not forget that 57.7% of the world's population does not have access to the Internet (Internet world stats, 2014). According to the Communications Authority of Kenya (from here on referred to as CA), in June 2013 when the data of this study was collected, 50.3% of Kenyans did not have access to the Internet (CA, 2013). In September 2014 the percentage was estimated to be 42.9%. Although the Internet penetration rate of Kenya is higher than the world's average and the gap between haves and have nots seems to indeed be steadily decreasing, there is still a great deal of inequality when it comes to access to these new media that one should not ignore (Goldin, 2007; Zadja, Biraimah, & Gaudelli, 2008). For many Kenyans, the cost of the Internet access is still too high even though future changes in the infrastructure have been predicted to make it more affordable (Janse van Rensburg, 2012). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that, for instance, poor infrastructure and costs of accessing social media platforms are still central to people's user-experience in Kenya, even though less in urban than in rural areas (Wyche et al., 2013). Thus, to place the findings of this study into a wider context, it is central to have a clear understanding of the inequalities in people's access to and use of different forms of ICT.

Digital divide "refers to the gaps in access to information and communication technology (ICT)" (OECD, n.d.). Even though the unequal distribution of resources is acknowledged by the majority, there is still a great deal of discussion for and against the existence, significance and urgency of digital divide (Ali, 2011). Although social media can give young adults new

opportunities to have their voices heard, this opportunity is available only those people who have access to the media. Sometimes, having physical access to the gadgets can become a tool of power (Thompson, 2008). In other words, the part of the people who have the access to these networks may become possessors of power and use it in the expense of the others (Thompson, 2008). It seems that in addition to having the potential to empower people, access to the ICTs can become a new source of inequality (Thompson, 2004; Wilson, 2004).

Certainly, mere implementation of ICT is not enough to bring about changes in the society (Ackermann, Decortis, Hourcade, & Schelhowe, 2009; Hargittai, 2002). Instead, to be able to benefit from it, people have to have the skills to use the technology and to, for instance, navigate online or use the software they have access to. To highlight the importance of digital proficiency, it has been even suggested that the concept of digital capital should be included into the general understanding of social capital (Stern et al., 2009). Digital divide can exist not only between countries or continents, but also regions or social groups, for instance, between urban and rural population (Stern et al., 2009; Wyche et al., 2014a & b). Young people are claimed to be more skilled than older generations in using the Internet even though there are differences also among younger population (Hargittai, 2010). The usage and digital proficiency of young users has found to co-vary with variables, such as socioeconomic status or geographical region (Stern et al., 2009; Stern and Adams, 2010).

To describe the inequalities beyond limited access, some scholars have claimed the existence of *a second level digital divide* (Hargittai, 2002). Instead of looking at the issues with access, this divide deals with difference in people's online skills. The underlying idea is that due to people's varying levels of proficiency to use the Internet, they are not able to take advantage of it equally (Hargittai, 2002). Some scholars divide the aspects of digital divide into three levels of inequality: issues of access, matters related to skills to use the technology and the tendency to

take advantage of technology (see e.g. Stern et al., 2009). Online skills can be defined as “the ability to efficiently and effectively find information on the Web” (Hargittai, 2002, p. 2). Some scholars refer to these abilities as digital literacy, which can be defined as

a person’s ability to perform tasks effectively in a digital environment, with “digital” meaning information presented in numeric form and primarily for use by computer. Literacy includes the ability to read and interpret media (text, sound, images), to reproduce data and images through digital manipulation, to evaluate and apply new knowledge gained from digital environments (Jones-Kavalier & Flannigan, 2006, p. 9).

Studies have examined the impact of different variables in relation to digital literacy. For instance, some studies have reported that age, level of education, and experience with the used medium can be used to predict one’s online abilities (Hargittai & Schafer, 2006). In their study of middle-class and urban township children, Lemphane and Prinsloo (2014) found that there was a significant difference in the digital communicative literacy practices between the children in these two groups, coming from two socioeconomic classes. Furthermore, Hargittai and Walejko (2008) found that people with more highly educated parents are creating more content than the young adults with lower socioeconomic background (Hargittai & Walejko, 2008). Second level digital divide has been claimed to be particularly visible in countries where the majority of the population already has access to the Internet (Ackermann et al., 2009). Although only approximately 57.1% of the population in Kenya has stable access to the Internet (CA, 2014), the penetration rate can be estimated to be higher in the major cities, such as Nairobi (Cheruiyot, 2010). Thus, the phenomenon of second level digital divide should not be disregarded when looking at the situation in Kenya.

One of the recent developments suggested to help to bridge or even close the digital divide is the increase of relatively inexpensive mobile phones with the access to the Internet (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It has been claimed that mobile Internet and stationary Internet, such

as access through desktop computers, differ in three profound ways (Chae & Kim, 2003).

Compared to stationary Internet, mobile Internet is claimed to be more personal and to provide instant access to the Internet despite the time and the place, although, at the same time, offering a lower level of available resources (Chae & Kim, 2003, p. 246). Moreover, the mobile connections are often comparable to computers in speed and reliability (Alozie, Akpan-Obong, & Foster, 2011). Indeed, smart phones seem to offer a more inexpensive alternative to computers, which still are not affordable to many (Alozie, Akpan-Obong, & Foster, 2011). Furthermore, mobile phones have been found to be popular also among marginalized youth, since they are affordable, portable and do not require sophisticated literacy skills (Alozie, Akpan-Obong, & Foster, 2011; Unterfrauner & Marschalek, 2009). Furthermore, one can nowadays use them almost anywhere in the world, including for instance many rural villages in Africa (Alozie, Akpan-Obong, & Foster, 2011).

3.2 Civic and political participation

Civic engagement has been associated with functioning democracy by several scholars (see e.g. Putnam, 2000). In today's societies, participation in societal and community related matters can take many forms both online and offline. Since the second aim of this study is to examine whether the use of social media is perceived to impact the community and the society the interviewees live in, one will be dealing with concepts of civic and political participation. In this section, the definitions of somewhat overlapping concepts of *civic participation*, *civic engagement* and *political participation* will be discussed first. Then, a model in which these three concepts are positioned in relation to each other will be introduced. This is done to clarify how these central concepts are understood in the present study. Finally, an overview of the research conducted on civic participation among youth will be introduced.

3.2.1 Defining civic and political participation

There has been a long-standing debate among the scholars on whether civic engagement had decreased in the past decades or whether it has only changed its shape (Berger, 2009; Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Putnam, 2000). Some have even gone so far as suggesting that the concept of civic engagement has become useless (Berger, 2009; Ekman & Amnå, 2012). One of the reasons for the critique has been that the concept has been used to refer to a wide variety of activities ranging from donating money for a cause to participating in a demonstration (Berger, 2009). While seen as all-encompassing, many of the definitions have been accused of being too broad (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Thus, it has been, for instance, suggested that the concept of civic engagement should be replaced with more specific and clearly defined concepts (Berger, 2009). Furthermore, to clarify the concept, Adler and Goggin (2005) outlined a continuum of civic engagement, which incorporates activities between two ends, informal/private individual action and formal/public collective action, making also a distinction between community activities and political activities (p. 240). Indeed, political participation can also be understood to be one form of civic engagement (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Although originally almost exclusively focusing on electoral participation, the concept of civic engagement in politics has also evolved into a broader definition, involving a wide range of activities that aim to influence political outcomes (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Teorell, Torcal and Montero (2007), for instance, outline a comprehensive typology of political participation that incorporates five different dimensions: electoral participation, consumer participation, party activity, protest activity and contact activity. All in all, there does not seem to be a consensus on how civic engagement should actually be defined (for a comprehensive overview, see Adler & Goggin, 2005).

Some scholars have argued that latent forms of political participation should also be included into the definition (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). It has been pointed out that understanding

these pre-political activities can help one to understand the conditions for political engagement in different societies and within different groups in these societies (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). To incorporate also these latent forms of participation, Ekman and Amnå (2012) developed a new typology, in which they make a distinction between manifest political participation and civic participation (Table 1). In the typology, political participation is understood as “actions directed towards influencing governmental decisions and political outcomes” (Ekman & Amnå, 2012, p. 289). Civic engagement, again, has been defined as “the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community’s future” (Adler & Goggin, 2005, p. 236). This can include both individual and collective actions (Ekman & Amnå, 2012).

TABLE 4 Typology of different forms of disengagement, involvement, civic engagement and political participation (Ekman & Amnå, 2012, p. 295)

	Non-participation (<i>disengagement</i>)		Civil participation (latent–political)		Political participation (manifest)		
	Active forms (antipolitical)	Passive forms (apolitical)	Social involvement (<i>attention</i>)	Civic engagement (<i>action</i>)	Formal political participation	Activism (extra - parliamentary political participation)	
						Legal/ extra-parliamentary protests or actions	Illegal protests or actions
Individual forms	<p>Non -voting</p> <p>Actively avoiding reading newspapers or watching TV when it comes to political issues</p> <p>Avoid talking about politics</p> <p>Perceiving politics as disgusting</p> <p>Political disaffection</p>	<p>Non -voting</p> <p>Perceiving politics as uninteresting and unimportant</p> <p>Political passivity</p>	<p>Taking interest in politics and society</p> <p>Perceiving politics as important</p>	<p>Writing to an editor</p> <p>Giving money to charity</p> <p>Discussing politics and societal issues, with friends or on the Internet</p> <p>Reading newspapers and watching TV when it comes to political issues</p> <p>Recycling</p>	<p>Voting in elections and referenda</p> <p>Deliberate acts of non -voting or blank voting</p> <p>Contacting political representatives or civil servants</p> <p>Running for or holding public office</p> <p>Donating money to political parties or organizations</p>	<p>Boycotting, boycotting and political consumption</p> <p>Signing petitions</p> <p>Handing out political leaflets</p>	<p>Civil disobedience</p> <p>Politically motivated attacks on property</p>
Collective forms	<p>Deliberate non-political lifestyles, e.g. hedonism, consumerism</p> <p>In extreme cases: random acts of non-political violence (riots), reflecting frustration, alienation or social exclusion</p>	<p>“Non - reflected” non - political lifestyles</p>	<p>Belonging to a group with societal focus</p> <p>Identifying with a certain ideology and/or party</p> <p>Life -style related involvement: music, group identity, clothes, et cetera</p> <p>For example: veganism, right -wing Skinhead scene, or left -wing anarcho - punk scene</p>	<p>Volunteering in social work, e.g. to support women ’s shelter or to help homeless people</p> <p>Charity work or faith - based community work</p> <p>Activity within community based organizations</p>	<p>Being a member of a political party, an organization, or a trade union</p> <p>Activity within a party, an organization or a trade union (voluntary work or attend meetings)</p>	<p>Involvement in new social movements or forums</p> <p>Demonstrating, participating in strikes, protests and other actions (e.g. street festivals with a distinct political agenda)</p>	<p>Civil disobedience actions</p> <p>Sabotaging or obstructing roads and railways</p> <p>Squatting buildings</p> <p>Participating in violent demonstrations or animal rights actions</p> <p>Violence confrontations with political opponents or the police</p>

In the typology, civic participation is seen as an umbrella term, parallel to non-participation and political participation, including both social involvement and civic engagement (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). The authors also argue that civic participation can be seen as latent-political participation that can, but does not necessarily, lead to political participation (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Social involvement refers to the interest and attention towards politics, whereas civic engagement also involves actions (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Political participation is also understood as consisting of two distinct components, formal political participation and activism which can be either legal or illegal (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). In addition to these two main categories, also forms of non-participation have been included into the typology (Ekman and Amnå, 2012). According to Ekman and Amnå (2013), non-participation can be either active or passive. As mentioned above, these all forms of participation can be manifested both at the individual and collective levels, also included into the definition (Ekman & Amnå, 2012).

This particular typology was selected for this study for several reasons. First, it is not only restricted to the manifested forms of participation, but also includes its latent and non-participatory forms. Second, if concentrating only on political participation, the understanding of the perceptions of the interviewees would be considerably narrower and the analysis would thus remain too limited for this study. Furthermore, even though being detailed, the typology is still not all-encompassing. Instead, it explicitly separates different forms of participation and makes the analysis of different kinds of actions and behavior more precise. Since aiming to understand and describe the perceptions of the interviewees, this typology will be later used to analyze the forms of participation expressed by the interviewees.

3.2.2 Civic participation among young people

Since the study focuses particularly on young adults, it is relevant to have an overview of the civic participation particularly among younger parts of the population. Young people are often accused of lacking interest in social issues, politics and engagement in civic participation (Bachen, Raphael, Lynn, McKee, & Philippi, 2008; Bers & Chau, 2006; Muirhead Alvaro, n.d.; Stevenson & Zusho, 2002; Waller, 2013). However, this claim has also been opposed. It has been pointed out that there are several examples of youth led protests around the world, for instance in Chile, China, Peru, Iran and South Africa just to mention a few (Dawson, 2014; Valenzuela et al., 2012; Youniss et al., 2002). In addition, scholars have suggested that young people might merely have different ways to participate than older generations (Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter, & Zukin, 2002; Metcalf, Blanchard, McCarthy, & Burns, 2008; Muirhead Alvaro, n.d.). In other words, by looking at the so-called traditional ways of participation, one might easily conclude that participation has indeed decreased. Furthermore, some scholars have also suggested that both of these standpoints are partly correct; merely looking at the same situation from two different perspectives (Bennett, Wells, & Freelon, 2011). It seems, indeed, that the so-called traditional ways of civic participation are decreasing whereas at the same time, new forms are emerging (Bennett et al., 2011). Some scholars refer to these two paradigms as dutiful citizenship and actualizing citizenship (Bennett et al., 2011) and some label them as citizen-oriented acts and cause-oriented acts (Norris, 2003). Although young people may lack interest in issues such as “traditional politics”, they seem to engage themselves into more “nonmainstream forms of civic involvement” (Dawson, 2014; Metcalf et al., 2008; Youniss et al., 2002, p. 128). This broader understanding of civic participation can also be seen in the newer definitions of civic and political participation, discussed in the previous section.

To engage in the society, one needs motivation, opportunity and ability to participate (Delli Carpini, 2000). Hence, when aiming to engage young people in civic matters, it is important to concentrate on their current interest (Bers & Chau, 2006, Halstead, 1999). Research has shown that new media, such as the Internet, have made it easier for people address civic matters and access relevant information (Oblak, 2003). Indeed, ICT and particularly the Internet have been argued to offer young people new ways to participate both at the level of the community and the whole society (Bers & Chau, 2006; Metcalf et al., 2008). Since claimed to be leveling the hierarchies between the participants (Gurak, 1999), the Internet can offer a medium also for the unprivileged youth to voice their opinions on issues, which used to be impossible due to their social status. Furthermore, the spread of ICT has given new opportunities for civic engagement also for youth living in areas that before might have been rather isolated from the other parts of the world (Eickelman & Anderson, 1999). Positive effects of the Internet on civic engagement among young adults have been reported, for instance, in the U.S. and in Europe (e.g. Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Pasek, Kenski, Romer, & Jamieson, 2006; Quintelier & Vissers, 2008). Although there is some evidence supporting the claim that technology is able to offer possibilities for civic participation (Youniss et al., 2002), there is still a lack of knowledge on how the engagement on the online platforms could be transferred into contexts outside the online world (Bers & Chau, 2006).

3.3 Social media and civic participation

The second main aim of the present study is to examine whether the use of social media is perceived to have an impact on the community and the society the interviewees live in. Thus, to place the study in a broader context, it is central to understand which ways social media could encourage different forms of participation in the society and to gain an overall understanding of

the studies conducted in this respect. In this section, an overview of the research carried out on social media and civic and political participation will be given. First, in order to provide background for the research presented in this section, a brief introduction to studies conducted on the impact of Internet use on civic participation will be presented. Second, studies carried out on the effects of social media on civic and political participation will be discussed. Then, the role of social media in protest mobilization will be examined. Finally, studies conducted in relation to social media's impact on electoral participation will be introduced.

3.3.1 Civic participation and the Internet

Although studies have looked the Internet's impact on civic engagement, in the beginning the research mostly concentrated on how the Web 1.0 based websites affected political engagement (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012). Early studies on how the Internet might affect political participation were very inconsistent in their results, and instead of examining the different ways people were using the medium, they looked at the time spend or issues of access (Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009; Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001). In addition, some studies were accused of not being representative of the population (Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009). All in all, the initial attitude towards the new technology was rather skeptic and it was feared that the increased use of the Internet would socially isolate people (Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009; Shah, Schmierbach, Hawkins, Espino, & Donovan, 2002). Later studies, however, have contributed to a more positive understanding of the effect of the use of the Internet on civic engagement; political participation and social involvement in general (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012; Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Kraut, et al., 2002; Shah et al., 2012). It has been also claimed that the Internet has great potential to contribute to democratization (Ali, 2011; Benkler, 2006). However, some studies have indicated that online and offline activities do not seem to significantly correlate with each

other (Bimber, 2001; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2010). Instead of merely debating whether the Internet has a positive or a negative impact on civic and political participation, scholars have also started to look at, for instance, more specific ways of usage (Valenzuela et al., 2012). Some studies have suggested that although informational use of the Internet correlates positively with civic engagement, entertainment use of the Internet might affect it negatively (Shah et al., 2001). All in all, there does not seem to be clear consensus whether online participation has an effect on civic and political activity, particularly in the offline world.

3.3.2 Social media and civic and political participation

Due to the constructive nature of Web 2.0, social media have been argued to have “affordances...which may alter the impact of social media on offline civic and political activity” (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012, p. 2). Affordance can be defined as “the type of action or a characteristic of actions that a technology enables through its design” (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012, p. 2). However, similarly to the research on the effects of the Internet use on civic and political participation, the findings of the studies conducted on social media’s influence on civic and political participation vary greatly. Some scholars have suggested that social media could have a positive effect on the political participation of the youth, although many of them warn about excessive positivism towards social media as a cure for political passiveness (Feezell, Conroy, & Guerrero, 2009; Macnamara, Sakinofsky, & Beattie, 2012; Vitak et al., 2010). Indeed, some studies have claimed that social media mainly engage youth that are already involved offline (Waller, 2013). Nevertheless, positive correlations have also been found. Among Swedish youth, particularly user-generated content has been found to increase political participation (Östman, 2012). It has been also claimed that social media might flatten the inequalities of resources that influence civic and political participation (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen,

& Wollebæk, 2012). Consequently, social media have been suggested to mobilize young people and people with a lower socioeconomic status more than other channels (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012). In their study, Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck and Ljungberg (2013) found out that social media use for political purposes increases interest in politics and political participation also outside online environment. Some studies have discovered that social networking sites, such as Facebook and YouTube, seemed to positively influence civic participation, but do not increase political participation or faith in the government (Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer & Bichard, 2010). All in all, findings concerning social media's impact on civic and political participation have been rather contradictory.

Social media and Web 2.0 based platforms have been found relevant not only in the so-called developed but also in the so-called developing countries in Africa. Through online platforms, such as Uchaguzi used in Tanzania, Kubatana in Zimbabwe or Ushahidi in Kenya, voters can share information about election related matters, such as misuses or corruption (Bailard, 2012; Moyo, 2011; Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013). Social media sites, such as blogs and Facebook, have been claimed to offer a less formal platform for the discussions (Bailard, 2012). Furthermore, it has been argued that Web 2.0 platforms have possibilities to create spaces of interaction and thus stronger connection between the governmental organs and the grassroots (Thompson, 2008). In a study on the Internet's effect on the presidential elections in Tanzania, the use of Facebook was found to correlate with the mistrust on the fairness of the elections (Bailard, 2012). Based on the results, it was noted that by offering people more information and thus potentially influencing people's perceptions of the fairness of the elections negatively, the use of the Internet and social media does not necessarily encourage action but can instead discourage people from voting (Bailard, 2012). However, it was

also pointed out that it is still unclear which factors determine whether the online activities translate into offline actions or not (Bailard, 2012).

According to several ICT specialists in Kenya, ICT is already contributing to the country's democracy although its influence is still rather limited (Janse van Rensburg, 2012, Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008). For instance, during the 2007 elections that led into severe post-election violence, social network sites, such as Ushahidi.com, played a role in informing the citizens about the misuses and giving them opportunities to share their information (Janse van Rensburg, 2012; Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013). Moreover, through ICT people have access to a significantly larger amount of information than before and therefore can be said to be more informed to make decisions. Unfortunately, people who do not have the access to this information are in a more vulnerable position to become, for instance, victims of manipulation (Janse van Rensburg, 2012). Marginalized young people living in either poor rural or urban areas are claimed to form the majority of these people and thus, providing them the access to the Internet is argued to contribute significantly to democracy (Janse van Rensburg, 2012). Indeed, it has been pointed out that when studying the effects of social media, for instance, on civic participation, one should not only concentrate on people's actions but also look at the socioeconomic context underlying the observed behavior (e.g. Waller, 2013).

Although the Internet and social media in particular seem to offer new possibilities for civic engagement, there are also factors that may restrain people from participating. One of the reasons suggested to explain the passiveness in political talk is the possibility of political victimization (Waller, 2013). In contrast to seeing Facebook as a space for free speech (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011), most social media sites, such as Facebook, can be considered to be a part of the public sphere where political victimization may take place (Waller, 2013). Hence, in the fear of political victimization, people may withdraw from stating their political opinions (Waller,

2013). Still in many parts of the world, speaking about politics publicly may cause concrete, negative consequences that prevent people from engaging in political discussions. Opposed to discussions on public networks, face-to-face communication often takes place between fewer people and the speakers have more control over the situation (Waller, 2013). This has been claimed to makes face-to-face discussions less risky for the participants (Waller, 2013). Furthermore, also specific characteristics of the platforms have been found to limit their applicability. In a study of young activists in Singapore, Zhang (2013) found that compared to Facebook, Twitter was generally less influential and was mainly used for disseminating information. It was, for instance, suggested that this could be due to the limited number of characters it allows to be used or its lower popularity among young adults (Zhang, 2013).

3.3.3 Social media and protest mobilization

In addition to more traditional forms of political participation, social media's role in protests and revolutions has also been studied. By enabling new ways and forms of communication, social media are argued to have the potential to affect both individual characteristics (for instance, motivation, skills) and structural aspects (for instance, structures to spread information) that facilitate mobilization (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012). In addition, by making civic and political participation easier, social media, and the Internet in general, have been argued to be able to make participation less costly for the participants (Delli Carpini, 2000, Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012).

There are numerous protests and revolutions where social media and ICT in general can be said to have played a role. Some examples are the revolutions in Tehran, Iran, 2009 and in Egypt, 2011, and protests in Mozambique, Ukraine, the U.S., Libya, Nigeria, Spain, Syria and Yemen (Howard, 2011; Iwilade, 2013; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013; Saleh, 2012; Tufekci, 2014;

Williamson, 2011). Although acknowledging that social media have played a role in various protests, their significance should not be exaggerated (Wilson & Dunn, 2011). This tendency towards technological determinism has been pointed out particularly in relation to popular press (Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013).

The use of social media, Twitter and Facebook in particular, during revolutions has sparked a great deal of discussion about the role of social media in organizing protest movements and uprisings. For instance, in 2011, during the Egyptian revolution, Facebook has been claimed to serve an important function not only during but also before and after the revolution (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Using social media, such as Twitter and Facebook pages, to mobilize people or to advance political aspirations has been argued to have several strengths (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012; Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Tufekci (2014) claims social media's impact on protest can be seen particularly in terms of public attention, evading censorship and coordination and logistics (Tufekci, 2014, p. 2). They have been used, for instance, for breaking media censorship by revealing events initially hidden from the public (Tufekci, 2014). Moreover, social media platforms allow people to report on events even real time, which enables "on the fly" coordination that was earlier possible mainly for the police forces (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013; Tufekci, 2014). Facebook, for instance, can be used as a platform for planning and arranging and help implementing the protests. Through different social media platforms, the users are able to reach people not only domestically but also globally (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Some scholars have argued that in politically unstable circumstances, Facebook could serve as a relatively secure environment to exchange important information (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Moyo, 2011). Furthermore, when using several different social media parallel to each other, the communication network is extremely hard to break (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011, Williamson, 2011).

Despite having affordances that can aid mobilization, social media have also been claimed to have weaknesses. Even though social media platforms have been found beneficial in relation to organizing logistics, the use of the platforms can also create confusion (Tufekci, 2014). For instance, the lack of leadership has been claimed to weaken the movements, even though horizontal division of power is often sought by the participants (Tufekci, 2014). Furthermore, it has been also argued that social media movements rarely lead into policy changes and easily remain unsustainable (Tufekci, 2014). Some scholars have highlighted that social media are not the cause of a revolution, but instead, they can work as enabling channels for it (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Williamson, 2011). The ease of online participation and thus ability to gather significant support online rather easily, which is one of the major strengths of social media, has been also claimed to make the movements less influential (Tufekci, 2014). It has been pointed out that while the participation becomes easier, it may decrease the credibility of the support and thus its strength (Tufekci, 2014). Indeed, translating online support into offline actions is still often difficult (Zhang, 2013). It has been argued that online actions are still limited to merely supplement the actions that take place offline (Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013). In contrast, some scholars have pointed out that offline protests do not necessarily lead into better results than online movements and contrasting online and offline actions with each other is fruitless (Tufekci, 2014). Despite its potential to empower people, social media should not be seen as simple solution to successful social movements and socioeconomic changes (Tufekci, 2014). However, they can still be vital instruments when pursuing them (Bailard, 2012; Khamis & Vaughn, 2011).

3.4 Social media and participatory communication

In the previous sections of the literature review, both concepts, development communication and social media, were introduced. Particular attention was paid to the most prominent paradigm of

development communication today, participatory communication. By examining the use of social media among young adults living in Kenya, this study aims to discover whether the interviewees use social media to engage into discussions and activities aimed at contributing to the development of the surrounding society. In other words, this study will examine whether social media serve as channels for development communication. In this final section of the review of literature, the connection between social media and development communication, and particularly how social media could answer the critique addressed to participatory communication, will be discussed. This will contribute to the background against which the findings of this study will be later on reflected.

It can be argued that today, the fields of ICT and development are closely linked (Ali, 2011; Thompson, 2008). Improved access to ICT also in so-called developing countries and the participatory nature of Web 2.0 have been suggested to increase the demand for participation also in the field of development (Thompson, 2008). As stated by Thompson (2008), there has been a “shift from some early conceptions of ICT as top down, totalizing instrument of efficiency and automation to the opposite view of ICT as enabler of bottom-up collaboration, diversity and multiple truths” (p. 824). In other words, although former usage of ICT could even be seen as adhering to the modernization paradigm, social media can be said to be participatory in nature. If participation is seen as central when promoting development, Web 2.0 based social media platforms could then potentially provide rather easily accessible channels for genuine participation. Indeed, social media have been claimed to be able to impact some of the common reasons behind the failure of development projects, such as lack of interest, lack of local content, and lack of skills (Ali, 2011, p. 212). Furthermore, since participatory communication emphasizes the agency of the community and redistribution of power, it is important to focus on the internal processes and different ways development takes place within the communities instead

of merely scrutinizing the projects implemented by external actors. In this way, one can get a clearer image of what kinds of ways people participate independent of the framework created by the external organizations. Although originally a Western innovation, social media have been taken up by considerable number of people also in many African countries, including Kenya. This adoption has not been initiated, at least directly, by the government or external organizations and thus, it can be claimed to be a matter of choice on the side of the citizens.

The use of social media for development seems to answer to most of the criticism addressed to participatory communication discussed earlier. Since genuine participation has been defined as involving participants at all levels of the project and embracing equal division of power, by enabling the participants to share, create and discuss the content, social media seem to offer a platform for genuine participation. The content of the social media sites is usually created by the community members themselves and, at least hypothetically, everyone has the possibility to contribute to it and participate in the discussions taking place. This being said, one has to keep in mind that there are also certain limitations that have to be taken into account. For instance, everyone does not have access to the Internet or to the needed technology yet as discussed already before. Furthermore, most social media platforms have administrators that may influence the content of and access to the platform. There are also countries where the Internet in general is to a great extent controlled by the government and social media sites might be banned altogether (see e.g. Kalathil & Boas, 2001). However, it has been also pointed out that censoring social media platforms is extremely difficult and thus social media can be seen as contributing to the freedom of speech (Ali, 2011; Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008).

Although acknowledging these limitations, social media seem to have affordances that support participation. For instance, social media enable users to engage in two-way interaction that is the core element of participatory communication. Since on Web 2.0 based social media

sites people are creating the content together, the issues raised in the discussions can be assumed to be of high relevance to them. By making content creation and publishing simpler and therefore giving people increased opportunities for it, social media has been noted to encourage creation of local content which is relevant for the users (Ali, 2011). In other words, the content or agenda does not come from an external source, but instead is constructed by the community, which as well is one of the requirements of participatory communication. Moreover, since valuing the unique cultural context of each community is central in participatory communication, by allowing people to create their own content, social media could serve as an effective platform for participatory communication.

Furthermore, Web 2.0 based social media sites are claimed to question the existing power structures and therefore answer to the common criticism addressed to participatory communication for not doing so. In a network, power is not situated in any particular actor but instead can be seen as being circulated among the participants (Thompson, 2008). For instance, there are Web 2.0 sites such as They work for you (n.d.) in the UK and Mzalendo (n.d.) in Kenya, where anyone has the opportunity to comment on the work of the MPs. By letting people to share their views and receive information about matters that could previously have been poorly accessible, these kinds of platforms can be seen as questioning the existing power structures of the society (Thompson, 2008). In addition, as discussed already before, networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace are not limited to networking only but instead, they can also work as a forum, for instance, for political debate (Thompson, 2008, Waller, 2013). Although socializing and interacting with others might be the initial reasons for joining, social networks can turn into platforms for civic discussion and organizing protest (Ali, 2011).

As discussed earlier, participation paradigm has been criticized of having three fundamental flaws, “tyrannies” (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Participation in the Web 2.0 based sites

has the potential to eliminate most of these limitations. Firstly, since they often do not involve facilitators, the decision making power is distributed more equally (Ghosh, 2010; Thompson, 2008). Secondly, it has been argued that due to the lack of face-to-face interaction, individual ideas are more likely to rise rather than “groupthink” (Thompson, 2008). Thirdly, Web 2.0 based social media sites are generally open to anyone who has the access to them despite the social status or place of origin and thus enable the inclusion of multiple viewpoints (Thompson, 2008). It can be argued that the Web 2.0 encourages participation by design and offers a dynamic platform for the people to participate (Thompson, 2008). By providing individuals new ways of participation, Web 2.0 based social media platforms have been even claimed to question the existing structures and understanding of participation and inclusion (Thompson, 2008). By enabling people to share their views with increased number of people, social media can provide a platform that contributes to the increased awareness of the challenges and problems in the community or the whole society.

By offering people more informal ways to use ICT, social media have been claimed to have the potential to function as a stepping stone to introduce new technology to the communities that formerly have resisted it (Ali, 2011). Adoption of social media, particularly social networking sites, has also been argued to contribute to the general ICT skills of the users (Ali, 2011). Furthermore, by allowing publishing of multimodal content and allowing the platforms to be used in various languages, social media have been argued to tackle the difficulties with language affecting many initiatives involving ICT and the Internet (Ali, 2011). It has been claimed that social media could even contribute to the closing of digital divide (Ali, 2011). Particularly the most popular social media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, have been able to attract a significant number of users around the world. If aiming to establish societal changes at the grassroots and affect the power structures of the society, it has been argued that

interpersonal or even group communication is not sufficient (Ghosh, 2010). Since enabling communication between multiple stakeholders at the same time, social media are able to go beyond those forms of communication and enable people to exchange information even with an extremely large number of people in a very short timeframe. Furthermore, by attracting a great number of users, social media have been claimed to be able to aid in establishing small businesses and to contribute to the sustainability of ICT initiatives (Ali, 2011). All in all, it seems that social media could impact the common reasons causing the development projects to fail and have the potential to serve as a fruitful platform for development communication.

4 METHODS

In this chapter, a comprehensive overview on how the study was carried out will be introduced. First, the relevance of the study will be briefly recapped. Then, the aim of the study and the research questions will be introduced. Second, the research design and the demographics of the participants will be presented. Then, the instrument of the data collection and method of the data analysis will be introduced. Finally, the researcher's role and the possible advantages and disadvantages it poses will be discussed.

4.1 Aim of the study and the research questions

As discussed before, social media have become increasingly popular in Africa, particularly among the younger parts of the population (Ephraim, 2013). In Kenya, young adults (under the age of 30) represent more than 77% of the country's population (UN-Habitat, 2014).

Furthermore, Kenya has been described as one of the leading countries regarding social media use, particularly in terms of social networking sites, such as Facebook (Macharia, 2015). Thus, due to its largely young population and technological progressiveness, studying the use of social media among young adults in Kenya can be claimed to be both relevant and timely. It has also been pointed out that if aiming to employ ICT for development, utilizing already familiar platforms is more sustainable than implementing new ones (Wyche et al., 2013a). Thus, studying the usage of already popular platforms and building on the existing practices can be even more beneficial than innovating new ones.

Despite the rapid increase in the number of users of the Internet and social media in the country, there seems to be little qualitative research conducted on the users' perceptions and experiences in Kenya (Wyche et al., 2013a & b). Moreover, only one similar study has been conducted in an informal settlement in Nairobi (Wyche et al., 2013a) and no studies focusing on

comparing the usage between two different socioeconomic groups have been published before. To contribute to the understanding of the use of social media in Kenya and to address the gaps in previous research, this study focuses on the experiences and perceptions of the actual users. The aim of the study is to examine which kinds of social media platforms young adults (18–29 year-olds) living in Nairobi use, why they use them and for which purposes. Furthermore, the purpose is to examine whether these young adults see social media as channels to have an impact on the community and the society they live in and thus use them for developmental purposes. To examine this, following research questions were formulated:

1. Why young adults living in Nairobi use social media and for which purposes?
2. Which kinds of topics young adults discuss in social media?
3. How young adults perceive the effects and impact of social media on the community and the society they live in?

All in all, the main focus will be on the question whether social media serve as channels for young adults with different socioeconomic backgrounds to contribute to societal change.

4.2 Research design

To gather the data, fourteen in-depth, semi-structured interviews were initially conducted in Nairobi, Kenya during July–August 2013. From the fourteen interviewees, thirteen were active users of social media and one was not using any social media platforms. Since the current thesis concentrates on the users' experiences of social media, the answers of the interviewee who did not use social media were excluded from the data. Thus, the data of this study consists of thirteen in-depth interviews. The locations where the interviews were conducted were selected by the interviewees. Some of the interviews were conducted in a public space, such as a garden or a parking lot and some at the interviewee's home. This was done to help the interviewees feel more

at ease and thus express themselves more freely than in more formal interviews (Neuman, 2011). In few occasions, on request of the interviewees, also other people were present when the interviews were conducted. Before the interview was conducted, the participants were explained the overall topic of the study although no specific interview questions were given in advance. All of the interviewees were also informed that they could end the interview and withdraw from the study at any time. None of the interviewees were given any compensation for their participation. If not acquaintances already, the interviews were preceded by an informal conversation where the interviewer, for instance, introduced herself, explained why she was in Kenya and told about her studies. This was done to make the situation more natural for the interviewee and to build rapport. For the interview to be successful, it is essential to build rapport, which is established when the interviewee can be said to trust the interviewer and feel comfortable in the situation (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998; Merrigan & Huston, 2009). The relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee can be seen both as a strength and as a weakness. On one hand, it can encourage the interviewee to share his or her perceptions and feelings in more detail. On the other hand, if the interviewer lacks the skills to ask appropriate questions or consciously or unconsciously attempts to guide the interview, for instance, he or she can severely distort the results (Leonard, 2003; Merton & Kendall, 1946). Despite the interviewees' varying proficiency in English, the interviews were conducted mainly in English, although some Kiswahili was also used. The interviews lasted on average approximately 30 minutes, but ranged from 15 minutes to almost an hour. All interviews were audiotape recorded which was done with the consent of the interviewees. Afterwards, the interviews were transcribed by the interviewer by using a transcription software f4 (see e.g. Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Transcriptions can be said to be abstractions of the real life situations on paper (Kvale, 2007).

4.3 Subjects and sampling

Since the aim of the study is to examine the use of social media among young adults living in Nairobi, the interviews were conducted among young Kenyans who were between 18–29 years of age. Six of the thirteen interviewees were living in Habari and seven had middle class background. Four of the interviewees were female and nine were male. Young adults were chosen as the target population, since it can be assumed that for them, the Internet is not a new phenomenon, but instead has existed most of their lives (Östman, 2012). As mentioned already before, people under the age of 30 currently represent more than 77% of Kenya's total population (UN-Habitat, 2014). Furthermore, since young adults are the coming generation to take over the civic responsibilities from the older generations, their perceptions and attitudes can be said to reflect the future developments. The participants were selected among the young adults living in informal settlement located in Nairobi and among young adults with middle class background.

It has been pointed out that particularly if the topic of an interview is very sensitive, interviewees may feel that their ego is being threatened and therefore conceal some of the information either consciously or unconsciously (Gorden, 1956; Locander, Sudman & Bradburn, 1976). The lack of anonymity in general can affect interviewee's answers (Leonard, 2003). Thus, to encourage the participants to share their experiences and opinions honestly, the interviewees were promised full confidentiality and anonymity. To protect their privacy, all the names and locations were removed from the data. The informal settlement in which six of the interviewees were living was given a fictitious name, Habari. Furthermore, when transcribing the recorded interviews, the names of the interviewees were replaced by the following codes:

MC (1–7)= Middle class interviewees

HB (1–6)= Interviewees living in the informal settlement (Habari)

Instead of concentrating on only one socioeconomic section of the society, these two demographically very distinct groups of participants were selected to get a more comprehensive image of the social media usage in the city. Contrary to the living conditions in urban middle class neighborhoods, residents of Habari commonly live in cramped houses, often without access to running water or basic sanitation. Living conditions in Habari can thus be described as sub-standard and insecure. Among the informal settlements in Nairobi, Habari was selected based on the interviewer's access to the area. Being a white, Western woman, entering an informal settlement in Nairobi without existing contacts is not recommendable. Thus, the participants in Habari were contacted by using the researcher's already existing contacts in the area. The middle class young adults were not from the same area, but instead lived in different parts of the city.

Since the researcher was not a member of the society, contacting and convincing people to participate in the study was found to be extremely difficult. Thus, the selection of the participants was done by using one form of non-probability sampling, snowball sampling (Atkinson & Flint, 2003; Neuman, 2011; Metsämuuronen, 2005). Although criticized for violating some basic principles of sampling, snowball sampling can be used when trying to access so-called hard to reach populations (Atkinson & Flint, 2003; Metsämuuronen, 2005). Since the interviewee had only limited access to the informal settlements and thus faced difficulties in reaching the target population, the use of snowball sampling can be justified.

In contrast to quantitative research, in a qualitative study, there is usually more flexibility when it comes to the number of participants required (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998; Rakow, 2011). When conducting interviews, the researcher will have to constantly reflect upon the collected data and based on that decide when he or she has collected enough. This point, when the collected data does not offer any new information for the researcher, is called saturation (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998; Metsämuuronen, 2005; Saumure & Given, 2008). Thus, no specific number of

interviews needed for the study was decided in advance. To reach the saturation, thirteen interviews in total were conducted between July and August 2013.

4.4 Instrument of data collection

The data collected for this study consisted of thirteen semi-structured interviews, which were conducted to acquire an in-depth understanding of the issue at hand. Interviews are mainly used in qualitative research particularly among critical and cultural scholars, although they can be and are used also when conducting quantitative research (Leonard, 2003; Rakow, 2011). It has been argued that while being highly popular instrument to collect data, interviews are often misused (Leonard, 2003). Since resembling a conversation, one can be misled to think that conducting interviews is easy and does not require much preparation or particular skills (Leonard, 2003; Sandelowski, 2002). This kind of thinking will easily lead to poor data. In contrast to normal conversation, interview always has a purpose; topic around which it is constructed and it is conducted with the consent of the interviewee (Alvesson, & Svensson, 2008; Leonard, 2003). Interviews cannot thus be seen merely as exchanges of information between two or more individuals, but instead, as situations in which things are produced and identities negotiated (Alvesson, & Svensson, 2008).

Depending of the researcher, the format of the interview can vary from highly formal to open-ended (Rakow, 2011). Based on how structured they are, interviews can be divided into three subgroups: structured, semi-structured and open interviews/unstructured (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Leonard, 2003; Metsämuuronen, 2005). Some scholars include thematic interviews as a group of its own (see e.g. Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). Semi-structured interviews were chosen as an instrument while the focus of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the interviewees and not, for instance, examine how widely or

frequently social media are used by the participants. More specifically, the interviews could be labeled as field research interviews, which include “asking questions, listening, expressing interest, and recording what was said” (Neuman, 2011, p. 449). According to Metsämuuronen (2005), semi-structured interview is the correct choice if wanting to gain more knowledge on issues that are, for instance, sensitive or if wanting to understand the reasons behind people’s choices or actions. In addition, qualitative interviews allow the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and to use other ways to adapt the interview if necessary (Leonard, 2003; Rapley, 2001). Furthermore, open-ended questions were used to give the interviewee a better opportunity to elaborate on his or her perceptions at their own pace (Leonard, 2003; Neuman, 2011). Although being a suitable instrument for my study by allowing access to possibly rich data, conducting an interview is not easy and requires practice and preparations (Leonard, 2003). Thus, several pilot interviews were conducted before starting the data collection process.

To be able to make sure one has selected the most appropriate method, one needs to be aware of both its strengths and weaknesses. Although interviews can be said to be suitable instruments for the data collection when aiming for thick description of a specific topic, they also has some shortcomings. One of the major deficits is that while being a part of the research, the interviewer may affect the interview either consciously or unconsciously (Leonard, 2003; Merrigan & Huston, 2009). Thus, it is highly important to openly discuss the researcher’s role in relation to the topic being studied. Furthermore, conducting interviews can also be very time consuming and expensive, particularly if translations or great deal of travelling are needed (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998; Leonard, 2003). In addition, since the interview format allows a great deal of flexibility, there is a danger of sloppiness. The flexibility can also decrease the reliability and comparability of the answers between different interviewees (Leonard, 2003). It has been pointed out that although interviews are suitable for gaining a thick understanding of the

perceptions of an individual, the findings cannot be generalized to a broader population (Gorden, 1956; Rakow, 2011). When the interviewer seeks to grasp the interviewees' perceptions and experiences concerning, for instance, an event that may have taken place already years ago, he or she has to take into account that one's memory can sometimes be flawed (Gorden, 1956). The interviewee may unconsciously or even consciously modify the details of the event being recalled. Furthermore, even though the researcher is present and can make observations about the context and the situation, he or she cannot control it. Thus, one should also take into account that there might be, for instance, some interruptions that can affect the flow of the interview (Leonard, 2003).

To make sure all the main themes were covered during the interviews, an interview script was created to guide the interviews (Appendix 1). The script consisted of three sets of open-ended questions which were formulated based on the three main research questions. The first set of questions addressed the usage, aiming to gain information not only about which platforms the interviewees were using but most importantly why they were using them. The second set of questions focused on the topics interviewees were discussing on social media. The third set of questions concentrated on the interviewees' perceptions of the impact of social media particularly on the community and the society they lived in. After compiling the script, several pilot interviews were conducted before starting the data collection process. Based on the information gained during the pilot interviews, the interview structure and the main questions were finalized. Although the sets of questions formed the basis of each interview, for instance, the order, the exact number of questions and their wording varied depending on the interview. Furthermore, the interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on their perceptions and experiences also concerning topics that were not covered by the initial script, if they were relevant for the current study. Moreover, since the study focuses on exploring the perceptions of the interviewees, no

hypotheses were formulated prior to the interviews. However, the research presented in the review of literature serves as the background of this study, and thus formed the basis also for the interview questions.

4.5 Researcher's role

Due to the more flexible nature of the interviews compared to, for instance, surveys, also the researcher's influence can be argued to be stronger (Merrigan & Huston, 2009; Neuman, 2011; Rakow, 2011). It has been claimed that "the researcher is the instrument of the research, rather than the method" (Rakow, 2011, p. 422). It has even been claimed that this is one of the biggest limitations of interviews as a method (Leonard, 2003). As reaching complete neutrality and objectiveness is impossible, many scholars have emphasized the need for the researcher to openly discuss his or her stance in relation to the topic being studied (Leonard, 2003; Rakow, 2011; Rapley, 2001).

My interest in this topic dates back in 2012 when I spent two months volunteering in Habari. During that summer I realized that many people had a Facebook account even if not necessarily having stable access to the Internet. Thus, I started to ponder on the reasons behind this phenomenon and found it particularly interesting that many informal settlements have their own Facebook groups and pages. Furthermore, after discussing this topic with several people living in the area, I started to understand that social media was utilized for various different purposes by the users. To better understand the use of social media in an informal settlement, I decided to focus my study on this particular area. However, since I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the usage among young adults in general, I decided to also interview people with middle class background to compare whether the usage differed between these two groups.

A year later, I returned back to Nairobi to volunteer and to collect data for the present study. Since I had been volunteering in Habari before, I had already gained a good understanding of the life in the settlement and knew numerous people living in the area. Furthermore, during my first stay in the country, I was living with four Kenyan young adults in an upper middle class neighborhood. This gave me an opportunity to gain a more diverse understanding, for instance, of the living conditions in the country. Thus, I claim that due to my experiences in Kenya I have a rather extensive understanding of the contexts where the interviewees were coming from and the Kenyan society in general. This helped me not only to reach the participants for my study but also to analyze the data collected through the interviews.

Although I had been to Kenya before and can be said to have a relatively good understanding of the society in general, the fact that I am a white, young female coming from Finland raises issues of power (Alvesson, & Svensson, 2008) and placed some restrictions for my study. For instance, I only had access to certain informal settlements through my existing contacts. For this reason, the participants were selected among people living in the communities I had access to, which excluded a significant number of potential participants. Furthermore, my physical appearance and the fact that I was not a member of these communities may have affected how the participants behaved during the interviews and what they were willing to share. Moreover, one should also take into account that the interviewees may have consciously or unconsciously altered their answers to please the interviewer (Leonard, 2003). At the same time, my own expectations and experiences might have affected my behavior during the interviews (Leonard, 2003). In addition, due to my limited ability to communicate in Swahili, the interviews were conducted in English, which naturally might affect the responses of the interviewees. In those few cases when the interviewee used a Swahili expression instead of English, I asked a native speaker to verify that I had understood what was meant. In conclusion, although I have

lived in Kenya before, I am still examining the situation from an outside perspective, which may also affect my interpretations of the data.

4.6 Data analysis

There are several different ways to analyze interviews, of which classic content analysis, grounded theory and discourse analysis are only some examples (Metsämuuronen, 2005; Rakow, 2011; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). It has been pointed out that data collection and analysis are not necessarily chronological steps, but instead, can also overlap (Metsämuuronen, 2005). This is particularly true in qualitative research (Metsämuuronen, 2005). Since the aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the interviewees, no hypotheses of the findings or predetermined categories to classify the data were formulated prior to the interviews. To analyze the data, a qualitative content analysis was chosen as the method of analysis. According to Schreier (2012), qualitative content analysis is a method that can be used to explore qualitative data in a consistent manner.

The first step, before starting the actual analysis, is to familiarize oneself with the data thoroughly (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). This is important to gain an overall understanding of the data (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). Thus, after transcribing the interviews, the transcriptions were read through several times before starting the actual coding process. In qualitative content analysis, the research questions that have guided the data collection are utilized to direct the analysis (Schreier, 2012). Therefore, after familiarizing myself with the data, I went through the transcripts using each of the research questions as guidelines to capture those parts of the data which were relevant for the study. The purpose of the qualitative content analysis is therefore not to give an overview of the collected data, but instead, concentrate on those aspects of the data that are relevant for the analysis (Schreier, 2012). Exhausting

analysis of the data, where all the possible codes have been found, is impossible (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). Furthermore, coding is always subjective and based on the selections made by the researcher (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). While going through the data, themes that were repeated across the interviews started to emerge. Qualitative content analysis refers to these emerging themes as codes (Schreier, 2012). The process where concrete excerpts of the raw data are grouped under themes is called *reductive coding* (Schreier, 2012).

To manage the large amount of transcribed text and aid the coding, Excel sheets were first used to group the relevant excerpts. This was done to remove the irrelevant parts of the data to make the coding easier. Although some codes were created based on the initial reading process and the research questions, the codes were primarily emerging from the data. Since starting the analysis from the data, this analysis can be said to be an example of a data-based analysis (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). It has been claimed that analysis that would purely emerge from the data is, however, impossible (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). Indeed, analysis always requires a perspective from which the data is scrutinized and thus, is always the researcher's interpretation of the data (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). After finishing the first round of coding, the data was examined for the second time to make sure nothing was missed. It has been pointed out that coding not only makes data management easier, but it also makes it easier to notice emerging patterns or linkages across the data (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998; Schreier, 2012). However, also after reducing the data into manageable codes, there was a constant dialogue between the codes and the data to make sure the analysis was tightly connected to the data. This reduces the possibility for misinterpretation and ensures that the arguments are supported by the data. After the coding process, the codes relevant for each of the central themes were examined in detail and answers of the two groups were contrasted to see whether any similarities or differences emerged. Finally,

the results were reflected against findings from earlier studies to gain a broader understanding of the topic in question. These results form the basis of the discussion presented in the next chapter.

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the information gained through the interviews will be introduced, analyzed and the findings will be contrasted with the existing research. Instead of presenting the analysis and the findings separately, the sections of this chapter will be constructed around the main themes of the study, based on the research questions presented earlier. First, to provide background for the analysis, the different social media platforms which were mentioned by the interviewees and ways to access them will be shortly introduced. Second, the reasons for the usage of these social media platforms are presented and analyzed. Then, the different topics that were discussed and could not be discussed by the participants will be introduced and elaborated on. Finally, the finding concerning the perceived impact and effect of social media use on the on the community and the Kenyan society will be presented and analyzed.

To illustrate the data gained through the interviews and to validate the findings, quotations from the interviews were incorporated into the analysis. The codes used in the quotations can be found in the table 2.

TABLE 5 Codes used to transcribe the interviews

Code	Meaning
[]	Words or clarifications added to the quotation
. . .	Hesitation or unfinished sentence
[. . .]	Part of a sentence, a sentences or a section has been removed from a quotation

5.1 Social media platforms used and ways of accessing them

Despite being categorized as a developing country, Kenya can be said to be one of the leading countries in terms of social media usage in East Africa (Portland, 2014). Nairobi, for instance,

has been pointed out to be the most active city regarding tweets in the area (Portland, 2014). Concurrently, however, it has been claimed that issues regarding costs and access are still central to the users' experiences of social media in Kenya (Wyche et al., 2013). Thus, to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of social media among young adults in Kenya, it is necessary to also discuss issues concerning the access to the platforms. First the different devices used to access the platforms and reasons for using them will be presented and analyzed. Due to its popularity, accessing social media through mobile phones will be looked at in more detail. Finally, the different social media platforms the interviewees mentioned in the interviews will be introduced. Although no generalizations regarding the popularity of these platforms can be made based on a limited number of individual experiences, for the purpose of this study, the differences found between the two groups studied will be highlighted.

5.1.1 Devices used to access the platforms

When asked which devices young adults used to access social media platforms, the interviewees mentioned computers, laptops and mobile phones. One interviewee from the middle class group also mentioned that he used an iPad when he had the chance, but did not own one himself (MC7). Although listing also other devices, all of the interviewees mentioned mobile phone as a channel to access social media. Furthermore, all the interviews believed that accessing social media applications through mobile phone was very popular in Kenya in general, and several interviewees argued it to be the most popular device to access social media particularly among young adults.

When I look at my age, most people, most young people have mobile phones and it's Internet, it accesses Internet. So I think most people, most young people, use it on their phone rather than on a computer (HB5)

Other studies have also suggested that accessing the Internet through mobile phones has become extremely popular particularly among younger users (see e.g. Janse van Rensburg, 2012; Unterfrauner & Marschalek, 2009). Furthermore, based on the number of mobile data subscriptions in Kenya, it is clear that accessing online platforms through mobile phones has become increasingly popular in the country in general (CA, 2014). In June 2014, the number of Internet subscribers was 14,030,036, of which 99.3% were mobile data/Internet subscriptions (CA, 2014).

When asked about the reasons for mobile phones' popularity, most interviewees pointed out that they are cheap, easy to use and portable. These observations are in line with advantages identified in other studies concerning the mobile phone use, for instance, among marginalized youth (Alozie, Akpan-Obong, & Foster, 2011; Unterfrauner & Marschalek, 2009). As also claimed by the Alozie, Akpan-Obong, & Foster (2011), mobile phones were pointed out to offer an inexpensive but still functional alternative to computers, which are still not affordable to many people.

Yeah, computers are really expensive on one side of the picture. Mobile phones these days perform basic computer functions. (MC6)

Moreover, one interviewee pointed out that there had been a huge boom in cellular purchasing about five years ago. Thus, one could argue that introducing different kinds of mobile applications has been relatively easy in Kenya, since Kenyans were already familiar with mobile phones as devices. One interviewee also mentioned that mobile network operators, such as Safaricom, offer affordably priced daily Internet subscriptions making accessing the Internet through one's phone very attractive for many. Indeed, when one looks at the operators in the country, Safaricom Limited with 21,928,450 subscribers seems to be controlling the market

almost monopolistically (CA, 2014). Since offering an affordable way to access social media, mobile phones give also people with lower income a way to access these platforms.

It's popular, very popular. Because most Kenyans can afford mobile phone. There's a mobile phone that goes for 2000 bobs [slang word used for the Kenyan currency, Kenyan shilling] which is equal to 2 . . . 20 euros. So, if you can access Facebook with that then you are good to go. As compared with laptop and iPads which are very expensive. (MC2)

One interviewee also pointed out that also older parts of the population have increasingly started to use different social media platforms. By giving people a more affordable way to access social media and engaging also older generations, it seems that mobile phones could help bridge the gap between people with access and people without and contribute to close the digital divide (see e.g. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Despite mobile phones contributing to close the digital divide, not everyone still has access to the Internet and to different kinds of social media platforms. Furthermore, even though enabling more people to access the platforms, it is good to remember that all social media sites are not mobile phone friendly and therefore the user experience can vary greatly depending on which kind of device one is using.

Yeah, it's very popular, but it also depends on the kind of phone you have. Cos there are phones that can access social media, but the quality is not as good (MC3).

Even though most interviewees claimed that a great majority of Kenyans already have access to the Internet and social media, in reality, only approximately 49.7% Kenyans had access to the Internet and approximately 10,7% of these users had an account on Facebook (CA, 2013; Internet world stats, 2012a). Indeed, although mobile phones are more inexpensive than, for instance, laptops, they are still too expensive for many Kenyans. Nevertheless, only one of the

interviewees acknowledged that unequal access to social media might also create inequality among people.

Yes, those who have access to social media, they follow. Those who don't have they are left out. They don't know what is going on. (MC5).

This positivism can be due to the fact that the access rate is found to be considerably higher in major cities, such as Nairobi, where the interviews were conducted (Cheruiyot, 2011). Thus, the interviewees might not have a realistic image of the situation in the country as a whole. Although local market and infrastructure constraints have been found to significantly impact the use of Facebook among the users in rural parts of Kenya, similar constraints have been found to be less significant in Nairobi (Wyche, et al., 2013a & b). Furthermore, as pointed out before, the number of people who have access to the Internet and social media has, indeed, increased, and therefore the digital divide can be said to be steadily closing. Some of the interviewees also claimed that the Kenyan government was making efforts to take Kenya into the so-called “digital age”. Another reason to explain the optimism could also be that the unequal division of resources and information has merely become a natural state for the interviewees, which does not need to be specifically emphasized. Moreover, based on the interviewees’ answers, people were mainly using social media to share information within a limited number of people rather than distributing it to a wider audience. It seems that the people who had an account were informed through social media and those who did not have one were informed using other means. This could explain why social media were not considered to create inequality between people. Nevertheless, although social media were also used, for instance, to inform people or to discuss civic life issues, it was still mainly used for entertainment.

5.1.2 Platforms used

When the interviewees were asked which kind of social media platforms they were using, numerous different platforms were mentioned. Although mostly varying according to the user, there were also distinct differences in the platforms used between the interviewees living in Habari and interviewees from the middle class group. Details of the platforms the interviewees mentioned during the interviews are given in the table 3 below. Three of the listed platforms, MocoSpace, RockMelt and Smiley360 were mentioned during the interviews, but none of the interviewees were using them. Furthermore, although regarded as social media by the interviewees, it is debatable whether RockMelt and Smiley can be considered social media (see Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Nevertheless, since the focus will be on the platforms the interviewees were actively using, these three platforms will not be included into the discussion.

TABLE 6 Platforms currently used by the interviewees

Name	Description
Facebook	Online social networking service where users can create a profile, add other users as "friends", send instant messages, share photos and videos (Facebook Newsroom, 2014).
Twitter	Online social networking service enabling users to communicate via short 140-character messages called "tweets" (Twitter, 2014).
YouTube	Video-sharing website on which users can upload, view, and share videos (Alexa, 2014).
WhatsApp	Cross-platform mobile messaging app which allows users to exchange messages (O'Connell, 2014)
LinkedIn	Business-oriented social networking service (LinkedIn Corporation, 2015).
Instagram	Online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service which allows its users to share pictures and videos on various social networking platforms (Frommer, 2010).
Skype	Telecommunications application software providing video chat and voice calls from computers, tablets and mobile devices via the Internet (Skype, n.d.).
Google +	Social networking and identity service (Google, n.d.).

Blogs	Regularly updated webpage containing a user's personal experiences, opinions or observations (Collins English Dictionary, n.d.).
MocoSpace	Social media platform to chat, play games, listen to music and meet people nearby or around the world (MocoSpace, n.d.).
RockMelt	A social media browser (Balowin, 2013).
Smiley360	A social community for consumer influencers (Social Media Link, n.d.).

In addition to asking which social media platforms the interviewees were using, all the interviewees were also shown examples of Kenyan based social media platforms (Table 4). These platforms were mostly directed towards matters related to civic or political participation and had been collected from other social media related studies or discovered by the interviewer while volunteering in the country. The brief definitions of all the platforms mainly rely on the self-descriptions taken directly from their official websites. However, it should be acknowledged that people may use them for very different purposes from the ones stated in the descriptions.

TABLE 4 Platforms shown to the interviewees [descriptions added]

Name	Description
Ushahidi	Ushahidi which means “testimony” in Swahili, was a website that was initially developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election fallout at the beginning of 2008. (Ushahidi, n.d.)
Mashada	Mashada is a Kenyan website for chatting, blogging and discussing. It accepts also SMS-delivered postings. (Mäkinen & Kuiru, 2008)
Mzalendo	Mzalendo (‘Patriot’ in Swahili) is a non-partisan project started in 2005 whose mission is to ‘keep an eye on the Kenyan parliament’. Mzalendo seeks to promote a stronger public voice and to enhance public participation in politics by providing relevant information about Parliament specifically about Senators and MPs activities. (Mzalendo, n.d.)
NiElect	NiElect was an open source platform which promoted peaceful elections. (NiElect, n.d.)

When asked which platforms the interviewees were using, Facebook was often the first platform listed, mentioned by all of the participants. Majority of the interviewees perceived it to be the most popular platform in Kenya and none of the interviewees mentioned any other platform to be more popular. Indeed, Facebook was clearly the most popular social media platform among the interviewees.

Young adults like me we usually use Twitter and Facebook. But Facebook, everyone has it. (HB2)

Even though all the interviewees did not mention Facebook as the most popular platform in Kenya, majority of the examples considering their social media usage particularly among the young adults living in Habari were examples using Facebook. Particularly the ones who were predominantly using Facebook seemed to use social media and Facebook as parallel concepts, often replacing former with the latter. Another platform that was mentioned, although not used by all the participants was Twitter, making it the second most popular platform among the interviewees.

When listing the platforms used, four out of six young adults living in Habari and six out of seven of the middle class young adults mentioned that they were using Twitter. Although not numerically highly significant, there was a small difference in the usage of Twitter between the two groups of interviewees. Even the interviewee who did not use Twitter in the middle class group claimed it was popular in the country although not using it himself. At the same time, two of the young adults living in Habari who had Twitter accounts mentioned that they did not access them often. This would imply that even though Twitter seems to be popular in Kenya, it is still used more actively by the middle class young adults than people coming from lower

socioeconomic classes. This was also pointed out by one of the interviewees from the middle class group.

Twitter and Facebook both have the same popularity with people of middle class. Lower class guys usually don't choose Twitter. They are more into Facebook because entails, it's a general kind of site. (MC7)

This observation was also supported by the fact that the only interviewee who mentioned being more active on Twitter than on Facebook was from the middle class group.

Facebook, I'm not as active as I was before. Just maybe posting one or two photos at once. And status not so much . . . But Twitter is something that I use to . . . that's where I post a lot of late. I've been so active on Twitter and I've even managed to discuss a few things around. (MC3)

Despite this difference, both Facebook and Twitter were very well known among users. The popularity of these aforementioned platforms has also been pointed out in user surveys conducted in the country. It has been, for instance, found that Kenyans are the most active Facebook users in East Africa (Internet world stats, 2012a). Furthermore, recent findings claim Nairobi being “the most active city in East Africa and the sixth most active on the continent, with 123,078 geo-located tweets in Q4 2013” (Portland, 2014). Indeed, Facebook and Twitter seemed not only to be the most popular platforms among the interviewees but also highly popular in the country in general.

In addition to Facebook and Twitter, also other platforms, such as YouTube, WhatsApp and Skype were mentioned by several interviewees. Besides being less popular among the interviewees, there were no significant differences in the usage between the two groups.

YouTube was used by eight and WhatsApp by seven of the interviews, and only two interviews listed Skype as one of the platforms they were using. Some platforms were, however, only used by the middle class participants. The first platform of which usage distinctively separates the

young adults living in Habari and the middle class young adults was LinkedIn. Five middle class young adults had a LinkedIn account, of which three were using it actively. Furthermore, the two middle class young adults who did not have accounts had still heard about LinkedIn before (MC1 & MC6). On the contrary, from the young adults living in Habari, none were using LinkedIn and several interviewees had not even heard about it before. Although not as popular as LinkedIn, other platforms that were mentioned only by the middle class young adults were Instagram, Google+ and blogs. Three middle class young adults mentioned that they were using Instagram, one was co-writing a blog and two mentioned that they were occasionally reading blogs online. Google+ was mentioned by only one middle class interviewee.

As noted before, all the interviewees were also shown a short list of platforms that originate from Kenya. Nevertheless, none of the interviewees mentioned that they were using any of the platforms and only some had heard other people using few of them. NiElect and Ushahidi were both mentioned by one participant and three interviewees had heard of Mzalendo. Although not using Mzalendo himself, one of the interviewee from Habari mentioned that many young adults had been using the platform before. In conclusion, based on the data, Facebook and Twitter were the most popular platforms among both groups of interviewees. However, in general the middle class young adults were using a significantly greater number of platforms compared to the young adults living in Habari.

5.2 Reasons for using social media

During the interviews, the young adults elaborated greatly also on the reasons underlying the usage of different platforms. In this section, the purposes for the usage of different social media platforms will be introduced first. Second, both constructive and destructive reasons for the usage irrelevant of the platform will be introduced. Then the information gained through the interviews

will be analyzed by utilizing the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) introduced in the literature review. In conclusion, evidence concerning a possible second level digital divide will be brought forward.

In addition to the number of platforms the groups were using, there were also differences in how the interviewees described the functions and purposes of different platforms they were using. According to the data, the middle class group was not only using a greater variety of platforms but also their motivations for using exactly those platforms were more elaborate and detailed. For instance, although some of the young adults living in Habari saw some differences between Twitter and Facebook, the differences were rarely described in detail. Furthermore, majority of the interviewees from the young adults living in Habari using both Facebook and Twitter saw these two platforms as being nearly the same or exactly the same. Only one of the four interviewees gave concrete examples of the differences. In other words, most young adults living in Habari did not make a clear distinction between different platforms they were using and elaborate on how different platforms would satisfy different needs.

On the contrary, the young adults from the middle class groups seemed to have a clearer distinction between different platforms and chose the platform according to their usage. Although Facebook was the most popular social media platform also among the middle class young adults, as mentioned above, their examples regarding their social media usage were in general more versatile. Many of the interviews described in detail how different platforms had different purposes and how they satisfy different needs. Furthermore, they often included other platforms in addition to Facebook and Twitter in their answers.

Each one has their reasons. Facebook I use so that I can communicate with guys I don't often meet on a day to day, face to face basis [. . .] WhatsApp is for those people who I actually talk to, a lot, like a lot a lot. . . like Facebook where I just pop in after two days or three days to see what's the update, say hi to somebody

and then go out for another three days. Twitter. . .to know what's going on in the world and stuff like that, I can follow CNN and then know what's going on, I can follow M-Pesa [Kenyan based money service] know what Safaricom [a mobile network operator in Kenya] is all about, I can follow maybe my friends, but basically Twitter is geared towards brands and stuff like that, companies (MC4)

YouTube, I use it mostly for my education and for basic knowledge. Like if I would like to see some experiment being done and I don't have the things to put up the experiment, someone else has already done it, so you just YouTube [. . .] Facebook is much easier since you get to catch up with other guys, you actually get to have a look at them and catch up with them . . . get to know what is happening in your friend's life [. . .] Twitter for me is like a place where you just go to relax and have fun. Personally speaking, Twitter is a nice place there is a lot of knowledge. (MC6)

Similar to the young adults living in Habari, also the middle class young adults were using Facebook mainly for social networking, interacting with one's friends and getting to know new people. Twitter, on the other hand, tended to be perceived more as a platform where one can gain information and knowledge, for instance concerning current events, and as a channel to follow corporations.

I was on my way, I was travelling to Nairobi from the rural areas I just saw an advert on Twitter, someone just from NTV our media, somebody just posted there was an accident ahead of us. That was a fatal accident, everyone died in that matatu. [local form of public transport] So it really helped us, cos we got the right route [. . .] I like Twitter because it just gives you the current updates. (MC1)

Also the only active Twitter user among the young adults living in Habari pointed out that she used Twitter as a source for the most recent updates.

Okay, let's say on Twitter, you use it because you, let's say, get updated earlier, before other people. At least you know what had happen or what had taken place before the others and that keeps you update. (HB4)

LinkedIn again, was seen as a platform for professional networking and looking for jobs, targeted for people already in the working life. Furthermore, it seemed that the interviewees thought that

LinkedIn was targeted to the upper socioeconomic classes rather than for the people with lower socioeconomic status.

It's more of a professional network with other professionals, update my CV [. . .]
Get to know if there are vacancies in other organizations that I can apply. (MC5)

Most people don't know how to use Twitter. And in Kenya, they believe
LinkedIn is for the rich. (MC2)

As used only by the interviewees from the middle class group, it seems that LinkedIn is popular mainly among middle class young adults and less known among young adults from lower socioeconomic classes. This could be explained, for instance, by the difference in the nature of expected employment of the people in these two groups. The middle class young adults are more likely going to apply and be selected for positions posted on these professional networking sites, whereas the young adults living in Habari often do not. As background information for the study, the interviewees were requested to briefly summarize their educational background. Since the level of education of the young adults from Habari was found to be lower, they generally did not have the formal qualifications to apply for the positions posted, for instance, on LinkedIn. Thus, the platform does not satisfy any of their needs and is not relevant for them. Moreover, it seems that for young adults living in Habari Facebook has taken up some of the functions associated with LinkedIn.

You'll find fellow friends, maybe they are looking for a job. They'll post it and they'll say if anyone sees any advertisement of a job, please remind me. (HB3)

In addition to being a social network where people interact with friends and make new ones, Facebook seemed to be a more general platform and used for multiple purposes. In this case, Facebook worked as a job portal through which one can either find a job or market a position. One could even claim that since people living in informal settlements such as Habari generally

form a relatively tight community, young adults tend to seek help from the community also for finding work. These claims are supported by the observations of Wyche et al. (2013a). In their study of the use of Facebook by young adults living in an informal settlement in Kenya, Wyche et al. (2013a) found that Facebook was frequently used for activities to earn money. They discovered that Facebook was used to look for information about employment, support entrepreneurial efforts and seek remittances (Wyche et al., 2013a). Indeed, it seems that particularly the young adults living in informal settlements are using Facebook not only for socializing but also to fulfil multiple other needs.

Furthermore, blogs were also platforms that were followed or written only by middle class young adults. Despite not elaborating extensively on the purpose of reading blogs, the interviewees seemed to use them mainly for entertainment. Since blogs that were mentioned were mostly about someone's life, fashion and relationships, they include showcasing the writer's life and possessions. This could be one of the reasons why blogging was mentioned only by the middle class young adults and not by young adults living in Habari. It was even argued that young adults from lower socioeconomic classes were ashamed of their background and thus, did not want to bring it up on social media.

Not all, let's say like if anything happen in Habari, I'll just post it and say 'Oh God help us Habari is doing this and this, we need help or we need this in Facebook'. But sometimes I've seen my friends from Habari they don't post anything about our area. They'll just take photo say please help this people from this area but not they would not say much about Habari. Yeah I think they are ashamed of where they come from. (HB2)

In addition to entertainment, blogs were also mentioned as channels to influence people. For instance, one interviewee from the middle class group who was co-writing a blog used it as a channel for creating awareness about and changing people's perceptions of other cultures (MC3). In other words, by discussing societal issues and, in that way, aiming to influence them, these

young adults seemed to use their blog as a channel for civic participation. Despite being used by some young adults, the interviewees believed that blogs were not popular in Kenya in general. This has been pointed out also in other studies which claim that even though being considered one of the most versatile blogospheres of the Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of bloggers in Kenya is still very low (Goldstein & Rotich, 2008).

As mentioned before, some examples of Kenyan based platforms were shown to all the interviewees (Table 4). Despite being mentioned in other studies (e.g. Goldstein & Rotich, 2008; Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013), platforms, such as Ushahidi or Mzalendo, were not popular among the interviewees, even unknown for the majority. Instead of using these platforms which were mostly directed towards different civic life related matters, young adults interviewed in this study seemed to discuss politics and elections related matters mostly on Facebook and on Twitter. One of the interviewee pointed this out when asked whether she knew any of the Kenyan based platforms mentioned in the earlier studies.

No, for me. I'm not that into politics, so I think that's why. (MC1)

Interestingly, although she discussed politics on social media in general, she still seemed to avoid politically oriented platforms. All in all, it seems that some social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, can offer a more informal platform for political discussions (see e.g. Bailard, 2012; Waller, 2013), even though politically oriented platforms are often avoided.

In addition to the different ways of usage described above, interviewees from both groups also elaborated on the reasons for the popularity of Facebook and Twitter. As noted in the previous section, these two were the most popular platforms among the users. Both platforms were pointed out to have both positive and negative characteristics which affect their usage. One of the reasons suggested explain why Facebook was considered the most popular platform was its

user-friendliness. Some of the interviewees from both groups argued Twitter to be too complicated for many users, and thus less popular than Facebook.

Yes, I think it differs. Like first of all, I think Facebook is a fairly easy social platform to deal with. Because unlike Twitter, where you have to have retweets. You have to put a hashtag searching for someone. It's just basically an uphill task. It's not very easy, unlike in Facebook. (MC4)

It was also pointed out that almost everyone has a Facebook account, which makes it more beneficial than many other platforms to join. Furthermore, one of the interviewees noted that social networking sites, such as Facebook fit well in the Kenyan society.

Mostly good, because taking from a society perspective, Kenya is a very familital form of living. Like I know my neighbor, maybe Nairobi is a little bit different, but I know on the other sides, people are very family oriented. So society, everybody knows each other in society. . . So I think most of it what it has done is done good, cos it has before social media is used I think society has to question it like what is it for. Why are we doing it, so you don't actually find somebody coming up with an ill-fated social forum. Had done mostly good than harm. (MC4).

According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Kenya can be claimed to be a collectivistic society (The Hofstede centre, n.d.). Thus, social relations, such as relations within family or with the members of the community in which one lives, can be claimed to be important for Kenyans. The importance of these relations can be claimed to be even stronger particularly in informal settlements where social relations often function as social security network. This can be one of the reasons why social networking sites, such as Facebook, seem to be particularly popular among Kenyans compared to other forms of social media. Although some interviewees saw Twitter as a rather complicated platform to use, it was also argued to be less complicated than many other platforms available.

When looking at the usage irrelevant of the platform used, the interviewees pointed numerous reasons why they were using social media and there were not many differences

between the two groups. The most common reason for using social media was social – keeping in touch with friends, asking how they are doing and making new friends. Both groups saw social media mainly as platforms for socializing and entertainment. Different forms of socializing with friends were mentioned by all the respondents from both groups.

Facebook and Twitter, as all knows, is a way of interaction between people, friendship, make friends, and also to communication. That is the main agenda, why I use it for. (HB6)

So, we, I'm only there for the social things. . . Yeah, just for the entertainment (MC2)

Indeed, most of the young adults thought that social media were mostly for entertainment, although some pointed out they were also places to discuss civic life related matters.

It's both, but I would say mostly entertainment [. . .] There is so much to talk about, so much to do. Politics is only a very small part of it, a very tiny part, extremely important. (MC7)

Some interviewees saw social media as channels to get young adults' voices and concerns heard.

It was made possible cos of social media, cos it has actually made the young people's voices well heard and I think it is awesome. (MC4)

It was also mentioned that social media worked as channels to address different kinds of issues particularly for those young adults who were less extrovert. Some of the interviewees used social media to bring about positive changes in their community.

About our community, I really like to discuss issues about our community. I have joined a lot of groups on Facebook which discuss or which make a lot of stuff about community. Because I love my community and I would like my community to change and through social media we can also have a revolution that change our community, yeah. (HB5)

The ones who discussed politics on social media claimed they were good channels to communicate with the government and leaders and some saw them as ways to affect the future of the Kenyan society.

The youth are getting into politics to ensure that these resources are coming to good use so the youth can actually benefit [the interviewee explains that the adults now are going to leave Kenya in a bad state] Youth are taking initiative to ensure that even their kids can enjoy what they enjoy at the moment. (MC7)

Although none of the interviewees mentioned they had used social media, for instance, to promote any political party, it was pointed out that politicians used social media for campaigning, informing people about their achievements and interacting with the voters.

Yeah they do they do especially when they go out and come with good news, they do post it immediately you know, on Facebook. (HB4)

Another reason for using social media, pointed out by interviewees from both groups, was that social media can work as channels to express one's thoughts and feelings and to get advice and encouragement.

And maybe when we're down somebody just comes in, encourages you [. . .] Relieve your stresses at times. (MC1)

Let's say, maybe one of my friend on Facebook is facing problem or maybe he is looking for advice. You know you can give advice. Or maybe you feel that you are low and you feel you are to be advised on something. There you can get good advice, they can help you. (HB4)

One interviewee from the middle class group also used social media to relax and two of the young adults living in Habari used social media to pass time when bored. In addition, social media were mentioned to allow people to report on the events, even real time. Some interviewees from both groups argued that social media are also used as effective channels to call for help in a case of an emergency.

You are in an emergency, you need an ambulance. Post it on Twitter and two minutes later you can even have an ambulance. That's how Twitter is coming up in Kenya. (MC3)

Furthermore, as discussed before, many interviewees also pointed out that social media platforms were used for business purposes: to advertise one's products and services, market a job opening, look for a job and network with other professionals.

Yeah, like there are some pages that have been created. Guys, like if you want to sell something you just post it online and guys have a look at what you are selling. Like you first like the page and then, now you want to sell something, you post it online and you find a page has like 15 000 people. If 2000 people see that advert, you will obviously get someone to buy whatever you are selling. (MC6)

And another thing is, I'm an artist. And as an artist, if I have new work I want to share with my friends, I can post them on Facebook. Or I can send them via email to my friends and that way also the social media also helps me to market my work. So basically that's why I use it. (HB5)

In addition to the numerous positive ways social media were used, majority of the interviewees also mentioned that it can be used destructively. One of the interviewees mentioned that he had noticed cyber bullying on social media and one had been bullied on Facebook before. Social media could therefore be used also to discourage others.

Cyber bullying, a lot of people are bullying each other, abusing each other on social media. A lot of bad things were being spoken on social media which is not good. But still, these people are expressing themselves, they have a right to say what they want to say. But sometimes it gets out of control. Like some people are really angry, some people are even starting to abuse each other which is not good. You have a right to speak your mind, but speak your mind in a way that will help to, your statement will not be compromising peace. (HB5)

Great majority of the participants had also noticed hate speech in social media during and after the presidential elections either in 2007, in 2013 or both, and only one of the interviewees from

the middle class group had not noticed it at all. Although not themselves, interviewees pointed out that some people were using social media to spread and provoke hatred among Kenyans.

Some people use it to spread hate speech so that you can hate people from other regions. (HB1)

Furthermore, some interviewees gave examples of how people use social media to fraud money from others, for instance, through fake profiles.

All in all, young adults from both groups gave numerous different reasons why they were using social media or why they believed other people were using it. The interviewees listed both constructive and destructive purposes for the usage, although majority of the reasons were positive. The reasons were often related to one's own life and well-being and varied according to the individual regardless of the group one belonged to. However, some young adults were using social media also to contribute to changes in their own community or in the surrounding society.

5.2.1 Social media and uses and gratifications theory

As described in the previous section, the interviewees gave various reasons for their social media usage. The gratifications identified among the participants were *social* (e.g. keeping in touch with friends); *entertainment* (e.g. watching funny videos online); *pass time when bored*; *information* (e.g. news); *professional* (e.g. find work); *support* (e.g. problems); *civic and political participation* (e.g. interact with politicians); *escape/diversion* (e.g. keep oneself busy in order to stay away from troubles); *habit/addiction* (e.g. use Facebook every day after waking up) and *criminal* (e.g. fraud money). In addition, two interviewees mentioned some people use social media merely since everyone else was using it. Furthermore, the answers were also compared to the list of potential new gratifications for new media, introduced in the review of literature (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Three of the four classes of gratifications listed by Sundar and

Limperos (2013) could be identified in the answer of the interviewees. These were: *agency*, *interactivity* and *navigability*. For instance, several interviewees in this study mentioned that social media allows one to get one's voice heard, which in Sundar & Limperos' (2013) list falls under agency-enhancement (p. 518).

Although the findings seem to be in line with results of studies concerning other forms of media (see e.g. Greenberg, 1974), it seems that more gratifications could be identified than listed in these earlier studies. Some scholars have pointed out that the earlier models of UGT should not be abandoned, but instead, expanded (Ruggiero, 2000). The finding of this study seem to support the claim of Sundar and Limperos (2013) that new media and their development have both created new gratifications and made already existing ones more nuanced. Thus, to be able to gain a deeper understanding of the usage of these new platforms, one should not merely limit oneself to look at the gratifications identified in the earlier studies. Although in general in line with existing research, the findings seem to contradict with the claims of Chen (2011). In his study, he found that Twitter was used to actively gratify the need to connect with others (Chen, 2011). Although using other social media platforms to satisfy the need to connect with others, the interviewees in this study used Twitter mainly for information and relaxation.

Although the gratifications varied greatly according to the user, and thus no clear conclusions of their importance in relation to each other can be drawn, social, entertainment and informative usage seemed to be the most important reasons for the usage among both groups, social appearing to be the strongest one. It has been argued also by other scholars that most of the social media usage and content is still entertainment oriented (Macnamara, Sakinofsky, & Beattie, 2012). The findings of this study are mostly in line with findings of other UGT studies on social media. For instance, in their study of Nigerian college students' usage of social networking sites, Akpan, Akwaowo and Senam (2013) identified the following gratifications:

connecting with new and old friends, having fun and relaxation, promoting their businesses, being socially balanced, easing boredom, being trendy and developing a relationship, checking on friends' comments, watching movies, getting the latest information, engaging in research, playing games, maintaining business contacts and updating status/wall (p 363). Although not identical, most gratifications were found in both studies. Furthermore, similar gratifications were also found in a study examining the use of Facebook among young adults living in an informal settlement in Kenya (Wyche et al., 2013a). In their study, Wyche et al. (2013a), for instance, discovered that activities directed towards earning money were of great importance for most of the users. Although income generation was not one of the most frequently mentioned gratifications among the participants of this study, it was still brought up by several interviewees.

Even though the gratifications were generally very similar between the two groups, the platforms utilized to satisfy them were greatly different. For instance, the interviewees from both groups used social media to seek information, but they used different platforms. Young adults from the middle class group used Twitter and YouTube for finding information and gaining knowledge, whereas young adults from Habari mainly employed Facebook to satisfy this same need. This finding is also in line with findings of Cho et al. (2003) who found evidence that age and socio-economic status can affect the efficiency to gain the gratifications sought online, young and higher in status being strategically better and efficient. Furthermore, there seemed to be differences particularly in relation to the technology driven needs. For instance, the answers regarding navigability (e.g. whether a device is easy to use and explore), which was one of the new gratifications suggested by Sundar and Limperos (2013, p. 520), seemed to differ between the groups. Many young adults from Habari did not seem to feel comfortable using platforms that were unfamiliar to them and often assumed them to be complicated. However, Facebook seemed

to satisfy this need for many users. On the contrary, several young adults from the middle class group seemed to be more open to new platforms and were more confident to try them.

One characteristic that could explain the difference in the number of platforms used could be the acceptability for new technology. In general, young adults from the middle class group seemed to be more open to new technology. In their study, Oke, Walumbwa, Yan, Idiagbon-Oke and Ojode (2014) examined the relationship between individuals' economic status and the adoption of communication technology in three Sub-Saharan countries, including Kenya. The results indicated that one's economic status is positively related to the adoption of communication technology. Furthermore, Oke et al. (2014) found out that adopting communication technology helps people to fulfill their need to be respected and accepted by others and to become part of a special group. Although the study conducted by Oke et al. (2014) deals with new technology, this same observation seems to apply to the adoption of new software. Indeed, in addition to being the first to adopt new technology, young adults with higher economic status seem to be more open to new developments in other fields as well.

5.2.2 Second level digital divide

All in all, it seems that the middle class young adults did not only use a wider range of platforms but they also utilized different platforms to satisfy different needs. Furthermore, it seems that the middle class young adults were more confident users of different platforms in general. By being more active users of social media, such as Twitter and LinkedIn, the middle class interviewees seemed to have better access to more resources, such as information on the latest news or job opportunities, than the young adults living in Habari. Albeit mobile phones seem to help bridge the gap regarding the access to the platforms, there seems to be a *second level digital divide*

forming between the two groups in relation to their online skills (see e.g. Hargittai, 2002).

Indeed, there seems to be differences in the people's digital literacy, which can be defined as

a person's ability to perform tasks effectively in a digital environment, with "digital" meaning information presented in numeric form and primarily for use by computer. Literacy includes the ability to read and interpret media (text, sound, images), to reproduce data and images through digital manipulation, to evaluate and apply new knowledge gained from digital environments (Jones-Kavalier & Flannigan, 2006, p. 9).

Although all the platforms are theoretically open to everyone, there seems to be a gap between the skills of the interviewees in the two groups to utilize the platforms available.

Furthermore, as noted before, social media were also used to spread rumors, lies or hate speech. Although the interviewees perceived this as a negative usage, none of the interviewees mentioned that they were involved or had been affected. Furthermore, the interviewees seemed to generally trust social media as a reliable source of information. Despite clearly understanding also the negative aspects of social media as channels to spread false information, the interviewees did not point out that this would affect their online behavior. Indeed, although ICT has been claimed to contribute to more informed decisions and less manipulation by enabling people to access larger amount of information (Janse van Rensburg, 2012), if information is absorbed without any criticism, it might lead to worse decisions and more manipulation. It seems that in addition to differences in the digital literacy skills among the interviewees, there might also be differences in the critical media literacy skills among the interviewees. However, due to limited data available, this observation cannot be discussed further.

Similar findings have been made in several other studies. As mentioned before, it has been found that lower socio-economic status can correlate with lower efficiency to gain the gratifications sought online (Cho et al., 2003). It has been also discovered that youth from higher socioeconomic classes are more likely to gain positive outcomes from the use of ICT and the

Internet than youth with lower socioeconomic groups (Hargittai & Walejko, 2008). Furthermore, Lemphane and Prinsloo (2014) came into this same conclusion in their study comparing digital communicative literacy practices of South-African children from two socioeconomic groups. They discovered that the children from the lower socioeconomic group had weaker sense of the affordances in general. Nevertheless, also contradictory findings have been voiced. It has been claimed that social media have managed to overcome the socioeconomic barriers existing in the societies (Ali, 2011). For instance, in their study of social media usage of marginalized youth, Metcalf et al. (2008) found that young people with marginalized status used the Internet and social media platforms in a similar way as the so-called normal youth. However, the information gained through the interviews seems to imply that the middle class young adults do not only use a wider variety of social media but their usage of these platforms is generally more specified. In other words, there seems to be a difference between the two groups of interviewees in their ability to utilize these platforms. Thus, this finding supports that of Stern et al. (2009) who argue that digital divide can exist not only between countries or continents, but also regions or social groups.

In conclusion, the information gained through the interviews suggests that the middle class young adults do not only use a wider variety of social media but their usage of these platforms is generally more specified. Thus, although young adults are increasingly gaining access to the Internet and social media, there seems to be a new division in relation to the abilities to utilize these different platforms. Furthermore, social media are generally considered to give people more opportunities to get their voices heard (e.g. Ali, 2011). However, if only a limited part of the population is using the platforms, their needs and concerns will easily become generalized as the general opinion and the opinions of those with more limited skills and access will be voiced less (Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008). In other words, the part of the people who have

access to these networks may become possessors of the power and use it in the expense of the others (Thompson, 2008). Even though Kenya is still facing challenges in terms of providing everyone equal access to the Internet, to truly bridge the digital divide and to ensure people equal opportunities to benefit from the new technology, attention should also be paid to the inequalities in digital literacy.

5.3 Topics discussed on social media

One of the purposes for using social media that majority of the interviewees pointed out was to discuss different kinds of topics. Since the discussions on social media are mainly initiated by the users themselves, the topics discussed can be assumed to be relevant for them and reflect their interests. In this section, the different topics that were discussed by both groups will be introduced first. Then, two central topics, politics and community related matters, are examined more in detail. Finally, the topics that the interviewees felt they could not discuss on social media will be introduced and analyzed.

5.3.1 Topics discussed by both groups

Generally, there were no major differences between the two groups regarding the topics the interviewees discussed on social media. Religion, recent events and trending topics were discussed by interviewees from both groups. In other words, these seemed to be topics that were relevant for young adults in general, irrelevant of one's socioeconomic background. Recent events included various kinds of trending topics ranging from accidents and disasters to individual's inappropriate behavior.

When the JKA [airport in Nairobi] was on fire and all. I remember this [Twitter] was a platform where people were talking about what solutions were to be done or. I participated in that. (MC3)

Like this one for, there was a day last week. There was a man who took chicken and slept with the chicken until the chicken died his. . . I posted out and we discussed it, how this man was so foolish to go with a chicken instead of going to a human being. Asking to a human being to. . . (HB2)

Another topic discussed by the interviewees was personal life related matters, such as problems and worldviews. Interviewees from both groups also claimed that relationships were discussed on social media and one even argued it to be one of the most discussed topics in the country.

Mostly in Kenya you'll see many people posting about relationships. You have a problem in your relationship [. . .] In Kenya one of the most talked about issue on social media is relationships. (MC3)

Also societal issues, such as female genital mutilation that one of the interviewees brought up, were mentioned. One interviewee also mentioned that he was following business and market related topics although rarely commented himself. In general, discussions were more often held on Facebook, whereas Twitter was mostly used for following, for instance, companies or conversations between other people. This might be, for instance, due to the specific characteristics of these platforms. It has been, for example, claimed that due to the limited number of characters it allows being used and lower popularity among young adults, Twitter is primarily used to disseminate information (Zhang, 2013). Thus, by not restricting the number of characters being used, Facebook seems to be better suited for discussions than Twitter.

5.3.1 Community related matters

Although the topics discussed on social media were almost the same within the two groups and varied according to the individual irrelevant of the group, one noteworthy difference was identified when looking at the community related discussions. The interviewees, however, were using the concept of community to refer both to groups they themselves belonged to and to groups they were not part of. In other words, some used it to refer to their own community and

others to communities they did not clearly belong to. To be able to analyze the answers, it was important to make a clear distinction between these two uses. Thus, to separate these two distinct levels of analysis, it was decided that the topics related to the community one belonged to or was somehow personally involved in are considered community related topics. In case one was not part of the community one was referring to, the issues will be treated as societal level discussions. These discussions generally dealt with topics that did not directly impact the life of the interviewee and were discussed by the wider public. As an example, one interviewee mentioned that people had been discussing droughts which hit certain communities in Northern Kenya. Thus, even though he was using the word community, it was not a community he belonged to and the topic was considered being part of a societal level discussion. On the contrary, another interviewee told he has been discussing the drug problem facing the community he lives in. In other words, he was referring to the community he belongs to and the topics was discussed between a more limited number of people. In general, middle class young adults' discussions seemed to stretch beyond their immediate context and include societal issues across the country. On the contrary, young adults living in Habari seemed to primarily discuss topics related to their own community.

Although most of the interviewees living in Habari were discussing community related issues, only one of the middle class interviewees mentioned that he does so (MC5). He was part of the Habari community through his work and therefore well-aware of what was happening in the community. Only one of the interviewees living in Habari did not specifically mention that he would discuss community related issues and another referred to a community he was not part of. Most interviewees living in Habari, however, seemed passionate about discussing topics related to their community on social media.

I like to discuss something healthy, something that would develop or something that would help other but not just to attack other people [. . .] about our community, I really like to discuss issues about our community. I have joined a lot of groups on Facebook which discuss or which make a lot of stuff about community because I love my community and I would like my community to change and through social media we can also have a revolution that change our community, yeah. (HB5)

In other words, even if ignoring the numerical difference between two groups, there were clear differences in their answers.

The information gained through the interviews seems to imply that young adults from Habari were more interested in topics related to their immediate context than the middle class participants. This could be explained by looking at the contexts where the interviewees lived in. The young adults living in Habari belonged to a clearly marked community of people that could be described as a village. Thus, they seemed to have a stronger sense of community in general. Furthermore, since being an informal settlement, Habari can be said to be a more unsafe place to live in than the estate areas where the middle class young adults lived in. This can be clearly seen in an example given by an interviewee living in Habari (HB3).

Okay, let's say where I come from. Maybe there is a lot which is going on. So sometimes you'll find cases like someone is shot, so such topics. Or maybe there is houses that are burned there, so such topics. Insecurity, maybe we discuss. We try to talk to these guys, what can you do, what could be done about the security around the area, such things. (HB3)

Hence, one could argue that the young adults living in Habari were more likely to face more challenges and problematic issues in their immediate context than the young adults from the middle class group. Moreover, the interviewees living in Habari can be argued to be more reliant on and affected by the other community members than the middle class young adults are. In that way, discussing community related issues and therefore trying to contribute to the development of the community was more relevant for the young adults living in Habari than for the middle

class young adults. The middle class interviewees, on the contrary, did not seem to face similar challenges regarding their own community, which could be why they did not feel that they would need to discuss community related issues.

5.3.2 Politics

Despite majority of the interviewees avoiding the topic, all the interviewees still pointed out that politics were discussed on social media. From the interviewees living in Habari, two mentioned that they were comfortable talking about politics, even though one of them believed that there was a possibility of conflict when discussing political views. Four other interviewees did not like to discuss politics in general or at all.

Other people. Me, I don't post politics. (HB2)

In general, the middle class interviewees seemed to be more comfortable talking about politics. Only two of the interviewees from this group pointed out that they did not like to talk about politics, one of them being the interviewee who did not consider any of the discussions on social media as discussions.

Say you are following a TV station on Facebook, so maybe they just post a sad story so people discuss, but people don't discuss in Kenya. Honestly, people don't discuss, people just throw abuses and they don't encourage you. They say three people shot dead. Others will like so sad, when others will be like good for them, they were thieves. You wouldn't see anyone asking why or. (MC2)

However, also she mentioned that politics was a topic although refused to call these exchanges as discussions.

People don't discuss, but politics is still a topic. (MC2)

In addition, one of the interviewees from the middle class group noted that he would not discuss politics on his wall, but instead, could do it in the inbox. All the other middle class interviewees were comfortable discussing politics on social media, although one of them pointed out that she does it only occasionally.

On Facebook you find just somebody write [the interviewee explains how some people write negative things about Kenyan politicians, using their names, and expresses that this makes her really upset] So I think that's what makes me at time not to discuss so much about politics. (MC1)

Contrary to the young adults who wanted to stay away from politics on social media, some young adults were also comfortable talking about it. Some even seemed to be rather active on political discussions themselves or at least followed the discussions actively. However, also those young adults who seemed to be discussing politics very actively on social media believed that the majority of the people did not do so. Yet, despite these differences, all the interviewees seemed to perceive politics as an important topic.

5.3.3 Topics avoided

When asked which topics the interviewees did not like or could not discuss on social media, the first topic most of the interviewees mentioned was politics. All the interviewees who mentioned that they did not talk about politics on social media pointed out that it was a conscious choice and that they did not do it since it might cause problems and conflicts among people or spark hatred. Furthermore, a major reason why most interviewees did not want to discuss politics on social media was that the discussions often turned into hate speech. All except one of the interviewees mentioned that they had noticed hate speech on social media either during or after presidential elections in the country, or both.

As mentioned before, when comparing the answers of the interviewees living in Habari with the answers of the middle class young adults concerning politics as a topic, there was a small numerical difference between the two groups. Even if ignoring the numerical difference between the groups, there seemed to be a difference in the answer of the two groups in general, middle class interviewees appearing to be more open to discussing politics on social media. One of the two middle class interviewees who did not like to discuss politics specified that he was not afraid of the consequences of the discussions, but instead, merely saw it as a personal choice. He was simply not interested in getting involved into politics.

Now more of a personal opinion and a personal approach. (MC4)

However, the other of these two middle class interviewees pointed out that talking about politics might also have some negative consequences.

Yeah, because first of all, they will abuse you bad and the police have a way of chasing people so you might end up. . . (MC2)

Furthermore, as mentioned before, one of the middle class interviewees also mentioned that even though he was comfortable talking about politics, he preferred to do it privately in his inbox. He also pointed out that discussing politics openly can lead into problems.

In Kenya..right now. Like last year when you had the elections there was a lot of tension that was going around. It wasn't good like you either post something and look tribalistic. You know, you wouldn't know if you've made the mistake of being tribalistic but someone else will come there and will judge you and look at you. And scrutinize you and the guy. You two could actually become enemies cos of that. So just to save the relationship with other people it is better of doing it in an inbox. (MC6)

Although also some middle class interviewees were not comfortable talking about politics on social media and acknowledged that it might also lead into problems, it seemed that the young

adults living in Habari were firmer in their answers seeing politics as a rather intimidating topic to talk about.

Like in politics, don't prefer to talk about how other tribe is more superior than others or how the government is. That one I can use it, but not that much, because I fear my life and my family and my neighbors. I can't talk badly about the government or the politics. (HB2)

Most of the young adults living in Habari mentioned that they did not want to discuss politics at all, since they saw that this might create conflict among their friends.

Yeah, that's what I told you. Some people might hate me because of something I like some politician. I hate this one, that one is bringing conflict among your friends. (HB1)

Indeed, some even argued that they were afraid and pointed out that talking about politics might cause some negative consequences.

Well first of all, I would say I am afraid that it would cause some consequences. And secondly, I don't like politics too much. I would like to stay away from politics as much as possible. (HB5)

However, interestingly, when this same interviewee was asked whether he thought that discussions on social media can influence civic life related issues in general, he pointed out that political discussions had had a positive effect on the past elections. In other words, he seemed to perceive politics as an important topic, but did not want to get involved himself. It seems that most people who did not want to talk about politics on social media did it, since they thought it might bring about negative consequences, not because they lacked interest in politics in general.

One of the ways to understand the difference in the openness to talk about politics on social media is to again look at the differences in the community structures. In a tight community, issues, such as differing political views, can more easily escalate into a conflict and lead into

concrete consequences or even exclusion from the group. Thus, even though some of the young adults living in Habari saw politics as a possible way to have an impact on the society, they did not want to get involved personally. On the contrary, the middle class young adults were more open to talk about politics in general and seemed to look at it more objectively. Indeed, they did not seem to perceive discussing political matters as intimidating. One of the interviewees from the middle class group, for instance, pointed out that he was consciously ignoring hate speech although had noticed it on social media.

Personally didn't really pay that much attention [to hate speech on social media] cos at the end of the day it is about who will lead the country better than the other, not who comes from which community. (MC7)

Furthermore, as noted before, young adults living in Habari seemed to see issues affecting their community as relevant for them and discussed them actively on social media. On the contrary, middle class young adults seemed to be more open to discussing societal issues and politics. Community issues, again, did not seem to be highly relevant for them. When examining the use of ICT among marginalized youth, Metcalf, et al. (2008) found that the marginalized status affected which topics the young people found important. For instance, a young adult who is currently homeless does not have the resources to take action towards improving the community around him or her, but instead, is focused on mere survival. Certainly, lack of willingness to discuss certain topics should not be interpreted as ignorance towards wider social issues, but instead, one should see person's actions in a wider socioeconomic context.

It has been claimed that social media can serve as platforms for free speech (e.g. Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). However, the findings of this study seem to contradict with this argument particularly in relation to politics. One of the interviewees, for instance, pointed out that the police had their ways to track down people who were spreading hate speech on social media,

indicating that this might lead into negative consequences. Thus, although social media were also seen as equalizing individuals, they were, at the same time, not considered platforms for free speech by several interviewees. Furthermore, several interviewees even wished that there would be tighter restrictions on how social media could be used, although, at the same time, some of these interviewees also pointed out that everyone should still have a right to constructively speak their mind. It seems that instead of seeing social media as platforms for free speech, the interviewees saw social media sites as being part of a public sphere. For instance, one of the interviewees mentioned that if talking about politics on Facebook, he generally does it through inbox messages since they are not visible for everyone. Thus, this study seems to support Waller's (2013) claim that social media sites, such as Facebook, can be considered to be a part of the public sphere, where political victimization may take place. As clear from the interviewees' answers discussed before, the possibility of negative consequences seemed to restrain interviewees from stating their political opinions openly on these platforms. However, also contradictory findings have been introduced. In their study of Facebook use among Namibians, expatriate Namibians and Americans, Peters, Oren and Bidwell (2012) discovered five key areas where the groups differed, one of them concerning how these groups communicated about death, religion and politics (Peters et al., 2012, p. 2603). Peters et al. (2012) found that Namibians were sharing their political and religious views openly on Facebook whereas Americans avoided doing so. Interestingly, although Kenya's Facebook penetration rate (4.8%) was closer to the one of Namibia (10.7%) rather than to the one of the USA (52.9%), the use of social media among Kenyans seems to be more in line with the use among Americans (Internet world stats, 2012a; Internet world stats, 2012b). Indeed, even though similarities in the usage of social media in different countries in Africa have been found, differences also exist. All in all, it is central that

the unique socioeconomic context of each country is taken into account when analyzing the situation in different countries.

In addition to politics, there were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of the topics that could not be discussed on social media. Alongside politics, religion was also a topic that was at the same time both discussed and considered inappropriate by the interviewees. One interviewee noted that in her opinion, religion should not be discussed on social media, even though some interviewees mentioned religion as one of the topics they discussed on these platforms. Several interviewees also mentioned that they did not want to discuss their personal lives on social media. Two of these interviewees, for instance, mentioned sex as a topic they did not discuss openly. Some of the interviewees also noted that they did not want to discuss any abusive topics that might lead to, for instance, cyber bullying.

Except for politics, most of the interviewees did not explain why certain topics could not be discussed on social media. Only three of the interviewees pointed out reasons for their behavior or speculated about other peoples' choices. One of the interviewees from the middle class group explained that he could not discuss sex or relationships on social media because of his religion. Another interviewee, who lived in Habari, pointed out that he did not want to publicly comment on people's posts since he was cyber bullied before. A third interviewee, also living in Habari, argued that even though she discussed issues related to her community on social media, some young adults coming from Habari did not like to do that since they were ashamed of where they come from. Apart from these three interviewees, none of the other interviewees gave any specific reasons for not talking about certain topics.

All in all, the topics discussed on social media were mostly similar between the two groups and varied according to the individual. The only two topics in which there were differences between the two groups were community related matters and politics. Although the

numerical difference in these both cases was not highly significant, there were clear differences in the answers of the interviewees. The information gained through the interviews seems to therefore suggest that the topics discussed on social media are not only closely related to one's personality and interests, but seem to also be affected by one's perceptions of the surrounding social context. If merely looking at the answers concerning the topics interviewees discuss on social media, it would be easy to conclude that the interviewees from Habari were politically passive and the middle class young adults were not interested in community related matters. However, if looking beyond the mere behavior, one is able to grasp the reasons underlying those choices. In this case, for instance, why there were differences between these two groups regarding the topics they discussed on social media. Indeed, it seems that the socioeconomic context where one lives in affects one's actions also on social media.

5.4 The effects and impact of social media

Although the interviewees were using social media mostly for entertainment, they also described how the use of social media can have a concrete impact on the community and the society they live in. During the interviews several participants also gave examples of how the use of social media can impact an individual and individual's life in general. Although personal characteristics and their adaptation to new online contexts were an important research topic in early research on computer-mediated communication, the current study focuses mainly on the impact at the community and societal level. Thus, elaborate discussion regarding the impact of social media on an individual falls out of the scope of this study.

In this section the answers of the interviewees are presented and analyzed at these two different levels. First, the interviewees' perceptions regarding the impact on the community will be introduced and analyzed. Second, the interviewees' views regarding the impact social media

were perceived to have on the Kenyan society in general will be examined. Then, the interviewees' perceptions of how social media have influenced citizens' interaction with the governmental figures will be discussed. Finally, interviewees' perceptions of social media's role regarding political elections and post-election violence in the country will be introduced and analyzed.

5.4.1 Social media and the community

Although many interviewees pointed out that the use of social media can have an impact on a community, this impact was not pointed out by all the interviewees. As mentioned already in the last section in relation to the topics discussed on social media, most middle class young adults did not discuss community related issues. Consequently, they generally did not comment on the impact social media use might have at the community level. Only one middle class young adult gave an example of the impact social media can have on the community which he was part of. This interviewee was working in Habari and noted that social media platforms were used to inform people who lived in the community and therefore influenced it positively.

Good thing also, cos it informs, for example. Habari has a page and it updates people about the events. It's influencing the society positively. We are getting informed. (MC5)

However, he also pointed out that the use of social media can also exclude people who do not have the access to these platforms.

Contrary to the middle class young adults, majority of the interviewees living in Habari seemed to see social media as channels to discuss issues affecting their community and in that way, contribute to the changes in their immediate context. In general, their examples were very detailed and social media's impact at the community level was seen as primarily positive. For instance, one of the interviewees described how Facebook groups can work as strong peer

support networks for individuals who need help, for instance, to stop drug abuse. By allowing people to share their experiences, and thus enabling also others to learn from them, social media were claimed to bring about positive changes in the community.

Yeah I think they [social media], definitely they can have a big impact in helping young boys to stop drug abuse. Because when you look at those discussions I saw a lot of young boys trying to share how they got involved into smoking marihuana. Some of them were sharing how they got involved into selling marihuana, some of them were sharing how they started chewing mira [also known as khat, has been classified as a drug in some countries.] (HB5)

Two of the interviewees also pointed out that social media offer young adults, particularly those who are shy, effective channels to voice their thoughts. While making it easier for them to join common discussions, social media were perceived to encourage more young people to participate. Furthermore, social media were seen as channels to educate people and discuss issues relevant to the people living in the community. Some of the interviewees pointed out that through these discussions social media had contributed to the security of Habari. For instance, one of the interviewees explained that social media had been used to educate people how to act in emergency situations, such as fire or when someone is injured. One interviewee also claimed that all community related discussions were directed towards changing Habari for better and perceived social media as a powerful tool for change in general.

About our community, I really like to discuss issues about our community. I have joined a lot of groups on Facebook which discuss or which make a lot of stuff about community. Because I love my community and I would like my community to change and through social media we can also have a revolution that change our community, yeah. (HB5)

Moreover, one of the interviewees mentioned that Facebook was used to discuss projects that were implemented in Habari in order to develop them further. This had led, for instance, to the continuation of a project where volunteers were gathering garbage from local rivers. In other

words, many of the interviewees living in Habari seemed to believe that the discussion on social media translated into actions which had a concrete impact on the community.

In addition to the positive ways social media were perceived to have impacted the community, some of the interviewees gave examples of how social media had brought about negative changes. Few of the interviewees, for instance, pointed out that certain topics of discussion easily bring conflict among friends, causing division within the community. Politics, in particular, was mentioned as a topic that can lead an individual into ‘big problems’. Furthermore, one of the interviewees claimed that discussions on social media are not enough to have an impact on the community. Instead, he believed that in order to bring about concrete changes, discussions on social media have to be combined with face-to-face interaction.

As mentioned already before, the immediate community and issues related to it seemed to be more relevant for the young adults living in Habari than for young adults from the middle class group. Young adults living in Habari seemed to believe that impacting the immediate context they live in was highly important. The young adults living in the middle class context, however, did not seem to have a similar need to influence the community they live in. Even though they did not point out that social media had influenced the community they live in, it does not necessarily mean that they believed they could not have an impact through these platforms. Rather, it seems that discussing the impact at the community level was not relevant for them. Instead, the middle class young adults elaborated more on the impact social media can have on the society in general.

5.4.2 Social media and Kenyan society

In addition to the impact social media were perceived to have on the community, many interviewees also elaborated on what kind of role social media play in the Kenyan society. It has

been argued that ICT in general has already contributed to Kenya's democracy, although still rather limitedly (Janse van Rensburg, 2012). Thus, in this section, the positive and negative influence the use of social media was perceived to have on the society will be discussed.

When asked how the interviewees perceived the impact social media usage can have on the society, most of the interviewees saw it as mainly positive. Two of the interviewees pointed out that the use of social media can have a positive effect on people's computer skills, suggesting that interest in social media could encourage people to learn how to use computers in general.

In the future, Facebook will bring positive changes in Kenya. You see some people now are getting used to know how to use computers because of social media. They are interested in Facebook and Twitter. (HB1)

This same observation has been made also in other studies (see e.g. Ali, 2011). In line with this observation, it has been suggested that also those online activities that emphasize entertainment and communication can indeed promote more confident and wide-ranging use of the Internet, particularly among young people (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). Furthermore, social media were perceived to enable young adults to voice their concerns and communicate their opinions also at the societal level. Particularly when combined with more traditional media, such as TV, social media were perceived to bring forward the voice of the people also nationally.

When we are watching news, they always have Facebook and Twitter. People will comment the bad, they have a question that do we ask the people and through Twitter and Facebook. And they will try to get your, maybe, your comments and share many of them, what you want to say about this. (HB6)

Yes it has, actually these days the media stations are using social medias to actually reach to the Kenyans who are on the ground and the young people cos the nation is made of young people [. . .] Easy way to reach people and like get to know what they want and what people are saying on the ground. (MC6)

Some interviewees also argued that social media had brought people together and encouraged Kenyans to help each other. Social media were, for instance, used to spread information about the droughts that were very severe in some parts of the country. According to the interviewees, these messages had translated into concrete actions to support the community to survive the catastrophe. Many interviewees also noted that social media can help one to network with other professionals, find a job or market one's products or services and thus impact one's working life in a positive way. One of the interviewees believed that social media have enabled young adults to "come out more" and thus encourage entrepreneurship and create employment.

Other people are also using it for business [the interviewee explains how for instance Safaricom and other companies use it and create employment]. . . through social media people are earning their living. (MC5)

Blogs making money from just blogging. People more towards self-employment. [. . .] Social media will play a lot cos it will give . . . voice. (MC4)

As discussed already in relation to different platforms the interviewees were using, the answers seemed to suggest that social media had not only contributed to how people find employment but also helped to create new employment opportunities in Kenya (see also Wyche et al., 2013).

Furthermore, young adults from both groups seemed to perceive social media as effective channels to communicate and to disseminate information to a wider audience also at the societal level. Some of the interviewees, for instance, pointed out that social media were an effective source of news and therefore made people better informed. Moreover, two of the interviewees believed that social media can raise awareness and change people's perception. One of the interviewees, for instance, described how social media had been used to raise awareness about different kinds of scams and crimes.

Yes, you made aware of how people steal in Kenya, cos there was a time that someone just decided to post how you enter the matatu [explaining how people were being robbed] Or how you should lock your car manually [explaining how people's cars were stolen]. . . Those things are good because you're made aware of. (MC2)

Despite having mostly positive influence on the society, the interviewees pointed out that social media can be used to disseminate harmful or incorrect information. Furthermore, children seemed to be perceived as a special group that should be particularly protected. Several interviewees pointed out that social media can expose children to inappropriate material, which can have a negative effect on them and their growth.

For me, I think in future, there will be a lot of young people, most of young people will be on social media and it is a high time the government or people concerned to start controlling stuff trending on social media. Because even kids can just go on social media and sometimes it's dangerous, because there are a lot of stuff trending there, which is not good for children. It can make them loose their direction of life or have a negative impact in their minds so I think. I see the future, if something is not done, social media will be used negatively to destroy young people's future because not everybody is doing clean stuff on social media. And something should be done by the government or people concerned. (HB5)

However, at the same time, some interviewees saw it as a positive development that children had started to use social media at a very early age. Majority of the interviewees believed that it was good that the children learned to use social media on their own and only few interviewees suggested or agreed that people should be somehow guided how to use the platforms.

In addition, two of the interviewees pointed out that social media can influence one's culture or how other people perceive one's culture negatively. Many of the interviewees saw the fact that many social media platforms were international as a positive aspect. They pointed out that one could, for instance, learn from others and keep in touch with friends and family who live abroad. However, the fact that social media platforms are global was also pointed out as a negative aspect.

Facebook should just have a control button. The problem with Facebook is that it's global and we are from different countries, different cultures. So this person might be posting something thinking that they are doing good, yet they are eroding someone else's culture. (MC2)

Furthermore, one of the interviewees pointed out that messages posted on social media could influence not only the individual's but also the country's image in an international context.

And also other people in Kenya they can make Kenya look bad by using that social media. Like that one I was telling you about [a case of a man abusing a chicken]. After posting it I saw another person posting another one and saying 'you Kenyan people'. He took us like all of us and it was just one person yeah that brought us. (HB2)

One interviewee also argued that if not used carefully, social media can spark a revolution.

Yes it can, like in Egypt. Guys protested online first and then they come to the ground. So you might just start something big online if you don't control whatever you say. (MC6)

Indeed, also other studies have found that Facebook and other social media channels can be used to mobilize people or to advance political aspirations (see e.g. Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). This has been pointed out, for instance, in relation to the revolution in Egypt in 2011 (see e.g. Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Although social media's ability to mobilize people is often emphasized as a positive feature, this interviewee seemed to see this potential as a negative characteristic.

Based on the interviewees' answers, the impact that social media were seen to have on the society, was often similar to the reasons behind the usage of these platforms. For instance, several interviewees described that people used different social media platforms to find work. When asked how they thought social media usage had impacted Kenya, several interviewees mentioned that they have either created employment or helped people find work. Thus, it seems that the gratifications the interviewees sought through these platforms could also be satisfied. All in all,

the use of social media was perceived to influence Kenyan society mainly positively, although some examples of negatively impact were also pointed out.

5.4.3 Social media and politics

In addition to the influence social media were perceived to have on the Kenyan society, the interviewees also discussed how social media had impacted people's participation in politics. Moreover, politics was the only topic that was mentioned by all of the interviewees, even though majority of the interviewees did not talk about it themselves. Thus, in the next section, the interviewees' perceptions of the impact of these political discussions will be introduced and analyzed.

Politics can be considered a traditional channel to impact society and its development. From the seven interviewees who discussed politics on social media, two specifically noted that they discussed politics, since they perceived it as a way to shape the future.

Politics is one way of shaping the future for the young ones for even our own life. So I think when you talk about the politics we are trying to, especially in our country, to see where is it going, where are these people taking us, what they're doing for us. So that is the main thing. (HB6)

On the contrary, one of the six interviewees who avoided discussing politics on social media particularly emphasized that politics was not necessary to influence the society in a positive way. In other words, he did not avoid discussions about politics since he felt intimidated, but instead, since he wanted to make a statement that he did not trust politicians.

Politics is just a hooks [interviewee started laughing] I think for me, my view on how people should live, I like people to live, I like been geared towards the good way. I'm a very polite guy, so if I start seeing chaos, and people just messing with my brain or stuff like that. I don't like following it. So to me, politics, I'm not very geared towards politic. I better be geared towards a community initiative personally myself, by my friends, than follow an initiative politically, that is politically inclined. (MC4)

Furthermore, as mentioned before, one of the middle class interviewees (MC2) thought that even though politics was a topic on social media, it was not discussed. She emphasized that even though people were trying to impose their beliefs on others, these discussions did not influence anyone's opinions.

Although not always discussing politics themselves, majority of the interviewees agreed that social media had made politics and civic life matters more accessible for young adults in particular. Similar findings indicating that new media have made it easier for people to address civic matters and access relevant information have been found also in other studies (see e.g. Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008; Oblak, 2003). Furthermore, it seems that social media have indeed made "politics more accessible and transparent" (Youniss et al., 2002, p. 129). Seven out of thirteen interviewees mentioned, for instance, that people were using social media to follow what the president or other politicians were doing, making politics more transparent. This tendency to use social media to follow politicians can also be seen if looking at the most popular Facebook pages in the country. According to Sociabakers (2013), the most liked Facebook page on 2013 was the page of then recently elected president, Uhuru Kenyatta. The interviewees also described that social media had made it easier for the politicians to reach people, which had made campaigning more interactive.

Yes, you can have a lot of impact to the society. Actually, like the last elections guys were campaigning online. Yeah, like you have to do a lot of campaign online since [its] one of the easiest way you can reach the people and it's just one of the fastest way you can reach the people too. And if people are also not satisfied, they'll still give you a shout out wherever you are. (MC6)

Moreover, it was pointed out that by making it easier for everyone to contact the decision makers, social media had equalized people.

Kenyan president has a page now and with this page he enlightens Kenyans with whatever he is doing and his whereabouts [. . .] You can also reach him. It equalizes everyone and brings everyone to a ground zero no matter where you are. (MC6)

The data of this study seems to support the claim that the spread of ICT has given new opportunity for civic engagement also for the youth living in areas that before might have been rather isolated from the other parts of the world (Eickelman & Anderson, 1999). Some of the interviewees also mentioned that one could use social media to communicate one's concerns to a member of the parliament or the president and thus, indirectly, impact the issues in question.

Like, let's say, maybe some other people in Africa, you know, some of the other religion or other tribes they still believe in these genital mutilation of female fgm. So you know most of them are complaining that in the world of today, you know. People they don't rely on those bad things, the ancient thing, so most of them are complaining and they do want advice. Maybe they post it on Facebook, you know, some of the politician, maybe, or on Twitter. When other politician came and watched it or read it they have to do something about it, you know. They communicate with people through social media so they get help through that. (HB4)

In other words, the interviewees seemed to perceive social media as effective channels to contact politicians or even influence them to take action. Furthermore, not only did many of the interviewees point out that social media were good channels to contact the politicians but it was also argued that when contacted, the politicians would also reply back.

Yeah, it is. Like in Twitter you are able to follow what people against the government are saying and the people who are supporting the government think about [. . .] Members of the government are on Facebook, have pages where you can post what you think what should be done. They respond back to you. [. . .] Youth connecting with the government and the leaders and in a very effective way. (MC7)

In that way, communication is not only a one-way process but instead a two-way exchange. Similar, observations have been made in a study of British and Dutch parliamentary candidates' usage of Twitter during general elections in 2010 (Graham, Jackson and Broersna, 2014). The

study identified two different patterns of usage which were old model and innovative model (Graham et al., 2014). Although the innovative model where politicians engage in a dialogue and form a closer relation with the people was still found to be rather rare and mainly observed among the Dutch politicians, there were still signs of the democratic potential of the platform (Graham et al., 2014). Indeed, it seems that, at least to some extent, social media have leveled the hierarchies between the users and flattened the inequalities of resources that influence civic and political participation (see e.g. Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012; Gurak, 1999). Furthermore, although expressing mistrust in politics in general and pointing out conflicts related to it, none of the interviewees expressed dislike towards any particular politician. Thus, interviewees' perceptions seem to contradict with the findings of Metcalf et al. (2008) who in their study found that young people with marginalized status generally disliked the people in power and feel they are not heard. Instead, the interviewees seemed to believe that social media had made the interaction between people and decision makers easier, giving people more opportunities to be heard. However, as discussed before, expressing mistrust or insulting political figures was not considered common or accepted in Kenya. Therefore, it is also possible that the interviewees did not share their genuine thoughts during the interviews.

Although social media seem to have increased young adults' opportunities to interact with the decision makers, utilizing social media does not necessarily guarantee that communication would be horizontal. As pointed out by Koponen (2007b), when dealing with issues related to development, one is also dealing with ideological questions, such as issues with unequal distribution of power. Based on the answers of the interviewees, it seems that there is still a rather high power distance between the citizens and the politicians. Although the interviewees expressed that social media could be used to contribute to changes in the community and the

society, one could also identify potential problems with power. This can be seen, for instance, when some of the interviewees were describing how social media could be used to call for help.

You are in an emergency, you need an ambulance. Post it on Twitter and two minutes later you can even have an ambulance. That's how Twitter is coming up in Kenya. (MC3)

Yeah, and also there was a time of fire. There was a fire there, tried to call the fire fighters but they did not come. They posted in our MP, our member of parliament, post his Facebook wall and when he saw it, just like that, the fire fighter came. (HB2)

In addition to referring to different platforms, there is also a difference in the agency between the two examples. According to MC3, one can call an ambulance through one's Twitter account, whereas HB2 mentioned that one has to post this on an MP's Facebook wall who will then call help. In other words, the interviewee from the middle class group seemed to think that he could get help without having to rely on a more well-known person. On the contrary, the interviewee living in Habari seemed to believe that she needed a person with more power to function as an intermediary to get help through social media. Since both of the interviewees were using both Twitter and Facebook, the difference cannot be explained by the differences in access to these platforms, although there might be differences in their abilities to use them. This same way of thinking could also be seen in the answers of other young adults living in Habari.

Like, for example, there are some of the people you'll never meet, like our president. Maybe you would want to communicate something but there is no way you could meet him. Now, through social media, maybe you can post something to him and he'll see it and, maybe, he'll take an action. (HB3)

I can, but you know, but this might involve power. Maybe, you know, I don't have that authority and if I have somebody to push me, someone powerful to do it, I am sure I can do it. (HB4)

It seems that although young adults living in Habari perceived social media as channels to have an impact on the community and the society, they did not believe they have enough authority to bring about the changes themselves. Instead, they appealed to a person in a more powerful position to take action for them. Although acknowledging the potential of these platforms, it seems that the young adults living in Habari lacked the confidence in their abilities to utilize it. It has been found that characteristics such as low self-esteem, lack of motivation, low self-efficacy and feeling a lack of worth can negatively affect young people's civic engagement (Metcalf et al., 2008, p. 5). Middle class young adults seemed to generally be more confident users of these platforms and did not seem to perceive power as an issue. They did not, for instance, mention that they had or would have to appeal to another person for help, but instead, seemed to believe that they would be heard as individuals. Furthermore, one of the middle class young adults also pointed out that the situation can even be the opposite. Instead of being asked for assistance, sometimes the politicians can appeal to the public for support as well.

People get to know what is actually happening, like . . . example of the droughts in Kenya. The information was actually sent by the social media, by Twitter. Not Twitter but Facebook. The people governing the area put a status update. It spread to the whole Kenya. There was an initiative [. . .] People helped to bring the community up again. Social media does help the community a lot. (MC7)

In general, the interviewees seemed to believe that while being in a public position, politicians have the needed authority to disseminate information effectively and to bring about concrete changes in the society.

5.4.4 Social media and political elections

When examining the interviewees' perceptions of the impact discussions on social media had had on the elections or politics in general, the answers varied greatly. On one hand, some interviewees pointed out that discussions about politics rarely turn into actions or even affect the

opinions of the voters. On the other hand, some interviewees claimed that they actually influenced, for instance, how people were voting. One of the interviewees also mentioned that the rumors which were spread on social media had caused a great deal of confusion during the elections.

During elections when the votes were still being counted people had already started spreading rumors that a particular officer has been kidnapped, raped, bad things. So there was so much tension, so much hate. People they did not know what to expect. So when the current president won, people were on a denial. At some point people fought but it wasn't that bad. But I think social media was a big factor. (MC2)

She claimed that the false information spread on social media had made people question the reliability of the information concerning the elections. This supports the claim made by Bailard (2012) that the Internet, and in this case social media, can also decrease one's trust on the fairness and equality of political elections.

In relation to the elections, only two of interviewees directly expressed their opinions on whether these discussions affected the way people actually voted. One of these interviewees had stated that he did not discuss politics on social media himself (HB5). Despite avoiding the topic himself, he believed that social media had had a concrete impact on the previous elections.

I think it does, because when you look at the past elections, there were a lot of big names or what some people call big fish. And the big fish were dropped. The ones who were not delivering, the ones that were not working for the people really failed. And I think it translated also. I think also on social media people are discussing these big fish, how their track record is, what they did for the people, if they worked or not, if they were serving the people. And most of them failed, they didn't get elected. So I think also it helped. (HB5)

The other interviewee who commented on the issue argued the contrary and believed that the discussions on social media did not necessarily translate into concrete actions (MC7). Instead, he

gave an example of a politician who did not get enough votes on the day of the elections despite gathering a great deal of support online.

Yeah, actually one of the guys who was running for senator here in Nairobi. He actually used social media to tell the public what he'll do for them and there is no better way to connect with a person than by telling them you will help them to deal with their own problems. Social media actually built, sold this politician [. . .] gathered a lot of support on social media, but the people forgot to actually vote. You look at the Twitter followers and then votes he got, less than a quarter [. . .] huge problem. (MC7)

Another interviewee also believed that although politics is discussed on social media, the discussions do not change people's opinions (MC2). Furthermore, this same idea was brought up by one of the interviewees in relation to social media's impact at the community level discussed before (HB3). According to him, the discussions rarely translate into concrete actions without face-to-face interaction even though people would actively talk about social or community issues on social media.

The data gathered suggests that although sometimes seen as encouraging actions offline, the interviewees did not seem to think that social media could influence how people vote. Thus, it seems that social media are still additional supplements to the offline actions (Olorunnisola and Martin, 2013). In other words, although social media can increase one's political activeness online and seems to have potential to impact also people's actions, it does not necessarily translate into changes in the actions taken offline. Studies looking at social media's influence on elections and voting have found evidence both for and against the claim that social media have positive impact on how people vote (Graham et al., 2014; Metzgar & Maruggi, 2009; Robertson et al., 2010). On one hand, it has been argued that social media could work as an important component also in political campaigns. For instance, studies have suggested that in America's 2008 elections, social media were used rather extensively not only to spread the campaign

message but also to engage those people who were reached by the message (Metzgar & Maruggi, 2009; Robertson, Vatrapu, & Medina, 2010). On the other hand, it has been claimed that the ease of online participation and social media's ability to gather significant support online rather easily can also decrease the credibility of the support and make the movements less influential (Tufekci, 2014). Indeed, many scholars have warned about excessive positivism towards social media as a cure for political passiveness (Feezell et al., 2009; Macnamara et al., 2012; Vitak et al., 2010). All in all, it seems that although social media can be effective channels to spread information, they rarely impact people's political participation offline.

5.4.5 Social media and post-election violence

Although many interviewees did not specify whether discussions on social media had concrete impact on the elections, great majority of the interviewees elaborated on the impact of hate speech and peace messages that were spread during and after the presidential elections. When discussing hate speech and peace messages on social media, several interviewees explained that they had also influenced people's opinions and actions offline. Previously held in 2007, new presidential elections had taken place few months before the interviews were conducted. Thus, it was sometimes difficult to make the distinction whether the interviewees were referring to the recent elections or to the elections held in 2007. However, since examining the impact of hate speech and peace messages on the elections in general and not aiming to identify cause-effect relations, this information was not central for the analysis.

Particularly in 2007-2008, after the presidential elections, Kenya suffered from extremely destructive post-election violence, which caused a lot of casualties and a great deal of infrastructure being demolished (see e.g. Goldstein & Rotich, 2008; Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013). Although the hate speech against opposing tribes was distributed

mainly through private radio channels and SMS messages, the hatred was also spread on social media (Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013). As mentioned before, all except one of the interviewees had noticed hate speech in relation to the elections in Kenya. Several of these interviewees also claimed that the hate speech had actually materialized and even provoked violence between different groups.

Yeah, it affects in a bigger space in a bigger act. Because in 2007 and in the elections it was posted in Facebook, hate speech, a lot of hate speech. And people reacted through it. Like they'll just say, let's say, that it is a lie. People from this tribe they killed our tribe, let's go and kill them. And there're some people who are high tempered they just follow what they've seen in Facebook and got their machetes [a knife, very common in Kenya] and go and kill other people. Yeah, like in 2007. (HB2)

Even though not pointing out that there had been any physical violence, one of the interviewees also argued that messages had caused division within groups. Furthermore, some of the interviewees mentioned that hate speech can lead to negative consequences but did not specify whether this had actually happened. Although some interviewees claimed that the messages had encouraged hatred and led into violence, some interviewees argued that the hate speech did not translate into actions or affect people's opinions.

There is plenty. They don't usually change the public's view of parliamentary figures and political figures. (MC7)

Even though opposing arguments were also voiced, it seems that social media was also used to mobilize people to take actions also offline. As pointed out in other studies, particularly Facebook seems to have the potential to serve as channels to mobilize people (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2012). Indeed, it has been argued that Facebook can be used as a platform for planning, arranging and implementing protests (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Although none of the interviewees mentioned that they would have taken part in any of the protests in relation to

the elections in the country, one of the interviewees claimed that social media had been used to coordinate the post-election violence. However, particularly due to the small sample size, no further generalizations can be made.

In addition to hate speech, some people were also spreading peace messages to discourage hatred among people. Three of the interviewees believed that preaching peace on social media had also influenced people's actions offline and helped to prevent the violence.

Despite the comments, I think this year the social media have been used to change or rather promote peace in the country after what happened in 2008. No one wants to take Kenya back to that era, it was a very sad moment. So we all used social media to promote peace and to unite each other as Kenyans, cos after all, you fight for someone who is still going to be the president of this country. They don't even know you die, they just know the statistics. We had to tell each other that 'you know what, let's not fight. We have our differences, let's vote for who we want. It's a democratic right to vote for who we want. But we are not meant to fight for them and die for them. Just vote peacefully, stay at home, don't start rumors'. I think social media was used to promote unity among Kenyans and it was a huge success. And even the media stations in Kenya played a huge role in promoting all this via social media. (MC3)

One of the interviewees also pointed out that by enabling the dissemination of hate speech and peace messages, social media influenced people both positively and negatively.

You know, if I can guess, there are millions of Kenyans on Facebook that some positive discussion had a positive impact and some had negative impacts. For instance, the peace messages were on Facebook, encouraged many people to nini [Kenyan expletive] from election violence and some were encouraging it, you see. In other ways it encouraged it, in other it didn't. (HB1)

It seems that social media encouraged both positive and negative changes in people's behavior. However, based on the answers of the interviewees, the underlying cause of the hate speech and the violence seemed to be tribalism. Tribalism, which can be defined as "loyalty to a tribe or other social group especially when combined with strong negative feelings for people outside the group", is still strongly present in the country and tightly connected to the elections

and politics in general (Merriam-Webster Online dictionary, n.d.). Similar views have been pointed out also in other studies conducted on post-election violence in the country, although contrary opinions claiming that the politicians were deliberately provoking the ethnic hatred have also been voiced (Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008; Wilson and Dunn, 2011). It seems that even though social media were perceived to have the potential to add diversity into the discussions, tribalism easily turned the discussions into abuses and arguments. Furthermore, even though people might support multiple politicians on social media, the voting seems to be often done on tribal basis. Thus, as it has been claimed also by other scholars, social media are not the cause of the revolution or uprising, but instead can work as enabling channels for it (see e.g. Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Indeed, social media were not causing the violence, but instead accelerated events that could have taken place also independent of it (Williamson, 2011). Despite not being the initial cause of the actions, the data gathered seems to still suggest that social media have the potential to affect also offline actions. Even though there are studies suggesting that ICT could influence young people's civic participation in a positive way, it has been claimed that there is not enough evidence to determine whether participation online actually translates into offline actions (e.g. Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Bers & Chau, 2006; Pasek et al., 2006; Quintelier & Vissers, 2008). Thus, further research should be conducted to discover which variables affect online actions to translate into offline actions. All in all, despite pointing out that social media have had both positive and negative impact on the community, society and politics, majority of the interviewees believed that social media were more beneficial than harmful. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that social media were mostly used for entertainment, socializing and finding information, and civic life related discussions were only a minor part of the usage of the interviewees.

6 SOCIAL MEDIA FOR DEVELOPMENT

Based on the discussion so far, it has become clear that the fields of ICT and development are indeed interconnected (Ali, 2011; Thompson, 2008). According to the information gathered through the interviews, social media platforms can be used for multiple purposes, many different topics can be discussed on social media and people perceive social media's impact in various different ways. This final chapter will utilize the analyses from the previous chapters to summarize how the interviewees use social media for civic and political participation. Furthermore, this chapter will aim to answer the underlying question whether social media function as channels for young adults to contribute to societal change and therefore serve as channels for development communication.

First, to examine whether social media could serve as platforms for civic and political participation, the information gained through the interviews will be analyzed by using Ekman and Amnå's (2012) typology (Table 1). Based on the analysis, an overall conclusion will be drawn to determine whether social media work as channels for civic and political participation. Finally, the observations presented in the previous sections will be analyzed to conclude whether social media can answer the critique addressed to participatory communication and serve as fruitful channels for it in Kenya.

6.1 Social media and civic and political participation

Generally, based on the findings outlined in the previous chapters, it seems that social media work as channels for civic and political participation. First, all the interviewees discuss civic and political related matters on social media, although the extent varies greatly according to the user. Second, the interviewees pointed out that the use of social media can have a concrete impact on the community and the society they live in. Here, again, differences between the groups could be

observed. To gain a deeper understanding of the different forms of participation that were observed among the users, Ekman and Amnå's (2012, p. 295) typology of different forms of disengagement, involvement, civic engagement and political participation (Table 1) will be used to analyze the data.

In their typology, Ekman and Amnå (2012) divide participation into three different categories: *non-participation*; *civic-participation* and *political participation* (Table 1). These categories have been further divided into active and passive forms of participation. In relation to non-participation, these subcategories are labeled as antipolitical and apolitical, and in terms of civic-participation, social involvement (attention) and civic engagement (action). Political participation is also understood as consisting of two distinct components: formal political participation and activism. Activism, again, is further divided into legal or illegal forms (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). To further define the typology, Ekman and Amnå (2012) have divided each category into individual and collective forms of participation.

Based on their answers, the interviewees can be said to mainly manifest different forms of civic participation. Although varying in strength, some forms of civic and political participation could be indicated in the answers of most interviewees. However, indications of non-participation could also be observed in terms of few interviewees. Some young adults, for instance, clearly stated that they did not believe in politics and wanted to avoid getting involved. Thus, one could claim that these interviewees manifest an individual form of active non-participation. They did not see politics as uninteresting or unimportant, but instead, expressed deep dissatisfaction towards the topic.

Even though none of the interviewees clearly expressed that they had done it themselves, social media were seen as channels to contact and interact with politicians. In the typology of Ekman and Amnå (2012), this is labeled as an individual form of formal political participation.

Furthermore, social media were also seen as channels for political campaigning, which is also one individual form of formal political participation. In other words, it seems that social media can be claimed to create new channels for traditional forms of political participation. Even though none of the interviewees mentioned that they had been involved in any riots and protests related to post-election violence in the country, they believed that other young adults had been involved. Since involving violence and other forms of civil disobedience, these actions can be categorized as collective forms of illegal activism, included under political participation (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Interestingly, it seems that many interviewees had the perception that other young adults manifested political participation, although they did not participate themselves. At the same time, however, all of the interviewees pointed out that young adults' involvement in the society was truly important.

Based on Ekman and Amnå's (2012) typology, most of the interviewees who expressed any interest in civic related matters could be said to manifest different forms of civic participation. Even if not taking any concrete action, the interviewees seemed to see politics and societal matters as important. This type of potential for civic participation has been labeled as an individual form of social involvement. In other words, the individual does not currently manifest any concrete forms of civic or political participation, but has the potential to get involved. Ekman and Amnå (2012) describe these as latent forms of participation. Most interviewees, however, manifested either individual or collective forms of civic engagement. Discussing politics on social media platforms, for instance, has been categorized as an individual form of civic engagement, whereas participating into work of community organization can be labeled as a collective form of civic engagement. Interestingly, there seemed to be a rather clear division between the two groups in terms of the forms of civic engagement they manifested. Young adults living in Habari seemed to be mainly oriented towards collective forms whereas young adults

from the middle class group seemed to mainly manifest the individual forms of civic engagement. Naturally, this division is not absolute and exceptions could also be seen. However, there seems to be a difference in the forms of engagement preferred by the interviewees from these two groups.

Regardless of the forms manifested, it is clear that the interviewees showed signs of civic and political participation. Indeed, if one understands civic participation merely as activeness in politics, one will omit a great number of other forms of engagement that might be equally as impactful. Ekman and Amnå's (2012) typology seems to be able to encompass these new forms of participation that exist in today's complex societies. Thus, the findings of this study contradict with the studies claiming that young adults are often passive in terms of civic and political participation (see e.g. Bachen, Raphael, Lynn, McKee, & Philippi, 2008; Bers & Chau, 2006; Waller, 2013). Instead, the findings seem to support the argument that the forms in which this participation is manifested have merely changed (see e.g. Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter, & Zukin, 2002; Metcalf, Blanchard, McCarthy, & Burns, 2008). However, as pointed out in the previous chapter, these forms of participation are only manifested if the cause underlying the actions is appealing or powerful enough. Indeed, merely accessing a suitable channel for participation does not necessarily lead into concrete actions. Furthermore, it has to also be acknowledged that there might be implicit restrictions, such as fear of negative consequences, which either limit or even prevent different forms of civic participation. If ignoring these underlying forces, one might falsely conclude that young adults are not interested in certain topics, such as politics or societal issues in general. Thus, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the civic and political participation among young adults, also the socioeconomic context where the behavior is manifested has to be taken into account. All in all, although social media were mostly used for socializing, entertainment and finding information and civic life related discussions were only a

minor part of the usage of the interviewees, it is clear that social media have the potential to serve as channels for civic and political participation. Moreover, in several cases this potential had already been utilized.

6.2 Social media and participatory communication

Although social media are still mainly used for socializing and entertainment, young adults seem to use these platforms also for civic and political participation. In addition to examining young adults' perceptions of the impact of social media in Kenya in general, this study focused on finding out whether social media serve as channels for young adults with different socioeconomic backgrounds to contribute to societal change. In other words, the aim of this study was to discover whether social media function as channels for development communication. Thus, in this final section, the analyses presented in the previous chapters will be used to conclude whether social media have been utilized for participatory communication in Kenya.

Development projects utilizing participatory communication have often been criticized for lacking genuine participation. In development initiatives, genuine participation presumes that participants are involved at all levels of the project and the power is divided equally among all actors involved. By enabling the participants to discuss, share and create content, social media have been claimed to offer a platform for genuine participation. Although generally perceived as an excellent platform for people to participate, the data collected in this study seems to only partly support this claim. For instance, one of the interviewees pointed out that the usage of social media may also exclude people who do not have access to it. Furthermore, although mobile phones seem to contribute to bridge the digital divide, the results suggest that a second level digital divide exist regarding the users' abilities to use and therefore benefit from these platforms. As discussed before, there seems to be differences in the digital literacy skills of the interviewees

between the two groups. Moreover, the middle class young adults did not only have better digital literacy skills, but they also seemed to participate more actively on societal discussions, particularly concerning politics. Nevertheless, even though young adults living in Habari seemed to participate less at the level of society, they were significantly more active in terms of their own community. Thus, social media seems to be able to offer new channels for genuine participation for both groups, although in different forms.

In addition to the differences in the digital literacy of the interviewees, there seemed to be also other reasons which restrict participation. Many of the interviewees, for instance, mentioned that there were topics, such as politics, that they did not want or felt they could not discuss. The reason to avoid discussions on politics was not lack of interest, but instead, the interviewees were worried about the consequences the discussions might bring about. Furthermore, also external restrictions were pointed out. For instance, one of the interviewees noted that particularly at the time of the election police was constantly following the discussions and all hate speech was banned. Another interviewee, however, noted that despite following and reacting to what people were posting, Kenyan government was not able to restrict social media in any ways. Based on the interviews, there were signs of both explicit and implicit external control which restricted the discussions on social media. Thus, it seems that in some cases people did not have equal opportunities to voice their opinions freely, which contradicts with the basic principles of participatory communication. This was also called for by one of the interviewees who pointed out that everyone should have the right to express themselves and what they believed in. On the contrary, however, it seemed that some of the interviewees wished to have more external control over the discussions. These interviewees claimed that social media should be somehow restricted and peoples' postings controlled. All in all, although generally not involving external facilitators, one should keep in mind that there might be other, underlying reasons that restrict the discussions

on certain topics. If ignored, one might easily come into the false conclusion that people lack interest in certain topics.

Social media have been claimed to question the existing power structures in the society by letting people share their views and receive information about matters that could previously have been poorly accessible. As an example, websites, such as Mzalendo, have been pointed out to give people opportunities to comment the work of the MP's and in that way participate into political discussions (Mäkinen & Kuirra, 2008; Mzalendo, n.d.). Based on the information gained through the interviews, however, none of the interviewees had used Mzalendo or any other similar platforms and only few of the interviewees had even heard of them. Instead, it seems that political discussions were held on more general social media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter. Although not necessary through specified platforms such as Mzalendo, social media were used particularly for following and distributing information about politics. In that way, social media have been claimed to make politics more accessible for young adults. However, at the same time, some interviewees pointed out that despite the discussions, people still vote on tribal basis and therefore, discussions rarely have a concrete impact on the elections and politics in general. Furthermore, although politics and community issues were discussed on social media, these platforms were still used mainly for entertainment.

Even though participatory communication stresses the redistribution of power at all levels, it has been claimed not to genuinely address the barriers within the societies (Melkote, 2002). Social media have been claimed to form stronger connection between the governmental organs and the grassroots and thus affect the power structures in the society (see e.g. Thompson, 2008). By allowing people not only to follow but also to interact with the governmental figures, the findings indicated that social media seem to challenge the way of seeing communication as a one-way, top-down process as it is perceived in the modernization paradigm (Servaes &

Malikhao, 2008). However, although social media were perceived to encourage interaction with the politicians, particularly the interviewees living in Habari seemed to perceive that there is still a rather high power distance between the citizens and the politicians when discussing societal issues. In that way, although the interaction appears two-way, it cannot be understood as a genuine dialogue if both sides cannot express their opinions equally. Particularly the interviewees living in Habari seemed to believe that they did not have enough authority to influence things at the societal level. However, when discussing changes the use of social media had had in Habari, none of the interviewees mentioned questions with power. In other words, it seems that contributing to changes at the community level requires less so-called formal power or the power in general is distributed more horizontally.

There has also been a concern that participatory group decisions might merely end up reinforcing the existing power structures by creating decisions that are in favor of the already powerful ones. It has been argued that social media could answer to this criticism, since individual ideas are more likely to rise rather than “groupthink” due to the lack of face-to-face interaction (Thompson, 2008). On one hand, the interviewees pointed out that social media allow people to bring forward their ideas, opinions and voice their concerns, thus giving more people opportunities to join the discussions regardless of their social status. On the other hand, some interviewees claimed that discussions on social media cannot bring about changes if not combined with face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, in some occasions social media seemed to even promote the so-called groupthink. This was obvious particularly in relation to the hate speech spread widely on social media in 2007. Moreover, although social media might offer young adults new channels to participate in the discussions and voice their concerns, it is important to acknowledge that a major part of the population is still left without this opportunity. This naturally amplifies the voice of those groups which have access to these platforms. By

utilizing these platforms, they are able to bring forward ideas and concerns which are relevant for them, possibly leaving out issues relevant for other groups (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Mäkinen & Kuira, 2008).

Conceptualization, originating from the work of Paulo Freire, is one of the central concepts of participatory communication (Melkote, 2002). Social media have been claimed to have the potential to increase awareness of the challenges and problems at the community and society level. Based on the interviewees' answers, social media had been used, for instance, to raise awareness of several scams in the city, contributing to the security in the society. Even though certain topics, such as politics, seemed to be generally avoided, there were also examples of political and civic life related issues that had been voiced through social media, contributing to concrete changes at the level of community or even the whole society. However, as discussed before, there might also be explicit or implicit forms of control that affect people's willingness to voice these concerns. Despite the limitations, it seems that social media have contributed to conceptualization in Kenya.

Furthermore, valuing the cultural context of each community is central in participatory communication. To be able to serve as a channel for it, social media should allow people to bring forward their cultural identities. Although some interviewees seemed to believe that these platforms did not fully fit the Kenyan context, most of the interviewees did not perceive any negative impact on the local culture. Instead, social media were generally perceived as compatible with the Kenyan culture, bringing about more positive changes than harm. In addition to valuing the cultural context, participatory communication stresses the need to concentrate on issues that are voiced by the people themselves and not on the ones given from external sources. Since the topics and issues that were discussed on social media were rising from the needs and

interests of the people discussing them, social media seem to offer a platform to discuss topic of their concern.

By allowing people to voice their concerns despite their socioeconomic status or place of origin, social media have been claimed to enable the inclusion of multiple viewpoints (Thompson, 2008). Indeed, if having access to the Internet, Web 2.0 based social media sites are generally open to anyone, regardless of the social status or place of origin. In general, the interviewees seemed to have a very optimistic image of the access rate in the country and most of the interviewees seemed to believe that the platforms were accessible to almost everyone. Furthermore, it was pointed out that social media give also less extrovert individuals an opportunity to voice their concerns and join the discussions. Some interviewees also noted that social media seemed to encourage participation among people in general and had made, for instance, politics more accessible for many young adults. Thus, it seems that participation and inclusion in these networks decreases the influence of, for instance, geographic or social factors (Thompson, 2008).

It has been also claimed that if aiming to establish societal changes at the grassroots and affect the power structures of the society, interpersonal or even group communication is not sufficient (Ghosh, 2010). Social media have been argued to take the communication beyond interpersonal or group communication and thus have the potential to contribute to societal change. The interviewees seemed to see social media as platforms to access and spread information and raise awareness both at the level of the community and in the whole society. Many of the interviewees also mentioned that social media platforms enabled them to interact with people globally. However, many of the conversations that were pointed out to have concrete consequences at the grassroots seemed to be conversations between a limited number of people in semi-closed groups within a community. It was, for instance, mentioned that people were

discussing community initiatives on social media and these discussions were then utilized to develop the initiatives further. Furthermore, social media were pointed out not only to help people find employment but also to encourage entrepreneurship. Indeed, it seems that social media could actually aid in development of small businesses and contribute to the sustainability of development initiatives (Ali, 2011).

All in all, despite not being able to fully answer the critique addressed to participatory communication, social media seem to have the potential to serve as channels for it. Indeed, based on the information gathered through the interviews, social media seem to already serve as channels for participatory communication particularly at the community level. For instance, similarly to community radios (see e.g. Gumucio Dagron, 2001), social media seem to offer affordable and easily accessible channels for information and discussion. However, there are still questions, such as issues dealing with power and genuine participation that need to be addressed if aiming to utilize the full potential of social media for development. Indeed, problems with access, low levels of digital literacy and unequal distribution of power are challenges that need to be focused on before social media can truly be used to contribute to the changes particularly at the societal level. Although the interviewees perceived social media as platforms that could contribute to the changes both in the community and in the society at large, it is important to keep in mind that the major purpose behind the usage was still entertainment.

7 CONCLUSION

The development that has happened in the field of ICT has not only changed a great deal in the field of communication, but it has also affected communities and societies around the world. In today's interconnected world, social media can offer people channels to interact with numerous people at the same time and exchange experiences and ideas. For some, they might serve as platforms on which to pass time and for others, they might be platforms for political debate. This present study had two main aims. First, it sought to discover which kinds of social media platforms young adults living in Nairobi were using, why they were using them and for which purposes. Second, it aimed to find out whether these young adults saw social media as channels to have an impact on the community and society they live in, and therefore use them for developmental purposes. All in all, the main focus was on the question whether social media serve as channels for young adults with different socioeconomic backgrounds to contribute to societal change. In this chapter, the main findings of the study will be summarized and presented to the reader.

Based on the answers of the interviewees, social media can be accessed almost anytime and anywhere also in Kenya. Mobile phones were found to be the most popular devices to access social media and seemed to contribute to closing the digital divide in the country. However, when examining which kind of social media platforms the interviewees were using, it was found that the middle class young adults were not only using a wider variety of platforms than the interviewees living in Habari but they were also using these platforms for more specified purposes. Hence, even though the findings seem to support the argument that digital divide is indeed slowly closing also in Kenya, there seems to be a second level digital divide forming regarding the digital literacy skills of the users. In other words, even though more people have access to the Internet and devices needed to connect, there seem to be vast differences in people's

abilities to utilize these different platforms available. Thus, in order to close the digital divide and to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to benefit from these platforms, attention should not only be paid to questions regarding access, but also to the differences in the digital literacy skills of the users.

In addition to the difference in the number of platforms the interviewees were using, differences were also found concerning two topics discussed, community related matters and politics. On one hand, young adults living in Habari were discussing topics related to the community they live in more actively than the middle class young adults. On the other hand, the middle class interviewees were more open to discuss politics than the young adults living in Habari. Even though young adults are often accused of lacking interest in civic life matters and particularly in politics, the findings of this study contradict these claims. It was found that although most of the interviewees did not discuss politics on social media, they did not point out that they did not want to. Instead, most of interviewees expressed that they were afraid or reluctant to do so due to possible consequences these discussions might bring about. If merely looking at the observable behavior, one could falsely conclude that most interviewees were lacking interest in civic life related matters. However, if taking the underlying sociopolitical context into account, one is able to gain a deeper understanding of the civic and political participation in this particular context. Indeed, despite manifesting different forms of engagement, the interviewees showed clear signs of civic and political participation. The findings thus support the argument that instead of being passive, young adults merely have new ways of participation. All in all, to be able to truly understand the interviewees' usage of social media, one needs to also take into account the underlying socioeconomic context that influences people's behavior and capabilities.

Although social media were still used mostly for entertainment, all the young adults perceived that social media had had an impact either on the community or the society they live in. However, it seems that although young adults living in Habari described how the use of social media had had a concrete impact on their community, they did not believe they had enough authority to bring about changes at the societal level. Indeed, even though social media were perceived to have made politics more transparent and interaction with the politicians easier, they did not seem to eliminate the challenges concerning unequal distribution of power. Thus, it seems that even though social media have the potential to contribute to widening participation in the society, the way this potential is being utilized also depends on the abilities and status of the user.

By examining the reasons behind the use of social media, the different topics that were discussed on different platforms and the impact social media were perceived to have on the community and the society, this study contributes to a better understanding of the use of social media for development in Kenya. Even though social media platforms potentially serve as excellent channels for participatory communication and have been claimed to have the potential to contribute to societal changes, in some cases they did not seem to do so. Instead, occasionally social media seemed to merely duplicate the existing power structures. Furthermore, although having the potential to encourage mobilization, social media were often not enough to affect actions taken offline. All in all, to be able to truly utilize social media for the development of the community and the whole society, problems regarding access, users' digital literacy skills and distribution of power need to be addressed. Despite these challenges, the findings indicate that social media have the potential to work as fruitful platforms for participatory communication and in some cases already have. Indeed, the interviewees were found to utilize social media in various innovative ways to adapt the platforms to fit their current needs. To conclude, social media

should not be perceived as inferior to other forms of Internet use, but instead, they should be acknowledged as an important usage of the technology (Ali, 2011).

8 LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite its merits, this study also has some limitations. Since the aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the usage of social media, qualitative interviews were selected as the most appropriate research instrument. Thus, due to the explorative nature of this study, the findings cannot be generalized too widely. Furthermore, despite giving the interviewer great freedom to explore the topic at hand in detail, particularly when conducting interviews, the researcher's influence can be argued to be stronger (Merrigan & Huston, 2009; Neuman, 2011; Rakow, 2011). It has been even claimed that "the researcher is the instrument of the research, rather than the method" (Rakow, 2011, p. 422). Thus, it can be claimed that any conclusions proposed, although strongly based on the data, are always interpretations of the interviewer.

Moreover, as already discussed in the method section, the researcher was not a full member of the society where the interviews were conducted. This not only poses some possible limitations with the reliability of the interpretations but also raises questions related to power. Moreover, due to vast differences in the backgrounds of the interviewer and the interviewees, one needs to also take into account the possibility of social desirability bias. Furthermore, before the interviews, the interviewees only knew that the questions would deal with their usage and perceptions of social media. At times, however, it seemed that some of the interviewees had been preparing themselves for the interview already in advance.

Sorry, I did not search on it before. (HB4)

Some of the interviewees, however, did not know about the interview in advance and agreed to be interviewed on the spot. Thus, it should be acknowledged that this might also affect the data collected.

Moreover, the differences in the English skills of the interviewees may also have affected the data collected. At times, it was not completely clear whether all the interviewees understood the concept of social media although the definition was discussed in the beginning of each interview. One of the interviewees, for instance, seemed to confuse the concepts of media and social media. Naturally, this had to be taken into account also when analyzing the answers and some parts of the interviews could not be included into the analysis due to this confusion.

As aforementioned, little qualitative research has been conducted on the users' perceptions and experiences of social media in Kenya, particularly among the young adults from lower socioeconomic classes. Thus, to gain an in-depth understanding of social media's role in the country, more research is needed. This current study concentrated merely on the perceptions of young adults in Kenya. Hence, in future research, attention should be also paid to the perceptions of other groups of the society. For instance, it would be interesting to compare whether social media have been perceived and utilized in the similar manner also among the older parts of the population. Since the study was conducted in Nairobi, which is the capital city of Kenya, to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the young adults in general, future research should also examine the situation outside the major cities. Moreover, cross-cultural research comparing the findings in Kenya with the perceptions of young adults from a more individualistic culture could also contribute to the understanding of the impact of cultural context on the usage of social media. Finland, for instance, scores considerable higher than Kenya on the independence dimension and can thus be categorized as a more individualistic society (The Hofstede Centre, n.d.). However, one needs to keep in mind that no culture is homogeneous and therefore any kinds of descriptions that aim to capture culture as a whole should be always assessed critically. Since the data indicated that young adults seemed to see social media as channels to interact with the governmental figures, more research should be carried out to see

how the political figures perceive this interaction. In other words, it would be interesting to examine how the politicians, for instance, see the use of social media in relation to their work and the Kenyan democracy in general. Furthermore, the present study found that social media were used in various innovative ways to adapt the platforms to fit the interviewees' current needs. For instance, social media were used to educate people how to act in an emergency situation. Thus, it would be worthwhile to study some of these specific ways of usage more in detail and analyze how this usage could be further supported. This further research would undoubtedly contribute to a deeper understanding of the ways social media could be utilized for development.

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Appendix 1: The interview script

MAIN THEMES

1. Usage
2. Topics discussed
3. Perceptions of the impact of social media

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions concerning the usage:

- Do you have access to social media?
 - If yes, how often and where do you usually use it?
 - Which kind of devices do you use to access it?
 - If mobile phone is mentioned: Do many people use mobile phones to access social media? Why do you think so?
- Are you using social media?
 - If yes, what kinds of social media platforms are you using?

→The interviewee was asked if s/he knows any Kenyan platforms and the following examples were shown to her/him: Ushahidi, Mashada, Mzalendo and NiElect.
 - Why are you using exactly these platforms?
 - Do you think these are popular also among other young adults (particularly living in this area)?
 - Do you know any other popular social media sites that young people are using?
- Why are you using social media?
- What do you “do” when you are using these sites? Please give examples.

- Do you think that other young adults like you are using them in the same way?

Questions concerning the topics discussed:

- What kinds of topics do you discuss? Please give examples.
 - Do you think that other young adults like you are discussing the same topics?
 - Do you ever discuss topics related to civic life on social media? Do you, for instance, follow or discuss politics or community related topics?
 - Did you follow or discuss the elections on social media?
 - If you don't follow or discuss politics, why?
- Are there topics you never discuss/prefer not to discuss on social media?
 - If yes, please give examples.
 - Why you feel these issues cannot/should not be discussed?
 - Are there differences between different sites?
 - Are there any sites you do not want to use for some reason?
 - If yes, could you give examples and tell more why you don't want to use them?

Questions concerning the perceptions of the impact of social media:

- What are the positive & negative aspects when using social media?
 - Please give examples.
- What kind of impact, positive or negative, can social media have on an individual or on the community or the society you live in?
 - Please give examples.

Do you think social media plays a role in the Kenyan society? (e.g. in the recent elections? In its development?)

- Please, justify your answer.
- Do you see social media as channels to have an impact on civic life related matters?
(community/society)

