Mediation of Peace Practices in Online Activism:

A study of social movements experiences

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I, the candidate, confirm that this thesis is my own work and that all appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others. I further confirm that I have never submitted this work for an award of a degree to any other university. Parts of Chapters 1 (background section), 2 (conceptual section), and 4 (empirical data of proposition two) have been accepted for publication in the following citation:

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Abstract

In many world regions, the increasing use of online media platforms is often linked with the options created for individuals and organisations to co-create spaces for diverse causes, including peace activism. In Kenya, these platforms have expanded options for people previously excluded from mainstream social, economic, and political activities, i.e., new services such as mobile money transfer and early crisis warning and reporting systems. In this study, I argue that while the increased use of online media platforms may expand opportunities to further peace and justice goals, there are specific ways in which they can exacerbate conflicts in volatile situations. A critical assessment of relevant literature shows a considerable focus on rudimentary access to available media platforms while neglecting social processes by which these platforms become significant for peace activism. Therefore, this study examines how the increasing use of online media has helped shape peace activism because of expanded options for individuals to co-create and disseminate content, including unregulated material. This is because these media practices may impose undesirable consequences on established conflict resolution norms. The study administered 241 cross-sectional survey questionnaires to members of the public and 18 structured interviews to peacebuilding organisations in the counties of Nairobi and Nakuru, Kenya. In this thesis, I highlight several contributions to peace activism practices in volatile situations. First, emerging citizen media practices apply to peace activism because they can influence how individuals and organisations access and engage in actions furthering or undermining peace goals. Empirical data analysed shows how the strategies by which people forge ties with others' concerns may help shape peace activism with positive and negative implications for inter-ethnic relations. Second, civil society groups play a vital role in co-creating and curating communicative practices for peace activism. Third, the increasing online media use can shift the dynamics of risks and conflicts for individuals and organisations because of the varying options for diverse actors to influence elements constituting peace activism. Therefore, I conclude that the increasing use of online media for activism is relevant because the emerging media practices can help shape peace activism with positive and negative implications for inter-ethnic relations and electoral peace. Furthermore, this study offers a structured approach to investigating the impact of online media platforms on activism. Thus, this study's original contribution in the context of the ongoing quest for sustainable peace in Kenya lies in a systematic empirical analysis combining media practices of all concerned parties to understand its influence on how they appropriate, negotiate and enact the logic of peace and conflicts.

Keywords: Vernacularism, communicative practices, media/social practices, peacebuilding, activism

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.0. Introduction

Across many regions of the world, the increasing use of online media platforms is helping shape both the way people can access information and engage in societal processes, and the conditions in which this information can be produced and disseminated (Rid & Hecker, 2009, p. 5; Silver & Johnson, 2019, p. 7; Vincent et al., 2017, p. 46). In many societies, this widespread access to online media enables the 'proliferation of opportunities for public expression for groups with conflicting worldviews and identities' (Waisbord, 2018, p. 4). Besides, the ease with which individuals and organised groups (co)-create and circulate unregulated contents, implicates the functioning of social institutions, particularly in contexts where societies are polarised ethnically. McIntyre (2018, pp. 42-43) terms this phenomenon post-truth: a situation whereby 'people seem prone to form beliefs outside the norms of reason and good standards of evidence in favour of accommodating their intuitions or those of their peers'. The link between increased online media use and exacerbation of existing tendencies such as ethnic tensions presuppose three interrelated issues, namely, 'who can speak and when; what and how they can speak; and the potential outcomes of their speech' (Ferree et al., 2004, p. 19). On the first issue of 'who can speak', the increased options for individuals and organised groups to co-create spaces for engagement and content point to the relevance of citizen media use. Access to diverse media platforms thus enables individuals to engage in activities and causes over and above one's local ties. This extended web of interactions, in turn, allows individuals to layer their information with multiple sources, but mainly with those proximate to them (Kang et al., 2011, p. 721). Proximate sources include webs of accumulated individuals' and organised groups' social relations. These webs of social relations may include affiliations to kinship, locality or other organisations that influence how individuals forge ties with others' concerns. In ethnically polarised contexts, kinship ties may affect information and media use patterns because these relationships constitute the basis for participation in social causes. For instance, in this study, I discuss how in Kenya, political campaigners, during elections, exploit kinship ties for political mobilisation. Indeed, the second issue of the 'what and how of speech' is implied in the first point. As McIntyre's idea of post-truth suggests, the prospects for

people (co)-creating and disseminating unregulated ideas or content enable options for continuous breaching the limit of established norms and practices. The options for individuals to participate in activities beyond the boundaries of one's localities impose new challenges on the integrative role of peacebuilders. For instance, in ethnically polarised societies, false information can intensify enmity and escalate conflicts, making it difficult for conflict resolution.

Finally, the effects of who has a voice, what they can say and how, have the potential to either positively or negatively shape 'structures of power relations' in a society (Bell, 2009, p. 207). The likelihood that what individuals do with available media platforms can transform the dynamics of "who can speak and how" suggests emergent communicative practices. In this study's context, emergent communicative practices can influence the character of peace between and among people and communities. For instance, throughout this study, I discuss the character of peace and conflicts resulting from inter-ethnic political coalitions. As discussed later in this chapter, in Kenya, ethnic relations structure dominates the course solutions to lingering social problems take. In this sense, emergent individual media practices apply to reasons people forge ties with others for common causes. This is because unregulated content such as false information and hateful material impacts how and why individuals forge ties with others, resulting in a certain quality of peace and conflicts.

Before proceeding further, I need to make a brief note about the title of this thesis. By including the phrase 'social movements experiences' in the title, I do not intend to imply that this study is about specific social movements. The reference to 'social movement' suggests that peace activism depends on people's capacity to recognise existing social problems and act purposefully, mainly using available information and media platforms for common causes. So, this study is limited to ordinary citizens' and peacebuilders' strategies and mechanisms with which they engage in activism and with what effect. Moreover, the focus on ordinary citizens and civil society groups aim to draw out empirical data about experiences of their strategies of forging and maintaining ties with others for collective action. That is to say, with the increased use of online media for activism, people's experience of these platforms and emerging engagement patterns may have implications for activism. In this study, civil society groups represent: ‘a place where economic, social, ideological and religious conflicts originate and occur’ (...) ‘a place where in periods of a crisis de facto powers are

formed to obtain their own legitimacy' (...) and 'public sphere where ideas are shaped' (Bobbio, 1989, pp. 25-26; Gramsci, 1971, pp. 207-208; Prechel & Berkowitz, 2020, p. 56). This definition of civil society is instructive to understand social processes and conditions enabling compliance to ideas and practices concerning emerging online activism. So, the idea of activism this study applies draws on social movement, peace and media studies literature because it focuses on collective actions and how people's use of available media platforms can structure the dynamics of peace and conflict. For instance, in online activism, both the technical features of these platforms and the reasons people appropriate available media may help shape existing social problems, such as bullying, hateful content, surveillance or false news. In this case, activism may include the ways peacebuilders and ordinary citizens recognise existing social problems and the strategies with which they forge ties to find solutions or resist what they perceive as harmful (DeFronzo & Gill, 2020, p. 27). For this study, activism refers to any communicative practices that either further or undermine individuals and organised groups' goals for peace. A critical analysis of the experiences of how ordinary citizens and peacebuilders communicate peace through available media, particularly online platforms, may provide deep insights into how their media practices help shape emerging solidarities. In contemporary societies, the emerging individual's media use patterns and experiences may intertwine with existing social problems and the nature of solidarities emerging from the media and information use patterns. For instance, empirical data in Chapter 4 shows that the reasons for which ordinary citizens and peacebuilders appropriate media platforms have consequences for peace and conflict dynamics. Furthermore, the use of the term "media platform", in this study, follows Rid and Hecker (2009, p. 193) explanation about how media in contexts of political conflicts have evolved – from a target to be destroyed, a weapon to use to attack moral support and cohesion of opposing parties, to a platform for forging will and force, maintaining and escalating it. This evolution has been made possible because of changes in these technologies and how people view and use them. So, as a platform, online media offer ordinary citizens opportunities for personalised engagement. Consequently, 'most information sharing online is among closely related individuals and groups – making information more social and local' (Rid & Hecker, p. 209). Finally, as discussed in this study, the influence or change attributed to increased use of media platforms refers to an exacerbation of existing tendencies relative to elements of communicative practices.

Therefore, this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part of this chapter gives a detailed account of the rationale behind this study. Then the second part engages with relevant historical events and processes in which this study is conceived. The analysis in the latter part draws attention to critical moments and initiatives in the ongoing quest for sustainable peace in Kenya to understand the relevance of peace activism. In this respect, I consider events such as the formation of inter-ethnic political coalitions, election-related violence, or election campaigns as critical moments because interested actors use them to frame or anchor other societal processes. By analysing these crucial moments in Kenya's ongoing search for peace, this study demonstrates how what individuals do with available media platforms apply to peace and conflict dynamics. Therefore, my task in this chapter is first to frame specific research issues towards which the study contributes. In this study, the impact of online media is defined by how what ordinary citizens and civil society groups do with available media platforms, particularly online media, help shape their (peace) activism around elections in contemporary Kenya. For instance, in volatile situations, peer-to-peer real-time content sharing can shape peace and conflict dynamics because it can further or undermine the 'quality of relationships' (Simmel, 2009, p. 350). Here the quality of relationships may refer to positive or negative influences an individual's media use patterns and experiences have on social relation structures. Thus, the increased online media access applies to peace activism only to the degree that what individuals do with these platforms influence how and why they forge ties with others' concerns. This impact can be located in the way people co-create and disseminate content about peace and conflicts and its implication on why individuals engage in peace activism. To this end, I make a case for the impact of online media upon peace activism by arguing that if conditions within which these platforms become critical sources of information and platforms for public engagement are considered, they have implications on how ordinary citizens and organised groups participate in societal processes. This is because the conditions of proliferated options for public expression of diverse opinions allow individuals and organised groups spaces for strategic appropriation and negotiation of ideas and practices (Bell, 2009, p. 215).

In the second section, I examine Kenya's peacebuilding context, i.e., the critical political events concerning peace actions, in order to analyse how different actors have

used them to frame political campaigns, especially during elections. Discussions under this section dwell on discourses shaping how a peace agenda is constructed and represented by various stakeholders in the context of peace activism.

The third section focuses specifically on Kenya's peace communication context. This section concentrates on processes by which individuals and civil society groups appropriate online media in the role of mediating social "truths" in ways that can lead to (re)-production of ethnic tensions or violence among groups (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Discussions in this section consider how structures of ethnic relations shape dynamics of conflicts and can negatively influence inter-group relations during critical political moments such as bitterly disputed elections. In this section, I emphasise that the increasing use of online media has enabled unprecedented ways diverse organisations appropriate these platforms, including the phenomena of misinformation and hateful online content, affecting how institutions across societies function. Nevertheless, more importantly is the influence of structures of power relations on information and media use patterns and peace activism. Here power relation structures include kinship ties and 'reference network' (Bicchieri, 2017) that mediate individuals' social actions – in that under certain circumstances, people's social ties may bear on their actions than the information being disseminated.

The analysis in the final section focuses on the changing communicative practices within Kenya's information and communication systems. In contexts where ethnic tensions pervade social and political relations, increased online media use for activism can mean that boundaries of how individuals experience conflicts are continuously breached, possibly causing new fault-lines. Also, it can mean that conflicting issues in one locality can be de-contextualised by the participation of actors outside of the boundary of an issue. Thus, in this section, I emphasise the effect of shifting communicative practices upon individuals' experience of conflicts beyond the boundaries of their localities and kinship ties. I argue that expanded opportunities for individuals and organisations to co-create and disseminate content also shapes conflict dynamics (actors and discourses). This is because how individuals and organisations take part in unfolding social situations will depend on the geographies these media help (re)establish.

1.0.1. Outline of the thesis

The outline of the rest of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the concepts of social practices and media practices. This review aims to find, on the one hand, the relevance of the increasing use of online media by civil society groups for peace activism, and on the other, the potential implications in the context of peacebuilding within ethnically polarised societies.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology, including a detailed analysis of the study's rationale, the research context, criterion of case selection, data collection procedures and methods used to analyse data. Chapter 4 presents and analyses the empirical result of the investigation of how what individuals and organised groups do with available media platforms matters in the context of peace activism, including the various ways members of the public think about peace and these media. The second line of data analysis in this chapter is whether communicative strategies of political actors, including activists, politicians, and other organised groups, can influence peace and conflict dynamics. The last section of this chapter scrutinises data on the potential of the communicative strategies of different actors to influence the dynamics of a context in which they are performed.

Chapter 5 synthesises the emerging patterns in the main study findings and interprets them in the light of the research question and conceptual framework and implications for similar studies and practice in the field.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by situating the main findings of this thesis within the ongoing peacebuilding initiatives in Kenya and other countries across Africa and beyond. In this chapter, I consider recommendations related to how with the increased appropriation of online media for activism, citizen media practices can be harnessed for goals furthering sustainable peace because the point of this thesis is to move forward the understanding of how media practices of individuals and organised groups can influence the form and character of (peace/political) activism.

1.1. Individualised media practices as spaces for common causes

For this study, peace activism has both social and political dimensions. Peace activism as political action will be concerned with the representation of inequalities, i.e., 'how power is distributed, exercised and its consequences upon individuals and organised groups. As such, power is implicated in social relations' (Hay, 2002, p. 3). More

importantly, in this study, I am interested in activities that people associate with peace activism and the influence of social media, to understand how they help them negotiate, cooperate, and deal with conflict within the processes of production and distribution resources for (re)production of social life (Leftwich, 2004, p. 115). For these reasons, events and processes cited in this study aim to illustrate how elections and peace actions can be used to frame, mobilise, and represent a distribution of power and resources and its consequences upon people, especially those in volatile situations. For instance, in an election campaign, the ways competing political groups frame and represent their issues can escalate intergroup tensions, thus altering conflict dynamics. In many instances, political rivalries tend to be couched in a language of enmity to 'arouse passions, fears, and hopes, because an enemy to some people is an ally or innocent victim to others' (Edelman, 1988, p. 66). Therefore, a critical focus on what people do with available media platforms, can provide material for understanding' clusters of social relations that help make up power relations' (Bell, 2009, p. 200).

The social dimension of peace activism focuses on the strategies by which people forge and sustain ties with others for common causes, i.e., it emphasises the 'cooperation of more than one individual and whose objective is to be found in the life processes of a group and not in those of separate individuals alone' (Mead, 1925, pp. 263-264). In this study's context, individual communicative strategies are relevant to activism to the degree that what they do with available media platforms is linked to and oriented towards others' concern for peace. Here what matters is how increased online media use influences these relationships. Thus, numerous ways individuals and organisations appropriate available media platforms to co-create spaces and content reveal the life processes of a group. In this sense, the strategies by which individuals forge and sustain ties with others' concerns are the basis of peace activism. This is because peace activism is a collective activity and depends on cooperation and solidarity among diverse people and organised groups. Throughout this study, I explore processes by which available media platforms become embedded in social action and, in turn, significant for how ordinary citizens and peacebuilders forge and maintain ties for peace activism. Thus, media practices stimulating individuals to engage in peace activism reveal the extent to which their actions are 'oriented to the behaviour of others' (Weber, 2019, p. 99). The concern here will be the extent to which what individuals do with available media platforms is oriented and linked to peace

activism. That is, how emerging media use patterns and experiences structure the way people understand and engage in peace activism. Therefore, an action is not merely social or political because of where it occurs (such as the public sphere), but a combination of both the conditions under which individuals live (how they can shape actions) and resulting social processes. In this study, I view peace activism and elections as processes and ethnic tensions as contexts. Ethnic tensions are considered contexts because they provide a reference framework by which political actors organise public agendas and impose conditions that may limit their options for furthering peace goals. In contrast, elections as processes refer to forms of political organisations (e.g., inter-ethnic coalitions) that emerge from ethnicised politics. Thus, to understand how increased online media use influences (peace) activism, one must look at emerging communicative strategies with which people take part in common causes.

As the preceding section indicates, inter-ethnic political coalitions result in a certain peace and conflict character. In this sense, events such as sports or religious prayer rallies used for peace or voter activation, and conditioned by ethnic tensions, can either open up spaces for dialogue and cooperation, conceal inequalities among people or intensify inter-group strife. In this respect, Lukes (2005, pp. 58-109) three-dimension analysis of power is instructive. According to Lukes, the one-dimensional view of power concentrates on the observable behaviour of those who prevail in decision-making situations but remain blind to how agendas are mobilised and controlled. For instance, in a context where political parties are ethnically based, a narrow focus on the behaviour of ethnic elites overlooks the role of supporters in determining how elites engage in decision-making processes. Thus, a critical focus on the relationships between ethnic elites and their support bases can reveal how the latter's communicative strategies help constitute power (Bell, 2009, p. 198). In the two-dimensional view of power, both the behaviours of political actors and those mobilised are considered; it points to hidden biases in the behaviour of those who prevail in crucial decision-making situations but conceive them too narrowly (Lukes, p. 131). In this case, biases of both the ethnic elites and their supporters can be acknowledged, but without a critical appreciation of aspects of social practices that perpetuate these inequalities. In Kenya, gender inequality across many social institutions is generally acknowledged, but debates are restricted to the number of positions either gender holds. Besides, public discourses and practices about how women and men should

be treated in public are still very conservative. Compared to their male counterparts, women vying for elective positions regularly face violence, harassment, and discrimination (IPU, 2018, p. 4).

In the three-dimensional view of power, the concern is with how social practices determine conditions in which consent or compliance to domination is secured even in situations where coercion is less overt and inequalities more opaque (Lukes, 2005, pp. 143-144). In this analysis of power, the issue is to understand the behaviour of those who prevail in decision-making situations and their supporters and social processes and conditions that enable compliance to practices that might otherwise undermine fairness and justice. Bell (2009, p. 184) further develops this third dimension of power to illustrate tensions and struggles involved in negotiating and appropriation of dominant ideas and values embedded in symbolic schemes. For Bell (p. 207), the third dimension of power helps reveal strategies for generating compliance to domination, i.e., how those subjected to power negotiate it, help constitute it and legitimate it. Further, Bell (p. 207) argues that power relations are drawn from the socialised body and reappropriated by the same body as experiences; thus, specific relations of domination are generated and orchestrated by participants simply by participating. To some extent, what individuals do with available media platforms can reveal how their everyday communicative habits reproduce social inequalities, i.e., acts of online bullying, hate content, or harassment may reflect how socialised bodies reproduce pervasive practices.

Furthermore, another relevant perspective on strategies for negotiating and appropriating dominant practices is Tilly (1991, p. 601) argument that 'compliance to domination is determined not by conscious rule-following, but the pursuit of personal agendas manoeuvring among obstacles put in place by others and experience'. Tilly (p. 594) disagrees with the view that people wilfully support their exploitation. Instead, he argues that exploited people continuously protest though in different ways. However, because the exploited people get something out of the system, it makes them acquiesce most of the time. For instance, in countries where ethnic identities dominate political followings, political candidates' support can be based on groups' pursuit of esteem, overriding any material contradictions. Thus, by pursuing symbolic ends, the exploited groups become implicated in oppressive practices to the extent that it mobilises conformity or reappropriated domination. In this study's context, these notions of power help put into perspective the dynamics influencing how a language

of peace, justice or violent actions can be appropriated, negotiated, and enacted by different individuals and organised groups. Besides, it brings into sharp focus communicative practices used to inculcate and police norms and practices such as fashion, beauty, or being a man or woman in a given society (Lukes, p 121). Therefore, understanding conditions under which individuals negotiate and appropriate ideas and practices can illuminate phenomena in countries such as Kenya and Sudan, where people implicated in gross human rights violations get elected to office even when it undermines individuals' existential realities and quest for justice and peace. Here justice and peace are (as in the positive conception of peace) in the interests of all, so power processes are at work whenever they are not realised, especially power processes of conflict.

As I shall discuss later in this section, the third dimension of power, 'the capacity to secure compliance to domination', brings to light the performative function of political campaigns. Campaigns are performative in that, during election campaigns, various political agents appropriate cultural practices such as prayer rallies, oath-taking ceremonies or visits to religious sites to display for voters the meanings of being elected (Alexander, 2006, p. 32). By culturally localising election campaigns, political actors' aim to get people's intimate participation in debates about social inequalities and injustice or obscure it (I return to this theme in Chapter 5). For now, a relevant question is how to understand the impact of increased online media use on the capacity of individuals and organised groups to mobilise and secure consent to specific ideas or practices. In this study's context, the social and political effects of increased online media use upon peace activism can be assessed through the options they afford individuals to either further or undermine peace and justice goals. Such options may include media practices that structure conditions in which ideas and values are generated, negotiated, appropriated, and disseminated. Thus, these processes influence how and when specific media practices become significant for peacebuilders, socially and politically. Equally, because the spread of information online depends on media users' social character, i.e., individual social ties as the basis of online communication, but it is prone to rumour, bias, or false information (Rid & Hecker, 2009, p. 210). Therefore, increasing access to online media and emerging citizen media practices are implicated in how people manage conflicting issues and communicate peace. Moreover, the effects of online media within peace activism need

to be seen beyond mere 'functional access and use of information and communication technologies by various segments of society to comprehend its contexts and consequences' (Bridle, 2018, p. 13). To the extent that increased online media use is shaping how people access news, information and spaces for social action, it is reconfiguring how individuals, groups and organisations engage (Fletcher, 2016, pp. 66-88). Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine how increased use of online media helps shape peace activism, particularly in volatile situations. This study is based on the idea that what individuals do with available media platforms apply to peace activism because of expanded options for co-creating and disseminating ideas, including unregulated content. These expanded options may breach previously 'narrow cleavages of public opinion' as more people now can engage with overlapping communicative practices of contentions, worldviews, identities, and motivations (Manin, 1997, p. 215). At a practical level, numerous innovations in media technologies, including mobile money transfer services and online crowdsourcing of information to targeted online political campaigns, continue to emerge because of a sizable and active population going online. Media practices such as online political memes, cyberbullying, online hate content, and online surveillance are made possible by increasing online media use and the conditions shaping how particular media practices become embedded within social and political actions. Such conditions could include issues such as ethnic tensions, unequal gender relations, poverty or the general character of the population using these platforms. Therefore, the change discussed in this study is limited to how increased online media use helps shape activism by exacerbating existing tendencies and providing people with options to further peace goals.

As this chapter illustrates, the establishment of multipartyism in Kenya in the early 1990s exacerbated inter-ethnic struggles. These struggles and ensuing election-related violence have made Kenyan elections' moments of severe national distress' (Branch & Cheeseman, 2009, p. 22). Also, the intensified inter-ethnic tensions seem to entrench 'ethnic populism, which enables political elites to form mutating opposition groups relying on a network of ethnically constituted patron-client relations (Cheeseman & Larmer, 2013, p. 44). Nevertheless, elections remain a critical event and process for the democratic governance of Kenya. Numerous efforts, including institutional reforms, power-sharing agreements, and peace activism, have been

embarked upon to mitigate the adverse effects of contested elections. The cases discussed in this chapter reveal the limitations of some of these interventions.

In Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, peace activism usually intensifies around the time of elections. This study is, therefore, conceived within the ongoing quest in Kenya for sustainable peace. At any given time, there are numerous groups, state and non-state, involved in peacebuilding actions. This study focuses on the role civil society organisations play in the communication of peace and how changes in practices and structures of information and communication can affect it. So, studying the role of civil society organisations in the communication of peace is based on the understanding that they play a needed role in facilitating individuals' engagement in social and political action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). Here civil society groups are understood as a social space where people cooperate and negotiate to co-create ideas and norms and play a vital role in integrating diverse individuals into emerging issues of social concerns. The issue, then, is to examine the impact of increasing use of online media upon peace activism, i.e., how what individuals do with available media platforms help shape peace activism. As set out in the preceding section, actions are not merely political or social by the fact of where they happen. Conditions and processes by which these actions become socially significant for framing and representing peace and conflicts also reveal their limit and blurred boundaries. For instance, in many countries during elections, campaigners often use cultural artefacts, ritual-like events or religion to activate their political bases. More often, these performances go unnoticed or are treated as part of election spectacles. However, in ethnically diverse yet polarised societies, the use of vernacular as a linguistic strategy for localising political issues can intensify hostilities, mainly when ritual-like events are used to 'divide up the world into the good and innocent on the one hand, and the deviant and reprehensible on the other' (Bell, 1997, p. 163). Vernacularisation in this study refers to political campaigners' linguistic strategies for localising their agendas, resulting in the exclusion of outer groups and polarisation. In other instances, political campaigners use coded language as a communicative strategy for intensifying animosity and obscuring facts. Hence, the process of vernacularising political campaigns is particularly crucial for understanding how emerging citizen's media use patterns can exacerbate existing tendencies leading to polarised political discourses. Therefore, vernacularisation in this study is applied in the sense that Hochschild (2016, p. 135) uses the term deep story — 'the story feelings tell, in the language of symbols – it

removes judgments, facts and tells us how things feel'. In ethnically polarised societies, stories that feelings tell and obscured facts produce 'allusive narratives, in which people's political sense is shaped by their own experiences and by stories they read and hear from friends and acquaintances. These stories substitute memory for history and make others' experiences seem as if it is their own' (Polletta & Callahan, 2017, pp. 393-394). Thus, the political effect of vernacularisation helps explain the criticism levelled against news media, especially the vernacular FM radios live phone-in shows for fanning ethnic hatred and polarisation during the 2007/08 political crisis in subsequent Kenya's general elections.

Moreover, vernacularisation also captures citizen media's impact on political campaigns because it transforms how people localise and personalise others' stories to intensify antagonism and tensions. A critical focus on media practices that enable individuals to co-create and disseminate personalised stories of negative ethnic stereotypes or cultural chauvinism reveal how such practices become politically significant during an election campaign (Ismail & Deane, 2008a, p. 319; KNCHR, 2008, p. 8). Cases cited throughout this study illustrate how vernacularised political campaigns divide the "election world" into good and evil for voters. Bennett (1977, pp. 219-220) argues that 'elections can serve two related purposes: to get one elected and as a backdrop against which citizens can work out their tensions and satisfy their needs for security, order, leadership, and control over the future'. The latter meaning points to the performative function of elections where cultural artefacts are used to display meanings by 'framing the difference between opposing sides and the significance of actions and events; (…) and shape social attitudes by giving dramatic form to polarised positions for people to choose from, and in doing so, they are drawn into the event itself' (Bell, 1997, pp. 160-163). For instance, political candidates joining a traditional oathing ceremony or visiting religious sites may dramatise and further polarise their support base. Thus, Bennett's and Bell's ideas provide a framework for understanding communicative practices that render election campaigns performative. This study draws from this framework to understand the dynamic relationships between the elements that make up communicative practices and the effects of citizen media practices. In this regard, understanding how media practices of individuals and organisations can help shape the dynamics of peace activism is vital. The potency of individuals' and organised groups' media practices is in the social character of the users, i.e., accessing, co-creating, and sharing ideas and contents as characterised

by layers of sources and social relations. Thus, the impact of increased use of online media on activism can be found in the options it affords individuals and organisations to appropriate and negotiate diverse ideas and practices for their causes. At once, three areas of influence are implied: the role of individuals' media practices in campaigns; the role of organisations as communicators; and the setting within which people and organisations engage in social and political actions. Three points encapsulate why it matters to understand the influence of increasing use of online media upon peace activism. First, online media have become critical sources of news, information, and platforms for social engagement, giving individuals and organised groups' capacity to act at a symbolic level in order to create discourses, meanings, and interpretations' (Mattoni, 2012, p. 2). The implication for peace activism is that citizen media practices can structure how organisations and individuals engage in societal processes. For instance, the increasing phenomenon of online groups disseminating unregulated content can shape the 'newsworthiness of an issue more than the focus news media place on it', thus affecting levels of engagement (Rid & Hecker, 2009, p. 210).

Second, online media platforms are increasingly embedded in existing social practices, thus, shifting conditions in which such practices occur. For instance, because 'social division enables one's willingness to believe news confirming their biases' (Tandoc et al., 2018, p. 149), increased use of online media can intensify phenomena of false information, hateful content or harassment and bullying of opponents. Furthermore, the willingness to conform to one's biases poses a challenge to the credibility of public processes and institutions and social cohesion, management, and transformation of social/political conflicts (Vasu et al., 2018, p. 4). The pertinent issue to this study is to make sense of how the emerging citizen media practices are structuring situations for various actions, including peace activism across society.

Finally, these platforms are vast and allow for diverse modes of interaction, sharing and fluidity in the norms and practices for co-creating and disseminating news and information. The emergence of online media practices such as microblogging and online memes allows for presenting content and ideas in ways not constrained by established norms and practices. Therefore, it is valid to investigate how these emerging media practices intersect with existing social problems, such as ethnic conflicts, exacerbating or reinforcing existing tendencies. Also, it helps explain what

these media practices may mean for diverse users: how individual users think about them; and how they inform and shape their social or political actions.

At the policy and practice levels, substantial amounts of resources are being invested in new information and communication technologies to support or set up social innovations to influence positive social outcomes, for instance, during crises. After the 2007/08 political crisis, Kenya saw a proliferation of ICT-based peace initiatives such as 'Sisi Ni Amani, UWIANO Platform, Ushahidi, Picha Mtaani, Umati, and PeaceTech Lab Africa' that engage citizens in online conflict management and resolution practices. Therefore, a critical analysis of these initiatives is needed about how individuals and organised groups engage with them. Empirical data for this study is drawn from PeaceTech Lab Africa, a non-governmental organisation deploying online media tools and innovations to address the problem of political violence in Kenya. This case study examines how people engage with organisation-enabled online activism, the potentials of citizen media practices for peace activism, and how these media practices help shape activism with positive and negative implications for inter-ethnic relations and electoral peace. Empirical data obtained from this case study aids the analysis of features and contextual dynamics influencing how peace activism may work in volatile situations. Media practices such as false information and hateful online content can exacerbate conflicts. At the same time, real-time early warning and reporting systems can help engage individuals in positive causes – stakeholder coordination and networking. Moreover, data from this case study helps show how and when emerging media practices can become significant to peace activism. If these aims are realised, this study will demonstrate how increased online media use influences peace activism because of emerging information and media use patterns. Also, it helps shape the agenda for a critical analysis of conditions and processes by which media practices such as microblogging and instant message services become widely recognised and embedded within specific social and political actions. If these media practices become significant socially and politically, I argue that they influence how individuals and organisations participate in peace activism. For the reason that media practices such as microblogging, hashtags and instant messaging services become socially and politically significant only when they have consequences for established practices of who speaks, what and how they speak and with what effect.

Furthermore, peace activism depends on formal and informal structures through which ordinary citizens and organised groups form solidarities. Thus, a study of the impact

of online media platforms on (peace) activism can focus on one or a mix of the following features: 'message carrying structures such as symbols, language, and discourse structures (of peace); the communicators' status and their communicative activities to establish how they can create, sustain or undermine (quality of social) relationships; the level of communication, i.e., interpersonal, group or public; and communication context' (Powers, 1995). For this study's purpose, I focus on the communicative activities of participants in the PeaceTech Lab's *Kenya Election Violence Prevention and Response Programme* (KEVP) to understand how increased use of online media can influence (peace) activism. In contexts where access to available media platforms may vary, a focus on media users' practices provides a helpful way for examining its impact. Thus, a critical focus on media users' motivations and emerging communicative practices such as hashtags, hateful online content or online surveillance can help reveal what happens to peace activism when more people participate in it. So, focusing on the KEVP participants' activities may reveal how their motivations and thoughts about peace actions help shape peace activism. Furthermore, PeaceTech's initiatives like KEVP provide an organisational structure for integrating diverse stakeholders into common causes (Chapter 3 offers a detailed analysis of this case study).

In short, a critical focus on participants' communicative practices allows this study to show how they can help shape or even increase activism with both positive and negative implications for inter-ethnic relations in Kenya. Communicative strategies of peacebuilders and members of the public are constituted within the emerging positive and negative media and information use patterns. Hence, a claim that access to available media platforms can influence (peace) activism calls for critical attention to strategies and social processes by which individuals form solidarities, organise and exert influence for common causes.

The conceptual proposition in this study is that activism is any communicative practice that either furthers or undermines individuals' and organised groups' goals for peace. The following three-point propositions support this investigation, namely:

a) First, what individuals and organisations do with available media platforms apply to peace activism because they structure levels of access and engagement. For instance, in contexts where societies are dominated by ethnic tensions and violent conflicts, "who speaks, what one can speak and how", can influence peace and conflict dynamics – in Kenya, inter-ethnic political

coalitions have resulted in a specific character of peace and conflicts between groups. Thus, the focus here is to examine the circumstances under which citizen media practices can contribute to or undermine peace activism or peace itself.

b) Second, communicative practices of diverse actors, particularly peacebuilders, apply to peace activism because they can enable and constrict individual peace actions. Here, the investigation focuses on the role of civil society organisations in the communication of peace.

c) Finally, communicative practices of diverse groups as media for the symbolic (re)-production of social order and consensus can help influence the dynamics of a context in which they are enacted. This question examines the implications of emerging online media practices to peacebuilding in volatile situations like contentious elections. The increased use of online media for activism coincides with positive media practices – real-time disaster information sharing and harmful media practices, such as online bullying or fake information. What is more, where ethnic tensions dominate social processes, mechanisms with which individuals forge ties with others matter to the conduct of conflict and peace? So, I examine how and why people engage in peace activism, embedding two units of analysis, peace organisations and ordinary citizens, to understand how their media practices help shape activism. Therefore, I argue that while the increasing online media use may expand opportunities to further peace and justice goals, there are specific ways in which they can exacerbate conflicts in volatile situations.

1.2. **Kenya's peacebuilding context:** *political violence and elections*

On 28 February 2008, two months after the disputed 2007 presidential election results and the ensuing widespread protests and violent confrontations between the police and opposition groups across many parts of Kenya, the incumbent President Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity (PNU) and the prominent opposition leader Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) reached a political agreement to work together (KNCHR, 2008, pp. 44-47; Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009, pp. 21-22). The 2007/08 political crisis that led to violent inter-ethnic conflicts – deaths of over a thousand people, destruction of properties and displacement of over half a million

people – was a culmination of the zero-sum intertribal competition for state power (Waki et al., 2008, p. 23). These violent post-election protests shattered the image of Kenya as an island of peace in the unstable Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region (Klopp & Kamungi, 2008, p. 11). Kenya has witnessed extensive political violence in the previous elections of 1992 and 1997 (Brown, 2013, p. 239); however, the 2007/08 post-election political crisis was different. This crisis attracted swift international interventions. The mediation process between the two warring parties, PNU and ODM, began on 22 January 2008, three weeks after the post-election violence erupted across Kenya (Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009, p. 1). The African Union's (AU) Panel of Eminent Personalities, chaired by the former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, negotiated a political agreement between Mr Kibaki and Mr Odinga, resulting in the formation of a grand coalition government (BBC, 2008). Besides facilitating the formation of a coalition government, this political agreement officially called the National Accord, also recommended other wide-ranging structural and institutional reforms under the rubrics of transitional justice mechanisms, i.e., methods countries emerging from periods of conflict and repression use to redress widespread or systematic human rights violations (ICTJ, 2009). The National Accord was negotiated under four annotated Agenda, namely:

1) Immediate cessation of violence and the restoring of fundamental rights;
2) Immediate measures to address the humanitarian crisis, promote reconciliation, healing, and restoration;
3) Parties to negotiate and agree on solutions towards resolving the political crisis arising from the disputed presidential results; and
4) Agreement on long-term measures and solutions (UN, 2008).

On 9 March 2018, the newly re-elected President Uhuru Kenyatta met with his fiercest political nemesis, opposition leader Raila Odinga announcing that they had resolved to work together, to unite Kenyans in an initiative christened 'building bridges initiative (BBI)' (Oruko & Misiko, 2018). (At the time of this writing, the High Court of Kenya had declared the BBI process and the Constitution of Kenya Amendment Bill, 2020 unconstitutional). This unity declaration came after months of divisive political campaigns and the contested presidential election on 8 August, which the Supreme Court nullified and ordered to be rerun. The Raila-led opposition coalition, together with their supporters, boycotted the rerun election. Like other previous elections in Kenya, the 2017 presidential election was contested along with tribal alliances – the

two major political coalitions, the Kenyatta-led Jubilee Party, supported mainly by the Kikuyu and Kalenjin communities, and the National Super Alliance (NASA) under Odinga encircling the Luo, Luhya, and Kamba communities. Although Kenyan politics cannot be reduced to these inter-ethnic political alliances, dominant social processes provide a lens through which one can critically analyse the emerging form and character of peace and conflicts, i.e., election-induced "peace" and conflict dynamics. Besides, salient social processes can influence media and information use patterns. Hence, one can examine political practices (inter-ethnic alliances) that help shape peace and conflict dynamics. For instance, in the ongoing processes in Kenya, there are parallels between the 2007/08 and 2017 disputed presidential election results and ensuing political crises. Both elections were defined by:

a) Widespread allegations of electoral malpractices: In 2017, the Supreme Court nullified the presidential vote and ordered a repeat. In 2007 the Independent Review Committee (IREC) found that the 'conduct of elections was so materially defective that no one could establish true or reliable results for the presidential and parliamentary elections' (IREC, 2008, p. 9; Smith-Spark & Sevenzo, 2017).
b) Police brutality: the CIPEV report of 2007/08 post-election violence indicates that 405 people killed during the protest were directly linked to the heavy-handed police response (Waki et al., 2008, p. 331). Similarly, in the 2017 elections' disputes, the police are accused of using excessive force against protestors (AI & HRW, 2017, pp. 38-41; KNCHR, 2008, pp. 75-79).
c) Post-election political agreements: On 9 March 2018, President-elect Uhuru Kenyatta and his primary political challenger, Raila Odinga, agreed to work together. The events around the 2018 political agreement popularly referred to as the 'handshake' (reportedly President Kenyatta and Mr Odinga reconciled) in some way mirror the 2007/08 post-election processes, particularly the symbolism of 'handshake'. After the handshake, the two politicians agreed to a task force to collect and collate public views on aspects of the Constitution needing reform. A final report was published on 21 October 2020 and proposes various changes to the 2010 Constitution (Haji et al., 2020, pp. xiii-xv).
d) Intimidation and harassment of news media organisations and civil society groups: In the 2007/08 political crisis, the media organisations were accused of being partisan and compromised. Vernacular FM radio stations, in particular,

were subject to accusations of fanning ethnic hatred and polarisation. Consequently, at the height of the political crisis, the government banned all live broadcasts (Waki et al., 2008, pp. 296-298). From 2013 to 2017, the civil societies groups and news media organisations faced sustained harassment by the government, threatening to deregister some leading non-governmental organisations, assault on journalists, and publicly demonising these entities (Kelly et al., 2017; KNCHR, 2018, pp. 219-220).

In short, both the 2007 and 2017 presidential elections were contentious because there existed bitter disputes challenging the legitimacy of the electoral officials and body, electoral procedures, and the outcomes of the election (Norris et al., 2015, p. 2). Disputed elections, as in 2007 and 2017 in Kenya, undermine the legitimacy of those winning office (Norris et al., p. 3). To mitigate this, the practice of power-sharing seems to be an attractive way out. In contemporary Africa, the practice of power-sharing has its roots in the colonial administration, where colonial authorities formed alliances with local rulers of subjected people to govern (Kiplagat et al., 2013b, p. 201; Oyugi, 2006, p. 57). This practice continued in post-independent periods, even during the one-party rule, where autocratic leaders relied on coalitions of ethnic elites to win elections, form a government, and rule (Oyugi, p. 54). For instance, between 1982 and 1992, when Kenya was under one-party rule – President Daniel Moi's Kenya African National Union (KANU) relied on regional ethnic elites, provincial and district administrators to mobilise and consolidate political support. In the 1990s, opposition groups fragmented into regional ethnic parties after returning to multiparty politics, which helped KANU win elections twice. However, in the 2002 general elections, when opposition groups formed a political alliance – the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), KANU was defeated. Kenya's NARC became the third in the post-multiparty era in Africa to form a coalition government after Malawi and South Africa in 1994. In Malawi, the coalition was between the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Alliance For Democracy (AFORD); while in South Africa, the coalition was among the African National Congress (ANC), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and National Party (NP) (Oyugi, 2006). The NARC power-sharing arrangements were dominated by regional ethnic elites, while the parties with which the coalition was formed remained weak and lacked broader inter-ethnic appeal. As I shall explore further in this section, structures of ethnic relations can dominate the dynamics of conflicts. Because pervasive ethnic tensions weaken the institution of political parties, political coalitions continuously

mutate from one formation of ethnic alliances to the next. In this study, mutating inter-ethnic coalitions are opportunistic and short-lived. Ethnicised elite factions characterise them. For instance, since 2002, except for a few entities (ODM and KANU), each election has seen the formation of new political alliances and parties: in 2007, Mr Kibaki ditched the NARC for Party of National Unity (PNU) for his second term bid; in 2013 Uhuru Kenyatta left KANU where he was a party leader and formed a new party – The National Alliance (TNA) which propelled him to power but ditched it in 2017 for another – Jubilee Party (JP). So, mutating political coalitions are opportunistic and short-lived; however, they structure the character of peace and conflicts – the alliance to which individuals belong define the contours of friends or enemies.

Political parties form coalitions because neither cooperating party can win an election or govern independently (Oyugi, 2006, p. 54). In 2007/08, the Party of National Unity (PNU) controversially won the presidential election but could not govern alone. It was forced into a coalition agreement with the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and the Orange Democratic Movement-Kenya (ODM-K). In 2013 The National Alliance (TNA) and United Republican Party (URP) coalition were formed to win an election and undermine the voices demanding justice for the 2007/08 post-election violence victims. The current Jubilee Party (JP) and ODM alliance seem more motivated by succession politics and the need to neuter the brinkmanship of factions allied to the deputy president than a desire for peacebuilding. Indeed, there are increasing incidents of election-related violence and mass demonstrations, such as in the 1992, 1997, 2007 and 2017 Kenyan elections (Norris et al., 2015); thus, peace narratives are deliberately promoted by establishment elites to delegitimise protests and justify the use of excessive force (Cheeseman, 2011, p. 337; Lynch et al., 2019, p. 603). Also, the way the Accord framed the political crisis seemed to reflect a particular way of thinking about conflict management and resolution (Caplan, 2019, p. 34; Mac-Ginty, 2013, p. 57). For instance, item three (3) of the Agenda seems to reflect assumptions of authors who view persisting ethnic conflicts and violence in Kenya as due to elites' greed, i.e., the scramble for economic interests that leads to further social rupture of society (Bedasso, 2015, p. 381; Nyong'o, 1989, p. 231). Besides, multiple political parties and the growing influence of informal power networks of individuals and organised groups outside the state further exacerbate ethnic conflicts and violence (Branch & Cheeseman, 2008, p. 3). So, the formation of a coalition government

between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga in the aftermath of the 2007/08 post-election protests can be interpreted as a logical solution to instrumentalised factional politics (GoK, 2008). With a fragmented electorate and most political parties lacking countrywide support, inter-ethnic coalitions seem the viable way out of political instabilities. The National Accord as such was an attempt to address the effects of mutating ethnicised elite factions that use their political bases to position for 'rewards and benefits if the political camp they support is part of a coalition in power' (Cox et al., 2017, p. 71). Above all, the National Accord framing of the crisis made it possible for all concerned parties to enter conversations about tackling historical grievances and the pervasive abuse of human rights of individuals and organised groups.

However, some objectives of the National Accord were never realised, particularly those touching on individuals who were implicated in the violence and gross violations of human rights and other historical injustices, yet still held public offices or influential political positions (HRW, 2008, pp. 35-39). Moreover, because the 2007 presidential election was bungled and all parties were implicated in the malpractices and violence (IREC, 2008, p. 9; Throup, 2008, p. 298), there was disgruntlement about the legitimacy of the coalition (VOA, 2009). This disgruntlement, among other issues, later defined the uneasy relationships between PNU and ODM members within the grand coalition government (DN, 2009). As a result, Kenya's post-2007/08 political crisis power-sharing agreement resulted in the formation of anti-reform alliances across party lines, giving rise to the politics of collusion (Cheeseman, 2011, pp. 333-334). For instance, because of the anti-reform collusion across parties, the coalition government failed to deal with impunity and corruption in the public sector as the root causes of inter-ethnic strife (AU, 2011, p. 32). Under Agenda item four (4), the Accord recommended broad institutional and structural changes, including reviewing the constitution; tackling regional social inequalities and unemployment, especially among the youth; investigating and prosecuting those implicated in gross violation of human rights; and putting in place measures to consolidate national cohesion and unity. Two non-judicial commissions were formed: The Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence (CIPEV), which investigated the root cause of political violence going back to pre-independent Kenya; and the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) that among other issues, investigated gross human rights violations and abuses by state institutions and public officers, both serving and retired, from 12

December 1963 to 28 February 2008. When the findings and recommendations of these two Commissions, particularly the CIPEV, were published, they polarised public debates (Obonyo, 2008). For instance, ODM rejected the CIPEV report, saying that its leaders would resist attempts to charge any post-election violence suspects (DN, 2008). Furthermore, the Kenyan Parliament failed to pass a law establishing a special tribunal to prosecute those who bore the responsibility for the post-election violence as CIPEV recommended (AU, 2011, p. 5). Consequently, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) took over the case, published the names of six (6) suspects, including the current President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Deputy William Ruto, from a secret dossier of CIPEV, and commenced investigations (AJ, 2010). Before the 2013 elections, the ICC intervention in Kenya became a tool for political mobilisation, splitting people into those for and those against the Court (AU, 2011, p. 6). The ICC interventions, it seems, gave fresh impetus to the anti-reform alliances.

Like most elections, the 2013 and 2017 presidential elections saw significant political realignments. The most dramatic political alliance was between Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto under the Jubilee Alliance. This alliance was dramatic because their respective inter-communities' relations have been strained by a history of election-related violence (Lynch, 2014, p. 94). Furthermore, Nakuru, the epicentre of the 2007/08 post-election violence, became the birthplace of the Uhuru-Ruto Jubilee Alliance, casting themselves as victims being fought by unknown internal and external forces (BBC, 2012). The Jubilee Alliance, which propelled Uhuru-Ruto to power in 2013, set into motion a process of reframing the ICC intervention in Kenya as a 'performance of injustice, neo-colonialism and a threat to Kenya's sovereignty, peace and stability (Lynch, 2014, p 105). In comparison, the opposition party's coalition – Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) under Raila Odinga framed its campaign on justice for historical grievances, including the victims of post-election violence. The Uhuru-Ruto political alliance seemed to have transformed the contours of the 2007/08 post-election violence. This is because the Jubilee Alliance cast the ICC cases as 'marred by poor investigation; bias; vested interests and misunderstanding of what had occurred; and an overemphasis on punitive justice to the neglect of peace and reconciliation' (Lynch, 2014, p. 105). Consequently, Uhuru-Ruto political unity appeared to have muted the voices demanding justice within their respective communities. The melodrama of Uhuru-Ruto political alliance vernacularised the story of the ICC indictments. For instance, when the ICC

summoned the individuals, it had named to appear for the confirmation of charges hearing at the Hague (ICC, 2012). The accused persons held countywide prayer and unity rallies en-route to the epic ICC journey for the hearing. As 'political performances', these prayer rallies were used by the ICC indictees to divide their political bases further into 'the good and innocent (those against the Court) and the deviant and reprehensible' (those for the Court) (Bell, 1997, p. 163). Moreover, the prayer rallies were used to mobilise ethnic communities as moral and historical by tapping into the histories of inter-ethnic violence among groups in the Rift Valley; and the Uhuru-Ruto alliance seemed to give form to the desire to redress these damaged intercommunal relations (Lynch, 2014, p. 94). (I return to this point in the next section). The effect of this was to move members of their respective communities from the narrative of justice for the victims of the 2007/08 post-election violence to that of betrayal and outside interference (Bräuchler & Budka, 2020, p. 15; Lynch, 2014, p. 98). Kenya's transitional justice debate, it seems, was susceptible to alternative articulation, shaped by a personalised sense of post-election violence, the experience of it, and by the stories they read and heard from friends and acquaintances in their respective communicative spaces. As such, these alternative articulations made it possible for individuals to negotiate and appropriate the experiences and stories of those indicted by the ICC as if they were their own (Polletta & Callahan, 2017, pp. 393-394).

Up to this point, it can be argued that the 2007/08 post-election crisis exacerbated the fault-lines of the Kenyan political processes. Most wide-ranging assessments of the National Accord have dwelt on structures of governance (Kanyinga & Long, 2012; Mueller, 2008). However, there has been less focus on the challenge of communicating peace in societies defined by deep social divisions, ethnicity, poverty, or religious affiliations. The increasing opportunities for ordinary citizens and organised groups to (co)-create and disseminate unregulated content imposes undesirable consequences on peace activism. Besides, there are numerous competing initiatives aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of ethnicised political contests. Even for the studies that have touched on this topic (Kamau, 2018, p. 114; Mutsvairo & Karam, 2018, p. 12; Nyabuga & Ugangu, 2018, p. 196), the focus has been mainly on the 'functional use of media platforms by various segments of society' ignoring 'its contexts and consequences,' i.e., social, or political processes by which functionalities and meanings get imposed on various technologies and with what effect (Bridle, 2018, p.

13). Thus, the question confronting a concentrated focus on rudimentary access and media functionalities explains the variability of effects across societies. This question can be resolved by focusing on salient social structures (e.g., ethnic polarisation or entrepreneurship) influencing how specific media platforms become significant for people in how they 'negotiate tensions and struggles involved in defining and appropriating' (media) practices and ideas (Bell, 2009, p. 182). For instance, while in some societies such as Tunisia and Egypt during the Arab Spring, access to online media played a pivotal role in political mobilisation (Mason, 2012, p. 74; Wolfsfeld et al., 2013, p. 119), in others (Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and India) the increasing access has led to the inception of new services, in particular, mobile money transfer (Ndemo, 2017, p. 1). A critical focus on these social processes can help unravel the dynamic relationship between the elements that make up communicative practices with which social groups reproduce themselves; and how the use of particular media platforms can help shape or reinforce certain aspects of their social order.

In the circumstances of this study, the concept of communicative practice is central to understanding the influence of socio-political conditions such as the 'politics of belonging' (Nyamnjoh, 2005, p. 3) in ethnically stratified society upon media and communication systems. McCarthy (1984, p. xxv) defines communicative practice as a 'medium for symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld, i.e., culture, social integration and socialisation'. If this reproduction process is interfered with, he argues, it can lead to 'loss of meaning, withdrawal of legitimation, confusion (...), destabilisation of collective identities, alienation, or breakdown of traditions' (McCarthy, p. xxv). McCarthy's (1984) definition of communicative practice comprises all media people forge and sustain ties with others for common causes. In this study, the concept provides a base on which to understand specific media practices such as hashtags and microblogs that can define the "what", "who", or "how" of social causes. That is to say, the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter hashtags created structures or symbolic media through which individuals could identify with others' concerns. In the mediation of peace and conflict practices, the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter hashtags have become symbolic markers for campaigns against gender and racial injustices. Therefore, the widespread use of online media tools continues to draw attention because of the way it intersects with politics and social conflicts. These uses can breach boundaries of meaning and practices in the (re)production of solidarity within groups. Indeed, the increasing use

of online media platforms in many parts of the world has been linked with polarisation, dissemination of hateful content, false information, and violence (Barclay, 2018, pp. 50-54; Laub, 2019; Müller & Schwarz, 2020, p. 40; Patton et al., 2014, p. 5). Also, the unprecedented use of these media platforms has been linked with other indirect effects on conflict dynamics, namely, the influence it has on the spreading of information, which is crucial for individuals and organised groups contending for power in society and the allocation of resources (Kaempf, 2013, p. 602; Vosoughi et al., 2018, p. 1150; Zeitzoff, 2017, p. 14). A question that arises then is to understand how increasing online media use, mainly as a platform on which people co-create spaces for solidarity, is helping shape their communicative practices constituting (peace) activism. Thus, a critical analysis of communicative practices within the context of the increasing use of online media for peace activism allows for a deeper understanding of factors enabling or constraining alternative articulation of the 2007/08 post-election crisis, particularly the call for justice for the victims of the violence and historical grievances. Therefore, it is vital to understand how Kenya's rapidly changing information and communication systems have helped shape how ordinary citizens and peacebuilders participate in the pre-and-post-election processes. Investigations taking this direction focus on the relevance of what individuals and organised groups do with available media platforms and how it matters to peace activism. A further question is about the role various groups play in peace activism as both necessary antecedent and consequent conditions for sustainable conflict management and resolution. Thus, the form and character of peace activism in an election campaign dominated by ethnic tensions presents an opportunity to interrogate from multi-stakeholder perspectives how communicative practices by different actors help shape the dynamics of a context in which they are enacted.

The main theme of this study is the relationship between individuals' media practices and 'communicative practices of the sense-making and construction of reality', particularly in contexts where individuals and groups suffer historical grievances (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p. 16). This is because increased access to online media can mean that diverse groups have opportunities to publicly 'focus their attention, articulation, and transformation of interpretations and meanings of particular social objects or phenomena in order to mobilise or de-mobilise their constituencies' (Lindekilde, 2014, p. 206). Thus, the dynamic relationship between the reasons

individuals forge ties with others for peace and conflicts and appropriated media platforms transform or reinforce certain aspects of society.

1.3. Kenya's peace communication context

In this section, I discuss Kenya's peace communication context concerning three interrelated issues: the role of citizen media practices in activism; the role of civil society groups in peace communication; and the consequences of the practices of both the former and latter upon the dynamics of conflict management and resolution strategies in societies prone to violent conflicts. Peace communication in this study means a process of organising actions furthering common understanding. It includes activities ordinary citizens and civil society groups organise to promote dialogue and raise awareness about conflict management and resolution strategies.

Kenya comprises 45 ethnicities (KNBS, 2019, pp. 423-424). Since the ratification of the 2010 Constitution, Kenya has been devolved into 47 counties. Except for big cities and towns, many counties are inhabited mainly by one ethnic group. In most periods, these diverse ethnic groups coexist harmoniously. Nonetheless, since the establishment of multipartyism in the early 1990s, ethnic identities have become structures for political mobilisation and determinants of political alliances (Anderson & Lochery, 2008, p. 329). As instruments for political mobilisation, ethnic identity presupposes structures of relations that in turn can influence the dynamics of conflicts. In the preceding section, I emphasised the point that the Kenyatta-Ruto political coalition instrumentalised histories of conflicts between their respective ethnic groups to mobilise support for their alliance. According to the 2013 TJRC report, historical land injustices in many parts of Kenya have been at the centre of political violence. During colonial rule, the report reveals that land policies were used to displace communities from their settlements into 'native reserves', rendering many people landless (Kiplagat et al., 2013a, pp. 184-190). However, at independence, the resettlement programme meant to redress these historical land injustices was used by elites of the newly formed administration to acquire large tracts of the former 'White Highlands' at the expense of displaced local communities (Kiplagat et al., 2013a, pp. 208-209). Further, the report finds that in cases where displaced groups were resettled, the programme gave preferential treatment to members of specific ethnic groups at the expense of the most deserving landless. In other instances, where elites were interested in the land

earmarked for resettlement, displaced people were forced or encouraged to settle outside their homelands (Kiplagat et al., 2013b, p. 54). Although resented by local ethnic elites, communities from other parts of Kenya resettled or acquired land in the Rift Valley and Coastal regions. For instance, in the Rift Valley, the epicentre of the 2007/08 post-election violence, there have been lingering histories of grievances between local ethnic groups (Kalenjin) and resettled people (Kikuyu, Kisii or Luhya) (Kiplagat et al., 2013a, p. 221). Because there has never been a deliberate effort to redress abiding histories of tensions and violent conflicts around the resettlement programme, ethnic elites regularly use these grievances for political gain.

Here I need to make a further note about structures of ethnic relations relative to the dynamics of conflicts regardless of lingering histories of injustices. In this study, structures of ethnic relations can be categorised as either ranked or unranked. According to Horowitz (1985, pp. 22-24), in the ranked structure of ethnic relations, 'ethnic groups are ordered in a hierarchy, with one superior and another subordinate. Social statuses tend to be cumulative, and unequal distribution of worth is generally acknowledged and reinforced by an elaborate set of behavioural prescriptions and prohibitions. Whereas in an unranked system, 'parallel ethnic groups coexist, each internally stratified. The unranked groups themselves are developing into whole societies, and the relative group's worth is uncertain, and always at issue' (Horowitz, 1985, pp. 23-24). In the context of conflict dynamics, these differentiations are essential because 'ethnic conflicts take different courses depending on whether relations between groups are ranked or unranked' (Horowitz, p. 53). Furthermore, the varied inter-ethnic relations structures are vulnerable to different forms of conflicts (Horowitz, pp. 30-31). For instance, as Horowitz explains, because the social class in ranked structures of ethnic relations coincides with ethnic identity, the goal of ethnic conflicts and violence may be to overthrow the dominating group; while in the unranked groups, the goal of violence and conflicts is to exclude other parallel ethnic groups from sharing power or resources by expulsion in part because of lingering historical injustice. Conflicts mainly involve ethnic elites of the groups forming alliances to negotiate across group lines (Horowitz, 1985).

In the Kenyan case, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) findings illustrate the course of conflicts in unranked structures of ethnic relations. In post-independent Kenya, the TJRC finds that ethnic tensions and violence result from

communities' claim on territory and resources to the exclusion of others; perpetuation of negative ethnic and cultural stereotypes; and the perceptions that ethnic representation in government delivers direct economic benefits (Kiplagat et al., 2013b, pp. 58-59). From the TJRC findings and Horowitz's distinctions, it can be said that Kenya's ethnic relations structures are unranked because violence and conflicts tend to revolve around ethnic elites who seek to include their political bases into the centre of power and resources while and excluding parallel groups (Horowitz, 1985, p. 31). The most frequent application of inclusion-exclusion politics is during elections when politicians and members of the public equate winning the top political seat with access to public resources and goods (Waki et al., 2008, p. 23). Furthermore, as Lynch (2011, p. 2) argues, 'ethnic identities provide elites with means to mobilise support and allow members of the public to claim rights to space, power and wealth'. In this sense, then, it can be argued that because varied structures of ethnic relations render groups vulnerable to different scales of conflicts, these have implications on how peace actions are mobilised, negotiated, interpreted, and appropriated by various groups.

1.3.1. Structures of ethnic relations and peace communication

At the beginning of this chapter, I pointed out that the proliferating options for individuals and organised groups to (co)-create and circulate unregulated ideas and contents implicate the functioning of social institutions, particularly in volatile situations. This section illustrates further this point by looking at the implications of structures of ethnic relations for activism as a collective activity. Peace activism as a collective activity depends on cooperation and solidarity among diverse groups. Nevertheless, ‘relations among unranked ethnic groups are less predictable because of pervasive intergroup tensions’ (Horowitz, 1985, p. 28). Even more critical is how less predictable relations help shape how ordinary citizens and peacebuilders communicate. The phenomenon of false news/information attributable to the unprecedented ways that diverse groups use available media platforms has affected how institutions across societies function. For instance, because of some features of online media platforms, individuals and groups can now have persistent interconnection and pervasive awareness of events and issues from entities they are linked with (Hampton, 2017, pp. 127-132). The decisive factors in the impact of the increasing use of online media on peace activism, it seems, are the layers of social relationships, information sources and power relations that are enabled and reinforced

(Bell, 2009, p. 214). As Vosoughi et al., (2018, p. 1148) find, 'the spread of false news on Twitter was aided by peer-to-peer diffusion characterised by a viral branching process; false political news travelled deeper and reached more people and was more viral than any other category of false information'. Kang et al., (2011) study further illustrate the effect of social relations on the dynamic of online information sharing. In their study seeking to establish the effects of layered sources on the credibility of information, they find that 'in the context of multiple source layers, which are common on the internet, the most salient or proximate source exerts a greater influence on readers' judgment of content than other source cues' (Kang et al., 2011, p. 731). Thus, access to available media platforms is essential. However, analysts often overlook salient factors influencing how specific media platforms become significant for individuals, i.e., what motivates people and their strategies to achieve this. Moreover, there may be many factors in any social situation influencing how people use available media platforms. However, the most salient will shape their media and information use patterns. Empirical data analysed in this study offer insights into a complex relationship between access to available media platforms and the patterns of use. As empirical data in Chapter 4 illustrate, the salient factors manifest in people's concerns about public discourses such as hateful content, ethnic profiling or political incitement. As such, it is vitally important to find out why and by what means people engage in peace activism and what peace may mean for those who choose to take part in it.

Discussions in the preceding section point to the consequences of peer-to-peer relations in the processing of information. In unranked ethnic groups, unpredictable relations undermine the basis of collective action hence the functioning of public processes and institutions. Meaningful civic participation in a multi-ethnic context presupposes generalised confidence among members of that society about each other's public decisions. Moreover, individuals' social action depends on and draws upon information and knowledge produced and held by different groups and institutions (Shapin, 1994, p. 7). It would be impossible for individuals to forge ties with others for common causes without generalised trust. As argued by Kang et al., (2011) and Vosoughi et al., (2018), peer-to-peer or proximity of sources determine how fast, deep, and farther online news travels. This is because peer-to-peer relations provide the basis for individuals to trust, access and disseminate information, hence its virality. Thus, predictable social relations, it can be said, condition the confidence of individuals

and organised groups within communication and information systems. This is the sense in which one can interpret Simmel's (1950, p. 318) argument that 'confidence is a vital force within society because it mediates between knowledge and ignorance'. One of the most critical areas to see the consequences of low confidence or distrust is in the mutation of political alliances among unranked ethnic groups during elections. As discussed above, political coalitions/alliances in unranked multi-ethnic societies are used as mechanisms for negotiation and power-sharing. If and when these alliances are formed, their support, survival and stability depend upon the faith in the honesty of other parallel groups (Simmel, 1950, p. 313). However, in unranked and ethnically stratified societies, distrust of the other groups undermines potentials for collective actions and solidarity (Simmel, p. 166). Pervasive distrust within the unranked interethnic relations corrodes and undermines processes and structures of information and communications, facilitating the willingness of individuals and organised groups to believe news and information that confirms their biases and enmity towards outer groups (Tandoc et al., 2018, p. 149). If ethnic tensions pervade systems of information and communication, then social order is precarious. This point is key to understanding the potentials of citizen media practices to exacerbate pre-existing tendencies. Nevertheless, the use of online media platforms is not a sufficient condition for social action; individuals and organised groups cooperate with the actions of others for their actions and decisions to make an impact. In a study about Kenya's voting patterns, Bratton and Kimenyi (2008, p. 287) find that 'although many voters resist defining themselves in ethnic terms, their voting patterns frequently follow ethnic lines. The enduring inter-ethnic tensions, it seems, have exacerbated the problem of distrust towards members of outer ethnic groups and, in the process, conditioned the voting patterns among many Kenyans (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008, p. 287). Therefore, election campaigns create specific situations that can influence communicative practices, shaping political contexts. Here the focus can either be on media platforms as tools emphasising rudimentary access or the constitutive aspects, focusing on the contents of everyday media practices, meanings and strategies by which individuals forge and maintain ties with others for common causes.

1.3.2. Effects of emerging citizen media practices on (peace) activism

In the preceding section, I have argued that social relations structures can help shape media and information use patterns with consequences on how people access and share news and information. Also, I have argued that what individuals and organised groups do with available media platforms matters in contexts where ethnic tensions dominate societal processes. What remains then is an illustration of how communicative practices of diverse political actors as media for (re)production of relations can influence peace and conflict dynamics. Therefore, it is vital to understand the interrelations between differing groups' communicative practices and a country's media and information systems. Throughout this study, the focus is on various dimensions of the consequences of increased use of online media upon peace activism. At this stage, it is proper to turn attention to how media practices of various actors including, peacebuilders and members of the public, help shape (peace) activism.

Even though polarising discourses and hostilities towards outer ethnic groups have existed before in Kenyan politics, the form and character of emerging online media practices can be distinguished by their defining elements. These defining elements include the constant contact online media users have with people and entities with whom they are connected, leading to a possible situation of pervasive awareness and intensified connection to events or happenings from these entities (Hampton, 2017, p. 123). Consequently, these features can structure how ordinary citizens and peacebuilders access, interact with and experience the entities or events in question. Consequently, these media practices intensify both (re)production and circulation of potentially inflammatory or hateful content (IRIN, 2008) and, simultaneously, communicative experiences of individuals and organised groups. Another defining feature is that the multitude of voices brought into conversations can transpose their localised and offline social relationships (of kinship) or conflicts (hateful content and misinformation) into 'how experiences of peace and conflicts are made and remade at the local level' (Mac-Ginty, 2017, p. 9). This process of (re)-making the logic of peace and conflicts at a local level can be interpreted as a 'negotiation of tensions and struggles involved in defining and appropriating' practices and ideas (Bell, 2009, p. 184). The transposed and negotiated experiences then have the effect of intensifying individuals' sense of their community because groups are 'persistently connected' and

engaged (Hampton, 2017, pp. 127-128). Furthermore, in volatile situations, the dynamics of (re)-making the logic of peace and conflicts can further escalate divisions because the emerging conversations and interactions continuously link individuals and organised groups to potentially corrosive discourses. Therefore, citizen media practices create opportunities for highly personalised engagement and information access shaped by one's webs of social relationships. Additionally, the more emerging media practices become embedded in social communication, the more these practices – real-time information gathering and sharing, and stakeholder coordination and harmful practices – online bullying or fake information structure how people experience peace and conflicts.

1.4. Shifting communicative practices within Kenya's media and information system

The 2007/08 political crisis happened when Kenya's media and communication systems were undergoing rapid changes. According to the BBC World Service Trust African Media Development Initiative report, by 2006, Kenya had ten (10) commercial radio stations up from four (4) radio stations in 2000; twenty (20) regional commercial radio stations up from four (4) radio stations in 2000; three (3) state-funded national radio stations; 5 regional state radio stations; and two (2) community radio stations. In the television broadcasting sector, in 2006, there were five (5) commercial national TV stations up from four (4) stations in 2000; and four (3) state-funded TV stations. For the newspaper sector, by 2006, there were five (5) national daily newspapers and nine (9) weekly papers. The Kenyan newspapers sector is mainly oriented towards the elites, has a low circulation, and relies heavily on advertisements (Power et al., 2006, pp. 28-44). In 2017 there were seventy-six (76) licensed commercial radio stations and seventeen (17) community radio stations (CA, 2018b, p. 40). In the mobile telephony sector, by 2006, there were 9.3 million mobile subscribers, up from 6.4 million users in 2005 (CA, 2007, p. 19). By the end of 2019, Kenya had 22.86 million internet users, of which 22.22 million accessed the internet via mobile phones, spending over four (4) hours daily online. Additionally, there were 8.80 million active social media users, with WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook as the top three online platforms (Kemp, 2020).

Although the state-funded Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) operated regional vernacular stations and programmes since the early 1950s, when Kenya was still a

British colony, their programming was restricted to culture and entertainment. In post-independent Kenya, KBC continued with the restricted vernacular broadcasts until the early 2000s when a private broadcaster, Kameme FM Radio, targeting Kikuyu, Meru and Embu ethnic groups, entered the sector (Ogola, 2011, p. 87). The burgeoning mobile telephony sector gave Kameme radio the impetus to incorporate live-phone-in talk shows in its programming (Ogola, 2011). Increasingly, these live-phone-in shows became famous for hosting debates with politicians and ethnic elites. In the run-up to the 2005 constitutional referendum and the 2007 general elections, as Ogola (2011, p. 90) argues, 'political elites used vernacular radio stations for mobilising their bases; and as a way of negotiating for space within the political centre'. However, these live-phone-in shows on vernacular media can also tend towards 'deliberation enclaves' because of the salience of ethnic identity on a diversity of opinions. According to Sunstein (2019, p. 20) 'deliberation enclaves are influenced by three factors: the level of diversity of opinions in news and group deliberations (argument pool), participants desire to maintain their reputation and self-conception (social influence), and validation of opinions (corroboration)'. To some extent, Kenya's social communication context may display these features. During elections, often political elites vernacularise campaigns, resulting in enclaves that insulate their bases from alternative news reports and discussions. Vernacularised or localised political campaigns can enhance campaigners' reputation because they exploit symbolic meanings – in Kenya, often political elites appropriate religious and cultural practices to enhance their image. Additionally, for participants, vernacularised campaigns may help validate their extreme opinions about alternative candidates and outer groups.

Furthermore, the increasing use of mobile telephony and the re-emergence of vernacular media, it seems, expanded communicative opportunities for many individuals and organised groups because, nationally, five of the ten most listened to radio stations broadcasted in vernacular languages (MCK, 2012, p. 3). Also, the widespread use of live phone-in shows seems to have altered the long-established media practice of listeners' fans-club (live radio call-in listeners' shows) to forums of political debates (Ismail & Deane, 2008b, p. 4). For instance, monitoring reports singled out live phone-ins shows on vernacular radio stations and the surge in the use of short-text-messaging (SMS) to spread inflammatory and hateful contents during the 2007/08 violence (IRIN, 2008; KNCHR, 2008, p. 8; MCK, 2012). This point is particularly crucial in understanding how emerging citizen media practices are helping

shape social communication contexts because of expanded opportunities for public expression for individuals and organised groups with conflicting worldviews (Waisbord, 2018). In 2017, mobile phone subscriptions had reached 41 million users (CA, 2017), up from 12.9 million users in 2008 (CA, 2009). According to the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK), mobile voice and SMS traffic increased because these services were being used for campaigns by various groups (CA, 2017). In the CAK recent media performance report, talk shows at 17.3% are the third most popular genre of local content behind religious, 17.7%, and music, 38.8% programming (CA, 2018b, p. 31). Thus, live phone-in shows in vernacular media programming, and it can be argued, have affected how individuals and organised groups relate, discuss, and engage with day-to-day social and political issues. Ogola (2011, p. 86) attributes the rise of vernacular media platforms to urban-based Kiswahili-English news media's de-politicisation of the media spaces. Moreover, the re-emergence of vernacular media can also be interpreted as a re-establishment of ethnicities to which individuals and organised groups are subjected (Nyamnjoh, 2005, p. 26). Where vernacularised media spaces are used to (re)create individuals' loyalties to their villages/locales and identities, they entangle the users and breach the boundaries of media and information systems based on the norms of objectivity, fairness, and balance (Nyamnjoh, 2005, pp. 27-28). This entanglement can help shed light on the extent to which the online media practices and spaces absorb individuals and organised groups into immanent conflicts and causes for peace (Bräuchler & Budka, 2020, p. 18). As empirical data in Chapter 4 show, increased use of online media affects peace activism in specific ways. At an individual level, emerging citizen media practices have enhanced and undermined strategies to connect with others. At an organisational level, emerging media practices have shifted both the role of the communicators, particularly the norms of credibility, because of how individuals create and disseminate content. According to Sunstein (2019, p. 19), group polarisation occurs when 'deliberating group members predictably move towards a more extreme point in the direction indicated pre-deliberation'. Therefore, it is from this sense that one can interpret the dilemmas and immense political pressure the Kenyan news media have been under since the 2007/08 political crisis to propagate (negative) peace rather than take a critical stance on issues of justice for victims of historical injustices (Cheeseman et al., 2019, p. 95; Weighton & McCurdy, 2017, p. 659). Thus, to communicate peace,

peacebuilder may need to influence salient features such as gender or ethnicity that shape conflict dynamics to transmit values and practice that further peace goals.

A recent study by Pew Research Centre indicates that many online media users in Sub-Saharan Africa are more likely to use social media sites to share their views and seek information (than with legacy media) (Silver & Johnson, 2019, pp. 22-24). Further, this study suggests that generally across the six countries (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Senegal, and South Africa) surveyed, majorities of internet users say that increasing access to online media has had a positive impact on education, politics, economy, personal relationships, and morality (Silver & Johnson, 2019, p. 25). Consequently, political actors have sought to exploit these active demographics online, particularly younger people, during elections. For instance, in Kenya, during the 2017 general elections, most political actors extensively used online platforms for political campaigns (Imende, 2017). GeoPoll and Portland report on the impact of false information during elections found that 49% of respondents regularly referenced online social media for news about the general election (GeoPoll & Portland, 2017, p. 9). In an exposé, *Data, Democracy and Dirty Tricks,* Channel 4 News reveals how the discredited data company Cambridge Analytica (CA) played a crucial role in influencing the 2013 and 2017 presidential elections in Kenya. From retrieved CA website archives, in the 2013 presidential election, CA surveyed 47,000 respondents, profiling them along political issues of concerns, levels of trust in key politicians, voting behaviours/intentions, and preferred information channels. In an interview with Channel 4 News undercover reporter, CA Chief Executive Officer Alexander Nix, and his Managing Director of Political Global, Mark Turnbull, are recorded explaining how they clandestinely aided Uhuru's The National Alliance (TNA), later rebranded Jubilee Party (JP) to target and manipulate voters' fears along tribal lines (CA, 2018a; Davis, 2018). Privacy International (PI, 2017) reveals that an American-based digital media company, Harris Media, ran both the websites hosting "The Real Raila" video – attacking the opposition leader Raila Odinga and "Uhuru For Us" video – portraying the incumbent, Uhuru Kenyatta as a peace-loving leader. These controversial documentaries, "The Real Raila" and "Kenya in 2020", were scripted to evoke apocalyptic images of Kenya if the opposition leader, Raila Odinga, was elected president and micro-targeted online media users (Valencia, 2017). These online media practices become even more critical in volatile situations because of 'group polarisation, which further fragments society' (Sunstein, p. 20). Therefore, it is vital that

an understanding is created about how different media platforms can help shape the activism of organised groups and intersect with varied aspects of their actions (Mattoni & Treré, 2014). Such an understanding allows for deeper insights into how pre-existing tendencies can be exacerbated by expanding opportunities for political campaigners to mobilise or demobilise their bases (Lindekilde, 2014, p. 206). From this standpoint, it is therefore relevant to investigate how emerging citizen media practices as part of 'symbolic reproduction of consensus and social order' (McCarthy, 1984, p. xxiv) enable or constrain pre-existing cleavages. As Tandoc et al., (2018, p. 143) point out, 'if there are political, sectarian, racial or cultural differences, people will be more vulnerable to fabricated news'. These pre-existing tendencies constrain and structure how individuals' perceive their society and its problems (Bennett & Entman, 2005, p. 1). In this sense, one can interpret Floridi's (2014, p. vi) assertion that online media are not just tools for interacting with each other but have become forces capable of changing people's self-understanding and modifying how they relate to each other and themselves. Furthermore, as the Cambridge Analytica cases illustrate, these changes have made it possible for invasive practices such as 'tethering of people to information and each other allowing for more powerful targeting and reach' (Schroeder, 2018, p. 18). Indeed, the online users' activities and their web of social relationships and information sources allow for their data to be used to construct predictive models to make targeted campaign communications more efficient (Nickerson & Rogers, 2014, p. 54).

With the proliferation of user-centred/friendly online media platforms, 'communicative practices of the sense-making and construction of reality' (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p. 16) take on new dimensions, especially in contexts where lingering historical grievance structure relations among ethnic groups. In an ensuing conflict, the capacity of people to share information and images in real-time from remote locations may result in 'telepresence – the ability of media users to manipulate reality through representations, seeing and acting at a distance' (Manovich, 2001, pp. 165-167). So, the increased use of online media for activism may mean that political campaigners' focus attention, articulate and transform interpretations and meanings of particular social objects or phenomena to mobilise their constituencies' (Lindekilde, 2014, p. 206). Besides, in socio-political contexts where online media are helping 'de-territorialise experiences of individuals and organised groups, it can generate new tension between groups beyond their ethnic boundaries' (Floridi, 2014, p. 176),

potentially intensifying conflict dynamics. Indeed, it is vital to explore how peace activism adapts and contributes to peace and violent conflicts (Gillan et al., 2008, pp. 19-22). Thus, if the way that individuals and organised groups experience conflict goes beyond the boundaries of their localities, then there are possibilities for intensified conflict dynamics (actors and discourses), to the extent that the way individuals and organised groups engage in them will depend on the geographies (loyalties to one's ethnicities), these media are helping (re)establish. In this study's context, expanded options for individuals and organisations to co-create and disseminate content, including unregulated material, have heightened how they experience peace and conflicts.

Diverse political actors' communicative practices, including peacebuilders, politicians, and other organised groups, can influence peace and conflict dynamics because peace activism can be at the heart of 'coordinating efforts on behalf of shared interests' (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015, p. 8). However, targeted online political campaigns can intensify and escalate animosity by 'obscuring the motives and interests behind political decisions' (Bennett & Entman, 2005, p. 2). In this sense, the enduring practices of peace activism in every electoral cycle in Kenya can, to some extent, be undermining critical voices on transitional justice issues, particularly historical land injustices and economic exclusion. While discussing the backdrop of the 2013 general elections, Benesch (2014, p. 9) highlights how 'sports figures, business leaders, artists, clerics, and even journalists stepped out of their usual roles to appeal directly for peace'. Lynch et al. (2019, p. 627) express similar observations arguing that 'the emphasis on peace can strengthen the hand of authoritarian governments (…) in which the fear of conflict is used to prioritise stability and order to the detriment of democracy'. For instance, recently, the government-funded National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) criticised utterances by a Kenyan Senator, Ledama Olekina, for having said that 'the land of the Maasai community should be reserved for their people' (Cheruiyot, 2020).

Therefore, the extent to which online media have proliferated social or political action matter to diverse groups when planning and organising public engagement. For instance, if the framework of 'connective action' (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013) is applied, the focus is on how individuals and organised groups mobilise issues in domains such as peacebuilding and the possibilities for a response from other stakeholders (Schroeder, 2018, p. 8). The critical issue is to understand the

circumstances under which 'personalised engagement – the politicising of personal social relations' (Bennett & Segeberg, p. 45) can contribute to collective actions. This study proceeds from the assumption that what people do with available media platforms can influence peace activism only to the degree that it mediates their concerns with those of other group members. Empirical data analysed in Chapter 4 demonstrate that the increasing use of online media for activism creates opportunities for personalised engagement. Therefore, the ubiquity and diversified modes of use of online media platforms extend the repertoire of political action, the scale by which political action is possible, and the range of political actors' (Couldry, 2012, p. 120). Furthermore, civil society groups – peacebuilders, 'are basic components of contemporary societies and, in particular, a major vector for articulating underrepresented political interests' (Giugni, 1999, p. xv). What is more, is to assume the capacity of individuals and organised groups to recognise and devise appropriate means of transforming entrenched practices of injustices such as widespread inter-ethnic violence, ethnic marginalisation, or endemic corruption. As Castells (2009, p. 47) argues that in the 'processes of power-making there exist two possibilities: of enforcing existing domination or seizing structural positions of domination, and of countervailing processes that resist established domination on behalf of the interests, values, and projects that are excluded or under-represented in the programmes'. For Castells, resistance to injustices is intrinsically a moral and political question for the good of the order. For, if the perceived injustices are not tackled, it could have both dirIf indirect harm to individuals or organised groups. Such harm can also be linked to other broader societal issues such as systemic gender biases, political violence, or political marginalisation. How, for instance, if afflicted groups choose to mobilise resistance, should their story be represented? What role can information and communication systems play? How should the role of various intervening actors be understood? These questions presuppose inevitable shifts in forces conditioning the articulation of contentions to the extent that they shape not only interventions mechanisms but also the 'conditions shaping politics', i.e., the way that legitimacy is claimed (authority), the referent point for the organisation of everyday life (evaluation) and the construction of the world to be addressed (framing)' (Couldry, 2012, p. 119).

1.4.1. Peace activism as situated action

In contemporary Africa, most states still grapple with the persisting problem of social fragmentation and the threat of violent conflicts resulting from 'competing locations of authority' (Ayoob, 1995, p. 4). The presence of competing locations of authority also 'challenges the (prevailing) notions of peace, (pointing to the need to see) peace as a spatial process and political discourse' (Courtheyn, 2017, p. 2). Also, it points to the possibilities of how different structures of ethnic relations can render groups vulnerable to different scales of conflicts implicating how peace actions are mobilised, negotiated and appropriated by various groups (I return to this issue in Chapter 2 of this thesis). For now, it is enough to point out that peace and conflicts are conceived as spatial and political processes—this viewpoint to the need for a critical focus on processes underlying peace discourses. Here I draw attention to communicative practices of framing, i.e., how individuals and organised groups enabled by pervasive access to media platforms negotiate tensions and struggles over meanings of cultural objects/phenomena (elections) in the appropriation of ideas and practices. These struggle over meanings are at the heart of understanding the role of citizen media practices in immersing and intensifying individuals' everyday experiences of conflicts because of 'persistent contact they have with events and issues from their locales' (Hampton, 2017). In this study, the concept of peacebuilding is defined by initiatives that aim 'construct new environments' (Keating & Knight, 2004, p. xxxv) at various levels of society and as a 'process of deconstructing the structures of violence and reconstructing structures of peace' (Knight, 2004). Because protracted violent conflicts tend to corrode, corrupt, and undermine 'institutional and procedural devices for addressing social problems, that is, the foundational social, political culture that sustains societies' (Keating & Knight, p. xi), peace activism needs to 'involve situated political actions that create alternatives' (Courtheyn, 2017, p. 8) from which one can locate not only the challenges they pose to sustainable peace, but also a sense of how it 'generates a particular understanding of places, communities, and accompanying identities' (Dodds, 2007, p. 5). For instance, in this study, empirical data on people's understanding of peacebuilding are varied and can structure how they negotiate ideas and practices of peace. In Kenya, ethnic polarisation dominates the course solutions to election-related violence take – often, inter-ethnic political coalitions and power-

sharing arrangements are presented as mechanisms for resolving historical grievances.

At the heart of peace, activism is the normative question about whether the state, individuals, movements, or organisations should promote peace, what kind of peace it is, and whose interest is being pursued. How, for instance, do public authorities, through development or security policies and media reportage, represent a given geographic region vis-à-vis the groups inhabiting it? How do these representations intersect with other layers of identities and contentions? These questions foreground the need to situate peace activism within the competing ideas of peace, as 'it is important that one better understands those real and virtual connections between places and communities and the consequences that follow therein' (Dodds, 2007, p. 3). Besides, any intervening forces either compete with an already established representation such as the 'labelling of a particular place as 'dangerous' or 'threatening' (Dodds, p. 1); or 'generate particular understanding of places, communities, and accompanying identities' (Dodds, p. 5) that sets communities and societies into intractable representations. What is of interest to this study from this way of conceiving peace, conflicts, and its representation, is to locate how expanded opportunities for ordinary citizens and civil society groups to co-create content and social spaces help shape peace activism. More importantly is to think about how, despite the expanded information and communication opportunities, some social practices (such as kinship) 'remain enabled by the contexts from which it breaks', limiting robust public debates (Butler, 1997, p. 40). For instance, because of layers of social relations, 'the convergence of social media creates echo chambers that reinforce biases' (Benkler et al., 2018, p. 4). Mobilisations for peace, it can be said, are tied to given spaces of social relations, in that, even within a country or a community, there are multiple and competing visions and spaces for social action. How individuals, organised groups or nations construct and represent peace and conflicts in these spaces and how it is fused with their communicative practices and political life is critical for understanding the impact of emerging media practices. In this regard, the concept of citizen media practices – as mechanisms by which individuals and organised groups forge ties with others' concerns provides material for understanding how online media can influence peace activism.

The assumption is that there are potentials for social action in the way individuals appropriate available media platforms. This can be used to locate practices such as

blogging, crowdsourcing contentions, or (co)production and dissemination of hateful content within peace activism. Such an understanding illuminates how "peace" activism by politicians, governments or activists relates to 'the production and circulation of spatial representations' (Dodds, 2007, p. 44). In this respect, it is possible to interrogate how public policies and development pronouncements frame social problems and, by extension, ethnic groups in different regions of the same country or used to challenge the 'what' and 'who' of politics' (Couldry, 2012, p. 120). For instance, at Kenya's independence, President Jomo Kenyatta's administration used the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 to frame development priorities and regions to be invested in. Article 133 of this Policy prioritised areas perceived to have potentially higher returns on investment over those with fewer potential (GOK, 1965, p. 46). Mr Kenyatta's administration used this sessional paper to justify the marginalisation of regions and people, characterising them as those receptive to and active in the development and those who are not. This framing seemed to imply that specific groups of people were a threat to the development or stability of the country.

In 2015, the United Nations member states ratified seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a framework for international development. Relevant to this study is SDG16, which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies because of the variables against which states measure their progress. In volatile situations, the serious impediment to peacebuilding is communicating the demands of sustainable peace – prosecuting perpetrators of serious crimes, reparations for victims, and public truth-telling processes without construing it as ethnic persecution. Thus, motivations, ideas, practices and meanings with which individuals and organisations engage in activism have consequences for peace and conflict dynamics. The results of this study can offer insights into the viability of an index that may allow peacebuilders to document the varied forms of peace resulting, for instance, from inter-ethnic political coalitions, their meanings, and practices. Such an index may aid countries in effectively addressing people's needs, particularly for sustainable peace and justice. From this stand, it is possible to situate how certain political events/processes (elections or civil conflicts) relate to the different narratives of peace and its consequences for the way people understand the nature of their contentions. As I will further examine in this study, communicative practices by various actors, especially individuals and organised groups in societies in conflict, are

'critical to how the social world becomes constructed' and its spatial representation (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p. 16).

In this chapter, I have tried to develop the concept of communicative practice to understand its implications upon (re)production of practices of peace and conflicts in conflict situations. I have argued that in volatile situations, yet ethnically diverse, the logic of peace and conflict is mediated by structures of social relations. In the context of the increasing use of online media, emerging media practices embedded in social and political action are 'constitutive (of the practices) rather than instrumental' (Cammaerts, 2015, p. 4). Therefore, communicative practices and social intervention objectives should be seen within a broader sense of people's media practices, that is, media platforms as embedded in the 'construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 3). Taking this position in the analysis of the role of media platforms in collective action, it suggests that primacy be given to the individuals' capacity to act purposively over social objects because it is by the actions of ordinary citizens and civil society groups that social objects become socially and politically significant for peace activism. In the case of this study, I focus on how increased use of online media can enable options for individuals to help shape elements that make up communicative practices, and in the process, peace activism. These potentials for influencing elements of constituting communicative practices – 'message carrying structures, the communicator, the level of communication and social contexts' (Powers, 1995) are enabled by the fact that individuals and organisations continuously negotiate and struggle over perception and representation of peace and conflicts for all concerned parties. Moreover, the analysis of Kenya's peacebuilding context reveals that critical political events and processes create conditions for organised groups to emerge, including those undermining peace goals. These groups find safety in existing conditions of interethnic tensions, hence the enduring phenomenon of mutating and unstable inter-ethnic political coalitions.

Chapter 2 engages with relevant literature to formulate a framework for understanding how emerging citizen media practices are helping shape peace activism, particularly in volatile situations.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I argued that the online media's impact on peace activism should be seen in the broader context of individuals' media practices. This is the case because communicative practices involve media by which people (re)produce their social worlds, reflecting their local dynamics of peace and conflicts. These local dynamics may include processes by which individuals and organised groups forge ties with others for common causes. Also, I argued that in an ethnically diverse but polarised society such as Kenya, ethnic relations structures have functional significance, i.e., they are used for political mobilisation and shape courses of conflicts. Ethnicity seems a salient basis of public communication because of vernacular media traction. Similarly, nationally, ethnic identities are a basis of political affiliation and organisation, as seen in Kenyans' voting patterns (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). Relevant in this study is that the increasing salience of citizen media practices in activism has consequences for the quality of information and engagement patterns. Therefore, the form and character of emerging activism practices can be distinguished by how people connect to ideas and entities co-created within prevailing social conditions. In Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, pervasive inter-ethnic tensions continue to undermine practices of political coalitions as mechanisms for negotiating and participating in societal governance. Fragile inter-ethnic relations have rendered peace fragile.

For the purpose of this study, the question that arises is how proliferating options for individuals and organised groups to (co)-create and circulate unregulated ideas and contents help shape peace activism. The impact of increased online media use upon peace activism, this study argues, ought to be seen within a broader sense of how and why people appropriate available media platforms for common causes. This position in analysing media technologies' role in collective action emphasises social agency over social objects because the doer's capacity to act purposefully is the basis of establishing social action and ethical and political accountability. In volatile situations, agency and accountability questions become even more critical because of the proliferating options for individuals to co-create and circulate potentially harmful content. An emphasis on social agency brings a web of social relations into sharp

focus, underlying potential consequences of increased media technologies' use for activism in volatile situations. This study underlines the role vernacularised political campaigns play in connecting people with perceived social problems.

Therefore, the literature review in this chapter aims to establish the relevance of the increasing use of media technologies to the practice of peace activism and its implications for societies during crises. In this sense, emerging media practices are the basis of peace activism because they can enable or constrain how people forge ties with others for common causes. Thus, these emerging media practices' potentials to shape how people engage in peace activism presuppose a continuous appropriation and negotiation in using available media platforms. These processes reveal the struggle over perception and engagement in prevailing social orders of peace and conflicts or justice and injustice.

This chapter is organised into five parts: part one discusses salient issues peacebuilders must confront in their quest for sustainable peace in societies prone to violent conflicts. These salient issues set the conditions in which peace is communicated. Part two considers the concept of media practice and how it applies to peace activism. The third part emphasises a critical understanding of the dynamic relationships between increased use of media platforms and reasons people have to engage in activism – peaceful and conflictual. Part four develops a conceptual framework for this study, which privileges individuals' communicative practices to understand the elements of these practices that increased the use of online media influences. Here I argue that the missing link in the study of how increasing online media use helps shape peace activism is understanding the dynamic relationship between the elements that make up communicative practices and emerging citizen media practices.

The final part offers an overview of the chapter.

2.1. Making peace in volatile contexts

In this introductory section, I discuss broadly salient issues concerning the practice of peace activism in volatile situations. Complex transitional justice issues often confront many societies emerging from histories of violent conflicts and gross violation of human rights. Under the rubric of transitional justice, societies have adopted numerous mechanisms and strategies to redress legacies of gross violation of human rights,

including ‘criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programmes, reforms of the security systems, and memorialisation’ (ICTJ, 2009). I refer to this as transitional justice rubrics because many countries redressing historical injustices tend to implement a set of mechanisms: for instance, combining truth commissions, public sector reforms, and criminal prosecutions to establish social stability. Indeed, these many transitional justice mechanisms could illustrate the difficulties peacebuilder must confront to ensure sustainable peace. In Africa, at least 18 countries (ACHPR, 2019, pp. 9-18) have used one form or several of these mechanisms to deal with their legacies of gross violation of human rights. While in some societies such as South Africa, the Truth Commission seems to have contributed positively (Gibson, 2005, pp. 345-346; 2006, pp. 414-415), in others, such as Kenya, the process did not go beyond public hearings and official release of reports (Wambua, 2019, pp. 65-66). These numerous public inquiries in Kenya have not generated a unified public will towards sustainable peace by acknowledging and productively addressing lingering historical injustices. In societies prone to violent conflicts, it seems the serious impediment to sustainable peace is communicating its demands during transition periods.

In the aftermath of violent conflicts or legacies of gross human rights violations, the demands of sustainable peace may include prosecuting those responsible for the violations. However, ethnically polarised societies impose undesirable conditions on political bases of affiliation and organisation, i.e., prosecuting ethnic elites would seem like an ethnic witch-hunt. In Kenya, the recommendations by various commissions of inquiry have either been ignored or used by some politicians for political mobilisation to the extent that it renders the process illegitimate. In this sense then, to communicate peace in societies emerging from legacies of rampant violation of human rights may mean ‘giving opportunities and contexts for individuals to transcend conflict-calming measures (such as inter-ethnic peace agreements) to encompass more positive actions linked with conflict transformation’ (Mac-Ginty, 2014, p. 548). Also, communicating the demands of sustainable peace brings into focus the ‘types of discourses which a society accepts and makes it function as true’ (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). As argued in the preceding chapter, in Kenya, like many countries in Africa, there is an increasing salience of ethnic identities in political mobilisation, affiliation, and public communication. Ethnic relations structures dominate how political alliances emerge and the course of conflicts and peace. Thus, it can be said that the discourses around ethnic identities make it possible for political practices of coalitions and power-

sharing to emerge upon which legitimacy and public will is (re)produced and claimed by different groups. Besides, because sharp ethnic tensions undermine coalition politics and, by extension, sustainable peace, it also enables polarising practices to emerge, such as hate speech or the spread of false information. What does this mean for peace activism?

In Africa, the concept of peacebuilding is often discussed in conjunction with development – the capacity of governments to address the conditions rendering societies vulnerable to the violent conflict, including strengthening the institutions of state for security and stability (Karbo, 2018, pp. 4-13; Sikod, 2008, p. 212; WDR, 2011, p. 12). An emphasis on state institutions such as the police, parliament, or judiciary and how its failure can cause violent conflicts justifies using a language of peace to arm and train political regimes to suppress dissent and opposition groups (Chomsky, 1999, p. 133). At the state level, discourses of peace and security are frequently mobilised by ruling elites to create domestic laws targeting opposition groups, particularly in light of the ongoing US-led war on terror in Africa (Zeleza, 2008, pp. 10-14). For instance, in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, terrorism legislation has been invoked to silence opposition politicians, journalists and civil societies groups (HRW, 2014, p. 12; Musila, 2019, p. 8; Prestholdt, 2011, p. 20). Moreover, because 'practices of peacebuilding tend to project different vested interests, they can also be used to revive neo-patrimonial accumulation and foster nepotism' (Omeje, 2018, p. 293).

Peacebuilding as interventions to enhance individuals and organisations' capacities to transcend their differences presupposes specific underlying causes of conflicts and peace. These causal conditions can be analysed at different levels – state, regional or community. In Kenya, at the state level, ethnic elites' rivalries, authoritarian tendencies by the ruling class and exclusion of some groups and regions from development programmes dominate the peacebuilding agenda. While at the community and regional level, the need to address poverty, underdevelopment, and ethnic tensions define peace initiatives' contours. The 2011 World Development Report (WDR) suggests that repeated cycles of violence and conflicts in some societies are due to the absence of capable and legitimate institutions that can ensure citizen security, justice, and livelihoods (WDR, 2011, p. 85). The report further encourages development partnerships to 'link security programmes to development outcomes' (WDR, p. 276). Understood in the perspective of WDR, peacebuilding interventions

can either prioritise the security of the state as necessary antecedent conditions or human development – 'quality of life for all people as defined by their capabilities' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 19). If peace interventions prioritise the state, then as Beswick and Jackson (2015, p. 9) argue, emphasis will be put on strengthening the state's institutions for development to occur. Peacebuilding efforts will then be directed towards reforming state bureaucracies – judiciary, parliament, security agencies (police and military), and the general rule of law for peace and security of a state and citizens. However, if citizens' security is privileged, then the emphasis is on the sources of insecurity for individuals and organised groups, such as oppression, torture, discrimination, or political persecution (Beswick & Jackson, p. 11). These sources of insecurities undermine 'what individuals can do and be, hence their quality of life (Nussbaum, p. 18). For Galtung (1990, p. 291), citizen security turns peace actions towards 'cultural violence, i.e., any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimise violence in its direct or structural form'. Thus, if some aspects of culture can be mobilised for repression, exclusion, or torture, it is critical to consider how individuals and organised groups negotiate and enact them. For instance, political elites may vernacularise campaigns into cultural practices to mobilise their political bases during elections.

In short, a focus on the state may favour peacebuilding programmes aimed at strengthening the formal structures of society and sensitising citizens to their duties to the state. Simultaneously, a focus on citizen security may favour elements of society that enhance individuals' social action, for instance, norms of gender, values, and generally 'what individuals can do and be' (Nussbaum, 2011). So, to argue that conflicts in Africa are rooted in complex constructions of its political economies, social identities, and cultural ecologies' (Zeleza, 2008, p. 2); or that conflicts are caused by 'greed or grievance of individuals or organised groups that want to gain economically by looting' (Beswick & Jackson, 2015, p. 60) points to the need for a critical understanding of the social and political process from which the supposed causes emanate. A critical focus on these processes from which peace and violent practices emanate can provide a lens through which peacebuilders perceive characteristics of peace and requirement for its maintenance' (Caplan, 2019, p. 34). Indeed, Mac-Ginty's (2017, p. 9) idea of 'everyday peace', i.e., actions through which individuals and organisations (re)make peace at the local level' illustrates this point. In Kenya, especially in deprived areas and urban estates, settlements tend to be ethnically

clustered. These ethnically clustered neighbourhoods illustrate how spatially, people negotiate peace and conflict dynamics. For instance, during the 2007/08 post-election crisis in some cities and towns such as Nakuru and Nairobi, neighbours turned against neighbours. Consequently, as Ogola (2011, pp. 86-87) and Nyamnjoh (2005, p. 37) argue, 'people migrating to urban centres constantly recreate their villages in urban spaces'. Thus, it can be said, in ethnically polarised societies and where political coalitions are fleeting, a way for individuals to make or remake peace is through how they negotiate their dwellings, business dealings or even religious affiliations.

Beyond the mandates of the various transitional justice mechanisms adopted, another critical task for peacebuilders is communication, framing what peacebuilding means for all concerned parties. For instance, Tongeren (1999, p. 11) suggests that the failure by news media, particularly the international press, to report adequately on the Rwandan genocide possibly contributed to international indifference and inaction. News media represented the Rwandan conflict as resulting from tribal hatred and feuds. Effective peace communication thus demands a fair representation of causes considered to underlie violent conflicts. This task requires peacebuilders to pay critical attention to elements that make up peace communication and how they are likely to be impacted by various media technologies and practices. The episode below from an abridged television documentary – *"How to Build a Country from Scratch"* of a film, "*State Builders*" by Martin-Kessler and Poiret (2013) illustrates how complex peacebuilding is in societies transiting from legacies of violent conflicts. Using the case of South Sudan's quest for state-building, Martin-Kessler, and Poiret suggest in twelve steps some of the complex and competing issues peacebuilders must confront to ensure sustainable peace. These steps are presented using enacted scenes and actualities. The twelve steps are:

a) The first step was how to overcome the panic all concerned parties experienced because of the urgently needed roadmap and timeframe for addressing unsettled issues between the interim state (South Sudan) and parent state (Sudan).
b) The second step was the process of picking a name for the new state.
c) The third step involved composing and learning a national anthem.
d) The fourth step was the capital city, the physical space and place for the new political administration.

e) The fifth step was to work out strategies for welcoming back or resettling the people displaced by 50-years of conflict.
f) The sixth step for the new nation was seeking international recognition among the community of nations, the United Nations.
g) The seventh step was to foster a sense of citizenship among the people, i.e., rallying them behind the nation's flag.
h) The eighth step was finding and preserving the nation's memories and documented narratives, national archives, and historical sites. Because of decades of civil war, these memories and official records were in a state of disuse and neglect.
i) The ninth step was to institute systems for collecting taxes in return for social services and development, and more importantly, for the citizens to learn about their rights and responsibilities.
j) The tenth step was setting up justice, safety, and security mechanisms for the state, especially policing. The big task for the new political administration was how to transform ex-fighters into accountable security agents.
k) The eleventh step for the new nation was to work towards fostering good neighbourliness with other countries.
l) Finally, the South Sudanese nation needed to invest in dialogue and negotiation structures whenever disputes emerged.

South Sudan, compared to other countries in Africa, is still a new nation. However, Martin-Kessler and Poiret's TV documentary highlight relevant issues to situations in many African countries to the extent that most states are yet to consolidate state-building and are vulnerable to repeated cycles of violent conflicts. For instance, because of failed transitional justice processes politically or economically, excluded groups across many countries in Africa continue to 'struggle against what they perceive as forms of 'internal colonialism, whereby the majority are ruled by hegemonic ethnic, religious, or regional elites' (Salih, 2018, p. 18). Most citizens still lack access to essential social services; secessionist groups continue to contest the state's legitimacy, national symbols, or histories (for example, in Ethiopia's Oromia region and Cameroon's Anglophone region) endemic cases of regime brutality and corruption. As Bereketeab (2018, p. 4) observes, 'the post-liberation African states and governments have failed to advance peacebuilding, state-building and nation-building. Hence, political campaigns tend to be characteristically confrontational, corrosive and

even violent. As the excerpts from the documentary *"How to Build a Country from Scratch"* of the conversations with the current South Sudan Vice President Riek Machar seem to suggest, protracted violent conflicts could be motivated by the high demands that peacetime imposes on those seeking to rule. Reminiscing about their years of bloody civil conflicts, Machar says, "in peacetime, you have to provide services, but during the war, all one does is to prosecute the war." In 2013 South Sudan slipped back into violent conflicts until 2020 when the warring parties reached another peace agreement. Machar's assertions about the demands of peacetime point conflict analysis towards social practices that perpetuate or transform violent conflicts. Indeed, as Akokparl (2008, p. 103) suggests, factional interests – power, greed or warlordism are at the core of violent conflicts in Africa. If the narrative of factional interest is sustained, the question is to understand the conditions for obtaining such interests in volatile situations and societies prone to violent conflicts, including communication. One might be prompted to search for conditions likely to form the basis for mobilising such interests, including roles different social groups play in framing contentious issues. Therefore, this study aims to understand how increased use of available media platforms, particularly online media, can help shape and even increase activism. That is, how expanded options for individuals and peacebuilders to co-create and disseminate content can influence peace and conflict dynamics.

The preceding section has highlighted issues peacebuilders must confront in societies emerging from legacies of violent conflicts and pointed to possible ways of overcoming such challenges. Attention in the next section turns to the relevance of the concept of media practices in explaining the emerging patterns of activism. In this study, I shall only focus on activism with a communicative aspect, i.e., media and communication practices that construct social meaning and how they build and sustain ties between people.

2.2. What is (peace) activism?

Proponents of state-centred peace presume that strengthening formal state institutions, i.e., reforming the police, vetting public servants, including judges and parliamentarians, can positively affect the course of violent conflicts. Peacebuilding, in this sense, can take the form of enacting new laws, equipping the police with new hardware, or retraining the police and judicial officers. Thus, if formal institutions are

presumed to be the locus of change, then peacebuilders 'may focus on state policies in order to influence the course of violent conflict' (Young, 2010, p. 421). Peace, in this sense, is the 'constitution of the state – through state institution strengthening – the idea is to anchor governments within specific sets of norms and practices for policing and enforcement (Richmond, 2014, pp. 65-68). However, a critical focus on "what an individual can do" with available media technologies turns attention towards direct social actions for which citizens mobilise, i.e., 'civil peace arising from localised organisations and campaigns' (Richmond, p. 79). Richmond's idea of civil peace provides a conceptual framework combining ordinary citizens and civil society groups' activism – their capacities to influence the course solutions to violent conflict take. In Kenya, alliances among faith-based groups, civil society, and individual activities have strategically pushed for political change while providing social services.

Therefore, peacebuilders' pursuit for transitional justice in Kenya confronts entrenched ethnic polarisation practices. Activism for transitional justice in Bourdieu's (1985, p. 729) words will entail the 'capacity to make entities exist (such as marginalised groups) in the explicit state, render objectified, visible, and even official (their injustices), what had not previously attained objective and collective existence, (...) and 'it represents a formidable social power for making everyday experience common sense for all'. For Bourdieu, the concept of social practices is not only crucial for understanding social agency – 'the contribution people make towards constructing the view of their social world' (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 727), but also 'the invisible structures that organise perception and determine what one sees and do not see' (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 19). In this study's context, Bourdieu's framework is useful for understanding how people's media practice can help shape (peace) activism, particularly in (re)producing social relationships. In his book, *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984, p. 101) makes a case for strategies by which individual tastes and choices of cultural goods get produced and legitimised – arguing that individual tastes and choices demonstrate agency, but they conceal the structuring structures'. Thus, habitus – embodied forms of social organisation such as identity, or gendered-mediated political choices in combination of capital – the actual usable resources and power within a structured space (field) such as peace activism, produce social practices (Bourdieu, p. 114). Therefore, in this study's context, what individuals do with available media technologies matters because it mediates their logic of peace and conflicts, i.e., the everyday peer-to-peer sharing of online political memes, hate content and surveillance matter to the form and

character of peace and conflicts. Furthermore, in ethnically polarised societies, social networks formation tends towards echo chambers/deliberation enclaves, which implicates the dynamics of who has a voice, what they can say and how. In this sense, emerging online activism can be understood as breaching limits of established norms because of expanded options for people to engage with overlapping worldviews and motivations. Simultaneously, echo chamber tendencies may breach established public discourse norms, limiting the 'pool of arguments' (Sunstein, 2019). For this study, what matters is how the increasing use of online media for activism shapes what it is to be an activist. In this regard, there is a need to account for how individuals and organised groups use media platforms to create and disseminate hateful content. This is because hateful or false information undermines strategies by which individuals forge and maintain ties with others, i.e., social integration. If blame is to be apportioned to any entity (people or media platforms) for hateful content that undermines social integration, in that case, one must account for how the entities in question are linked. I argue that the link between individuals and media platforms is the meaning or purpose, hateful content, or false information served for people who engage in it. In this sense, false information creates crossings on which networks of individuals seeking out such contents emerge. For Latour (2005, p. 5), the social world should be construed as a network of many connecting elements circulating inside tiny conduits in which everything, humans and non-humans, are actors. Latour (p. 5) suggests that change occurs each time a new element enters into these connections, and it demands a reassembly because it redefines the old ties. Therefore, the 'social' is a peculiar movement of re-association and reassembling (Latour, 2005, p. 7). Latour (p. 16) concludes that the social world conceptualised as a network of heterogeneous actors renders it flat as possible to ensure that establishment of any new link is visible. In the "*Network of Outrage and Hope,"* Castells (2015) takes a similar position when he appears to emphasise network structures as the cause of actions. He argues that in a networked society, power is organised around networks programmed in each domain of human activity (…); power networks connect through the programmers or power switches (Castells, 2015, pp. 7-8). Taken literally, it means that programmers of power switches can turn on and off the actions of others. This seems to be the basis for authors who emphasise media technologies' emancipatory potentials because it is assumed these platforms can cause actions (Castells, 2015; Dijck, 2013; Mason, 2012; Shirky, 2011). However, Latour's and Castells' view of the social world is useful

in the sense that it prompts a critical focus upon the social and political implications of networked actors (of human and non-human) and their web of relationships that layer social objects and social facts. Of interest to this study in Latour's and Castells' assertions is a critical understanding of how media platforms' technical designs such as automated campaigns can modify or reinforce specific actions to either further or undermine peace goals in volatile contexts. This is because individuals and organised groups always 'act in specific action contexts dependent on specific institutional materiality and other social actors' (Jessop, 1996, p. 126). In this sense, the question confronting Latour's and Castells' approach is how to account for potentials outcomes of dissimilar actors' networks, as far as collective actions are concerned, i.e., how to disentangle networks from the reasons for why people create and disseminate hateful content. Melucci (1996, p. 69) maintains that 'explanations based on structural determinants on the one hand, and values and beliefs on the other, can never answer the questions of how social actors come to form a collective and recognise themselves as being part of it; how they maintain themselves over time; how acting together make sense for the participants in the social movement; and how the meaning of collective action derives from structural preconditions'. At stake here is how to account for individuals' and organised groups' capacity to comply with specific courses of action and the effects of available media platforms. For instance, if one takes Latour's (p. 28) position that group formation is made up of ever-shifting ties, then a practical question is how to account for social trust as the basis for acts of solidarity within the network of human and non-human actors. Latour, it seems, takes the uncertainty position towards group formation because he 'dissolves the notion of human agency upon which moral accountability is premised' (Hay, 2002, p. 99).

A similar question can be asked of arguments that privilege ethnic identities as robust structures determining violent conflicts. Bourdieu (1985, p. 727) acknowledges both the individual agency – 'the contribution they can make towards constructing the view of the social world'; and also 'the invisible structures that organise perception and determine what one sees and do not see' (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 19). Bourdieu (p. 21) points to the potential of individual agency to effect change when he says that 'the power to show is also a power to mobilise, give life to ideas or images, and groups'. However, Bourdieu (p. 727) notes that schemes of perception available at the moment in question structure the social world's perception. The properties attached to agents

or institutions do not offer themselves independently of perception but in combination. Bourdieu's suggestion points to the dynamic relationship between internal and external conditions conditioning individual capacities for peace activism. Besides, a narrow focus on external factors ignores the salient role struggles over meaning play in creating a web of social relations characterising the social world. For Bourdieu, what people can do affects their social position, i.e., in this study's context, peer-to-peer online media skills or capacities to co-create and disseminate content affects people's social position. However, these media practices hide mediating structures such as ethnicity or gender. On this point, Simmel (1950, p. 43) suggests that 'society is that being with one another, for one another and against one another' and implies a continuous (re)making of meanings on which social networks form. Simmel's emphasis on the web of interactions and conflicts puts into perspective what Bourdieu (1985, p. 729) describes as 'the making of the everyday experiences in which at every moment of ordinary existence individuals struggle and clash over the meanings of the social world and their position within it'. In his essays on group affiliation, Simmel (1964, p. 13) argues for a sociological significance of conflicts in causing and modifying groups, interests, unity, and organisation. Simmel (p. 19) suggests that 'being opposed to something makes individuals feel that they are not completely victims of circumstances because opposition allows people to prove their strength consciously – hence, it is a means for constituting and preserving groups' relations'. This is why I propose that the reasons people appropriate available media platforms can help shape their activism. In this sense, in contexts where some groups previously excluded from mainstream information and communication systems gain access, it can mean that inclusion becomes the (social/political) object of struggle and conflict (Meyrowitz, 1985, p. 133). As Simmel (1964, p. 18) further argues, inclusion or disappearance of antagonism does not always result in a more prosperous social life but, in a different way, deprives groups of their force of cooperation, affection, and harmony of interests'.

Up to this point, in this study's context, it can be said that activism is a product of dynamic relationships between the reasons for which individuals forge ties with others and available media platforms. For instance, ethnic identities create the nodes on which groups seeking power can emerge in an ethnically polarised society. Ethnic identity in itself might have numerous meanings and purposes for different groups. However, when objectified, the power of these meanings and purposes produces

social things and in particular groups (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 741). This is the sense in which one can interpret the claim that since the establishment of multipartyism in Africa, ethnic identities have become structures for determining political alliances (Anderson & Lochery, 2008, p. 329). As political mobilisation structures, ethnic identities use intergroup hostilities to provide individuals with reciprocal positions to feel and express themselves (Simmel, 1964, p. 18). Questions for this study are about how peace activism emerges in volatile situations and how the increasing media technologies' use help shape its form and character.

In this context, the form and character of peace activism can be accounted for by what individuals and organisations do with available media technologies. Here the focus is to understand how citizen media practices are the basis of associative and dissociative relationships during crises. This approach treats peace activism as a media-conditioned phenomenon, i.e., a critical assessment of the relationships between individuals' social experience (of peace and conflicts), co-created media contents and emerging media use patterns among different people (Ruddock, 2017, p. 76). The task at hand is to make sense of the different ways this relationship can be conceptualised and its implication for peace activism: To conceptualise the link between citizen media practices and construction and management of peace and conflicts social experiences. Moreover, it implies considering features and processes through which specific media platforms become socially significant for peace activism. This study accounts for how individuals and organisations appropriate media technologies within ethnically polarised conditions for peace activism. Questions pursued in this study map out media practices by which individuals and organisations contribute to peace activism. This study helps account for how emerging citizen media practices are intertwined with extant social problems, hence its consequences for actions furthering or undermining peace. Implicit in this approach is a definition of peace activism by specific means available to peacebuilders and how these means shape their relationships with other entities, including the state, members of public and civil society groups (Young, 2010, p. 423). If the means with which peacebuilders mobilise for peace can influence their relationships with other stakeholders, it implicates their actions' form and character. Two salient points follow from this: one is about the role individuals and organised groups play in constructing the view of their social world; and the other is how through such representation, individuals and organisations constantly try to impose a view of the world and their identities (Bourdieu, 1985, p.

727). Both of these points turn attention to processes by which individuals and groups define problems, analyse causes, and defend positions on selected action courses (Knüpfer & Entman, 2018, p. 477). Moreover, through what individuals and organisations do with available media technologies, they integrate themselves into life in a society, i.e., each other's social concerns.

For instance, peacebuilding intervention programmes in post-conflict situations are often criticised for 'aggravating the vulnerability of populations to poverty and do little either to reduce shadow economies or give people a say in economic reconstruction' (Pugh, 2005, p. 25). These criticisms highlight the social significance of processes by which peacebuilders frame the causes of violent conflicts, offer, and justify solutions (Entman, 1993, p. 52). A question for peacebuilders to discern is how their interventions interact with different elements constituting entrenched practices in (post)-conflicting societies. If the social infrastructure of violence is to be overcome, reforms in the political economies in the aftermath of violent conflicts must engage in 'social transformation and not just about new markets, piecemeal political reforms or, in some case informal power-sharing arrangements' (Zanker et al., 2015, p. 87). This is because factional interests can undermine some of these piecemeal reforms, further entrenching 'exploitative practices of patronage' (Omeje, 2018, p. 290). In this study, the focus on communicative practices of ordinary citizens and peacebuilders is to account for how they mobilise for peace. There is a need for a critical understanding of mechanisms through which some citizens and civil societies groups forge ties to solve existing social problems, in this case, election-related violence. Therefore, the processes through which ordinary citizens form solidarities presuppose the role of ideas, motivations and communication. This suggests a need for critical analysis of the dynamic relationship between elements that constitute peace/violent practices and individuals' media practices. Also, it suggests a critical focus on the processes by which specific practices get constructed, become entrenched in society and strategies through which they are reproduced.

As I discuss further in the next section, peace activism is understood as a communicative process through which peacebuilders' produce and maintain meanings (of peace) for participants – constituents, antagonists, and bystanders' (Benford & Snow, 2000). As such, this process of producing and maintaining meanings may depend on people's everyday habits, such as how gender or ethnicity mediate media and information use patterns. In the context of peace activism, where peacebuilders

depend on ordinary citizens' everyday actions matter, mainly what people do with available media platforms concerning peace and conflicts. In this study, the concept of social practice is used to mean 'routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements interconnected to other forms of embodied activities, i.e., the forms of mental activities, things and their use, background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how' (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249). I integrate this definition with Bourdieu's (1989, p. 19) idea of social practices, mainly as he applied it to understand the (re)production of social space, identity, and relations. Bourdieu's formulation is particularly useful for analysing peace activism as a product of the relationship between individuals' or groups' dispositions of (peace or violence habitus) and media practices as resources with which those with access to media platforms engage in (re)producing ideas, meanings, and practices. In the following section, I will discuss framing as a process of producing a social space of associative and dissociative relations with which individuals integrate into common causes – peace activism.

2.3. Framing, media practices and (peace) activism

The preceding sections have tried to show that peacebuilders' processes of defining and offering solutions at any given moment apply to peace activism because they create opportunities for individuals to integrate into causes and are nodes on which social networks may emerge. This is because peace and conflicts as tangible reasons for how solidarities emerge enable individuals and organised groups 'to organise ideas to make sense of relevant events and suggest what is at issue (Gamson, 1989, p. 157). This current section makes a case for how framing as a process by which individuals and organised groups negotiate, appropriate and integrate into causes is a basis of activism. In this study's context, activism is any communicative action furthering or undermining peace goals. Thus, framing processes can contribute to activism by helping integrate people into common causes, constitute interests, social norms or resistance to harmful social practices. In this sense, peacebuilders are 'signifying agents actively engaged in producing and maintaining meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders' (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 613). Thus, peace activism as a mechanism by which individuals forge and maintain ties with others to further the cause of peace presupposes 'a sense of doing something (like peace and conflicts) together only as part of groups' doing something' (Searle, 1985,

p. 13). The ‘sense of doing together’ envelopes both the reasons for the ‘doing’ and ‘emergent network’ because the network may appear to cause the actions in question. However, in this study’s context, the emergent social networks mediate individual’s actions as they ‘display for each other the meanings of their social situation’ (Alexander, 2006, p. 32). For instance, in the mediation of gender and racial injustices, hashtags such as #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter hashtags have become symbolic markers – for integrating diverse actors into these common causes. Hence, these media practices enable diverse ‘co-participants to build real or virtual groups with a sense of solidarity or prelude to civic engagement’ (Schudson & Beckerman, 2020, pp. 260-270). So, media practices such as hashtags, micro-blogs or podcasts can enable individuals and organisations to co-create new ways of doing peace and conflicts. In this regard, a question for peacebuilders is assessing how peer-to-peer sharing of peace microblogs influences individuals’ peace experiences. These processes reveal intricate relationships involving media users, their media practices, and resultant social reality.

As I will discuss in Chapter 4, what individuals do with available media technologies can reveal their constructed sense of collective security. Taking this position on the increasing online media’s impact on peace activism allows for a critical study of dynamic relationships between salient social processes, conflict dynamics, and ensuing media and information use patterns. For instance, in an election campaign, when different actors jockey for position to raise profiles of particular issues while undermining others, ‘these divisions create groups that can be mobilised and that mobilisation makes it possible for them to convince everyone that they exist, to exert pressure and obtain privileges’ (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 22). In this instance, ethnic polarisation as a salient social process is a node on which political actors build profiles of issues and groups. Often, political elites conflate social problems with social identities. Bourdieu (1989, p. 20) argues that ‘symbolic struggle over the perception of the social world may take two different forms: on the objective side a group may act by how it is represented (in size, strength or cohesion); on the subjective side, a group may try to transform categories by which it is represented.

In this study, a critical focus on media practices reveals processes underlying how individuals and organised groups appropriate available media platforms for common causes and their implication for peace and conflict dynamics. By conflating ethnic identities with social problems, campaigners frame lingering issues ‘to mobilise, give

life to ideas, images, and groups' (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 19-21). In this sense, framing processes play a vital role in defining the social or political objects to which inclusion and exclusion are mobilised (Baumgartner et al., 2008, p. 4). The need for relatedness and thus inclusion and exclusion in socially polarised society is answered by ethnic identities. As empirical data in Chapter 4 show, the need for relatedness is a tangible reason individuals forge and maintain ties with others and it may mediate how people engage in peace activism. Therefore, framing (of the idea of peace) can be thought of as mechanisms 'by which individual actions are brought into relation with social objects' such as ethnic identities (Mead, 1925, p. 273). In this sense, ethnicised political campaigns exploit individuals' need for belonging to control inclusion and exclusion, setting individuals up against their moral positions. Thus, framing processes matter to collective action because they influence participation norms, such as 'who can speak and when; what and how they can speak, and desired effects of one's speech' (Ferree et al., 2004, p. 19). The following episode illustrates how framing processes can structure public actions. In Kenya, during the 2017 post-election protests, the acting Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i described the people who had been reported dead during the demonstrations as criminals taking advantage of the protests to loot and destroy property (Achuka, 2017; Psirmoi, 2017). The government's framing of protesters as criminals may have had the effects of justifying police's excessive force and delegitimising the protest's political reasons. During the protests, it is reported that the police killed two young girls, a nine-year-old Moraa Nyarangi and a six-month-old Samantha Pendo. The press reports indicate that Moraa was killed by a stray bullet while playing outside their house in Mathare slum, Nairobi. Pendo was beaten to death by riot police when they stormed into their house in Nyalende slum, Kisumu (Mosoku, 2017; Mukinda et al., 2017).

Therefore, the following points encapsulate reasons why the concept of framing helps understand the link between increased online media use and peace activism. First, the concept of framing turns analysis toward communicative practices as media by which individuals and organisations co-create social spaces and (re)produce social worlds. Here a critical focus is placed on the dynamic relationship between the elements that make up communicative practices as symbolic media with which individuals (re)produce their social realities and salient features mediating collective actions. On the latter point, the tendency has been to explain the potential impacts of media use via technical features while ignoring the social process by which individuals

and organised groups appropriate various media platforms. The focus on technical features, though necessary, ignores the story of how media practices such as microblogging, short-text-messaging-services (SMS), online memes, or hashtags evolve within social relations and practices (Kirkpatrick, 2008, p. 2). For instance, depending on the nature of the media contents, such as hate messages or news in a volatile situation, the medium through which they are delivered can make a difference (Ott & Mack, 2020, p. 329). However, the influence of media platforms on peace and conflict dynamics depends on pre-existing tendencies. Hutchison et al. (2016, p. 15) find a link between social intolerance, media freedom and the likelihood of polarisation and incitement to violence. Hutchison et al. point is critical if one conceives communicative practices as dynamically present in all social processes – social intolerance and media freedom and as influenced by how people use available media platforms and vice versa. If one agrees with the view that communicative practices are made up of dynamic elements, then it is correct to say that 'media technologies allow individuals control over certain issues whereby one can bring about states of affairs that would not otherwise have been brought about' (Kirkpatrick, p. 3). The main point of this argument is that social processes structuring how individuals and organised groups appropriate available media platforms allow one to make sense of the consequences of its various applications across societies (Searle, 1985, p. 43). Indeed, such an analysis may reveal the process by which emerging media practices become socially significant for peace activism, i.e., what particular media technology represents for people (Kirkpatrick, p. 4). For instance, empirical data analysed in Chapter 4 show that people's ideas and meanings about peace, how and why they use particular media platforms, and emerging media and information use patterns relate to people's activism.

Second, framing as a way of mobilising images and giving life to ideas is an essential mechanism for understanding how (social) problems get forged to justify a specific course of action. In different social contexts, framing an issue can offer options for 'controlling the behaviour and language of people who wield little power and maybe suspects on other grounds. It focuses on the problem that reinforces established inequalities' (Edelman, 1988, p. 21). In the case referred to at the start of this section about police brutality in Kenya, framing protestors as looters only helped reinforce police highhandedness and render illegitimate alternative ways of expressing dissent.

Third, framing processes allows one to account for the dynamic relationships between individual actions and collective actions, i.e., peace activism as an 'active (being done), processual (dynamic/evolving) phenomenon that implies agency (work of ordinary citizens and peacebuilders) and contention (involves the generation of interpretive frames) at the level of reality construction' (Benford & Snow, p. 614). In the context of peace activism, 'individual and group intentionality, that sense of doing (wanting, desiring) something together' (Searle, pp. 24-25) are crucial because it allows for critical attention on the role of people's motivations, meanings and communicative strategies in activism. Because of the widespread online media's use in many sectors of society, some authors have tended to overlook the role that physical locations, local contexts and embodied experiences play in protest and mobilisation' (Treré, 2019, p. 8). For instance, as discussed in the preceding section, Latour levels social agency with information and communication technologies (ICTs) to the extent that he calls into question the idea of sociality. Latour (2005, p. 2) groups together humans and non-humans as actors in what he calls reassembling, to which he concludes that it is no longer clear whether there exist relations that are specific enough to be called social. His argument overlooks two things: One is the fact that media platforms cannot solely by their technical features translate individual's and organised groups' access and use into social action; and second, is how to account for the social and political implications of the network of human-non-human actors' actions, mainly where violent acts are concerned. In the latter case, the increasing use of robots for political campaigns and false information online illustrates this point. This thesis considers peace activism and violent conflicts as social and political facts depend on what individuals do with available media platforms. Media practices such as microblogging, podcasts, or hashtags become socially and politically significant for peace activism only when they have consequences for established practices of who speaks, what and how they speak and with what effect.

Consequently, a critical focus on individuals and organisations' media practices contribute to deepening the understanding of how increased media technologies' use can help shape some elements of social and political actions. Therefore, framing within peace activism can be understood as the processes of: '(a) conceptualisation of collective action frames; (b) identification of framing processes relevant to the generation, elaboration, and diffusion of collective action frames; (c) socio-cultural contextual factors that constrain and facilitate framing processes; and (d) elaboration

of the consequences or implications of framing processes' (Benford & Snow, 2000, pp. 612-613). In light of this study, the first process can include considering individuals and organisations' roles in constructing their idea of peace and conflicts. Empirical data in Chapter 4 show that there are various ways people described peacebuilding, which may imply locus of actions, that is, the presumed "where", "who", and "what" of peace activism. The second process points to the means available to individuals and organisations to (co)-produce frames and the likely effect of these means for how entities relate to each other. The third process points to a dynamic relationship between actions and contexts. Finally, the fourth process points to the consequence of the second and third processes.

In this section, I have tried to show that framing as a communicative practice is a helpful way of analysing how increasing online media use can help shape peace activism, particularly in creating crossings on which social networks emerge. A network of peacebuilders emerges because of social and political objects on which groups build profiles of issues. Also, I have argued that the tendencies to explain media's potential impacts via technical features ignore the social process by which emerging media practices become socially and politically significant for activism. Therefore, I argue that the missing link in the study of the impact of online media on (peace) activism is understanding the dynamic relationship between the elements that make up communicative practices and how the use of particular media platforms help shape or intensify certain aspects of society.

The following section develops a conceptual framework that links peace activism to emerging online media practices.

2.4. Conceptual framework

In the context of political events in parts of North Africa and the Middle East in 2011, Mason (2012, p. 66) points out that there are 'three big social changes underlying them, namely, demographics of revolt, technology and human behaviour'. According to this view, widespread unemployment among the youth and/or technological advancement shifted political conditions in these regions. He maintains that 'social media and new technology were crucial in shaping the revolutions of 2011, just as they shaped industries, financial systems, and mass culture in the preceding decades' (Mason, p. 74). This study privileges individual's and organisations' capacity to

recognise social problems and act purposefully communicatively to understand social practices that their media practices help shape. Following the idea of shifting informational and communicative contexts, Floridi (2014, p. vi) argues that 'ICTs are not just tools for interacting with the world and each other; they have become (…) interpretative forces modifying how individuals relate with each other and themselves'. As part of these changing contexts, Floridi (p. 122-123) emphasises that 'by shaping and influencing one's interactions with the world, first-and-second-order ICTs invite individuals to interpret the world informationally, i.e., making it possible for 'data trails to be recorded, monitored, processed, and used for social, political, or commercial purposes'. Floridi's assertions suggest that emerging ICT-based practices can help shape some elements that make up social practices. For instance, recording and monitoring individuals' online data trails can intensify repressive and exploitative political practices such as censorship in societies where they are pervasive. However, the purpose or meaning of online monitoring or data harvesting cannot be performed only by the technical features of these platforms. Censorship provides the reasons for how individuals' and organisations' media practices become politically significant for governments, i.e., what people do with available media platforms is what matters politically. Thus, their media practices tell a political story (Street, 1992, p. 2). The political story is that citizens' digital data trails make it possible for political campaigns to 'construct predictive models of behaviours – predicting how citizens will engage in particular forms of political activity; support – predicting the political preferences of citizens, and responsiveness – predicting how citizens will respond to campaign outreach' (Mian & Rosenthal, 2016, p. 1; Nickerson & Rogers, 2014, p. 54). These practices further point to the need to analyse how 'certain structures of everyday discourse such as rumours, threats, gossip, jokes, or sermons can be exploited' because of the way individuals use available media platforms (Powers, 1995, p. 198). This study takes the position that in analysing the impact of media technologies upon peace activism, three interrelated issues are germane: first, whether what individuals and organised groups do with available media platforms matters, and in what ways.

The second is whether peacebuilders and other organised groups can influence peace and conflict dynamics. The third issue is the influence of different actors' communicative practices on social situations. There is a presumed series of cascades, media practices and contents, forged ties, and shifting peace and conflict dynamics in

these three issues. Furthermore, the polarities between individuals capacity to act purposively – which 'implies free will, choice and autonomy' and the emancipating powers of media platforms – 'the setting within which social, political, and economic events occur and acquire meaning (…) assumes that political behaviour tends to be ordered' (Hay, 2002, p. 94). In this regard, the question of Gerbaudo (2012, p. 2) as to whether 'tweeting and retweeting matter when it comes to influencing collective action – mobilising and coordinating people on the ground' remains relevant. This is because, for individuals who view online activism as enhancing their collective security, emerging media practices are 'spaces of appearance, acting together in the manner of speech and actions' (Arendt, 1958, p. 199). The issue here is how to assess what is intensified when more people use available media platforms for activism. Debates on these issues diverge towards 'those who privilege either technology or social agency as drivers of mobilisation' (Fominaya & Gillan, 2017, p. 388). For instance, while referring to political changes in the Middle East and North Africa, Mason (p. 81) maintains, 'social media networks now allow individual citizens with their massive following to mount pressure on political leaders and institutions' (Mason, p. 81). Similar views are held by Dijck (2013, p. 75) when he argues that the pervasive nature of digital technologies allow 'citizens to take control of their communication and propaganda channels to challenge the power of conventional gatekeepers'. Other authors, (Ogola, 2019, p. 125; Omanga, 2018, p. 2), highlight technical features of social media such as WhatsApp and Twitter for incubating new expressive communication infrastructures. However, critics of the emancipatory power of digital technologies point to the fact that techno-optimists 'did not predict how useful it would prove for propaganda purposes, how masterfully dictators would learn to use it for surveillance, and how sophisticated modern systems of internet censorship would become' (Morozov, 2011, p. xiv). Benkler et al. (2018, p. 4) make similar observations when they point out that 'the convergence of social media, algorithmic news curation, bots, artificial intelligence, and big data analysis created echo chambers that can reinforce pre-existing biases'. Bridle (2018, p. 15) characterises technology's emancipatory view as 'computational thinking, the belief that whatever practical or social problem societies face, a software application can be deployed for it'.

While emphasising social agency, Gladwell (2010) maintains that social media tools 'makes it easier for activists to express themselves'; however, it is 'harder for that expression to have any impact' perhaps because of the 'weak ties' which are not

appropriate for ‘high-risk activism’. Considering the nature of news content (e.g., hate) and context, and the preceding arguments notwithstanding, media platforms can influence communicative practices in the sense that online media allow information to be rendered into easily manipulated and distributed formats. So, in volatile situations, manipulable information has consequences for how people make sense of their social world (Ott & Mack, 2020, pp. 343-347). Therefore, a critical focus on media as practice centres on the question of ‘how media are embedded in the interlocking fabric of social and cultural life’ (Couldry, 2004, p. 129). The focus on media practice brings into sharp focus a dynamic relationship between reasons people forges ties with others’ concerns, the strategies by which they do this, and the effect of the media through which they pursue these goals.

Therefore, conceptually, this study takes communicative practices as a framework for understanding the dynamic relationship between what individuals do with available media technologies and shifting peace and conflict situations. On these dynamic relationships, Powers’ (1995) four-tiered model of communicative practices are particularly instructive. The four tiers are:

- Tier one is ‘message-centred: includes all analyses of the message carrying structures such signs and symbols, formal language, and discourse structures, such as fables, rumours, threats, and the general categories of content they can convey’;
- Tier two is ‘communicator-centred: focuses on the communicator concerning message structures and their meanings, i.e., what the status of the communicator is, how the communicator creates, sustains or destroys relationships, and possible effects of their communication to ways of understanding social reality’;
- Tier three is level-centred: focuses on the various levels of communication, i.e., public, small-group, and interpersonal communication’;
- Tier four is context-centred: focuses on recurrent social situations in which various tiers – elements one, two and three and processes are analysed (Powers, 1995, pp. 194-210).

Powers’ four-tier model provides a framework for analysing how ordinary citizens and peacebuilders’ communicative practices, particularly media and information use patterns, can help shape peace activism. For instance, since the 2007/08 political crisis, vernacular media have been criticised for fanning ethnic hatred and polarisation,

particularly during elections. During an election, various political campaigners mobilise everyday vocabularies, particularly in vernacular, to influence how people engage in local political processes. Media practices such as live phone-in shows, hashtags, microblogging, or podcasts can intensify cultural fables or legends' social significance about lingering historical injustices. Therefore, this four-tiered model allows for a critical focus on emerging citizen media practices that can intensify the experience of particular episodes. Bräuchler and Budka (2020, pp. 4-10) observe that 'media penetrate violence, and violence penetrate media; (...) because 'media technologies, formats, and practices change the lived realities of conflicts, conflict participants and conflicts observers'. For instance, if the focus is placed on individual communicative practices, questions may arise about how their media practices such as live-chat shows, microblogging or online memes used to share humour, rumours, or even threatening messages immerse and intensify the everyday experiences of their locales. Such analyses immediately bring up questions about the content of the communicative practices (how different individuals frame peace and conflicts), the role and relationships of the communicating individuals, and their contexts' socio-political dynamics. Thus, the increasing media use creates conditions for individuals and organisations to co-create spaces and ideas that may help shape their activism. As suggested by Bräuchler and Budka, media penetrate individuals' everyday experiences by influencing participants, observers, and their lived experiences of conflict. Thus, individual media practices can help shape some elements of their communicative practices, i.e., the form and content of conflict messages, the participants, how they relate to each other, and the social situation dynamics such as election campaigns. The other possible way of conceiving how increasing use of online may influence an individual's everyday experiences of peace and conflicts is in the understanding of how particular media practices such as live-phone in/chat shows, online sharing of photos, audio-visuals, memes, or peace-texting become habituated to a people's actions (Searle, 1985, p. 41). In this sense, the process by which media practices such as online memes or hashtags become socially significant for activism implies 'primacy of social acts over social objects – in that, social objects are always constituted by social acts, and in a sense, the object is the continuous possibility of the activity' (Searle, p. 36). Another way of looking at Bräuchler's and Budka's argument is by focusing on how social relations structure communicative practices such as rumours or fables and how they can 'create, sustain or destroy relationships

among participants in a social situation' (Powers, 1995). In Kenya's peacebuilding context, it can be argued that ethnic identities dominate the direction in which solutions to social problems such as political violence and bad governance follow. As argued in chapter 1, polarised relations among some ethnic elites continue to undermine Kenya's sustainable peace prospects. Interethnic tensions structure how political alliances form and dissolve, further undermining robust multi-party practices. As an example: currently, political elites in Kenya have initiated a campaign to amend the 2010 Constitution, to expand the executive branch of government by creating an office of a prime minister and two deputies, supposedly to foster ethnic inclusion – 'build bridges' (Haji et al., 2020, p. xiv). In this case, the proposal to create the prime minister's office and two deputies seems to respond to the course that conflicts are taking in unranked structures of ethnic relations where ethnic elites mobilise ethnic identities to negotiate inclusion.

Furthermore, dynamically present social tendencies, such as intolerance and prejudices, can shape people's media and information use patterns when mobilised. This is because pre-existing layers of social relations, as Kang et al. (2011) and Vosoughi et al. (2018) argue, influence the spread of false information online. In this sense, citizen media practices matter to peace activism because they are structured by these tendencies and may influence how individuals co-create and disseminate rumours, threats, or gossip about an ensuing conflict. Kapferer (2013, p. 14) argues that rumours' constitute a relation to authority: divulging secrets, suggesting hypotheses, and constraining authorities to talk while contesting their status as the sole source authorised to speak'. He adds that 'rumour disrupts speech (dominant narratives) just like people's first free, unregulated radio station does' (p. 14). A critical focus on individuals' and organisations' media practices may reveal how they can render everyday vernacular corrosive. Conventional fact-checking of fake information or rumours assumes that it is people's lack of correct/accurate information that fuels its spread. However, Kapferer (p. 13) points out that 'rumours persist even when official verification declares them false' because rumours constitute relationships. Fact-checking practices often overlook the dynamics of how individuals relate to power structures, including disruption of official voices and pervasive distrust. To address the problem of false information resulting from the increasing use of online media, Cheeseman et al. (2020, p. 158) advocate for digital literacy among members of the public as one way of overcoming its harmful effects on politics. However, this

recommendation overlooks the influence of pre-existing social practices, such as ethnic relations structures, on media and information use patterns, particularly in ethnically polarised countries. The problem of misinformation goes beyond digital literacy; it includes how intergroup relations structures and belief systems such as belief in supernatural powers or social intolerance can influence public discourse dynamics. In this respect, it is possible to think about how citizen media practices such as microblogs help shape particular' social expectations, i.e., by the way, individuals affect the dynamics within their reference networks, particularly in the way one thinks about what others will do or endorse' (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 20). Vosoughi et al.'s (2018) study about the link between spreading false news online and peer-to-peer relations illustrates this point.

As online media platforms increasingly become more embedded in social actions, it can intensify 'individuals persistent contact with their traditional ties of kinship and pervasive awareness of events and issues from their localities' (Hampton, 2017, pp. 127-132). Thus, constant contact appears to undermine Simmel's (1950, p.121) idea of 'freedom as the absence of relations, release from ties that limit individuals' autonomy. In ethnically divided societies, the political effects of deliberation enclaves (Sunstein) resulting from constant contact can constrain robust public debates by such means as online bullying (Carter & Sneesby, 2017). Online bullying can have the effect of silencing targeted groups or individuals. In this regard, Noelle-Neumann (1974, p. 44) concept of 'spiral of silence, i.e., the proclivity of some people to speak up and the other to be silent starts off a spiralling process which increasingly establishes one opinion as the prevailing one' is relevant for understanding the political and social effects of constant contact and pervasive awareness.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Kenya's social communication context may display some elements of deliberation enclaves, particularly in regions where vernacular media dominate public debates. In critical public debates, these tendencies may diminish the diversity of opinions, further polarising participants (Sunstein, 2019). Diminished diversity of opinions may foster 'pluralistic ignorance – a belief trap whereby individuals and organised groups keep doing something out of fear of being shunned or ridiculed, and cannot express their views of what they think because it will disadvantage them' (Bicchieri. pp. 61-63). Alexander (2011, pp. 7-8) succinctly captures this idea when he argues that 'social actors, embedded in collective representations and working through symbolic and material means, implicitly orient towards others as if they were actors on

the stage seeking identification with their experiences and understanding'. Here, the crucial point is the aspects of mobilised social practices, i.e., the symbolic meanings and embodied or internalised knowledge and skills within a practice. Like online media practices such as #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter, live phone-in shows on vernacular radio make it possible for individuals to co-create social spaces and strategies through which they 'display for each other the meanings of their social situation' (Alexander, 2006). Through these co-created social spaces, people intimately participate in the co-constructed causes.

In short, the impact of the increased online media use on peace activism can be understood by how emerging citizen media practices intensify specific elements that make up communicative practices (the message, the communicator, the social institutions and organisations, and the contexts). Moreover, more importantly, the salient processes shape how particular media practices become embedded within social and political actions. The second phenomenon is often overlooked when analysing the potential effects of online media platforms or any other media tools. It is almost assumed that any media platform in use comes embedded with social and political significance. For instance, Ogola (2019) and Omanga (2018) elaborately discuss how the increasing use of online media has helped create vibrant platforms for political engagement among ordinary citizens. However, they seem not to pay critical attention to how specific media platforms – WhatsApp or Twitter and the accompanying practices become socially or politically significant for media users, mainly for activism. In the context of this study, it is vital to critically discuss social processes that shape how specific media platforms become significant for activism. Some proponents of public participation often assume that political disengagement can be solved by increasing access to available media platforms. However, this assumption does not seem to account for engagement aspects that get intensified with increased access. Following Castell's (2015, p. 9) idea of programmers of networks of power switches, proponents of the emancipating power of media technologies imply that the reasons people engage in political actions are because they have been switched on.

Therefore, this is the reason behind this thesis: to bring into sharp focus the dynamic relationship between the elements that make up communicative practices and how increasing media use can help shape public engagement, particularly peace activism. That is, understanding how emerging ordinary citizens' and peacebuilders' media

practices can help shape and even increase activism with positive and negative implications for inter-ethnic relations and electoral peace.

Towards this end, three concepts are essential: media practices, social practices, and peacebuilding. First, the increasing use of online media across different societies produces media practices (such as hashtags, memes, or automated message portals) that can influence the dynamics of how people engage in societal processes. Media practices, as applied here, means 'what people do with media in the contexts in which they act; (…) actions that are directly oriented to media, actions that involve media without necessarily having media as their aim or object; and actions whose possibility is conditioned by the prior existence, presence or functioning of media' (Couldry, 2012, p. 35). Media practices of individuals and organised groups can help shape how 'authority is claimed, won, contested and defended' (…) 'reality of it creates around issues such as peace and conflicts, and how that or any other reality for that matter is possible in the first place' (Ruddock, 2017, p. 20). Consequently, it is critically important to understand how citizen media practices allow many people to take part in the cultural construction of peace or violence (Ruddock, p. 22).

Second, social practices, according to Bourdieu (1977, pp. 82-83), as everyday actions are products of a dynamic relationship between habitus – the schemes producing practices and perceptions and social position – the resources and networks available to individuals within a context. In Kenya's case, peace and violent practices can be viewed as outcomes of a dynamic relationship between individuals' embodied ideas of peace and conflicts, media with which these actions are performed and emergent networks (based on identities), particularly during election campaigns. Therefore, a critical focus on individuals' and peacebuilders media practices can help reveal how increasing use of online media can shape their actions in the context of existing practices of peace and conflict. As discussed in Chapter 1, embodied experiences of peace and conflicts in Kenyan electoral politics seem to shape the course of solutions to the lingering problem of political violence during elections. Bourdieu's interest in the concept of social practices brings to light structures that help reproduce inequalities. For instance, in their study on the link between education and domination, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, pp. 7-11) demonstrate how education practices help reproduce class differences, i.e., how social class mediates educational expectations. In this study's context, the conditions of unranked ethnic relations structures make it possible for ethnic elites to mobilise social identities to perpetuate

inter-group animosities and tensions. In the process, mobilised identities obscure the domination these structures help reproduce. In this context, Schatzki's (2002, p. 87) definition of practices as 'temporally evolving, open-ended set of doings and sayings linked by practical understandings, rules, teleo-affective structures, and general understandings' is instructive. Schatzki suggests three elements that compose a practice, namely:

- Practical understanding – the skill or capacity that underlies activity, it executes the actions;
- Rules – the explicit rules, formulations, principles, precepts, and instructions that enjoin, direct people, to perform specific actions' and
- Teleo-affective structure – the normativised and hierarchically ordered ends' (Schatzki, 2002, pp. 79-80).

In this study, I integrate Bourdieu's and Schatzki's notion of social practice and as expounded on by Shove et al. (2012, p. 14) as being made up of elements, namely, 'materials – including things, technologies, tangible physical entities; competences – encompassing skills, know-how and technique; and meanings – comprising symbolic meanings, ideas and aspirations'. As already emphasised in the preceding sections, a critical focus on social practices can help reveal the processes by which lived traditions and experiences get transformed into symbolic content and actions (Hepp, 2013, p. 13). In the context of the cited cases of election campaigns in Kenya, where political elites often use vernacular as a linguistic strategy to localise political issues, they may exploit cultural symbols, songs and sayings to produce meanings, rhythms and routines to mobilise their bases. In the sense that election campaigns and voting can be viewed as an 'everyday performance of embodied attitudes, behaviours and orientations and uses for material things' (Alexander, 2011; Mattoni & Treré, 2014). In Kenya, the 2017 presidential election was contested along ethnic alliances with two major political coalitions – the Kenyatta-led Jubilee Party (JP), supported mainly by the Kikuyu and Kalenjin communities, and the National Super Alliance (NASA) under Odinga encircling the Luo, Luhya, and Kamba communities. These ethnic coalitions during this election 'formed a context in which individuals and organised groups performed voting' (Schatzki, 2002, p. 69). Moreover, the alliances formed the context in which voters ordered their performances (Schatzki, p. 70).

This study proceeds from the assumption that what ordinary citizens and peacebuilders do with available media platforms apply to peace activism only to the

degree that it mediates their concerns with those of other group members. Therefore, it is vital to make sense of strategies through which people integrate into common causes. Election campaigns are adversarial, but especially in ethnically polarised societies. In most election campaigns, political contenders deploy arrays of antagonistic narratives to mobilise for their agenda and candidates (Manin, 1997, p. 227). Usually, such confrontational narratives tend to help political candidates construct perceived voters' needs. Thus, voting in an election becomes both a representation and a performance of hopes, aspirations, or fears. Thus, voting in an election can have a threefold meaning: First, it reveals voters' embodied skills and knowledge about the mechanics of voting itself – marking of a ballot paper and casting it; and voters as framed by an election, i.e., how various candidates construct what they deem as legitimate voters' needs and concerns.

Second, voting as an activity can represent specific meanings for individuals and organised groups. Bennett (1977, pp. 219-220) suggests that election campaigns can serve two related purposes: getting one elected; and as the backdrop against which the citizens can work out their tensions and satisfy needs for security, order, leadership, and control over the future. The latter meaning points to how citizens get to display for each other what an election may mean (Alexander, 2006). Finally, the third meaning of voting in an election is electing individuals with the hope that they will, in turn, translate the symbolic meanings into material things to satisfy perceived voters' needs. Therefore, election campaigns as ways of doing politics are made up of everyday' bodily performances (embodied skills and knowledge), mental representation as in attitudes, behaviours, and orientations (meanings), and uses of objects and things (materials things standing for elections)' (Mattoni & Treré, 2014, p. 258). In Kenya, the enduring mobilisation of political coalitions based on tribes, election campaigns capture the dynamic interfacing of these threefold meanings of an election. Therefore, a critical analysis of ordinary citizens and peacebuilders' media practices during election campaigns can provide insights into how they engage in political campaigns, especially for peace activism. In Kenya, political campaigns tend to be polarising and identity-based. Identity-based political mobilisation, thus, may influence the course of conflict dynamics.

Finally, this study is located within the ongoing quest for sustainable peace in Kenya and how changes in information and communication systems influence social contexts and practices of peace and conflict. The agenda, therefore, is to consider how citizen

media practices have the potential of contributing to peace activism. By citizens producing the lived local experiences in the media (online), there are potentials for intensifying or reinforcing pre-existing social conditions to the degree that lived experiences get amplified, (re)framed, or allow spaces for it to be performed (Hjarvard et al., 2015). In this sense, peace activism can be understood as creating specific communities with a sense of who they are and as symbols standing for definite values, ideas, or practices (Edelman, 1988, p. 2). However, peace activism responds to objective social and political facts about conflicts, deep-seated social divisions, or legacies of gross violations of human rights. The idea of activism in this study is that such communicative practices can either further or undermine individuals and organisations' peace goals. Thus, peace activism as 'performance of practices involves active integration of materials, meanings, and competencies' (Shove et al., 2012, pp. 119-120). The task for peacebuilders is to grasp what peace stands for (meanings, symbolism) among members of the public; what material things, apparatus, activities or artefacts individuals and organised groups associate peace with; and the competencies - skills and know-how with which people engage in peace activism.

As argued in Chapter 1, the presence of competing locations of authority can challenge prevailing notions of peace (Courtheyn, 2017). Thus, another relevant concept for explaining these tensions is Bourdieu's (1985, p. 726) notion of 'social space as a space of relationships defined by the capital (including cultural, economic, symbolic) individual has, and which positions them at the same time conditioning their actions'. In this sense, activism can be understood as a product of how individuals forge ties with others for common causes. Peace is thus the concrete reason individuals forge ties with others. Similarly, peace activism as a practice can also be interpreted in Lefebvre's (1991, pp. 39-41) notion of 'space as spatial practices, space as representations, and space as representational'. If Lefebvre's idea is applied to peacebuilding in the context of the current study: first, as 'spatial practices', it could include material things in the space, i.e., security apparatus of the state, or buildings – worship places and media technologies.

Second, as space as representations, peace activism produces knowledge, ideas, policies, and programmes by experts and practitioners. For instance, this study conceives peacebuilding as initiatives aimed at 'constructing new environments' and as a 'process of deconstructing the structures of violence and constructing or

reconstructing structures of peace' (Keating & Knight, 2004, p. xxxv). However, this vision of peace might radically differ from things in the space by which people associate and engage in peace activism. Because protracted conflicts tend to corrode, corrupt, and undermine 'institutional and procedural devices for addressing social problems such as development policies, policies for promoting diversity are foundational to a political culture that sustains peaceful societies' (Keating & Knight, p. xi). The dialectic tensions, for instance, could arise from the fact that 'localised perception of peace, safety, and security are articulated in different ways and raises different issues' (Mac-Ginty & Firchow, 2016, p. 1). In Chapters 4 and 5, I return to this point with empirical data and further illustrations.

Furthermore, as a representational space, peace activism can be what individuals and organised groups live, experience, and perform through various activities (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 40). In ethnically polarised societies, either meaning of peace can have adverse outcomes. For instance, in the most extreme cases, if ethnic animosity and tensions define an election campaign's contours, then practices such as ethnic cleansing can become acceptable. If social identities are constructed in political campaigns as a problem, they become excused from public concerns – evictions of or attacks against rival ethnic groups are not liable to sanctions (Edelman, p. 12). One can interpret the enduring problem of political and ethnic violence in Kenya in these terms. Therefore, peace activism as practices furthering goals of peaceful society should aim to transform elements within practices that perpetuate violent conflicts because 'practices change when new elements are introduced or when existing elements are combined in new ways' (Shove et al., p. 120). Therefore, in a socially fragmented society, peace communication should aim to influence elements constituting 'the valued pursuits to which interpretation of life chances make sense' (Shove et al., p. 157). This, in effect, requires peace activism to redefine symbolic meanings of political representation, without which peace actions cannot transform elements within political practices that reproduce violence.

2.5. Overview of the chapter

This chapter set out to construct a relevant conceptual framework for understanding how the increasing online media use by ordinary citizens and peacebuilders can help shape activism. In Kenya's ongoing quest for sustainable peace, emerging citizen

media practices – hashtags, microblogs, cyberbullying and online hate content, can define the “what”, “who”, and “how” of social causes. Indeed, these media practices have consequences for peace activism because they influence media and information use patterns and, by extension, established conflict management and resolution norms. A critical assessment of relevant literature shows a missing link in the online media’s impact on peace activism: understanding the dynamic relationship between the elements that constitute communicative practices and emerging media use patterns’ effects on established practices. A critical analysis of the suggested role of online media in activism reveals the tendency to explain potential effects via technical features while ignoring processes by which specific platforms become significant socially or politically for individuals and organised groups. This point is critical if one conceives of online media’s effect as a dynamic relationship between the elements that make up social practices and emerging media users’ practices. If one agrees with this view, then the task at hand is to account for how citizen media practices help shape or even increase activism, particularly in volatile situations—accounting for these links may help reveal how and what specific media technology represents for people (Kirkpatrick, 2008).

Consequently, media practices point to the need to analyse how specific structures of everyday discourse (rumours, threats, gossip, or sermons) can be rendered corrosive practices (Powers, 1995). The study takes the position that in analysing the impact of online media upon activism, three interrelated issues are germane: first, whether what individuals and organised groups do with the media platforms available to them matters to peace activism, and in what ways. The second is whether activists and other organised groups can influence how ordinary citizens engage in peace activism. Third, whether communicative practices by different actors can intensify the dynamics of a context in which they are performed.

In Chapter 3, attention turns to the research methodology, discussing how different research methods are applied to gather pieces of evidence to account for the link among the three issues suggested above.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.0. Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I have argued that in volatile situations where ethnic tensions dominate social processes, what people do with available media platforms matters to both conduct of conflict and peace activism. The increasing online media use for peace activism also coincides with positive and harmful practices such as early crisis warning and reporting systems and spreading false information and hateful content. The harmful media practices impose undesirable consequences on established conflict resolution norms. The chapters highlight numerous cases where media platforms in use are often linked with the options created for people to engage in diverse causes, including peace activism (Dubow et al., 2017, pp. 2-3; McKone et al., 2015, pp. 3-4; Vincent et al., 2017, pp. 22-27). By contrast, in Kenya, in the aftermath of the 2007/08 post-election violence, there has been widespread online media use for peace activism as strategies for conflict management and prevention. However, what is not adequately known is how this increased use and emerging citizen media practices help shape activism in volatile situations. Thus, the task was to develop a framework to guide how research methods can be used to gather empirical evidence to answer the questions posed. In the light of this study and the ongoing quest for sustainable peace in Kenya, empirical data is required on at least three issues, namely, the ideas and meanings people have about peace activism; data about how and why people use particular media platforms for social and political action; and how people think that the use of specific media platforms has affected their social situations. Therefore, this study is designed to systematically analyse ideas, practices, and meanings that ordinary citizens and peacebuilders have about peace activism and their use of available media platforms for activism.

As discussed in detail in the sections that follow, this study triangulates actions of peace organisations and those of members of the public using structured interviews and cross-sectional surveys together with a mixture of open and closed questions; and data gathered is analysed qualitatively and quantitatively (Ayoub et al., 2014, p. 72). In this respect, this current chapter provides a detailed account of how research methods and instruments are applied in design, case selection and data collection

procedures, and analysis methods. Thus, the research methods discussed in this chapter are to find out how the increasing online media use applies to strategies by which individuals and organisations connect to ideas, networks or actions furthering or eroding peace goals and why they do so. Moreover, to understand how citizen media practices help shape peace activism, data is needed about the 'meanings and purposes individuals attribute to their actions' (Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 26). Although other studies on this topic might favour a focus on a single unit of analysis, i.e., media platforms, activists or members of the public, this study prefers an in-depth study design combining media practices of peace organisations and members of the public.

This study combines media practices of participants, their ideas of peace and motivations for engaging in activism – relevant literature suggests these social processes are often taken for granted or overlooked. For instance, recent studies by Omanga (2018) and Ogola (2019) show how online media have become significant for politics but overlook the meanings and purposes people may attribute to their actions and how they help shape public engagement. Omanga (p.2) argues that WhatsApp groups have become popular forms of participation in Kenya's political life because of the flexibility of these platforms and low data charges. However, he does not interrogate how the underlying social process structures people's ideas of participation or politics. Similarly, Ogola (2019, p. 132) identifies various digital practices, such as political memes or hashtags people engage in politics. However, he does not systematically analyse them to establish the social or political basis making them viral. The virality of his case study of the hashtag #Whatwouldmagufulido may point to another reality of how widely media users associating with it endorse authoritarianism and technical features of platforms in use. Thus, this study combines several data sources (peace organisations and ordinary citizens) and methods (survey and structured interviews) to maximise their theoretical advantage (Denzin, 2009, p. 301). By collecting data from different analysis units, Denzin (p. 301) argues, 'analysts can discover what their concepts have in common across sources'. In this regard, I combine activities of the members of public and peace organisations in order to answer different aspects of questions about meanings and purposes that individuals attribute to their activism and their use of media platforms (Ayoub et al., p. 92). In this study, the impact of online media on peace activism is defined by a dynamic relationship between contexts (such as election campaigns in ethnically polarised conditions) and emerging citizen media practices which may intensify it.

Methodologically, this study draws inspiration from Ferree et al.'s (2004, p. 45) analysis of the role of different groups' media practices in facilitating or hindering the quality of public debates.

In their study, Ferree et al. (p. 286) triangulate methods, data sources, and analysis to understand how public discourse's quality is related to the media practices and actions of organised groups and individuals in and out of political institutions. Ferree et al. (2002, p. 290) also argue that media practices can set the criteria for who should speak, what can be spoken, how it should be spoken, and the potential outcomes of one's speech. In this sense, it is vital to assess how emerging citizen media practices resulting from increased online media use can influence peace and conflict dynamics. For instance, if one agrees that the widespread media technologies' use has transformed how rumours or false stories spread, it is vital to know how this potentially affects both the content of speech and who can speak. Similarly, if one agrees that there are increased options for people to (co)-create and disseminate content, including false and hateful material, it is crucial to know how this transforms the way that individuals relate with sources of information and its potential consequences on the peace and conflict dynamics (Powers, 1995, pp. 192-193). Therefore, empirical data about how and why individuals join causes promoting or undermining peace goals is critical to discovering how embedded media platforms help shape these dynamics.

As discussed in chapters 1 & 2, in ethnically polarised societies, social identities are often mobilised for political ends because of the power of meanings and purposes that these identities have for different groups. Thus, the objectified meanings and purposes of ethnic identities within polarised social conditions become the material reasons groups and networks mobilise and emerge. For this study, the conditions of ethnic polarisation have consequences for patterns of information use and activism because of pervasive inter-ethnic tensions and suspicion. In this study, data is sought not only about frequencies of use of various media platforms but also, how for instance, pervasive inter-ethnic tensions or repressive media laws cause particular media's use patterns to emerge. However, in other instances, particular media technologies are forced upon people (such as digital biometric identification systems currently being rolled out in Kenya and other parts of the world) to the extent that the emerging media practices are products of the struggle between political interests and individuals' negotiated use. To this end, media practices such as short-text-messaging services (SMS), hashtags, microblogging or online memes only become socially or politically

significant for activism when they impact established practices of who speaks and what and how one speaks.

Across many societies, the phenomenon of the increased online media use presents both practical and conceptual challenges. In practical terms, the increasing online media use coincides with the intensified spread of false information, hateful content, and ethnic polarisation that imposes negative consequences upon the practice of peace activism. For instance, intensified the spread of false stories or hateful content, mainly during crises, puts pressure on the credibility of established practices and social norms requiring investment in new capabilities, such as fact-checking. Many organisations now spend substantial resources responding to false stories, signalling the influence of these media platforms on their established communicative practices. In Chapter 4, empirical data about shifting dynamics of opportunities and threats for individuals and organisations illustrate how fringe voices can influence processes' credibility regardless of its consequences, particularly for the vulnerable groups. In conceptual terms, there is a need to understand how the increased online media use is linked with activism, i.e., why individuals use particular media platforms for activism and how their media practices influence activism. Therefore, if peace communicators have to rely upon media platforms for peacebuilding, then they need to know how and why individuals use particular media platforms for activism and with what effect. This is because peacebuilders have to convince themselves that what people do with available media platforms can contribute to or undermine actions furthering peace goals. Also, members of the public might be interested in knowing how their media's use patterns contribute to both positive and negative outcomes. As empirical data analysed in Chapter 4 also reveal, many respondents worry about online practices such as bullying and stalking, harassment, or political incitement. The course that solutions to the problems resulting from increased online media use can take depend upon one's assumptions about the nature of their relations: how the phenomenon of online activism relates to the problem of false information, cyberbullying, or hate speech.

As discussed in chapter 2, the relationship between the capacity of individuals and organisations to act purposefully and embedded media platforms is what divides Latour's notion of reassembling networks of actors – humans and non-human, in which their agency is limited to a modified web of relations, from Bourdieu's notion of 'social

practices' in which he suggests a dynamic relationship between an individual's capacity to contribute towards the construction of social realities and simultaneously constrained by invisible structures determining one's actions. A critical task in this study is to understand what peace activism in volatile situations may comprise, i.e., how media platforms, acts of individuals disseminating peace messages, election events and ethnic identities all come together in activism; that is to say, how individuals' actions and practices can be grounds for affirming peace activism (Epstein, 2016, p. 158). For instance, for one to be called a peacebuilder, it means that their embodied ideas, meanings and skills of peace must induce in them tangible reasons and purposes for engaging in activism. Epistemologically, this approach is preferred because the reality under study, peace activism, its existence as a social and political fact depends upon individuals' and organised groups' social relations and schemes of their perceptions, attitudes, and practices (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 14). For instance, in ethnically polarised societies, pervasive tensions can influence inter-group relationships to the extent that they cause groups' emergence as symbols standing for specific values, ideas or practices (Edelman, 1988, p. 2). Under particular conditions, if translated into media practices, these tensions can also become grounds for the emergence of activism – peaceful or violent. In this study's context, it seems to suggest that media practices can be essential elements in peace activism. However, this presupposes particular conditions that make it possible for various media practices to become significant socially and politically for activism. Thus, the methods discussed in this chapter aim to help study these conditions. The following section discusses the rationale for this study's design in order to situate the case of peace activism in Kenya during the 2017 general elections.

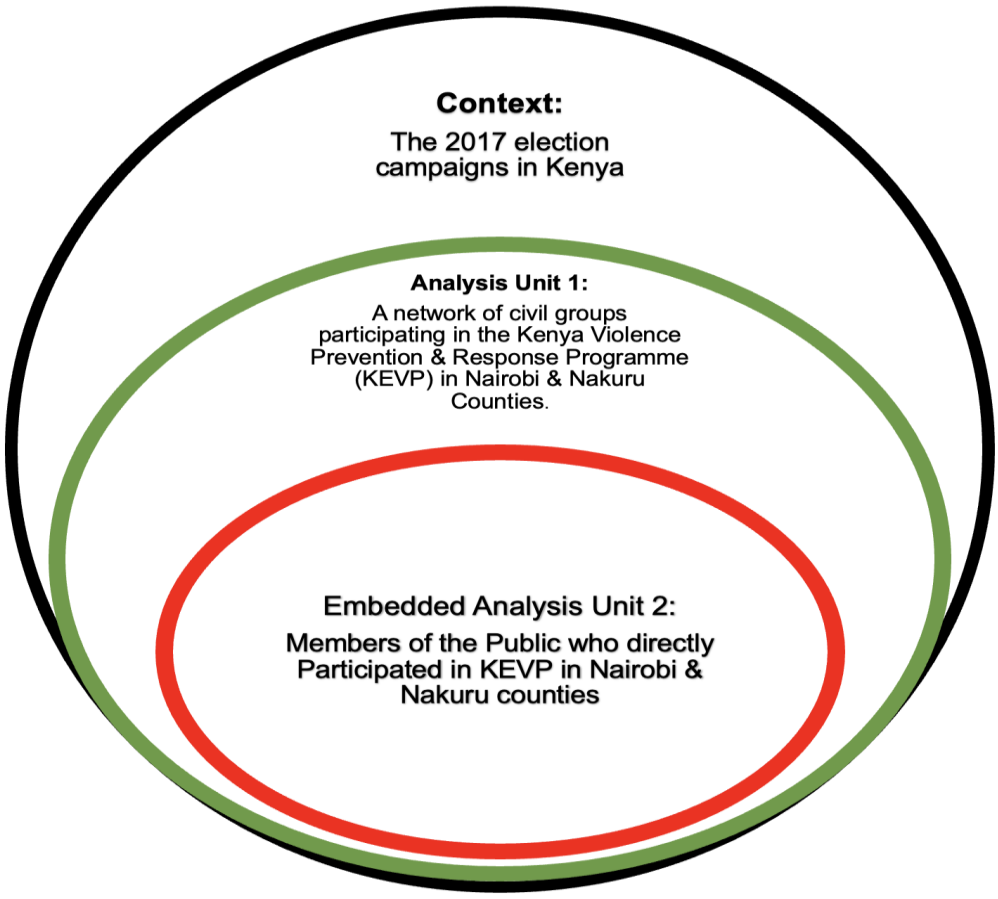
3.1. The rationale for research design

After the 2007/08 political crisis, Kenya saw a proliferation of ICT-based peace initiatives such as 'Sisi Ni Amani, UWIANO Platform, Ushahidi, Picha Mtaani, Umati, and PeaceTech Lab Africa' that engage citizens in online conflict management and resolution practices. The assumptions driving many of these initiatives might be that to deliver peace and conflict management solutions efficiently, automation is necessary and that doing so depends on 'improved data collection, organisation, and analysis' (Kahl & Larrauri, 2013, p. 2). In the view of this study, the tendency to focus

on technical features such as automated real-time data collection from conflict zones, although necessary, ignores the story of how media practices such as short-text-messaging-services (SMS) or hashtags evolve within social relations and practices of communities (Kirkpatrick, 2008). Although the focus on media platforms' technical features might shed light on the effects of 'persistent contact' (Hampton, 2017, p. 132) people have with entities they are connected with, it overlooks the meanings and purposes that individuals and organisations appropriate for particular media technologies. These processes by which people appropriate particular media platforms are at the core of social or political activism and the resulting impact. As Papacharissi (2009, p. 230) asserts, 'it is not the nature of technologies themselves, but rather, the discourse surrounding them that guides how society appropriates these technologies'. Tools and functionalities of ICTs can limit to a specific extent individuals' social or political action. However, the social processes by which particular media platforms become significant for individuals are crucial dimensions of these platforms' impact. Therefore, the influence of online media upon peace activism points to the need for appraising how widely specific media platforms are accessed and the meanings and purposes for which particular media become socially and politically significant for activism. Thus, the task here is to gather empirical data to understand better the role of citizen media practices in peace activism. As Yin (2018, p. 55) points out, the case study approach can help investigate a phenomenon with presumed causal links in real-world interventions that are too complex for other methods if used singularly. So, this in-depth embedded research is designed to gain insights into how individuals and organisations use media and information for peace activism, especially during election campaigns. A case study, according to Robert Yin (p. 50) 'is an empirical method used to investigate current phenomenon (in this case, peace activism) in-depth and within its real-world context (Kenya's 2017 elections campaign), particularly in the event where the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context may not be evident', i.e., the boundaries between peace activism language and election campaigns can be blurred. This study examines the communicative strategies of participants – peacebuilders and ordinary citizens in the PeaceTech Lab Africa's *Kenya Election Violence Prevention and Response Programme* (KEVP). Thus, this study is limited to strategies and mechanisms with which participants in KEVP engaged in activism and with what effect.

The KEVP brought together a loose network of diverse actors – community-based organisations (CBO), Non-governmental organisations (NGO), faith-based organisations (FBO) and members of the public. The initiative aimed to address the risks of political violence in Kenya during the 2017 elections in the counties of Kisumu, Nakuru, Nandi, and Nairobi by supporting civil society groups and members of the public to engage in peace-promoting activities. The KEVP was a joint initiative between Mercy Corp and PeaceTech Lab. The latter provided an online platform for local leaders to develop targeted peace messaging and for the public to report cases of election-related tension, rumours, and early warning messages. By the time of the election in 2017, PeaceTech Lab indicated that KEVP online platform had 200,000 subscribers signed up from across the four counties. Methodologically, the case study embeds two units of analysis – the peace activism within the network of civil society groups and between the civic groups and the members of the public in the counties of Nairobi and Nakuru. The figure below visualises the design.

Table 3:1: Visualised research design



Furthermore, the KEVP end-line evaluation report acknowledges that since the programme managed to undertake all proposed activities, the actual impact, as well as the attainment of its original objectives, were difficult to assess (KEVP, 2018, p. b). A critical focus on media practices, as this study proposes, can provide rich empirical data that provides another dimension to the assessment difficulties that the KEVP end-line report highlights. In the context of the current research topic, focusing upon media access and use alone without accounting for why and how particular media practices become significant for activism overlooks a vital dimension of media impact. These insights are helpful to account for the features within peace activism that can be intensified or entrenched when particular media practices become politically significant for individuals, especially in volatile situations. Therefore, individuals' or organisations' media practices resulting from the increasing online media use only become socially significant if and only if the emerging practices affect media and information use patterns (Searle,1985, p. 23).

3.1.1. Operationalising the research question

This study's primary research question examines how increasing use of online media is influencing peace activism, i.e., how emerging media practices of ordinary citizens and peacebuilders can help shape or even increase activism with positive and negative implications for inter-ethnic relations and electoral peace. This question presupposes three interrelated units of analysis: citizen media practices (what individuals do with available media technologies), peacebuilders' media practices (peace activism), and social situations in which these processes occur (election campaigns). Underlying this investigation is Kenya's search for sustainable peace within protracted constitutional reforms to find balance and formula for equitable resource sharing in an ethically polarised society. As argued in Chapter 1, Kenya's information and communication systems have undergone rapid transformations compared to the period before the 2007/08 political crisis when the government heavily censored and controlled public communications. Therefore, to argue that what individuals do with available media platforms applies to peace activism is to say that their media practices can help shape some features that make up social practices. This argument is based on the following research propositions that guide the development of specific research questions and tools for gathering empirical data.

a) *Citizen media practices can contribute to peace activism*: Some of the defining features of online media platforms include the persistent contact media users have with people and entities they are connected with, leading to a possible situation of a pervasive awareness of events or happenings arising from these entities (Hampton, p.132). These features can structure how individuals and organisations access and interact with the entities in question. A focus on what individuals do with available media platforms presupposes people's capacity to comply with specific courses of actions and that the media through which these actions are performed can have effects. Therefore, if one agrees with this proposition's direction, the task here is to gather empirical data on how citizen media practices apply to the logic of peace or violent actions. A vital point here is to demonstrate the dynamic relationship between the reasons for which individuals engage in peace activism and emerging media practices. Moreover, empirical data about what individuals do with available media platforms can reveal how their media practices influence information use patterns and thus become significant for activism. In brief, it is crucial to analyse how emerging media practices shape opportunities and risks for individuals and organisations. Also, such data reveal diverse meanings and attitudes people hold about peace and conflicts, how they are appropriated and enacted. For instance, this study is interested in what motivates people to engage in peace activism and the strategies by which they forge ties with others. This data reveals how available media platforms become significant for activism and are embedded within social actions. The table below summarises the logic of the specific research question and the data required.

Table 3:2: Research proposition 1 summary

Specific research question: *How do citizen media practices contribute to peace activism?*		
Operationalised questions: *What are the patterns or practices in information use, and channels of access within peace activism? What are the ideas of peacebuilding among citizens in ethnically polarised societies? What motivates people to seek peace information, and engagement in peace actions? How do various contexts shape information that is sought, platforms of access and participation in peacebuilding?*		
Concepts	**Empirical Data Indicators**	**Data sources**
Media practices Peacebuilding Deep stories Performance	▪ Opinions about things and actions respondents associate with peacebuilding; ▪ Activities respondents engage in to promote peace; ▪ Opinions about peacebuilding; ▪ Motivations for engaging in peace actions; ▪ Respondents' views about trends in information and media use.	▪ Respondents' interviews (structured interviews) and cross-sectional survey reports; ▪ Organisations project reports; ▪ Literature review.

b) *Organisation-enabled peace communication is strategic to peacebuilding*: this proposition brings to the centre the role civil society groups play in enabling members of the public and communities to engage in collective actions (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013, p. 13). The assumption is that by enabling diverse actors to engage in collective actions, organisations help in not only supporting participation but also mobilise and co-create a repertoire of practices strategic to peace activism – because 'constituent organisations can adopt a signature mode of personalising the engagement of publics' (Bennett & Segerberg, p. 48). As pointed out in Chapter 2, peace activism is a product of, among other factors, dynamic relationships between causes for peace and conflict and available media platforms. Thus, in volatile situations, peace and conflicts create causes for which groups seeking to further or undermine peace goals can emerge. Bennett and Segerberg point about signature mode for individualising engagement is similar to Bourdieu's (1998) argument about the process of creating social or political objects around which to mobilise people and exert public pressure.

In online activism, hashtags such as #MeToo or #BlackLivesMatter are an example of a signature mode for personalising engagement. Moreover, in the

cited case of deadly anti-riot police actions during the disputed 2017 presidential elections in which two children, Samantha Pendo and Moraa Nyarangi, were killed, the hashtag – #JusticeForBabyPendo was used to mobilise the protest. According to historical data retrieved on the #JusticeForBabyPendo hashtag between July 1st and December 31st 2017, there were 4913 tweets sent reaching over ten million people demanding justice[1]. In 2019 a public inquest found five police officers culpable for the death of Pendo. Therefore, Bourdieu's, Bennett, and Segerberg's point is vital for understanding strategies by which civil society organisations at different levels of society mobilise individuals to participate in interventions that lead to co-creating media practices and spaces for activism.

Table 3:3: Research proposition 2 summary

Specific research question: *In what ways do civil society groups strategically promote peace activism?*		
Operationalised questions: *What are the various ways online peace activism is described? How has the use of online media for peace activism shaped users and their locales? What are the emerging online peace practices among users?*		
Concepts	**Empirical Data Indicators**	**Data sources**
Media practices Peace communication Deep stories Performance	▪ Perceptions civil society groups and members of the public have about online media; ▪ How civil society groups and members of the public represent online activism; ▪ Perceived levels of confidence among respondents to use online media for peace; ▪ Respondents' views about the role of peace activism.	▪ Respondents' interviews (structured interviews) and cross-sectional survey reports; ▪ Organisations' project reports; ▪ Literature review.

c) *Increased use of online media has influenced peace and conflict dynamics:* If the preceding two propositions provide significant pieces of evidence that what individuals do with available media platforms matters for peace activism – as they can be a basis for co-creating practices and spaces for activism – and that such media practices as enabled by civil society groups are strategic to peace communication, then the emerging media practices have consequences for peace activism in volatile situations. These presuppositions are based on the idea that collectively recognised opportunities and risks associated with

[1] https://twitter.com/hashtag/justiceforbabypendo?src=hashtag_click

emerging media practices could intensify some features that makeup peace activism. These features include the form and content of peace messages (how peace is transformed by the proliferating options for individuals to co-create and disseminate unregulated content); the actors involved (the implication for peace activism when unregulated voices join in the conversation); and the context in which peace activism occurs. Consequently, the proliferating options for individuals to produce and circulate unregulated contents have implications for how individuals and organisations experience their locales – because diverse actors take part in producing, distributing, and mobilising repertoires of practices with which they shape the texture and contours of social realities (Hjarvard et al., 2015, p. 7).

Table 3:4: Research proposition 3 summary

Specific research question: *What are the implications of the emerging online media practices to peace activism in ethnically polarised contexts?*		
Operationalised questions: *In what way is the increasing use of online media shifting the dynamics of opportunities, risks, threats, and conflicts individuals or groups experience in their locales? What are the indications that widespread use of online media is changing contexts of peacebuilding?*		
Concepts	**Empirical Data Indicators**	**Data sources**
Media practices Misinformation Peacebuilding contexts/situations Deep stories Performance	▪ Perceptions civil society groups and members of the public have about the opportunities and risks of online media; ▪ How civil society groups and members of the public address perceived opportunities and risks of increased use of online media; ▪ Online media activities or content respondents perceive harmful; ▪ Respondents' views about barriers to online peace activism.	▪ Respondents' interviews (structured interviews) and cross-sectional survey reports; ▪ Organisations project reports; ▪ Literature review.

Therefore, after laying out the rationale for this study's design, situating the case under study, and operationalising research questions and propositions, the following section discusses relevant issues underpinning the selection of research sites and participants. The section provides a brief outline of dynamics shaping the conflicts in the research sites and how the case under study is located within the interventions.

3.1.2. Study location

Since 2010 when a new constitution was promulgated, Kenya has been divided into 47 devolved county governments. The majority of these counties are multi-ethnic, including Nairobi and Nakuru, the sites for this study. Compared to other regions of the country, these counties have better physical infrastructure and continue to experience marked economic growth (KNBS, 2018, p. 40). According to the 2019 Kenya National Census, Nairobi's population is 4.39 million people, while Nakuru is 2.16 million. Nationally, Nairobi County is the most populous, while Nakuru is third. Regarding access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), of the 1.49 million households in Nairobi County, 53.4% own a radio, 68.7% have a functional TV, and 42.1% have access to the internet. While in Nakuru County, of the 598,237 households, 61.1% own a radio, 40.7% have a functional TV, and 20.9% have access to the internet (KNBS, 2019, pp. 462-468). During political campaigns, both regions remain vulnerable to ethnic tensions and violent inter-ethnic conflicts as documented by the two non-judicial commissions of inquiry into causes of tribal clashes – the Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence (CIPEV), which investigated the root cause of political violence going back to pre-independent Kenya; and the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Tribal Clashes In Kenya – popularly known as 'Akiwumi Commission' (Akiwumi et al., 1999, p. 23; Waki et al., 2008, p. 78). The Akiwumi Commission investigated tribal clashes that had occurred in various parts of Kenya from 1991 to 1999.

During the 2007/08 political crisis, the two counties witnessed widespread tribal clashes, displacement of people, deaths, and property destruction (Waki, 2008, pp. 106-7 & pp. 196-201). In 2010 when the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted six Kenyans, including the current President Uhuru Kenyatta, and his Deputy William Ruto, for being behind the 2007/08 violence, Nakuru County, which was the epic-centre of the violence, became the launchpad for a political alliance, The National Alliance (TNA) that would propel the two into power. Before the 2007/08 post-election violence, the two politicians were in opposite political camps, and the ensuing tribal clashes pitted their respective communities against each other. As documented in the CIPEV report, violence in the two counties was concentrated within low-income settlements – in Nairobi, the most affected estates included Kibera, Mathare, Dandora, Kariobangi, while in Nakuru, organised attacks and counter-attacks happened in

Kaptembwa, Kwarhoda, Mwariki, Free Area, Githima and Kiti estates (Waki, pp. 102 – 196). Most humanitarian and conflict mitigation interventions are concentrated in these settlements. Because of simmering inter-ethnic tensions, cases of hate speech, incitement to violence, and the organisation of political gangs are recurrent during the elections period (NCIC, 2019, pp. 29-32). For these reasons, respondents (both civil society organisations and members of the public) interviewed for this study were recruited from these low-income settlements with deprived social amenities and physical infrastructure. In Nairobi County, the respondents were drawn from the sub-counties of Kibera and Mathare North with a population of 185,777 and 206,564, respectively, while in Nakuru County, the respondents spread across three sub-counties of Nakuru North, East, and West that makes up the Nakuru urban centre with a combined population of 570,674 people (KNBS, 2019). Also, most participants in the KEVP were concentrated in these two regions.

Because of deprived infrastructure in low-income settlements, PeaceTech's use of online media platforms for conflict management is illustrative of the adaptive leadership roles (Northouse, 2016) which civil society groups play in promoting the uptake of innovative social interventions and bridging the technology access gap among grassroots groups. On the one hand, this case study provides opportunities for understanding the influence of media on how peacebuilders mobilise and communicate within their networks; on the other, it helps to grasp the dynamics of how citizens participate in activists' interventions. This study design enables the researcher to gather data across two constituencies: the peacebuilding organisations and the members of the public. Structured interviews are used for the former, and cross-sectional survey questionnaires for the latter. Furthermore, these methods enable this study in a structured way to investigate the processes and practices by which individuals and organisations forge ties with others for common causes. Moreover, this study design enables triangulation of data sources (peace organisations and members of the public) and methods (survey with both open and closed questions and structured interviews) because of the nature of evidence needed for questions posed.

In the following section, attention shifts to the criteria for recruiting research participants and their demographic distribution.

3.1.3. Research participants and data sources

This study's research participants were recruited from a diverse network of civil society groups and citizen members who took part in the joint PeaceTech and Mercy Corps online peace activism platform under the KEVP initiative. Before recruiting participants, an initial background documentary review of publicly available KEVP reports was conducted to identify issues, actors involved, project strategies, and trends in practices concerning the conflict interventions. This initial exercise played two critical roles: it helped determine how research participants were selected, and the second was refining research tools. A list of potential organisations to include in the study was drawn up at the end of this process. However, collecting data on a diverse and loosely bounded network of entities and members of the public with whom they are connected can be a challenging task. This is because the entities involved are independent, and gaining access to their operations can be a long-drawn process. Conversely, working through a network of this kind for a study of this nature provided a critical infrastructure needed to gain access to and trust of key informants. This study addressed the former challenge by first developing data collection protocols, i.e., setting up participation criteria. The main protocols for this study included letters of introduction and consent forms, and participant information briefs. To further concretise the selection process and maximise the potentials of local networks for recruiting participants, the following inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied:

a) Participants were sourced from a list of individuals and civil society organisations that had directly participated in the PeaceTech online peacebuilding project in the counties of Nairobi and Nakuru during the 2017 election in Kenya;
b) Potential respondents were identified through a snowball strategy, beginning with contacts identified from PeaceTeach's programme reports;
c) That identified potential respondents who were willing to take part in this study; and;
d) Potential respondents were by themselves able to read and write in the language in which the questionnaire was administered.

Once I completed developing data collection protocols, the next step was to apply for research approvals, including ethical approval and research permit. The approval processes with both the Leeds Trinity University's Research Ethics Committee (REC)

and Kenya's National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) proceeded without significant hurdles. For REC to grant ethical approval for this study, I needed to present a detailed fieldwork data management plan, including letters of permission from research participants; risk and safety assessment reports for both the researcher and respondents, comprehensive research questionnaires, and a detailed research proposal. For the research permit, NACOSTI requires researchers to submit ethical approvals from sponsor institutions, i.e., a research application letter and a concept note of the study. Once the necessary approvals were secured, and potential research participants identified, the first task was to send out a formal introductory letter to PeaceTech, the technology provider of KEVP. In this letter, I set out the purpose of the research, key issues the study sought to gather information on, and their role in the study for all potential participants. When PeaceTech granted permission, I was able to gain access to both the organisations and members of the public who had directly participated in the KEVP. This connection was necessary because, by the nature of their work, the civic groups have a broader reach and established trust with the communities they serve.

In the introductory section of this chapter, I suggested that countries experiencing crises and increased online media use present twofold challenges of dealing with unmoderated content and voices and explaining the potential effect of citizen media practices upon peace actions. For these reasons, there is a need for versatile data gathering methods for an in-depth understanding of these challenges and resultant social consequences. Melucci (1996, pp. 384-385) suggests at least three ways of orienting data gathering methods on collective actions. The first approach focuses on social conditions to provide profiles of actors and micro-processes to explain collective actions. The second approach, which this current study takes, focuses on actors' perceptions, representations, and values regarding their actions. This approach uses research techniques such as a survey of participants and documentary analysis to compare individuals' perceptions and representations of social reality to structural variables. People's perceptions and values towards peace and conflicts apply to activism because individuals are socially situated, and their relationships can structure media and information use patterns. Therefore, data is needed about how people describe peace, what they do with available media platforms, and how people link their actions to changes in their localities.

In contrast, the third approach is concerned with quantifying protest events using public records of those challenging public authorities. Melucci (p. 386) is critical of the three approaches because they conceal collective action as social production, purposive, meaningful, and relational orientation, which cannot be reduced to structural constraints, public behaviour and a sum of participants' and leaders' opinions. However, Melucci (p. 393) suggests that self-restrained use of either of these methods can provide vital data on collective action processes. This study takes the second approach because peace activism presupposes social relations, social objects – the reasons individuals forge ties with others, and processes through which collective voices, grievances and solidarities are mobilised. Therefore, there is a need for data gathering methods that allow structured tracing of how different variables and processes for socially situated individuals interact. If the argument that what individuals do with available media platforms can influence peace activism must be sustained, data is needed about the dynamic relationship among different variables and processes. For instance, before initiating peacebuilding work, peacebuilders might be interested in knowing how individuals' sense of peace or (in)security in their localities relates to media and information use patterns.

Furthermore, in-depth data is needed about when individuals are likely to participate in actions furthering peace goals and by what means. In this case, combining cross-sectional survey questionnaires and structured interviews allows this study to triangulate diverse participants' responses and their perceptions, meanings, and purposes for engaging in peace activism. As data presented in Chapter 4 shows, media use frequency can structure possibilities and limits for how people engage in peace activism. So, to make sense of how citizen media practices help shape peace activism in volatile situations, data is needed about people's levels of engagement in peace and emerging media and information use patterns. Such empirical evidence reveals how individual media practices can shift peace and conflict dynamics. Furthermore, peacebuilding initiatives often target demographically diverse groups. Thus, gathering data from as many participants as possible provides an in-depth picture of unfolding processes. Meticulously structured cross-sectional surveys and interviews provide versatile instruments for gathering data from a sizable group and triangulating demographic variables and responses. Because this study aimed to go behind the 'how' and 'why' of peace activism among peacebuilders and members of the public, the questionnaires mainly contained open-ended questions. The use of

open-ended questions allowed this study to capture a large dataset of respondents' descriptions and explanations of different aspects of the impact of increased online media use on the practice of peacebuilding in the counties of Nairobi and Nakuru. This study conducted 19 semi-structured interviews with representatives of local peace organisations. It administered 241 cross-sectional surveys to respondents who directly participated in the KEVP before and during the 2017 general elections. The interviews and survey were simultaneously deployed in person between March – June 2019. Regarding gender distribution for peace organisations representatives, 70% of the respondents were male, and 30% were female. For the members of the public recruited through the partnering community-based peace organisations, the survey questionnaires were self-administered in a face-to-face interview – 51% of the respondents were male and 49% female.

The following tables below further break down and illustrate the demographic characteristics of the research participants and their distribution across the research locations.

Table 3:5: ***Demographic characteristics***

Combined distribution of questionnaire among respondents			
		Gender	
Respondents	**Size (count)**	**Male %**	**Female %**
Cross-sectional Survey	241	51%	49%
Structured interviews	20	70%	30%

Table 3:6: Demographic characteristics

Distribution of Cross-sectional survey respondents per research site													
		Sex											
		Male				**Female**				**Total**			
		Sub-County				**Sub-County**				**Sub-County**			
		Kibera	Mathare North	Nakuru Town	Total	Kibera	Mathare North	Nakuru Town	Total	Kibera	Mathare North	Nakuru Town	Total
		Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %	Table Valid N %
Highest level of education	Primary Education	0.0%	0.5%	4.5%	5.0%	0.9%	0.9%	1.4%	3.2%	0.9%	1.4%	5.9%	8.2%
	Secondary Education	1.4%	2.3%	13.2%	16.8%	0.5%	3.2%	10.5%	14.1%	1.8%	5.5%	23.6%	30.9%
	Tertiary Education	3.2%	5.9%	13.2%	22.3%	0.9%	2.3%	10.9%	14.1%	4.1%	8.2%	24.1%	36.4%
	University Education	3.6%	4.5%	6.8%	15.0%	1.8%	3.6%	4.1%	9.5%	5.5%	8.2%	10.9%	24.5%
	Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total	8.2%	13.2%	37.7%	59.1%	4.1%	10.0%	26.8%	40.9%	12.3%	23.2%	64.5%	100.0%

For the cross-sectional survey: in Nairobi County, Kibera had a total of 12.3% respondents, 8.2% were male, and 4.1% female; Mathare North 23.2% respondents male being 13.2% and female were 10%. In contrast, Nakuru town had 64.5% of respondents, 37.7% were male, and 26.8% were female. The highest level of education attained for the general survey respondents was as follows;

primary education 8.2%, secondary education 30.9%, tertiary education 36.4% and university education 24.5%. The table above contains further illustrations.

Table 3:7: Demographic characteristics

Distribution of structured interviews respondents per research site										
		Gender								
		Male			Female			Total		
		County			County			County		
		Nairobi	Nakuru	Total	Nairobi	Nakuru	Total	Nairobi	Nakuru	Total
		Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %	Table N %
Highest level of education	Primary Education	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%	5.6%	5.6%	0.0%	5.6%
	Secondary Education	5.6%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%	5.6%
	Tertiary Education	16.7%	11.1%	27.8%	5.6%	0.0%	5.6%	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%
	University Education	27.8%	11.1%	38.9%	16.7%	0.0%	16.7%	44.4%	11.1%	55.6%
	Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total	50.0%	22.2%	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	27.8%	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%

For structured interviews, Nairobi County had 77.8% of the respondents, and Nakuru, 22.2%. In terms of gender distribution, Nairobi had 50% of all the respondents, and 27.8% were female. In Nakuru, all 22.2% of respondents were male. Regarding the highest level of education attained, respondents with a university education were 55.6%, followed by tertiary education, 33.3%. Respondents with primary and secondary education made up a cumulative of 11.2%. The table above contains a further illustration.

3.2. Data collection procedures

In the preceding section, I have described the criteria for recruiting research participants, their demographic characteristics and distribution; the following part lays out the procedure followed during data collection in the field. This study is conceived in the context of the ongoing quest for sustainable peace in Kenya. Therefore, it is vital to understand strategies by which individuals forge ties with others for peace activism. Such data can illuminate how communicative practices function as symbolic media with which people reproduce themselves and their social situation. As the practices are dynamically present, they can be mobilised in varying degrees according to how individuals and organised groups are socially situated. The case of vernacularised political campaigns cited in Chapters 1 and 2 is an example of dynamically present communicative practices that can be mobilised for political violence. Hence, this presupposes processes in which people continuously negotiate and appropriate available media technologies, ideas, and practices for common causes. In Kenya, the increasing online media use applies to peace activism insofar as the emerging media practices influence Media and information use patterns. As empirical data presented in Chapter 4 reveals, both members of the public and peace organisations worry about content inciting violence or hate crimes, false information, and rumours. Therefore, there is a need for an expansive and robust research design enabling the gathering of richer and stronger arrays of evidence. An in-depth study approach allows for mixing data collection methods – qualitative and quantitative techniques (Ayoub et al., 2014, p. 71; Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159; Yin, 2018, p. 115). This study's design is in-depth embedded research combining structured interviews, a cross-sectional survey, and relevant literature reviews. The choice for a triangulated approach – structured interviews and nested general surveys – was informed by the need for comprehensive data about the patterns of "how" and "why" individuals and peace organisations appropriate available media platforms for activism. Besides, in ethnically polarised contexts, media and information use patterns have implications for engagement levels in common causes. Thus, the use of 'triangulation can help both theoretically and empirically to understand dynamic and often-neglected areas' (Ayoub et al., 2014, p. 92) within peace activism, such as the link between the elements that make up

communicative practices with which individuals (re)produce their realities and features that get transformed by what individuals do with available media technologies.

I piloted the initial interview schedule and general survey questionnaires before the actual fieldwork to assess the range of replies to the questions, the questions' validity, and the average time it takes to complete the interview. Once the pilot was completed, the questionnaires were revised in consultation with the PhD supervision panel and key informants in the field. Data collection for both the structured interviews and cross-sectional surveys was concurrent at a single time, from March to June 2019.

It would have been enriching for this study if some data were collected before the intervention, during the intervention and post-intervention. However, post-intervention analysis is appropriate for this study because researchers can never anticipate such opportunities. It would require different field strategies, such as being embedded in a programme for extended periods and extensive involvement in the implementation. Nevertheless, this study emphasises the strategies by which individuals and organisations forge ties for common causes, and that can be established retrospectively. This calls for focused yet comprehensive data collection tools – detailed interviews schedules and survey questionnaires covering all possible data dimensions of the research question.

Thus, the choice of structured interviews for civil society organisations' representatives allowed for structured aggregation of responses across several complex variables of how respondents construct and represent meanings of peace activism. The vast datasets gathered from peace organisations and members of the public who participated in the KEVP allow this study to discuss how discursive practices of peace activism inform the access, use, and communication of peace among demographically diverse groups. All the face-to-face interviews took place in public venues. All respondents were invited to read the participant information brief before signing the consent form as a standard procedure.

For civil society groups to strategically influence the communication of peace in volatile situations, they need to gain a more in-depth understanding of "how" and "why" individuals engage in collective actions. Thus, it is essential for studies investigating peacebuilders' role in peace communication to gather data about how members of the public represent and engage in peace actions, i.e., the public perceptions towards peace and (in)-security of their locales. Such data makes it possible to aggregate data from 'very heterogeneous participants in the same category' (…) 'bridging the gap

among levels of analysis' in this case, a network of peace organisations, members of the public and their media practices (Andretta & Porta, 2014, p. 330). In short, a nested cross-sectional survey of citizen members who directly participated in peace projects was preferred. The cross-sectional survey sought in a structured way to aggregate perceptions, meanings, and actions of the respondents about "how" and "why" they engage in peace activism; what particular media platforms they prefer for peace activism; what online activism represented for individuals; and ways in which they engaged in peacebuilding. A survey questionnaire allows for a cost-effective and structured way of collecting data from a relatively diverse population. The basis of peace activism is reciprocal cooperation among diverse people and organisations. Surveys and structured interviews questionnaires can help establish how specific ideas and practices are prevalent across demographics. For instance, this study reveals the existing meanings and peace practices among respondents. Furthermore, the embedding of survey techniques within the in-depth study was out of the need for a cross-analysis of several variables to reveal patterns and prevalence of the practices under study.

The following section turns attention to the stages and procedures involved in preparing data for analysis and tools used.

3.3. Data analysis methods

Although this study relied on structured interviews and survey questionnaires as primary data gathering techniques, most of the questions were open-ended – prompting respondents to describe and further explain their responses. As discussed in the previous section, this was to 'discover meanings individuals attribute to their actions' (Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 26). Thus, this study aims to understand how individuals and organisations think about peace and represent and engage in it. Besides, standardised data collection tools made it possible for structured coding of data into the frequency of words, phrases, and concepts helpful in generating quantitative patterns of themes – pattern-matching (Yin, p. 251) such as "how" and "why" users engage in peace-promoting actions.

a) Thus, the first step in the analysis involved checking the raw datasets to ensure completeness of data input and familiarisation with its content.

b) The second step involved searching for common words and phrases in the dataset using the Nvivo software. This process aided in coding patterns of themes and concepts from the qualitative responses – the coding of string data (open-ended responses) into themes and patterns mirroring frequently occurring features within the case under study. The qualitative codes were grouped under commonly recurring themes and patterns for further analysis and presentation for the structured interviews and the cross-sectional survey.
c) The third step in the analysis involved 'converting the qualitative codes into quantitative form' (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 215) by matching the coded common themes with individual responses in the SPSS datasets – rendering the string data responses into numeric data allowing for visualisation of outputs in the form of frequency tables and charts.

The fourth step involved visualising data – generating frequency tables and charts that allow for further analysis and developing study findings supported by applying concepts and theories. The visualised data and study findings are presented in chapter 4, which analyses themes and patterns of practices emerging from empirical data. This study adopts what Yin (p. 379) calls analytical generalisation – analysing the case datasets to develop findings and explanations about occurrences in a case using a combination of relevant concepts and themes that can be applied to other situations beyond the original case study.

3.4. Methodological limitations and implication for the study's findings

This section discusses potential implications of respondents' selection bias for the study's findings. For this study, research participants were recruited at two levels: the representatives of organisations collaborating in the PeaceTech's KEVP in the counties of Nakuru and Nairobi and second, the citizen members who participated through enlisted civil society groups. Potential respondents were identified through snowball strategy, from project documents supplied by PeaceTech and through referral by enlisted grassroots organisations. This strategy was vital for gaining access and trust among the research participants. However, it limited the diversity of participants. The following two points encapsulate the methodological limitation of this study. First, the selection of respondents in this study was limited to participants already motivated to engage in peacebuilding. Therefore, this study did not aim for a

global sample representing all the population – peace organisations and citizen members residing in the research site. However, access to a global sample of the population residing in Nairobi and Nakuru counties and nationally might have benefited this study to systematically compare how diverse social groups understand and engage in peace activism. Furthermore, during election campaigns, ethnicity tends to be a salient feature in political mobilisation, hence the need to establish how it can influence strategies with which peacebuilders and ordinary citizens engage in activism. However, the findings of this study give insight into possible areas for further investigation at the country level, such as how meanings of peace and social identities may help shape media use patterns and, in turn, peace activism.

Finally, this study does not include a systematic content analysis of selected peace organisations' project reports and other administrative documents. This study focuses on the strategies and mechanisms with which peacebuilders and citizen members engage in activism. However, a systematic analysis of project and administrative documents would have aided a comparative analysis of peacebuilders and citizens' ideas and practices of peace activism. In this sense, this study's findings are biased to what participants recalled about their role in the KEVP in the 2017 elections.

3.5. Overview of the chapter

In this chapter, I have discussed how research methods were applied to answer the study question. The chapter has presented a detailed account of the assumptions underpinning the study design: the lead research question with detailed study propositions guiding specific questions, study sites and criteria for selecting respondents, methods for collecting evidence, and its analysis. The chapter emphasised the importance of mapping out data on various uses of media platforms and the analysis of processes by which particular media practices responsible for data being mapped out become socially or politically significant for activism, thus placing the concept of media practices at the centre of the analyses. To this end, the study approaches the impact of media platforms on activism from the perspective that these platforms cannot solely by their technical features translate individuals' and organisations' access and use to social or political activism. In the light of this study, there is a need to make sense of how citizen media practices pose a challenge to the practice of activism in volatile situations. Thus, data is needed about people's representation of peace and their information and media use patterns. Chapter 4

analyses data from an empirical study to build insights helpful to account for the features within peace activism that get transformed when some media practices become socially significant for activism, especially in ethnically polarised societies such as Kenya.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis & Research Findings

4.0. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed this study's rationale and methodology, providing background information about the research site and data collection procedures and analysis methods. The task at hand was to gather empirical data about how peace organisations and ordinary citizens use available media platforms for peace activism. Thus, this chapter's empirical data provide insights into how the increasing use of online media platforms is helping shape peace activism, particularly during political campaigns. In this study's context, data about what individuals do with available media platforms provide a basis for linking these platforms to actions, either furthering or eroding peace goals. In this chapter, I analyse empirical data obtained from a cross-sectional survey, structured interviews and relevant literature supporting three propositions of this study: First, in contexts where ethnic tensions dominate social life, what individuals and organised groups do with available media platforms matters to the practice of peace activism. This is because these media platforms can either enable or constrain individuals' and organised groups' options to access and take part in furthering peace. The second proposition is that organisation-enabled media practices such as instant messaging services portals can be strategic to peace activism in volatile situations. These portals enable civil society organisations and ordinary citizens to co-create spaces for common causes and access much needed public services in regions where governments have limited reach. However, there is a dynamic relationship between the reason's individuals forge ties with others and the media platforms they use for activism. For individuals and organised groups with access to online media, it can mean constant contact with their reference networks, information, and events, which modifies or entrenches a particular view of local realities. In this sense, the reference networks and events with which individuals have constant contact can define the form and character of their activism. In Kenya, conflicts over land, state power and lingering historical injustices tend to create causes for which political elites mobilise their bases. Lingering historical injustices and inter-ethnic tensions have entrenched ethnic-based political mobilisation. As discussed in Chapter 2, the reasons or purposes for why particular groups emerge are often conflated with the media platforms they use. While access to available media platforms

could affect how people engage in social processes, access alone is insufficient for activism. Political or social actions might be undermined by 'prohibitive costs of accessing particular media platforms; lack of prerequisite media technologies or literacy levels' (Mutsvairo & Karam, 2018, p. 12), but these barriers are not the only or primary reasons why people do or do not participate in public processes. The latter points to a critical understanding of how civil society organisations can enable or constrain individuals' engagement in common causes. Further, it suggests a dynamic relationship between individualised media practices and social conditions structuring how people engage in peace activism.

The third proposition is that the increasing use of online media is shifting dynamics of opportunities, risks, harms and conflicts for individuals and organisations, particularly in volatile situations. This is because media practices such as targeted online political campaigns – manipulation, disinformation, and cyberbullying-intimidate and silence opponents and dissent and impose undesirable conditions on peace activism. Many civil society organisations and even ordinary citizens now must worry about such media practices' threats to their safety and the credibility of established social institutions. Therefore, this chapter is organised into three sections, according to the research propositions. The first section reports and analyses empirical data about the actions and practices in information use and access platforms, how individual actions relate to dominant ideas of peacebuilding among respondents, and their motivations for engaging in peace activism. Data presented in this section shows how emerging citizen media practices may help shape peace activism with both positive and negative implications for electoral peace. A more in-depth analysis of these media practices reveals tensions and circumstances by which many people are likely to conform to one discourse or practice over the other.

The second section aggregates empirical data linking individual media practices to civil society groups' role in peace communication. Data presented under this section supports the assumption that organisation-enabled media initiatives enable grassroots to participate in peace activism. It allows peace organisations and members of the public to co-create and curate media practices strategic to peace activism in volatile situations. Indeed, this also points to the vital role civil society organisations play in linking individuals to common causes and society. Therefore, it is vitally important to account for how peace organisations and grassroots' roles are changing because of increased online peace activism; that is, accounting for how peace organisations and

members of the public appropriate media platforms and co-create spaces for negotiating positions, symbols, meanings, and ideas for activism. Finally, the third section of this chapter reports and analyses data about potential implications of the increasing use of online media in the practice of peace activism, particularly in societies experiencing instability. The argument is that the increasing use of online media can influence the dynamics of conflicts, opportunities, risks and harms for individuals and organisations. This argument assumes that the emerging media practices allow users options to affect some features that make up communicative practices.

As proposed in Chapter 2 of this study, a helpful way for making sense of the effect of the increasing use of online media upon activism is through a critical assessment of the dynamic relationships between emerging media practices and elements that make up communicative practices. In this context, peace and conflicts are why two or more people come together; media platforms become significant for activism only when citizen media practices (of tweeting or posting peace messages) shape how people interact with processes involving others. Thus, a critical analysis of why individuals forge ties with others reveals the dynamics of sustaining relationships between citizen media practices and elements that make up peace activism. Empirical data analysed in this chapter explores how emerging citizen media practices resulting from the increasing use of available media platforms help shape peace activism. In this study, there are three interlinked variables, citizen media practices (what individuals do with available media platforms), peace organisations (peacebuilders) and peace activism (dynamics of peace and conflict). Therefore, the indicators for citizen media practices' relevance to activism are the numerous ways individuals and peace organisations appropriate available media platforms and co-create spaces and platforms for common causes. Consequently, these data sets provide evidence about how individuals' media practices can be linked to information and media use and activism patterns, particularly in volatile situations. Besides, empirical data about why individuals use specific media platforms for activism and resulting patterns of information use turn attention to why people co-create, disseminate, and search for specific information sources. Thus, the reasons for individuals connecting to certain entities can also structure both the contours of activism and options for who can speak and how by intensifying or reinforcing the dynamics of a context. Finally, as discussed in the methodology chapter, data sets presented in this chapter result from open-

ended questionnaires – prompting respondents to describe and explain further their responses. From these data sets, I developed frequencies of patterns, concepts, and themes for quantitative analysis. In the context of this study, peace activism presupposes a web of social relations, objects, and processes by which civil society organisations and members of the public mobilise solidarities and cooperation. There is a need for a structured tracing of the main variables and how they are correlated in each social context. Moreover, patterns and themes developed from an open-ended cross-sectional survey and structured interviews allow this study to triangulate diverse respondents' perceptions, meanings, and purposes for engaging in peace activism.

4.1. Emerging citizen media practices and peace activism

As argued in Chapter 2, peace activism as a collective activity depends on cooperation and solidarity among diverse individuals and organised groups. However, in the context of this study, there are some conceptual and practical challenges of determining how citizen media practices can be a basis for peace activism. On the one hand, at a practical level, media practices such as cyberbullying, online micro-targeting of users with false information or hate content impose undesirable conditions on peace activism. These media practices undermine communicative strategies linking individuals' actions to common causes. On the other hand, linking what individuals do with available media platforms to actions either furthering or undermining peace is challenging. In this latter case, data about emerging media and information use patterns can offer insights into changing dynamics of peace and conflicts in Kenya's ongoing quest for sustainable peace. In this study's context, the link between the increased use of media and activism is relevant only to the degree that what individuals do with available media platforms is linked to others' actions. Therefore, it is critically important to gain a deeper understanding of empirical data indicators about patterns of respondents' use of available media platforms; and how these patterns of use relate to elements constituting communicative practices of who can speak and how. Similarly, if one agrees that increased options for people to create and disseminate unregulated content impose undesirable conditions on activism, peacebuilders must know how this is helping shape dynamics of peace and conflicts in fragile societies. Therefore, the empirical data presented in this section responds to the following question: How are citizen media practices affecting the dynamics of activism (peaceful or violent)? Data analysis reveals that information and activities

about peacebuilding are relevant, and most respondents search for and use it. However, the circumstances under which this information and activities are sought may range from moments of political crises such as violence before, during or after elections and through activation by political campaigns. More importantly, there is a correlation between the respondents who sought information about peacebuilding and those who participated in peace actions. Finally, local information and communication intermediaries such as community centres still play a vital communicative role in the emerging online information and communication practices of individuals and organised groups within communities.

Table 4:1: Information seeking patterns

Have you ever sought information and activities about peacebuilding?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	194	80.5
	No	47	19.5
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

As displayed in Table 4.1 above, most respondents, 80.5%, have sought information or activities about peacebuilding within their towns and counties. However, 19.5% of the respondents said they had never searched for information or activities about peacebuilding in their locales at the time of this study. Indeed, it is essential to note that the two variables in this question, i.e., information and activities, cover a range of actions: in the sense that searching for activities might lead to actual participation. In contrast, information-seeking behaviour might only be limited to individuals' desire to know facts about the peace situation in their localities and not necessarily participate in activism. (Later in this section, I consider the link between peace-related information-seeking behaviour and participation in activism.) Therefore, when prompted further to list places (*Table 4.2 below*) they sought this information or

activities from, a sizable number rely upon community social centres at 26.1%; followed by local churches and mosques, 13.3%, and local administration offices, including chief's office, county government and the police, 13.3%. Only 7.9% of the respondents used online media platforms for information on peacebuilding. Local and national news media emerged as places or channels respondents least depended upon for information and activities about peacebuilding at 0.4% and 1.7%, respectively. However, many parts of Kenya have peace committees comprising government representatives, local leaders, and local community-based organisations; only 7.1% of respondents reported to have sought information about peacebuilding from these alliances. Furthermore, peace communication in this study means a process of organising actions furthering common understanding. It includes activities individuals, and peacebuilders organise to promote dialogue and raise awareness about conflict resolution strategies and individuals and communities' rights. As argued in Chapter 2, several countries in Africa have used a range of transitional justice mechanisms such as truth-telling and justice processes to address historical gross human rights violations. However, there are numerous challenges to communicating how societies must acknowledge and respond to these in ethnically polarised contexts. Therefore, it is vitally important to examine the relationship between peace-information seeking behaviours and entities.

Table 4:2: Places/channels through which peace information is sought

If yes, list the places/channels you sought this information from			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Online (internet, online groups, WhatsApp)	19	7.9
	Local news media (radio, TV)	1	.4
	Local NGOs/activists	17	7.1
	Local churches/mosques	32	13.3
	Local administration (chiefs, county government or police)	32	13.3
	National news media (Radio/TV/Newspapers)	4	1.7
	Local groups (social centres/ places/ groups)	63	26.1
	Peace committees (alliances of CSOs & government)	17	7.1
	No Response	56	23.2
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

The places respondents seek information and activities about peace are essential, but timing also seems a relevant determinant. As Table 4.3 below indicates, many respondents, 25.7%, are more likely to be prompted by conflicts, violence, or crisis in general to search for information on peacebuilding. Similarly, political campaigns, 10%, and public events, 5.8%, can also activate individuals' interest in peace information. Besides, a sizable number of respondents said they look for information on peace at any time, 24.1%, while others during their free time, 9.5%. Moreover, it is worth noting that some respondents attributed their need for peace information to places or organisations, 9.4%. The latter finding relates to the argument Dodds (2007, p. 5) makes about how through speeches and policies, representatives of the state and civil society organisations 'generate specific understanding of places and communities residing in a region'. In Chapter 1, I referred to Kenya's Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, which justified the marginalisation of communities based on higher returns on investment in their regions. Thus, when some people attribute their peace-information-seeking behaviours to places or organisations, they highlight public discourse's consequences in constructing social orders. In Kenya, some government agencies and civil society organisations often produce reports mapping regions as potential political violence hot spots, particularly during elections (Wambui, 2021).

Table 4:3: Trends in peace-related information-seeking behaviour

When are you likely to seek information on peacebuilding?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	During or after conflicts, violence, or crisis	62	25.7
	Any time or always	58	24.1
	Others (names of places/offices/organisations)	22	9.1
	During political campaigns (before or during elections)	24	10.0
	During free time/holidays	23	9.5
	During public events (workshops, festivals)	14	5.8
	Living in conflict-prone regions	1	.4
	No response	37	15.4
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Most respondents search for information and activities about peacebuilding and do so through multiple information and communication systems. There is a further need to determine how peace-related information-seeking behaviour compares with participation in peace actions. As shown in Table 4.4 below, 83% of the respondents had participated in peace-promoting actions, while 15.4% did not. As shown in Table 4.6 below, a further cross-analysis suggests a significant correlation between respondents seeking peacebuilding information and their participation in peace activism. For instance, a cross-analysis of information-seeking behaviour and participation trends (see Table 4.6 below) suggests that there is a significant relationship between respondents who sought information and activities on peace and the likelihood of them engaging in activism ($p<0.611$). Information-seeking behaviour can also be linked to patterns of engagement and the use of available media platforms. As Table 4.5 below indicates, over half of the respondents regularly use online media for peace activism, i.e., daily, 18.3%, twice a week, 9.5%, or weekly, 22.4%. However, as illustrated in (*Table 4.2 above*), community-based information and communication intermediaries still play a vital role in grassroots peace activism. Indeed, if peace-related information-seeking behaviours are linked to one's engagement in activism, then it is also relevant to make sense of what peacebuilding represents for most participants, which the following section further explores. In light of this study, the various ways individuals promote or undermine peace can be interpreted as negotiation and appropriation of positions, meanings, symbols, or practices.

Table 4:4: Trends in individuals engaging in peace activism

Have you ever participated in activities promoting peace?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	200	83.0
	No	37	15.4
	No Response	4	1.7
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:5: Frequency of using online platforms for peace activism

How often do you use online platforms for peacebuilding posts?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	At least Everyday	44	18.3
	At least once a week	54	22.4
	At least twice every week	23	9.5
	At least once in a month	62	25.7
	Cannot remember	40	16.6
	No Response	18	7.5
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:6: Link between a search for peace information and activism

Correlations			
		Information and activities about peacebuilding	Have you ever participated in activities promoting peace?
Information and activities about peacebuilding	Pearson Correlation	1	.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)		**.611**
	N	**241**	**241**
Have you ever participated in activities promoting peace?	Pearson Correlation	.033	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.611**	
	N	**241**	**241**

In Table 4.6 above, a cross-analysis of two variables, information-seeking behaviours and participation in activism, sought evidence of correlation tending towards either stronger or weaker links. Here correlation analysis reveals how two or more factors tend to change together, i.e., the dynamic relationships between a range of specific

factors. In this case, the cross-analyses applied throughout this study aim to reveal how increased online media use correlates with people's local experiences. For instance, Table 4.6 above analysis shows that an individual's information-seeking behaviour correlates with their participation in peace activism. However, many factors may influence how peace activism is shaped by the increased access to available media platforms, extant social conditions and expanded options for individuals and organisations to co-create social spaces for common causes. Thus, a two-tailed test of how these factors are interconnected is illustrative, i.e., evidence for correlations. Therefore, a probability value or p-value of 0.611 indicates a positive correlation between information-seeking behaviour and participation in peace activism. To interpret empirical data presented in this chapter, the evidence for correlation helps explain how emerging media practices may affect individuals and organisations media and information use patterns, for instance, how fake information or cyberbullying can intensify (in)-security individuals and organisations experience.

4.4.1. Negotiating ideas and practices of peace activism

In Chapters 1 and 2, I drew attention to the complexities of building peace in ethnically polarised societies because of inter-ethnic tensions. I drew on Horowitz's (1985) 'ethnic relation structures' concept to explain how pervasive inter-ethnic tensions undermine societies' capacity to redress gross human rights violation legacies. In ethnically polarised contexts, I argued that a serious impediment to peacebuilding is communicating the demands of sustainable peace. That is the consequence of prosecuting perpetrators of serious crimes, reparations for victims, and public truth-telling processes without construing it as ethnic persecution. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the United Nations Secretary-General, officially introduced the concept of peacebuilding into the international security discourse in his report, "Agenda for Peace", to the 47th Security Council. In this report, he defines 'peacebuilding' as identifying and supporting structures that strengthen peace and promote a sense of confidence and well-being among people (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, p. 212). He underlines structures as necessary conditions for consolidating peace. Before the "Agenda for Peace" report, Galtung (1976, p. 297) had argued that 'peace has a structure different from peacekeeping and ad hoc peace-making' interventions. For Galtung (p. 282), 'peacekeeping is dissociative. It aims to keep antagonists apart under mutual threats of punishment' but does not resolve conditions causing conflicts.

In contrast, peace-making, he suggests, aims to resolve perceived sources of conflict and can take different forms, including compromise, where antagonists accept compatible goals; domination by one group through violence embedded in structures of society; or elimination through direct violence against the rival groups to preserve incompatible goals (Galtung, pp. 290-293). Because of the limits of peacekeeping and peace-making approaches, Galtung (p. 298) advises that there is a need for establishing alternative structures capable of eradicating causes of wars. To which, Boutros-Ghali (p. 212) concludes that successful peacekeeping and peace-making must be anchored in structures that consolidate peace, people's trust, and well-being. In his analysis of practices defining peace, Richmond (2014, pp. 5-6) argues that a focus can be narrowly on actions aimed at ending direct violence and ignoring its underlying causes or on creating structures within which conflicts are resolved, such as institutions of democracy, law, human rights, and development. However, at issue is how people interact with and experience these institutions: access to justice, public resources, and representation, especially in ethnically polarised contexts. As discussed in the preceding chapters, ethnicity is a salient base of political mobilisation in Kenya, and it extends into how individuals negotiate their dwellings and other social affiliations. As several public inquiries into election-related violence (Akiwumi et al., 1999; Waki et al., 2008; Kiplagat et al., 2013) show, often, ethnic identities provide means with which elites mobilise support and violence against rival groups (Lynch, 2011, p. 2). Where ethnic tensions dominate social processes, citizens can make or re-make peace, as Galtung (1976) suggests, through domination by voting for one of their own and direct violence against rival groups.

Galtung's assertion points to the need for a clear understanding of prevailing notions and peace practices, i.e., how various actors, states, and non-states define and engage in peace. More importantly, it is how peace is practised in the everyday vernacular of people. As shown in Table 4.7 below, in this study, there are at least three ways that respondents conceive peacebuilding. First, many of the respondents, 55.2%, describe peacebuilding as processes or actions geared towards community relations, understanding, or bringing people together. For instance, many respondents described peacebuilding as: *"a process of building relations in the community"; "assisting people to eradicate conflict and maintaining unity"; "a process of understanding the reasons as to why people associate themselves with conflicts"; "a process of bringing people together and stopping tribalism"; "a process of resolving*

injustices in the community in a peaceful way"; "a process of finding a solution to a conflict"; "a place where people negotiate about what might help the community and change their attitude" or "a process of building relationships between our neighbours and us".

Second, some respondents, 21.2% conceive peacebuilding as a platform, a forum or a structure through which individuals can further goals of "*cohesion, reconciliation or harmony"* within their local communities. They described peacebuilding as a platform for *"emphasising peace acts by sharing and posting peace information"; "creating a platform for cohesion and reconciliation for people to live in harmony"; "a group of people who work to bring unity and love in our community and county"; "convincing those in conflict to dialogue and maintain peace."*

Third, 19.1% of the respondents view peacebuilding as absence or presence of harmony, conflicts, or war. This category of participants describes peacebuilding with words/phrases such as, *"living peacefully with one's neighbours"; "peace as calmness between two or more parties who were in a quarrel"; "togetherness"; "living without quarrels as brothers and sisters"; "living in peace and unity with neighbours"; "having a peaceful community"; "living together without tension"; "being in a cool environment away from war"; "a conducive environment without violence"; or "means to accept and maintain peace in our villages in all time".*

The following observations can be made from these findings: first, the various ways people describe peacebuilding imply locus of actions, that is, the presumed "where", "who", and "what" of peace activism. So, the finding that many people understand peace as a process of building relations among communities reflects the UN's definition (Boutros-Ghali, p. 212). Their concerns are about restoring severed social relations as structures for mitigating ethnic tensions for these respondents. Why does it matter? In this study's context, the increased use of online media for activism is helping shape some elements of communicative practices, which are media by which communities reproduce their social integration (McCarthy, 1984). Therefore, if elements of some social interactions are intensified because of citizen media practices, it has consequences for emerging structures of peacebuilding. As discussed later in this chapter, online activism is shifting the dynamics of opportunities and threats for people. These findings further underscore the relevance of locus of change for peace interventions, i.e., whose peace is disrupted and in what ways.

Second, people describing peacebuilding as a platform or forum for furthering cohesion reflect Galtung's (1976, p. 292) definition of peace-making as 'compromise, integration, disintegration or elimination of opponents'. As discussed in Chapter 3, when Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto created the Jubilee Alliance following Kenya's 2007/08 political crisis, they seemed to trade justice for the victims of the post-election violence against the harmony between their respective communities. In this sense, the Jubilee Alliance provided a forum through which their supporters could (re)-negotiate the understanding of justice (Lynch, 2014, p. 94). However, since 2018, the Jubilee Alliance's parties started 'decoupling from each other' because President Uhuru Kenyatta brought the opposition leader, Raila Odinga, into the alliance under the "Building Bridges Initiative" (Galtung, p. 292). So, peacebuilding, understood as a platform for promoting reconciliation, can also undermine sustainable peace goals, particularly in contexts where inter-ethnic tensions pervade social processes. The final observation is about respondents concerned with the presence or absence of conflicts and wars. Richmond's (2014, p. 5) suggestion that the definition of 'peace can narrowly focus on ending violence' seems instructive. Furthermore, Galtung (1969, pp. 170-183) concept of negative peace is relevant in that these people's concerns are about their capacity to prevent direct physical and psychological violence against them.

Table 4:7: Ideas of peacebuilding

Describe peacebuilding in your own words			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Peacebuilding as a state (harmony or absence of violence, conflicts, or war)	46	19.1
	Peacebuilding as a process/action (non-violent approach)	133	55.2
	Peacebuilding as (a platform, forum, or structure)	51	21.2
	No response	6	2.5
	Others (no idea, not interested)	5	2.1
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Why does it matter to ascertain people's idea of peace? For peace communicators, mapping out the varied ways people describe peacebuilding can help determine socially or politically shared schemas about peace and conflict and the degree to which they are institutionalised: for instance, how different ways of understanding peace structure individuals' motivations and their engagement levels. This study shows a relationship between how respondents describe peacebuilding on one side and their motivations for engaging in peace actions, and the kinds of initiatives they would associate peace with on the other. For instance, in Table 4.8 below, the need for peaceful co-existence, expressed by 38.2% of respondents, seems to motivate many respondents' engagement in peace activism. Accordingly, other respondents are prompted by cases of conflicts (13.3% for ethnic clashes or election-related violence) and political campaigns (5.4% for elections or peace campaigns). Besides, it is worth noting that 5.8% of respondents view peace activism as a civic duty or desire to bring change in their communities (4.6%). These respondents' views can be contrasted with those who are either moved by personal gain, 8.7% or peer influence, 5.4% (social groups). For instance, a cross-analysis of the varied ways peace is described and respondents' motivations, as Table 4.9 below shows, suggests that for individuals motivated by the need for peaceful co-existence, peacebuilding is a process of non-violent actions (expected count, 50.8, actual count, 56).

Similarly, for respondents prompted by incidents such as post-election violence or ethnic clashes to participate in peace activism, peacebuilding is a non-violent action (expected count, 17.7, actual count, 21). However, regardless of their motivations, most respondents conceive peacebuilding as non-violent actions (expected count, 133, actual count, 133). Equally, regardless of how respondents described peacebuilding, most are motivated by the need for peaceful co-existence (expected count, 92, actual count, 92).

Table 4:8: Motivations for engaging in peace actions

If yes, what motivated you to participate in peacebuilding activities			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Conflicts (Post-elections, ethnic clashes & violence)	32	13.3
	Political campaigns (elections or peace campaigns)	13	5.4
	Need for peaceful co-existence	92	38.2
	Civic duty (I am a peacebuilder, activist)	14	5.8
	Bring change in the community (development)	11	4.6
	Personal gains or growth	21	8.7
	No response	45	18.7
	Social groups (youth/women/peer)	13	5.4
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:9: Cross-tabulation of understanding of peacebuilding and motivations

Describe peacebuilding in your own words * If yes, what motivated you Crosstabulation											
			If yes, what motivated you								Total
			Conflicts (Post-elections/ ethnic clashes/ violence)	Political campaigns (elections/ peace campaigns)	Need for peaceful co-existence	Civic duty (I am peacebuilder/ activist)	Bring change in the community (development)	Personal gains or growth	No response	Social groups (youth/ women/ peer)	
Describe peacebuilding in your own words	Peacebuilding as a state (harmony or absence of violence/ conflicts/ war)	Count	5	2	16	4	1	3	10	5	46
		Expected Count	6.1	2.5	17.6	2.7	2.1	4.0	8.6	2.5	46.0
	Peacebuilding as a process/ action (nonviolent approach)	Count	**21**	5	**56**	4	7	10	25	5	**133**
		Expected Count	**17.7**	7.2	**50.8**	7.7	6.1	11.6	24.8	7.2	**133.0**
	Peacebuilding as (a platform/forum/ structure)	Count	5	5	18	5	2	5	8	3	**51**
		Expected Count	6.8	2.8	19.5	3.0	2.3	4.4	9.5	2.8	**51.0**
	No response	Count	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	6
		Expected Count	.8	.3	2.3	.3	.3	.5	1.1	.3	6.0
	Others (no idea, not interested)	Count	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	5
		Expected Count	.7	.3	1.9	.3	.2	.4	.9	.3	5.0
Total		Count	32	13	**92**	14	11	21	45	13	241
		Expected Count	32.0	13.0	**92.0**	14.0	11.0	21.0	45.0	13.0	241.0

The broad-gauge of motivations for why individuals engage in peace actions in the preceding section further points to the need for continual testing of different ways people conceive peace and how that might influence their social or political expectations and engagement. Also, a grasp of these motivations can indicate the kinds of actions people are likely to engage in and their effects. Table 4.10 below shows an array of activities with which people experience peacebuilding. For instance, 22.4% of respondents participated in cultural activities such as drama, sports tournaments, or concerts; others, 17%, took part in community dialogue meetings. Still, other groups preferred public demonstrations – peace walks or protests at 11.6%; community clean-ups or tree planting at 5.4% and participation in media campaigns – radio talk shows, distribution of posters or social media groups at 8.7%. Additionally, other participants associated donation of foodstuff, 5%, civic education 4.6%, or social groups, 5% with peacebuilding. Therefore, given the numerous ways people engage in peacebuilding, it opens options for multiple voices and engagement patterns. In turn, these multiple options for voices and action can indicate the numerous ways peace is performed with potentially positive or adverse outcomes. As discussed in the previous section, in the most extreme cases, if ethnic animosity and tensions define an election campaign's contours, social identities could be constructed as a problem (Edelman, 1988, pp. 21-24). For a group's internal harmony, practices such as ethnic cleansing or evictions can become acceptable ways of re-making or making peace in a negative sense.

Table 4:10: Actions associated with peacebuilding

List the kind of activities you engaged in			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Capacity building (seminars/workshops on peacebuilding)	11	4.6
	Others	9	3.7
	Cultural activities (sports, drama, tournaments, or concerts)	54	22.4
	Public demonstrations (peace walks, rallies, or protests)	28	11.6
	Community dialogue/meetings (forums, or chiefs town hall meetings)	41	17.0
	Environmental (community clean-ups or tree planting)	13	5.4
	Media campaigns (radio talk show, posters, or social media groups)	21	8.7
	Social groups (youth or women groups)	12	5.0
	No response	40	16.6
	Humanitarian Outreach (food donations)	12	5.0
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

4.4.2. Spaces for peacebuilding

The competing meanings and numerous ways people engage in peace actions turn attention towards the dynamic relationship between media platforms with which individuals appropriate and negotiate ideas or practices and actions these platforms can enable and constrain. As suggested in Chapter 2, some authors tend to conflate why two or more individuals cooperate for various causes with the media platforms people use. In ethnically polarised societies, it is crucial to understand the dynamics underpinning the causes for which people search for, produce, or circulate information and their media practices. Therefore, it is vital to determine how the cause for peace defines the contours of individuals' media practices. As Table 4.11 below shows, most respondents, 80.1%, have used online media platforms to share peace messages, and only 19.1% have not. In comparison, Table 4.12 below displays aggregated reasons for respondents appropriating online media for peace activism. For many respondents, 18.3% are motivated by the desire to promote peaceful co-existence, particularly during elections, conflicts, or violence, 7.5%, while 18.7% are motivated by shared mutual interests. Other participants find online media platforms convenient for creating awareness and advocacy, 8.7%, perhaps, because it is an efficient means

of communication, 11.2%. However, at least 10% of the respondents who participated in the PeaceTech[2] peacebuilding initiative had no access to this platform. Seemingly, if they reside in settlements defined by poor social services, this category of participants might be excluded from other functions online media platforms play for those who have access to such service as community outreach, 7.5% or emergency alert system 4.1%.

Table 4:11: Use of online media for peace activism

Ever used online media to share peace messages to your friends or neighbours?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	193	80.1
	No	46	19.1
	No Response	2	.8
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:12: Motivations for using online media for peace activism

If yes, explain your answer.			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	During political campaigns (elections, conflicts, or violence)	18	7.5
	Mobilising, awareness creation & advocacy	21	8.7
	Promote peaceful co-existence	44	18.3
	Straightforward & efficient means of communication	27	11.2
	Networking & sharing mutual interest messages	45	18.7
	Alerts & emergencies	10	4.1
	A platform for discussion & community outreach	18	7.5
	Others (not in online groups, no phone or not active online)	24	10.0
	No response	34	14.1
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

[2] PeaceTech Lab Africa's programme aimed to address the risks of political violence in Kenya during the 2017 elections by supporting civil society groups and members of the public to engage in peace-promoting activities.

Equally important is how individuals experience online activism besides the reasons they cite to explain their use. Table 4.13 below shows various experiences for most respondents who use online media platforms for peace activism. While 36.1% of participants described their use as good networking platforms, respectively, other users, 23.1% and 7.9%, said that online media provided access to diverse sources of information and voices.

Table 4:13: Users' experiences of online peacebuilding

Describe your experience of using online media for peacebuilding.			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Good networking platform (wider reach/faster information relay, easy to organise/ mobilise)	87	36.1
	Access to diverse voices/Interactive/Realtime feedback	19	7.9
	It can escalate conflicts, rumours/no privacy	11	4.6
	Access to diverse sources of information (easy access/ affordable)	56	23.2
	Not accessible (many languages used)	8	3.3
	Others (Cannot tell, I do not use it. I do not have a smartphone)	18	7.5
	No response	42	17.4
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

In short, this section's empirical data illustrates that online media effects upon peace activism are a dynamic relationship between elements that make up routine social practices of individuals and organisations and emerging media practices. Routine social practices may include peer-to-peer online sharing happenings in each other's locales that can help shape the quality of their interactions because of the likelihood of intensified experiences of issues under consideration. If one agrees with this view, then the task is to account for how citizen media practices apply to the logic of peace actions in societies needing practical solutions. Accounting for these links can explain how and why particular media platforms become embedded in social actions and reasons that motivate people to innovate and appropriate available media platforms

for common causes. In the context of peace activism, it analyses how increased use of online media is helping shape the way members of the public and organisations interact. Consequently, a critical focus on individuals' and peace organisations' media practices points to a dynamic relationship between various causes for activism and available media platforms. Moreover, it suggests the vital role communicators can play in co-creating social practices strategic to peace activism.

4.2. Peace communication and civil society groups

Data presented in the preceding section emphasise the idea that peace activism as a collective activity, rests on cooperation and solidarity among diverse individuals and organised groups. This is because individuals' capacity to cooperate in peace activism depends on the meanings or purposes for their valued pursuits (Shove et al., 2012, p. 157). Moreover, this previous section's empirical data shed light on why individuals use available media platforms for activism to answer the following question: how are individual media practices linked to peace activism? In the context of the civil society groups' role in peace communication, individual media practices are relevant to the extent that they are the basis for co-creating communicative practices for activism; and linking individual actions to groups' processes. Thus, this study is concerned with media practices that individuals co-create for each other. That is to say, the relevance of individuals' media practices to peace activism is only to the degree that what individuals do with available media platforms is linked to the actions of others, particularly common causes. Therefore, the basis of peace activism is social interactions resulting from media practices individuals and organisations co-create together for collective actions. How, for instance, do microblogs, hashtags, or political memes about lingering injustices become nodes on which networks for justice emerge? In this case, microblogs or hashtags about police brutality may intensify how people experience social injustices, hence helping shape how routine social interactions can become significant for activism.

As argued in Chapter 2, activism can be viewed as a product of a dynamic relationship between causes for peace and conflicts and available media platforms. In light of the empirical data presented in this section, activism (peaceful or violent) is conceived as an object or product for which individuals come together – to co-create (or are motivated by) causes that can either further or undermine goals for peace. Thus, there

is a need for a critical understanding of the link between individuals' media practices and the groups with which they are connected. In this sense, civil society groups' activism is mobilising, coordinating, and co-creating practices with which individuals or organised groups engage in social processes.

For this reason, peace activism can be viewed as a process of bringing individual actions into relation with the concerns of other members of society. Moreover, individuals' activism presupposes the relevance of social interaction structures in people's 'imagining (themselves within) a community' (Anderson, 2006, p. 42). Several issues, including inter-ethnic conflicts, social inequalities, human rights, access to justice and peace, dominate public policy discourses in Kenya. For instance, ethnic identities and polarisation define how political groups emerge and interact with their members. However, it is unclear how emerging citizen media practices may help shape peacebuilders' activism. This study focuses on peace organisations as social structures mediating reasons and purposes people forge ties with others to further peace. Thus, the proliferation of online-based peace initiatives in Kenya after the 2007/08 political crisis to engage citizens in conflict management and resolution are examples of peacebuilders and citizen members co-creating strategies for activism. In Kenya, since the 1990s, civil society groups, including non-governmental organisations (NGO), faith-based organisations (FBO), international non-governmental organisations (INGO), community-based organisations (CBO), and individual activists, have helped to provide the public with civic education (Wanyande, 2009, p. 14). Furthermore, to date, civil society groups remain an integral part of Kenya's development agenda in conflict management, peacebuilding, and the safety and security of individuals or communities. The latest government report shows that over 11,000 registered non-government organisations, of which 8,893 are active (NGOs-Board, 2019, p. 17). In 2018, the annual budget of about 3,000 NGOs out of 8,000 that reported their programme activities to the government was US$1.5 billion (NGOs-Board, 2019).

Therefore, this section's empirical data draws attention to the processes by which peace organisations and members of the public appropriate available media platforms and co-create strategies for negotiating ideas, positions, meanings, and practices for activism. Data analysed in this section responds to the following question: how do civil society organisations strategically promote peacebuilding? Thus, the analysis focuses on the data about how individuals describe online activism, perceive online activism's

effects upon their localities, and emerging online activism practices. This study suggests that the varied way members of the public and peace organisations represent peace activism depends upon processes by which particular media platforms become embedded in social action. In this study, such processes include how individuals appropriate and represent available media platforms, i.e., spaces for enhancing their communities' security, alternative platforms for information sharing and learning, or spaces for interaction. Indeed, a detailed assessment of empirical data suggests a significant relationship between the frequency of use of available media platforms and perceived changes in one's locality. These perceived changes can be attributed to the reasons for which individuals use media available to them. However, as argued in Chapter 1, how individuals use available media platforms can also be subject to one's web of social interactions and layers of information sources. Thus, their peace activism can be vulnerable to actions undermining goals for a peaceful society. For instance, if individuals and organised groups experience an enhanced sense of (in)security in their neighbourhoods, it might be because of the many layers of social relationships and sources of information influencing how they experience their localities. In this sense, increased use of online media for activism can be interpreted by what individuals worry about, fear, or hope for while using these platforms. Additionally, the effects of online activism can be reflected in the way people experience these platforms. For instance, this study finds that many respondents fear and worry about the threats of cyberbullying, stalking, political incitement, or intimidation.

4.2.1. Spaces for access, interaction, or engagement

Chapters 1 and 2 discussed some challenges of communicating peace in the context of increasing options for individuals to create and disseminate unregulated content. These discussions drew attention to reasons and processes by which groups and networks can emerge, including social identities, causes for peace and conflict. However, as the analysis in these chapters suggests, studies often conflate the reasons for networks emergence with media platforms through which they are mobilised and formed. When analyses conflate reasons for why networks emerge with media platforms, it obscures the processes by which particular media platforms become socially or politically significant for activism. What is more, it has implications for the direction solutions to perceived social problems take. By exploring the various

ways individuals describe online activism, attention is drawn to these processes that, in the view of this study, are at the heart of understanding the possible effects of increased use of online media upon activism. For instance, this study finds that respondents experienced online activism in varied ways, which can affect individuals' engagement levels. As shown in Table 4.14 below, respondents from the members of the public experienced online peace activism as either space for access and interaction, 31.1%; engagement opportunities, 27%, or as a safe platform for people residing in volatile places, 2.5%. However, for other members of the public, online activism led to exclusion based on either lack of digital skills and economic status of users or exacerbated tribal polarisation, 15.4%; and people with no access, 3.3%. Furthermore, this finding highlights the point of divergence between members of the public and civil society organisations: on one side, online activism represents exclusion based on skills, kinship ties, or users' economic status; on the other hand, they are spaces for inclusion. Table 4.15 below further illustrates how representatives of peacebuilding organisations defined online activism in terms of access, i.e., practical and accessible way of reaching a larger audience, 60%, or spaces for citizens inclusion and engagement, 20%. Besides, online media platforms are ideal for connecting and sharing ideas among some peace groups, 10%.

Table 4:14: Representation of online media activism

Experience of online peace activism in your village			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Wider access, coverage & interactive platform	75	31.1
	Exclusion for people with no digital skills, tribal groups & poor	37	15.4
	Expanded opportunities to engage & learn about peace among different groups	65	27.0
	Safe way to engage in the situation of insecurity	6	2.5
	Others (not yet online, lack of data bundles)	8	3.3
	No response	48	19.9
	Bullying & harassment made easy	2	.8
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:15: Online activism within peace groups

Describe online peace activism within your organisation			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Safe space for citizen inclusion & engagement	4	20.0
	Effective & accessible way of reaching a larger audience with peace actions	12	60.0
	A platform for connecting & sharing ideas within peacebuilding groups	2	10.0
	No response	2	10.0
	Total	20	100.0

Thus, on how individuals describe online activism, empirical data shows that those who frequently use these platforms represent them as spaces for access, interaction, or engagement. For peace communicators, a critical question is how individuals' varied ways of representing online activism relate to peacebuilding in volatile situations. As discussed in Chapter 3, the effect of increased use of online media can be defined by dynamic relationships between why individuals forge ties with others for common causes and available media platforms. A critical focus on these dynamics allows one to assess the degree to which individuals' media practices and actions shape the quality of social interactions, social roles and, in turn, (peace) activism. In this sense, part of the explanation for the quality of peace discourse in Kenya may be reflected in enduring practices of mutating ethnic-based political coalitions and how online activism may intensify positive and negative courses. Mutating political coalitions in Kenya are characterised by unstable alliances that influence the dynamics of conflicts. The inter-ethnic political alliances created in each election since 2002 have influenced the course inter-ethnic tensions take. As argued in Chapter 1, pervasive inter-ethnic tensions undermine individuals' capacities to participate in the politics of coalitions because of their mutating nature. Even more critical is how widespread inter-ethnic tensions dominate the way individuals engage with information and communication systems. The varied ways individuals experience and engage in online activism capture the dynamic interfacing of extant social practices (such as polarised ethnic relations) with the intensified practices such as the spread of false online

information and unregulated content. Therefore, what is relevant in the analysis here is linking individuals' experiences and practices of online activism with perceptions of peace in their local communities.

4.2.2. Online activism, perception of local communities and emerging practices

In this section, I consider how individuals' experiences and practices of activism relate to their locales' perceptions. On the one hand, for individuals and peacebuilders that frequently use online media for activism, their experiences are positive. On the other, as analysis in the preceding sections suggests, some respondents associate increased use of online platforms with exacerbated ethnic polarisation, cyberbullying, stalking and intimidation. A relevant question is about the circumstances under which individuals are likely to engage in online activism and why they do so. Making sense of these mediating factors reveal the dynamics between individual actions and group actions. As Table 4.16 below reveals, most respondents – 74.7% members of the public – are more likely to participate in online peacebuilding than to attend town-hall meetings. In Table 4.17 below, some respondents cite reasons such as the convenience of access platforms, 52.7%; broader participation, 13.3%; and safety of use in hostile situations and for vulnerable groups, 4.1%. Nevertheless, other potential participants in the online peace activism were impeded by a lack of mobile phones or inflexible media platforms, 2.9%. Also, it is worth noting that power dynamics within groups, 0.8%, motivated a few respondents to prefer online activism over town-hall meetings.

Table 4:16: Online activism and town-hall meetings

Are you likely to participate in online peacebuilding than attend town hall meetings?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	180	74.7
	No	42	17.4
	No Response	19	7.9
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:17: Some of the reasons for preferring online activism over town-hall

If yes, why is that the case?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Allows for broader participation from different groups	32	13.3
	Convenient, accessible, save time & resources	127	52.7
	Bypasses power dynamics within groups	2	.8
	Safe to use in hostile situations & for vulnerable groups	10	4.1
	Others (I have no phone, not flexible)	7	2.9
	No response	63	26.1
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

The question about the preference for online media platforms over town-hall meetings (and vice versa) highlights the relevance of mechanisms by which people forge ties with others for common causes. In Table 4.17 above, respondents cite communication features such as accessibility and convenience as having a participation advantage over town-hall gatherings. Therefore, it is relevant for peace communicators to determine the participation advantages of different communicative practices because they influence people's motivations and perceptions of common causes. So, having established that there are individuals who are likely to prefer online activism over town-hall meetings or vice versa, another relevant question is how this could be linked to one's local community's perceptions. As Table 4.18 below reveals, 76.3% of respondents attributed a sense of security experienced in their local communities to online activism. When prompted further to explain their answers, as Table 4.19 shows, 32.8% of the respondents related this to enhanced community mechanisms for monitoring, early warning and responding to potential or actual violence incidents. Other respondents cited reasons such as accessible platforms for community organising, 14.5%; spaces for engagement and publicity, 10.8%; and increased sense of acting together at 12.9%. A sense of enhanced collective security in ethnically polarised contexts can tend towards homophily groups creating echo chambers that reinforce (existing) 'biases and tensions' (Benkler et al., 2018). As Vosough et al. (2018) observe, peer-to-peer diffusion aided the rapid spread of false political news.

Table 4:18: Online activism and community feeling safe

Use of online platforms for peacebuilding & community feeling safe			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	184	76.3
	No	30	12.4
	No Response	27	11.2
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:19: Reasons for communities feeling safe

If yes, why do you think the community feels safe?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Increased awareness, publicity & space for engagement	26	10.8
	Communities have accessible platforms for organising & action	35	14.5
	Enhanced community mechanisms for monitoring, early warning & response	79	32.8
	Increased sense of community & acting together	31	12.9
	Others	12	5.0
	No response	58	24.1
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Similarly, as Table 4.20 below shows, some respondents, 30.7%, say that online activism enhances a sense of security within their local community; and 22.8% suggest that online peace activism provides groups with alternative platforms for information sharing and cooperation, 20.7%. Besides, some respondents, 4.6%, highlighted these platforms' exclusionary nature as some groups are still excluded. By contrast, for most peacebuilding organisations, as displayed in Table 4.21 below, online activism makes public processes accessible to local groups, 55%; for the

reason that these platforms could be affordable, 15%; or more inclusive, 15%; and for other users, it can enhance their sense of community, 15%.

Table 4:20: Contribution of online activism

What contribution online peace activism has brought to your community?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Created platforms for cooperation & collaboration	50	20.7
	Enhanced sense of security among communities	74	30.7
	Some groups are still excluded & minimal change	11	4.6
	Ease of communication	7	2.9
	Provided communities with an alternative platform for information sharing, learning & response	55	22.8
	No response	35	14.5
	Others (I cannot tell, not aware or none)	9	3.7
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:21: Peace organisations and online activism

At an organisation level, what difference has online activism made in communities you serve?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Affordable platforms for reaching a larger population than town hall meetings	3	15.0
	Convenient platforms for local communities' public engagement	11	55.0
	An accessible platform for excluded & marginalised	3	15.0
	Enhanced sense of community & peaceful co-existence	3	15.0
	Total	**20**	**100.0**

Up to this point, correlations can be drawn between individuals who frequently use online media for activism and its perceived effects. Overall, the previous sections' analyses suggest that most respondents associated online activism with positive

influence within their locales. However, other users, as Table 4.22 below reveal, worry about online practices such as cyberbullying, stalking and intimidation,14.9%; loss of privacy and identity theft,10.8%; incitement to violence, false information, and rumours, 10.4%; and hacking and scamming-sites, 10%. In this study, individuals' hopes, worries, and fears about the increased use of online media suggest its social or political significance. These platforms enable the linking of individual actions with others' concerns and actions.

Furthermore, analysis in the preceding sections suggests that online activism is associated with an enhanced sense of community and security among many respondents. As discussed in Chapter 2, the widespread use of online media influences the dynamics of how individuals relate with social entities, i.e., individuals now have constant contact and pervasive awareness of issues or ties with their local communities. Such intensified awareness can help shape how individuals engage with existing biases or 'belief traps' in ethnically polarised contexts (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 42). Thus, the finding that some respondents, when using online media platforms, fear being misunderstood, 11.2%, is illustrative of this point.

Moreover, the fear of being misunderstood can help explain the social effect of intensified kinship ties resulting from increased use of online media, thereby preventing individuals from robust engagement in public debates or what Noelle-Neumann calls the spiral of silence (1974). This finding can be explained by the fact that political coalitions are ethnically based in Kenya, and individuals who try to affiliate with non-aligned groups often get bullied and intimidated into silence (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008, p. 287). As such, these findings underline the need to pay attention to processes by which particular media practices become socially significant for activism within existing social practices. For instance, in the aftermath of Kenya's 2007/08 post-election crisis, both the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNHRC) and the Commission Investigating Post Election Violence (CIPEV) recorded evidence of how phone-in shows on FM radio stations enabled production and dissemination of unregulated hateful content, further intensifying feelings of inter-ethnic animosity. Thus, in ethnically polarised contexts, political campaigners often use vernacular languages as a strategy to pull crowds. However, where cultural fables or songs are used derogatorily, they can negatively structure political debates. Moreover, this is the sense in which media practices can be described as politically significant for individual users. Fears, hopes, and worries individuals have notwithstanding, as Table 4.23

below shows, for most peace organisations, online activism represents practical and accessible ways of reaching a larger audience, 60%, or spaces for citizens inclusion and engagement, 20%.

Table 4:22: What worries people while online?

What worries you most when using online platforms?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Exclusion of those with no access to online media	10	4.1
	Others (lack of data bundles, nothing)	19	7.9
	Loss of privacy & identity theft	26	10.8
	Hacking & scam-sites	24	10.0
	Incitement, fake information & rumours	25	10.4
	cyberbullying, stalking & intimidation	36	14.9
	Surveillance by government & threats of arrest	6	2.5
	Explicit & graphic content	4	1.7
	Fear of being misunderstood	27	11.2
	No response	64	26.6
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:23: Online activism with peace groups

Describe online activism as an organisation			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Safe space for citizen inclusion & engagement	4	20.0
	Effective & accessible way of reaching a larger audience with peace actions	12	60.0
	A platform for connecting & sharing ideas within peacebuilding groups	2	10.0
	No response	2	10.0
	Total	**20**	**100.0**

Another relevant question that needed further analysis is whether people who frequently use online media, participate in activism, and search for peace-related information are more likely to attribute changes in their local communities to these platforms. As pointed out in this chapter's introductory section, activism (peaceful or

violent) depends on diverse actors' cooperation and the dynamic relationship between causes for action and available media platforms. However, for peacebuilders, the challenge is determining how individual media practices can be a basis for initiating and sustaining peace activism. In the context of this study, proliferating options for individuals to access, (co)-create and circulate unregulated content matter for activism only to the degree that what individuals do with media platforms available to them is linked to actions of others.

Data analysed in preceding sections turns a critical eye on what individuals do with available media to sharply focus the dynamic relationship between causes for action and available media platforms. This analysis highlights the often-overlooked aspects in the link between the increased use of online media and activism, i.e., the processes by which people innovate and appropriate media platforms for common causes and its social or political significance. By emphasising the processes by which people appropriate specific media platforms, the analysis treats activism (peaceful or violent) as dependent on how individuals forge ties with others. As data in this study suggests, online activism meanings vary, including an intensified sense of security in one's locality, spaces for public engagement or ethnic polarisation. Therefore, if correlations are drawn between the frequency of use of available media platforms and their social significance, individuals' routine media practices become the building blocks for such analyses. As revealed in the previous section, over half of the respondents in the PeaceTech Lab Africa's Kenya Election Violence Prevention and Response Programme (KEVP) frequently engaged in peace activism.

A further cross-analysis between the frequency of engagement and perception, as Table 4.24 below indicates, shows a significant correlation between individuals who frequently engage in online activism and their likelihood of accepting that online media has changed their communities. In the context of this study, the perceived effects of online activism upon one's local community are discussed as concerns people have when using online media (*see Table 4.22 above*). For instance, in a cross-analysis of online activism, communities feeling safe and online misinformation shows a significant relationship between online misinformation and whether or not a group or community feels safe ($p<0.434$, *Table 24*).

As discussed in Chapter 1, in contexts where inter-ethnic tensions structure social relations, 'false information and rumours tend to travel further and deeper' (Vosoughi et al., 2018, p. 1148). On the one hand, if fears and tensions dominate inter-ethnic

relations, it exacerbates differences and makes the outsider look mysterious, while on the other hand, equality enhances understanding (Simmel, 1950, p. 333). In this sense, the phenomenon of false information or rumours can be explained by the tension between common understanding and mysterious others. As such, false information and rumours 'constitute a relation to authority', including the mysterious outsiders (Kapferer, 2013, p. 14). The mysteries that make up the outsiders become sources of tension that rumours or false information must resolve (Simmel, p. 333). Moreover, two factors can explain why false political news travels far and deeper via peer-to-peer diffusion: first, because political news is about those in authority, it is presumed to contain something mysterious, if not also hiding something from the ordinary people. Therefore, sources purporting to know something most people do not know will create the impression that everything mysterious is essential (Simmel, p. 333).

The second point is that because peer-to-peer (or kinship) relations are bound by mutual understanding, false information or rumours shared 'arouse vicarious participation' to the extent that it will feel as though users were themselves victims' (Kapferer, p. 130). The phenomenon of misinformation can be explained by the fact that, to some extent, emerging media and information use patterns can help shape the 'newsworthiness of given news stories' (Rid & Hecker, 2009, p. 210). Moreover, because of the web of social relationships, the effects of misinformation seem to be more intense at the individual level. Table 4.24 below shows a correlation between individuals' frequency of use of online media and the likelihood of one being affected by online misinformation ($p<0.619$). However, at the group level, this perception is less intense ($p<0.357$). In practical terms, the evidence for correlations between these variables supports a more in-depth analysis of peace and social conflict dynamics, particularly in understanding social norms around practices such as false information, bullying, and political incitement. Furthermore, cross-analysis can help peacebuilders benchmark the threshold of positive correlations – for instance, how individuals perceive the risks or threats of online activism can influence their sensitivities to certain forms of conflict. This is the issue to which the following section turns.

Table 4:24: Correlations – perceived effects of online activism

Correlations				
		How often do you use online media for peace activism?	*Online platforms use and community feeling safe*	*Ever been affected by online misinformation?*
How often do you use online media for peace activism?	Pearson Correlation	1	.357**	**.619****
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	**241**	**241**	**241**
Online platforms use and community feeling safe	Pearson Correlation	**.357****	1	**.434****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	**241**	**241**	**241**
Ever been affected by online misinformation?	Pearson Correlation	**.619****	.434**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	**241**	**241**	**241**
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

4.3. The implication of emerging media practices for peace activism in volatile situations

Two observations can be made from the analysis of empirical data in the preceding sections. First, there is a relationship between individuals who sought peace-related information and their activism engagement. Data analysed in section one reveals that several conditions, including conflicts, political events, or violence, may influence patterns of peace-related information actions. In this sense, what individuals do with available media platforms matters to activism to the extent that it can influence their routine actions concerning peace and conflict.

The second observation is the correlation between the frequency of the use of available media platforms and its perceived effects. Evidence presented in section two built the case for citizen media practices as the basis for peace activism. This is because, through these media practices, peacebuilders can mobilise and co-create options – spaces, meanings or symbols with which individuals and organised groups can take part in common causes. Besides, most respondents registered mixed

opinions about the contribution of online activism, thus, pointing to the need for continual testing for potential effects of emerging peace activism patterns, particularly in contexts of shifting dynamics of risks, harms or threats resulting from increased use of online media. These shifting dynamics of opportunities, risks, or conflicts that individuals experience draw attention to the processes by which media practices become significant socially for activism, i.e., through the influence of emerging media practices on how individuals relate to each other and common causes. Furthermore, they show the political impact of emerging media practices on the way individuals relate to organised groups. Finally, the analysis highlights the link between these processes and emerging patterns of media and information use. Therefore, data presented in this section explores the implications of the shifting dynamics of opportunities, threats or conflicts resulting from increased use of online media for peace activism. For instance, a cross-analysis of perceived positive or negative effects of increased use of online media and an individual's sense of things in their local communities suggests some level of correlation, giving indications to conflict dynamics. For this study, 'opportunities' are defined as positive contributions, while risks or threats are the adverse effects respondents associate with online activism. In this sense, researchers can investigate how proliferating individuals' options to create and disseminate unregulated content relate to people's concerns and hopes about their local communities. Empirical data analysed in this section illustrate how both the positive and negative contributions of increased use of online media can help shape the dynamics of peace and conflicts.

4.3.1. Shifted dynamics of risks, threats, and conflicts for individuals

Analysis in this study suggests that increased use of online media platforms for activism to some extent is shifting dynamics of opportunities, risks, threats, or conflicts that individuals and organisations experience. For most respondents, increased use of online media for activism has positive and negative effects (*see Tables 4.20 and 4.22 above*). A further cross-tabulation of the perception of positive and negative effects of increased online media use for activism reveals several patterns. First, as Table 4.25 below shows, respondents who said that online activism enhanced a sense of security among communities also worry about threats of bullying, stalking and harassment, loss of privacy, hate speech and false information (at 74 counts).

Second, respondents who viewed online media as alternative platforms for information sharing and learning are also concerned with the likelihood of being exposed to criticism, loss of privacy, being misunderstood, surveillance, arrests, or death threats (at 55 counts). Finally, at 50 counts, the threats of individuals being exposed to criticism, bullying, harassment or hate speech undermine online activism's potential benefits as platforms for cooperation. More importantly, regardless of how respondents understand peacebuilding, most worry about bullying, stalking and harassment (at 47 counts), loss of privacy through hacking or impersonation (at 38 counts) and being misunderstood or misquoted (at 29 counts). Similarly, despite all the concerns about the risks associated with the increased use of online media, most respondents find that these platforms enhance a sense of security among communities (at 74 counts) because they provide an alternative platform for information sharing, learning and response (at 55 counts).

Table 4:25: Cross-tabulation of positive & negative effects of online activism

Contribution of online peacebuilding to your community * Risks and threats that worry you when using online platforms Crosstabulation												
			Risks and threats that worry you when using online platforms									Total
			Exposed to criticism (backlash, defamation, or antagonism)	Bullying, stalking & harassment	Loss of privacy (hacking or impersonation)	Being misunderstood or misquoted	Incitement (hate speech & use of violent language)	False information (fake news or misleading statements)	No response	Others (not aware of any, lack of bundles & no risk at all)	Surveillance, arrests & death threats	
Contribution of online peacebuilding to your community	Created platforms for cooperation & collaboration	Count	5	10	7	5	8	5	2	6	2	**50**
		Expected Count	4.6	9.8	7.9	6.0	3.7	3.1	7.1	5.4	2.5	**50.0**
	Enhanced sense of security among communities	Count	6	**23**	12	5	7	6	7	5	3	**74**
		Expected Count	6.8	**14.4**	11.7	8.9	5.5	4.6	10.4	8.0	3.7	**74.0**
	Some groups are still excluded & minimal change	Count	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	0	**11**
		Expected Count	1.0	2.1	1.7	1.3	.8	.7	1.6	1.2	.5	**11.0**
	Ease of communication	Count	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	1	**7**
		Expected Count	.6	1.4	1.1	.8	.5	.4	1.0	.8	.3	**7.0**
	Provided communities with alternative platform for information sharing, learning & response	Count	7	8	11	9	2	2	8	4	4	**55**
		Expected Count	5.0	10.7	8.7	6.6	4.1	3.4	7.8	5.9	2.7	**55.0**
	No response	Count	2	2	4	5	0	0	15	6	1	**35**
		Expected Count	3.2	6.8	5.5	4.2	2.6	2.2	4.9	3.8	1.7	**35.0**
	Others (I can't tell, not aware or non)	Count	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	3	1	**9**
		Expected Count	.8	1.8	1.4	1.1	.7	.6	1.3	1.0	.4	**9.0**
Total		**Count**	**22**	**47**	**38**	**29**	**18**	**15**	**34**	**26**	**12**	**241**
		Expected Count	**22.0**	**47.0**	**38.0**	**29.0**	**18.0**	**15.0**	**34.0**	**26.0**	**12.0**	**241.0**

In Table 4.26 below, a cross-analysis of the perceived positive contribution of increased use of online media and harmful content or activities reveals that most individuals find political incitement such as ethnic profiling, hate speech, or divisive political discourse, damaging (at 89 counts). Most respondents have varied answers to online activism's perceived contribution to their local communities; however, their main concern is political incitement. Respondents who focus on an enhanced sense of security within communities are most concerned with the effect of false information (at 22 counts). Individuals who view increased use of online media as providing communities with alternative platforms for sharing information, and learning, see political incitement as their primary concern (at 24 counts). It is worth noting that despite the perceived positive contributions of online activism, more people worry about ethnic profiling, hate speech and intimidation (at 89 counts), and false information (at 32 counts).

Table 4:26: Cross-tabulation of positive & harmful content/activities

Contribution of online peacebuilding to your community * Content or activities online you consider to be harmful Crosstabulation										
			Content or activities online you consider to be harmful							Total
			Political incitement (ethnic profiling, hate speech, divisions & intimidation)	False information (fake news, misleading posts & rumour)	Bullying, trolling & insults	Explicit & graphic content	Outlawed groups	Others	No response	
Contribution of online peacebuilding to your community	Created platforms for cooperation & collaboration	Count	22	4	4	11	0	3	6	50
		Expected Count	18.5	6.6	4.4	4.8	1.0	2.5	12.2	50.0
	Enhanced sense of security among communities	Count	24	22	5	4	2	2	15	**74**
		Expected Count	27.3	9.8	6.4	7.1	1.5	3.7	18.1	**74.0**
	Some groups are still excluded & minimal change	Count	6	1	0	1	0	1	2	11
		Expected Count	4.1	1.5	1.0	1.0	.2	.5	2.7	11.0
	Ease of communication	Count	5	0	0	1	1	0	0	7
		Expected Count	2.6	.9	.6	.7	.1	.3	1.7	7.0
	Provided communities with alternative platform for information sharing, learning & response	Count	24	3	8	5	2	1	12	**55**
		Expected Count	20.3	7.3	4.8	5.2	1.1	2.7	13.5	**55.0**
	No response	Count	5	2	1	0	0	4	23	35
		Expected Count	12.9	4.6	3.0	3.3	.7	1.7	8.6	35.0
	Others (I can't tell, not aware or non)	Count	3	0	3	1	0	1	1	9
		Expected Count	3.3	1.2	.8	.9	.2	.4	2.2	9.0
Total		Count	**89**	**32**	21	23	5	12	59	241
		Expected Count	**89.0**	**32.0**	21.0	23.0	5.0	12.0	59.0	241.0

Table 4.27 below displays descriptive data of contents or activities respondents find harmful, including political incitement as ethnic profiling, hate speech, divisive rhetoric, or intimidation, at 36.9%. Other respondents find false information, misleading posts, and rumours, 13.3%, also harmful to peacebuilding. Similarly, as Table 28 shows, for peacebuilding organisations, content inciting violence or hate crimes, 40%, ranks high, followed by fake news/information or rumours at 30%. These patterns of perceived risks or benefits of online activism unravel the dynamic relationship between the way people appropriate a particular media platform and actions, either furthering or undermining goals for peace. In the context of Kenya, political incitement worries most people because of polarised inter-ethnic relations. These patterns of risks and benefits of increased use of online media in ethnically polarised contexts transform how individuals engage with vernacularised election campaigns.

Table 4:27: Contents/activities individuals consider harmful

Content or activities online you consider being harmful.			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Political incitement (ethnic profiling, hate speech, divisions & intimidation)	89	36.9
	False information (fake news, misleading posts & rumour)	32	13.3
	Bullying, trolling & insults	21	8.7
	Explicit & graphic content	23	9.5
	Outlawed groups	5	2.1
	Others	12	5.0
	No response	59	24.5
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:28: Contents/activities peacebuilders consider harmful

From an organisation perspective what online content is considered harmful to users?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Inciting violence & hate speech	8	40.0
	Fake news/information, rumours	6	30.0
	Graphic images of violence	2	10.0
	Explicit images	1	5.0
	Exposing individual private information with the intent of harassing or intimidation	3	15.0
	Total	**20**	**100.0**

4.3.2. Barriers to online peace activism

The previous section emphasised emerging patterns in the way individuals perceive the effects of increased use of online media for peace activism. Analysed data shows that these patterns are linked to the way people appropriate available media platforms. The focus of the analysis in this section is to link these patterns to what respondents perceive are barriers to online activism. As pointed out in the introductory section, access to available media platforms is vital but insufficient for peace activism. Poor infrastructure or prohibitive costs might undermine individuals' options for engaging in peace activism, but they are not the only reasons people do or do not participate in public processes. Of interest to this study is the link between the varied ways respondents perceive the benefits and risks of increased use of online media and the barriers they face while engaging in peace activism.

As Table 4.29 below shows, there are different categories of these barriers, including costly online platforms, 22.4%, lack of access for targeted groups, 9.1% in low-income settlements, or fear of loss of users' privacy, 3.7%. Worth paying attention to are barriers that emanate from structures of social relations. As discussed in Chapter 3, both Nairobi and Nakuru counties are multi-ethnic and often experience simmering intergroup tensions and cases of incitement to violence. Thus, some respondents worry about the use of multiple dialects in online activism, 14.1%. For instance, the KNHRC and CIPEV investigations following the 2007/08 political crisis found that

political elites regularly used coded vernacular to mobilise their bases. Closely related to this previous point is how emerging vernacular online groups open individuals to political manipulation, 9.5%, especially where the communication content is unregulated. As such, vernacular media practices become a barrier to robust online peace activism when polarising and excluding outer groups from common causes. Besides, other respondents cite bullying and incitement against activists, 5.4%. Kenya is among 45 countries known for using targeted spyware software against human rights defenders and opposition groups (Marczak et al., 2018). Most respondents rightly recognise how government surveillance and harassment can undermine online activism.

Table 4:29: Barriers to online peace activism

List some of the barriers you have encountered while using online platforms for peace activism			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	No barrier	8	3.3
	Language barrier (multiple dialects in use)	34	14.1
	Some target groups have no access to online platforms	22	9.1
	Costly communication platforms	54	22.4
	Manipulation, political interference & propaganda	23	9.5
	Security & privacy of users	9	3.7
	Bullying & incitement against activists	13	5.4
	No response	72	29.9
	Others	6	2.5
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

As the cross-analysis in the previous sections revealed, respondents concerned with an enhanced sense of security within their community worry about the effects of false information. Besides, discussions in Chapter 1 emphasised that an accumulated web of social relations, particularly in ethnically polarised contexts, can govern how people engage with available information. Increased use of online media for activism is influencing the dynamics of who can speak and how. Thus, ethnically polarised social

relations can help shape patterns of information use, production, and dissemination of mainly unregulated content.

In Table 4.30 below, the phenomenon of false information has affected at least 39% of respondents. When prompted to describe how false information affected them, as Table 4.31 below shows, 10.4% of respondents said that false information escalated tension and fear of violence erupting. Other respondents reported that false information had caused depression, anxiety, fear, and low self-esteem, 9.5%. While some participants said that episodes of false information made it difficult for them to trust news sources, 5%, for 5.4% others these led to the breakdown of relationships. However, the phenomenon of false information aroused some respondents to a desire to do something positive, 1.7%. In light of the risks and threats resulting from the increased use of online media, the desire to do something positive is among the many coping motives for people to respond. Table 4.32 below highlights how respondents dealt with cases of false information. For instance, while 17% of respondents tried to verify and correct the false news, 16.6% ignored it. Other respondents took the step of countering the false news with correct information, 6.2%; and 4.1% reported the cases to the police or social media firms. Moreover, 1.2% blocked the sources of false news or stopped re-posting it.

Table 4:30: People affected by false online information

Ever been affected by false online information?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	94	39.0
	No	128	53.1
	No Response	19	7.9
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:31: Perceived effects of false information

If yes, how did this affect you?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Caused tension, panic & fear of violence	25	10.4
	Depressed, anxious, fearful & low self-esteem	23	9.5
	Made it difficult to trust available news sources	12	5.0
	Breakdown of relationships & damaged reputation	13	5.4
	Desire to do something positive	4	1.7
	No response	157	65.1
	Others	6	2.5
	Threatened & targeted	1	.4
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

Table 4:32: Strategies for dealing with false information

How do you deal with online false news?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Ignored the false news/sources	40	16.6
	Tried to verify & correct the false news	41	17.0
	Reported the false news to authorities (police, social media firms)	10	4.1
	Blocked the false news sources or stopped re-posting the news	3	1.2
	Counter false news with correct information	15	6.2
	Others	8	3.3
	No response	124	51.5
	Total	**241**	**100.0**

4.4. Overview of the chapter

Data presented and analysed in this chapter demonstrate that emerging citizen media practices impact peace activism because these practices influence how individuals relate to each other and organised groups. Data shows that online activism represents spaces for access, interaction, engagement, or collective security for most

respondents. Moreover, cross analyses suggest that regardless of online activism's perceived positive contributions, most people worry about harmful practices that these platforms enable. Therefore, the varied way people engage in online peace activism and perceived positive and negative contributions illustrate the dynamic relationships between social processes by which individuals forge ties with others and embedded media platforms.

In Chapter 5, attention turns to the potential implications of these findings, particularly what they may mean for the future of peace activism. The changing dynamics of peace and conflict resulting from the increased use of online media for activism may also alter civil society organisations' communicative roles. For instance, in contexts where online practices such as manipulated facts and cyberbullying to intimidate opponents are pervasive, it might mean peace organisations modify their role to include fact-checking capacities. Although the onward use of online media across societies may lead to innovations, new roles, and institutions, it does not necessarily address enduring social inequalities, as data shows. In volatile regions of the world, the increasing use of online media for activism poses new challenges for peace communication because facts and narratives about conflicting issues can now easily be manipulated. Consequently, the social function and credibility of established conflict resolution practices became increasingly precarious.

Chapter 5 Discussion of Findings

5.0. Introduction

The preceding four Chapters set out arguments about and empirical evidence for the effects of increased use of online media on peace activism. In these chapters, I discussed claims linking online media use to options enabling or constraining individuals' capacity to participate in common causes, including peace activism. A critical assessment of relevant literature shows a considerable focus on basic access to available media platforms while neglecting social processes by which such platforms become significant for different individuals and organisations. As discussed in Chapter 2, considering the dynamic relationship between emerging media practices and features that make up peace activism can remedy this gap. However, for authors such as Castells (2010) and Latour (2005), technology networks increasingly constitute new capacities for social action. Latour (p. 71) limits social action to a thing's capacity to modify a state of affairs: arguing that if one agrees that humans' and tools' activities are nearly the same, then implements are actors. For Castells (2010, p. 502), networks are a material basis for society's performance and have decentred the inherited units and forms of social organisation. In this study's context, Castells' and Latour's perspectives are relevant because of the social consequences of practices such as algorithmic communication, in which content is automated and disseminated, including false information and hate messages. In a network of people and implements (each acting in its own right), a pertinent question is the moral limits of the resultant activities, particularly the course conflicting issues take. Another relevant question is about how automated communication constricts or enables options for social interaction and organisation. For instance, the question about how automated false political news can influence social interaction patterns among people individually. At the group or organisational level, the ensuing social interaction patterns (re) produce social practices such as false information, rumours, and hateful context during election campaigns. So, the influence of increasing online media uptake is limited to how ensuing opportunities and risks help shape how individuals forge ties with others for common causes. However, the processes by which individuals and organised groups appropriate available media platforms remain crucial elements in explaining these relationships' dynamics. Cited studies in Chapter 1 reveal that in contexts where poor

governance or conflicts are widespread, access to specific media platforms often stands in as the solution. This assumption overlooks the causes for which groups emerge and embed available media platforms in their social and political actions.

Underlying this study's purpose is Kenya's quest for sustainable peace. Since the 2007/08 post-election violence, several conflict resolution initiatives have been set up, including the creation of mutating political coalitions, constitutional reform, truth commissions and grassroots inter-ethnic dialogue. Some conflict resolution mechanisms registered positive outcomes, such as the promulgation of a new constitution in 2010, which led to broad reforms, including devolution of public resources and planning to local communities. Other processes, such as truth commissions, aimed to redress gross human rights violations – did not go beyond public hearings and the release of official reports (Wambua, 2019). Seemingly, the latter conflict resolution mechanisms failed to produce a unified public will towards sustainable peace because of the salience of certain factors such as inter-ethnic tensions and opportunistic political coalitions. Moreover, where ethnicised political discourses dominate how individuals and organised groups negotiate social affiliations, it imposes undesirable conditions on peace activism, which is dependent on solidarity and cooperation among diverse individuals and organised groups. Therefore, this study's findings highlight and contribute to debates about the challenge of communicating peace in societies dominated by deep social divisions.

Furthermore, these findings emphasise how communicative practices provide a useful way of assessing the influence of increased online media use on peace activism because communicative practices as a means with which groups (re)-produce their social worlds can be shaped by what individuals do with available media platforms. Beginning with what individuals do with available media platforms, the expanding options for content co-creation and dissemination can influence 'certain structures of everyday discourse such as rumours, jokes, or sermons' (Powers, 1995). Therefore, this chapter discusses the main research findings drawing attention to how citizen media practices become socially and politically significant for peace activism. These discussions provide answers to the following questions: How can citizen media practices contribute to peace activism? In what ways do civil society groups strategically promote peace activism? What are the implications of the emerging online media practices to peace activism in ethnically polarised contexts? On the first question, the link between citizen media practices and activism – data in this study

shows that the emerging online media practices impact activism because they shape patterns of access and engagement in actions furthering or undermining peace. In this question, the variables of 'citizen media practices' are embodied skills and knowledge, which denotes the individual capacity to act purposefully.

In contrast, 'online media practices' such as hashtags, microblogs, or digital political and social memes are symbolic markers for various campaigns. On the second question, empirical data analysed demonstrates that organisation-enabled online and offline communication are strategic to peace activism. It enables members of the public and peacebuilders to appropriate available media platforms and co-create spaces for negotiating ideas and meanings causes for activism. Finally, on the third question, this study finds that while many respondents frequently use online media for peace activism and associate it with positive outcomes, they also worry about its negative consequences. Furthermore, a cross-analysis of empirical data from these three questions suggests a relationship between peace-related information-seeking behaviour among respondents and their participation in activism; and a correlation between individuals who frequently use online media and the perceived influence of these platforms. Therefore, in this chapter, I argue that if the processes by which media platforms become significant socially for information access, interaction and public engagement are considered, they have consequences for how individuals and organised groups participate in social causes, including peace activism. This is because the reasons for which individuals come together can help shape how they engage with information, available media platforms and causes for peace activism. In this case, peace and conflict are the basis of people and organisations forging and maintaining ties with each other. Thus, false information, peace-promoting messages, or hateful material as the content of media practices can influence the character of social interactions. Where the communicative contents are positive, it may enhance social integration. In contrast, where the social interaction’s content is corrosive and hateful, it may result in repulsion and disintegration of relationships.

Therefore, this chapter is presented in three sections: Section one begins by discussing how emerging citizen media practices help shape activism and explore potential implications for peace communication. The second section focuses on the implication of the finding that peacebuilders’ media practices can enable diverse ways for members of the public to engage in peace activism. The final section considers the

consequences of the finding that individuals' information-seeking behaviour can be linked to patterns of engagement in activism and what it means for socially (ethnically) polarised contexts.

5.1. Citizen media practices and peace activism

There are three interrelated elements and processes in analysing how peace activism is changing because of the increased use of online media platforms. Peace activism as a media with which individuals and organised groups (re)-produce their social orders (of peace and conflict) depend on specific discourse structures. In Kenya, polarised inter-ethnic relations and pursuit of political power and state resource's structure peace activism. So, citizen media practices with which individuals co-create and relate to ideas, practices and processes point to options and risks they impose on the structure of everyday discourse of peace and conflict. For instance, humorous online microblogs or memes with ethnic tones can diffuse or escalate conflicts. In either case, dynamically situated individual media practices within the ethnicised character of peace and conflicts can exacerbate existing tendencies. Cultural sayings, riddles, or songs, if vernacularised, can corrode the character of social interactions. Similarly, the organisations or social groups to which individuals are connected or co-create point to the character of prevailing social orders people take part in. In this sense, inter-ethnic tensions dominate the structure of peace discourse because they shape the course solutions to lingering problems such as political violence and gross human rights violations.

As argued in Chapter 1, the constant contact and pervasive awareness with which individuals and organised groups connect to ideas or entities can define how emerging citizen media practices influence peace activism. In this study's context, polarised inter-ethnic relations structure how individuals negotiate their affiliations across varied social contexts. Many Kenyans align with and vote for their ethnic alliances (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). However, these inter-ethnic political coalitions are short-lived; they mutate into opportunistic factions and ties. In this study, mutating coalitions are alliances of expedience among ethnic elites characterised by patronage and opportunistic tendencies. In Kenya, these mutating political alliances have rendered coalition politics precarious, and by extension, peace. Thus, it can be said that

polarised inter-ethnic relations structure the character of peace and conflicts and individuals' participation in it.

Moreover, mutating ethnic-based coalitions have consequences for the dynamics of conflicts and peace. A collapse or a mutation of inter-ethnic political coalitions often results in intensified tensions and animosities among communities. Discussions in Chapter 1 referred to the post-election political alliance between President Uhuru Kenyatta and the opposition leader Raila Odinga since 2018, which has caused factions on both sides of the political divide. Thus, the frequency with which political elites create and dissolve coalitions influences the character of peace and conflicts in Kenya. Before the 2017 elections, the character of "peace" and conflicts was influenced by the coalition between President Kenyatta and his deputy, Mr Ruto. However, since 2018, President Kenyatta and Mr Odinga's political alliance has shaped the character of "peace".

Therefore, citizen media practices, together with the reasons for which individuals (co)-create ideas or entities, form the basis for analysing how increasing online media use can help shape elements constituting peace activism and conflicts. In this sense, citizen media practices contribute to peace activism only to the degree that it mediates individuals' concerns with other group members. This study finds that individuals search for peace-related information and engage in activism for varied reasons, including during crises such as violence before, during or after elections and campaign activation. A cross-analysis between individuals' information-seeking behaviour and their engagement in activism finds a significant relationship. In this sense, peace activism can be seen as a product of a dynamic relationship between reasons for individuals affiliating with causes and appropriated media platforms. This conclusion is in line with Bourdieu's (1998) argument about how 'invisible structures can determine what one sees and does not see'. In Kenya, during elections, political elites often vernacularise campaign messages into cultural fables, songs, or sayings to mobilise their bases. Cultural fables or songs as invisible structures may localise political issues into a logic of everyday practices and intensify how people experience peace and conflict.

For instance, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNHRC) and the Commission Investigating Post Election Violence (CIPEV) reports show how vernacular radio stations enabled individuals to make hateful statements. These reports single out live-call-in shows, music, and coded terms as media practices that

intensified feelings of ethnic hatred and tensions. These vernacularised media practices mobilised everyday vocabulary of such terms as *madoadoa* (spots)*, bunyot* (enemy) and *sangara* (wild grass) against outer groups (KNCHR, 2008, p. 85; Waki et al., 2008, p. 295). In an ethnically polarised society, coded terms as linguistic strategies are designed to exploit elements making up a vernacular such as sayings, humour, and fables. Thus, the KNCHR and CIPEV reports about callers on vernacular radio stations using coded terms show how citizen media practices matter: they can exacerbate existing inter-ethnic biases and differences. More importantly, these media practices have consequences for the dynamics of media users' experiences because they can intensify tensions among groups. In this case, polarised ethnic relations supply reasons for which individuals could be mobilised. As argued in Chapter 2, ethnic identities in themselves may have numerous meanings and purposes for different groups, but it is the power of these meanings when 'objectified that produce groups' (Bourdieu, 1985). Vernacularised political campaigns aim to dissolve meanings of social identities into political causes – to the extent that identities of groups become synonymous with elites' political aims. This is the sense in which one can interpret the claim that ethnic identity structure multiparty politics and alliances across Africa or multiparty politics has exacerbated inter-ethnic tensions (Anderson & Lochery, 2008). Lynch (2014, p. 93) makes a similar assessment when describing how inter-ethnic relations between Uhuru Kenyatta's Kikuyu community and William Ruto's Kalenjin underlay the formation of their political coalition – the Jubilee Alliance. Galtung's (1976) peace-making concept is relevant – both Kenyatta and Ruto traded the conflict of displaced communities, mainly Kikuyus in the Rift Valley, for an alliance of political expediency.

Furthermore, the KNHRC (2008) and Waki et al., (2008) reports about vernacular radio stations and dissemination of hate content illustrate how citizen media practices can impact the everyday logic of conflict and peace. However, within the communicative practice framework, individual media practices are embedded in the prevailing character of peace and conflict. In this case, mutating inter-ethnic political alliances present a specific character of peace in which conflicts between groups change according to their affiliations. Thus, a critical focus on citizen media practices can reveal how they help (re)-produce the character of peace and conflicts and, in turn, help shape activism. In Kenya, ethnicity is more pronounced in political mobilisation, and it influences the course of conflict resolution mechanisms. Indeed, one of the

proposals to address the problem of contentious elections in the ongoing implementation of the 2010 Constitution is expanding the executive branch of government for ethnic representation (Haji et al., 2020). It is, therefore, crucial to highlight how the politics of ethnic identities mediate the reproduction of communicative and political practices. In this context, media practices can influence how individuals co-create and relate to ideas and entities. As KNHRC and Waki et al., reports suggest, the effects of citizen media practices are more apparent where lingering historical injustices and negative ethnic stereotypes dominate the structure of everyday peace and conflicts. For instance, Lynch (2014) emphasises ethnic tensions resulting from historical land injustices and how they structured members of Uhuru's Kikuyu (resettled) and Ruto's Kalenjin (host) communities' performance of their inter-tribal political alliance. Lynch argues that considering the 2007/08 post-election violence, the political coalition between Uhuru and Ruto recast the logic of a routinised inter-community narrative of justice and injustice of land resettlement schemes.

There are numerous penetrating social problems in fragile societies, including poor governance, unemployment, and political apathy among various social groups. If solutions are devised for these lingering social problems, it is crucial to understand the potentials and limits of emerging media practices such as algorithmic-enabled political campaigns. As pointed out in the introductory section of this chapter, a network of humans and non-human things pose challenges to the course conflicts and solutions take. It is, therefore, crucial not to conflate media platforms, social action, and enduring social problems. If these variables are conflated, it leads to what Bridle (2018, p. 15) calls 'computational thinking, a belief that software applications can be deployed to whatever practical or social problem societies face'. Bridle's critique points to the problems of conflating media platforms with social problems and the reasons or purposes for which groups emerge. Computational thinking makes media platforms individuals and organisations appropriate for activism stand-in for why they protest, engage in violence, or participate at low rates in public processes. Conflating the causes for which two or more individuals forge ties with appropriated media platforms makes it difficult to account for valued ends—what matters for individuals or organised groups—such as belonging, trust or distrust.

Furthermore, it overlooks specific ways purposes such as belonging, trust, or distrust shape the character of social interactions. As the preceding section suggests, inter-

ethnic political alliances can produce a specific character of peace and conflict. Thus, in analysing the influence of increased use of online media on activism, it is vital to consider valued ends—what moves people to forge ties with others. In this study's context, peace and conflict may move individuals and organised groups to form solidarities.

Data analysed in Chapter 4 shows that the emerging web of social relations resulting from online activism has consequences for how people access and engage with information. This is because media practices such as cyberbullying, political incitement or false information undermine actions furthering peace goals. In situations where people have 'sustained awareness and constant connection' with false information or political incitement, the dynamics of their experiences can be intensified (Hampton, 2017, p.134). As Tandoc et al. (2018) point out, polarised social relations structure individuals' 'willingness to believe information confirming their biases'. Therefore, if an individual's information-seeking behaviours are linked to patterns of engagement, it has consequences for who can speak; when one can speak; how one can speak; and potential outcomes of one's speech' (Ferree et al., 2004). Both Latour's (2005) – 'networks of connections' and Castells' (2015) – 'programmers of power switches' seem to suggest that access to these platforms switch on or off causes for which individuals mobilise. These views are evident in arguments emphasising rudimentary access to available media platforms over causes for which individuals forge ties with others (Kamau, 2018; Mutsvairo & Karam, 2018; Nyabuga & Ugangu, 2018). When analysts conflate available media platforms with common causes, it lends credence to the belief that software applications can resolve social problems (Bridle, 2018). Therefore, internet and media shutdowns can resolve political agitations.

While lack of access or shutdown of available media platforms may undermine how people participate in common causes, it is not a sufficient condition for peace activism. If it were, societies with widespread access to media platforms would experience high levels of civic engagement. A primary focus on media platforms overlooks how existing social tendencies, in this case, ethnic tensions help shape emerging media practices. Hutchison et al., (2016, p. 17) argue, 'in highly intolerant societies, free and independent news media can reinforce intolerance and raise the salience of grievances used by political elites to provoke political violence'. During crises, a default policy reaction for some governments has been the routine shutdown of the internet and news media (Nyabola, 2018, p. 123). Other mechanisms for stifling political

dissent include 'prohibitive costs of accessing particular media platforms; lack of prerequisite media technologies or literacy levels' (Mutsvairo & Karam, 2018, p. 12). Although these barriers might undermine social action, in themselves, they are not the causes for which people do not take part in public processes. If 'basic access' is emphasised without considering what individuals do with media platforms, it suggests that people do not have the capacity for common causes, i.e., public participation or acting in solidarity with others.

Even more critical is how to account for the strategies by which individuals and organised groups relate to ideas and entities. Social action, Weber (2019, p. 101) argues, can be determined either by 'actions pursued because of external factors (purposive/instrumental rationality), actions pursued because of its intrinsic value (value rationality), actions motivated by emotions (affect), and actions triggered through ingrained habituation (traditions)'. These varied forms of social action may influence how access to available media platforms shape activism. For instance, if people pursue violence for instrumental reasons – such as opportunistic political gains regardless of its consequences to other groups, their activism's dynamics may vary from those motivated by values or existing social tendencies. Therefore, conflating enduring social problems with available media platforms or making these media stand in for why individuals and organised groups join common causes overlook these varied forms of social actions. This study's empirical data shows that individuals are motivated by varied reasons and purposes to innovate and appropriate media platforms for activism. For instance, some participants are motivated by cases of violence, political crises, or political events to search for peace-related information and engage in activism.

Furthermore, many respondents associate online activism with positive and negative effects, which shift the dynamics of opportunities, risks, threats, or conflicts they are likely to experience (See tables 4.25 & 4.26, Chapter 4). As a result, patterns of engagement seem to emerge based on how, when, and where people search for peacebuilding information and activities. These emerging engagement patterns have consequences for peace activism if one follows Tandoc's et al. (2018) suggestion that sectarian differences can make people more vulnerable to false information. This is because peace activism depends on the cooperation of diverse individuals and organised groups. So, a clear understanding of the varied forms of social actions may guide peacebuilders to devise effective peace interventions.

For this study, emerging citizen media practices are mechanisms with which individuals and organised groups co-create and connect to others' ideas or concerns; hence, they can help shape the dynamics of options and risks people experience. Individuals' options to (co)-create social spaces for peace activism are subject to media practices such as cyberbullying, hate content, and online surveillance. Therefore, by emphasising a link between citizen media practices and activism, this study highlights social processes by which individuals integrate into collective causes. For peacebuilders, this means indexing strategic media practices for activism. In 2017, like all other previous elections in Kenya, various political actors, government agencies, journalists, artists, and religious groups stepped up efforts to mobilise members of the public to "preach peace" (Benesch, 2014). These groups mobilised all accessible information and communication systems, including online media, community social centres, news media and places of worship for the cause of "a peaceful election". According to data analysed in Chapter 4, individuals and organised groups access peace-related information through diverse sources. Moreover, individuals' information-seeking behaviours are motivated by numerous factors and are linked to their participation trends. Therefore, it is crucial to consider how individuals' accessing and disseminating information related to the causes of furthering or undermining peace. Even more crucial is testing the extent to which emerging citizen media practices influence social action. Empirical data in this study show that online activism is a process of co-creating social spaces for promoting peaceful co-existence and dialogue for some respondents. At the same time, other respondents worry that emerging media practices can exacerbate already polarised inter-ethnic relations because of the ease with which individuals produce and circulate unregulated content, including hate speech, ethnic profiling, and bullying. In this sense, media practices such as cyberbullying, hate speech, or intimidation corrode social interactions if they become part of routine social conduct, and therefore, peace activism.

The cited case of political incitement from vernacular radio stations in Kenya during the 2007/08 post-election violence shows how elections exploiting corrosive linguistic strategies can escalate tensions and intensify hostilities (KNHRC, 2008; Waki et al., 2008). Just like vernacular radio stations are singled out for intensifying ethnic tensions, emerging online media practices can enable echo-chamber tendencies –

reinforcing biases against outer groups (Benkler et al., 2018; Currarini & Mengel, 2016, p. 15). Therefore, citizen media practices such as ethnic profiling, hateful content and cyberbullying impact peace activism only to the degree that it exacerbates existing social tendencies. This claim turns attention toward processes by which individuals and organised groups appropriate, negotiate and display meanings of their situations for others (Bell, 2009; Alexander, 2006). This finding also emphasises media practices by which individuals forge ties with ideas, causes, or organisations. On this account, these media practices may either reinforce existing tendencies or breach the boundaries of established social norms. In Kenya, often political elites use incendiary rhetoric during elections to stir and reinforce ethnic biases to affect voting patterns (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). These ethnic-based voting patterns also condition how political coalitions form and dissolve because of institutionalised opportunistic tendencies among political elites. For instance, the enduring patterns of mutating interethnic political alliances in Kenya exemplify institutionalised opportunistic tendencies because intergroup relationships are 'less predictable' (Horowitz, 1985). Thus, the question of institutionalised opportunistic tendencies among political elites turns attention towards practices by which individuals and organised groups (co)-create spaces for negotiating and appropriating ideas or symbols for activism (I return to this point in the next section). For now, the emphasis is on the potential of citizen media practices to influence elements that makeup peace activism. Instructive is Bourdieu's concept of 'social practices' suggesting that invisible structures (in this case, opportunistic tendencies) enable and constrain individuals' capacity to engage in coalition politics. Opportunistic tendencies can help explain the unstable nature of political coalitions in Kenya. Discussions in Chapter 1 suggested that election campaigns are a fault line in many societies because of the narratives by which individuals and organised groups define themselves. Political campaigns exploit corrosive linguistic strategies that stir animosities to define social problems through people's identities.

Furthermore, these campaign processes structure why people come together to negotiate and cooperate in dealing with their social situations (Leftwich, 2004). In most election campaigns, political contenders deploy arrays of antagonistic narratives to mobilise for their agenda and candidates (Manin, 1997, p. 227). Usually, such confrontational narratives tend to help political candidates construct perceived voters' needs. In 2017, like other previous Kenyan elections, various peace campaigners

appeared to conflate the problem of political violence with elections. Election campaigns were blamed for exacerbated ethnic tensions, in the process helping political elites legitimise opportunistic interventions such as mutating political alliances and state repression as practical solutions. This way of characterising election-related violence obscures a critical focus on election mismanagement problems and the corrosive effects of vernacularised election campaigns on public communications. Accordingly, peace activism can be considered a process of 'constructing reasons for a problem' such as political violence or inter-ethnic conflicts (Edelman, 1988).

As set out in Chapter 1, there is a phenomenon of mutating political alliances, in which ethnic elites dissolve and form new political alliances in each election because of polarised intergroup relations and opportunistic tendencies among political elites. In ethnically polarised contexts, Bourdieu's (1977) idea of 'habitus,' i.e., embodied opportunistic tendencies, provides the logic for mutating political alliances and people's way of 'saying and doing' peace and conflicts (Schatzki, 2002). In this sense, peace activism as a process of political self-definition may reflect conditions enabling and constraining individuals' and groups' everyday political choices and actions (Edelman, p. 3). In Chapter 1, I argued that during elections, political elites in Kenya often use ritual-like events such as prayer rallies, oath-taking ceremonies and ethnic leaders' installation rites to mobilise their bases. According to Bell (1997), these ritual-like practices are meant to help participants discern what is good from what is reprehensible. The following episode illustrates how in the 2017 elections, some political candidates used these ritual-like events to frame solutions for election-related violence. On 7 July 2017, three of the eight presidential candidates, the incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta, Ukuru Oukot, and Michael Wainaina joined a public rally christened "Saba Saba[3] Prayers", convened by an alliance of evangelical churches in Kenya for a "Peace Pledge". At the rally, each candidate took a turn in publicly pledging their commitment to peaceful election campaigns. Anecdotal scriptural verses interspersed the peace pledges as if staged to 'appeal to people's inward prayer life formed by language of battles (…) and divinely legitimised' (Boulding, 2000, p. 17). On his part, the opposition leader Raila Odinga organised a parallel event at the historic

[3] Saba Saba – Kiswahili for 7 July 1990 when opposition groups, despite extreme repression from the then Kenyan President Daniel Moi, mobilised and organised a public rally at Kamukunji grounds. Both Saba Saba and Kamukunji grounds have come to stand for freedom and political pluralism.

Kamukunji grounds to appeal to Kenya's quest for political freedom (CitizenTV, 2017). These events presented members of the public with competing images – of an election as a religious undertaking and as a quest for political freedom (Manin, 1997, p. 227). For this reason, the "Peace Pledge" event can be viewed as a cultural performance because it offered both the members of the public and political candidates an opportunity to 'display for each other the meanings of their social situation' (Alexander, 2006, p. 32). The political candidates' social situation was getting elected; thus, the "Peace Pledge" rally offered them an opportunity to display this meaning. While for voters was an opportunity to ‘display and negotiate their hopes and fears’, this rally offered such a backdrop (Bennett, 1977), resulting in a particular 'dramaturgy' (Hjarvard et al., 2015). The "Saba Saba prayer rally" as a dramaturgy metaphorically offered a stage (prayer rally), setting (election), part (performing voters and leaders) and team (political candidates and citizen members) to display for each other their political commitments publicly. Thus, in staging political campaigns with religious tropes, campaigners may influence how the electorate ‘makes sense of, frames, and copes’ with election-related anxieties (Ott & Mack, 2020, pp. 282-285). In short, these ritual-like events exemplify how election campaigns can be viewed as cultural performances. More importantly, they show how different entities can negotiate and appropriate these ritual-like practices for communicative purposes. The expanded opportunities for individuals to co-create spaces and content may intensify how they may experience political campaigns. Thus, the widespread use of online media tools raises concerns at two levels. On the one hand, emerging citizen media practices coincide with the problems of polarisation, dissemination of hateful content, false information, and violence (Barclay, 2018; Laub, 2019; Müller & Schwarz, 2020; Patton et al., 2014).

On the other hand, there is a need to understand how these emerging media practices can influence peace activism. Kenyan elections take place within ethnically polarised conditions. These polarised social relations also structure how people access and share information. So, citizen media practices allow individuals and organisations to forge ties with others' causes and individualised experiences of political processes. The finding that some respondents view online activism as social spaces for furthering dialogue and sharing mutual interests reflect those of Vosoughi et al. (2018) and Kang et al. (2011) about the impact of layered sources and relations on emerging patterns of media and information use. Accordingly, the impact of online media's increased use

is about how it helps shape the social character of activism, i.e., the structures by which individuals and organised groups sustain their web of social interactions (Simmel, 1950, p. 319). Thus, the influence of emerging media practices depends on how people relate, form and join groups.

Another main finding of this study is the varied ways people describe peacebuilding and their motivations for participating in peace activism. The different ways people describe peacebuilding directly connect to the challenge of communicating peace in ethnically polarised conditions. This is because these descriptions can influence how people interpret and engage with proposed solutions to social problems. Besides engagement levels, the different ways people think about peace could reflect tensions in their embodied experiences, worldviews, and social situations (Bourdieu, 1985, pp. 724-728). The embodied skills, knowledge, experiences, and perceptions mediate individual routine social expectations. According to this study, peace and conflict may offer reasons for opportunistic inter-ethnic political coalitions to emerge. These short-lived inter-ethnic political coalitions structure the logic of peace and conflict among people in the sense that political alliances to which people belong can restore some semblance of peace or intensify tensions. Thus, how people describe peace can indicate a relationship between embodied experiences (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) of peace and conflicts, individual actions, and social structures (inter-ethnic political coalitions). Therefore, to explain these varied ways individuals describe peace activism, I draw on Lefebvre's concept of social space. According to Lefebvre (1991, pp. 26-32), 'social space is a product of social relations that serves as a thought and action tool. It is also a means of production, control and domination'. For instance, in this study, social processes such as collective security, social interactions and public engagement underlie and orient how members of the public and peace organisations innovate with available media platforms. For instance, as this study shows, the need for collective security and social interactions may explain why regardless of online activism's perceived positive contributions, most respondents worry about harmful practices that these platforms enable. So, these dynamics may influence the degree to which available media platforms help shape peace activism. This is because of the need for collective security and social interactions as social relations are defined by 'meaningful contents of mutual disposition and the arising comportment among people' (Weber, 2019, p. 103). Thus, the need for collective security and social interaction are

the 'meaningful content' that define how individuals and organisations appropriate and innovate with available media platforms. Collective security and social interaction are the basis of engaging in (peace) activism.

Therefore, for this study's purpose, contents of mutual disposition (in this case, collective security) among the Kenyan people can include inter-ethnic political coalitions, peace activism or inter-ethnic conflicts, which set the parameters within which people participate in social processes. In this sense, social spaces, including inter-ethnic coalitions and peace activism, result from institutionalised inter-ethnic tensions dominating most social processes. To capture state power, political elites and their respective communities co-create ideas, practices (coalition parties) and symbols that draw on prevailing ethnic relation structures resulting in a specific character of peace and conflicts. In the 2017 general elections, the character of peace and conflict was shaped mainly by two inter-ethnic political coalitions – Uhuru Kenyatta's Jubilee Alliance, bringing together mainly ethnic elites from Kikuyu and Kalenjin, and Raila Odinga's National Super Alliance (NASA) supported by elites from Luo, Luhya, and Kamba communities. Political coalitions can emerge for genuine common causes but also for opportunistic ends. In Kenya, most inter-ethnic political alliances are short-lived, which points to why individuals forge ties with others. For instance, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) concluded that pervasive inter-ethnic tensions in Kenya result from people's everyday experiences of access to public resources, perceptions of representation in government and attitudes towards rival groups, i.e., negative ethnic and cultural stereotypes (Kiplagat et al., 2013b, pp. 58-59). Thus, these factors may structure the character of emerging political coalitions and the dynamics of peace and conflicts.

Similarly, peacebuilders and citizen members can co-create peace ideas, symbols, and practices for activism. Besides, embodied experiences of inter-ethnic tensions, exclusion and marginalisation may enable and constrain individuals' social actions. Thus, the fragile character of peace in Kenya is due to institutionalised inter-ethnic tensions resulting from politics of exclusion that impedes robust individuals' self-expression, development, and justice. Furthermore, institutionalised ethnic exclusion and marginalisation have consequences for communicative practices with which individuals and organised groups (re)-reproduce their social worlds. As discussed in Chapter 4, Galtung (1976, pp. 292-297) defines peace in terms of social relations: on one end of the continuum of associative peace is peace-making through strategies

such as compromise, integration, or domination; on the other end are strategies that seek to transform structures perpetuating violent conflicts.

In contrast, dissociative peace works to keep competing groups apart through physical deterrence, security patrols, walls, or weapons. In Kenya, polarised ethnic relations have institutionalised ethnic-based political parties and coalitions. These alliances influence solutions to lingering social problems, i.e., how people vote, access to justice, public appointments, and resource allocation. For peacebuilders, it is crucial to understand how emerging online media practices may help shape both associative and dissociative peacebuilding strategies. Because, as empirical data shows, most respondents worry about harmful practices that these platforms enable, which can influence the character of peace and conflict. Therefore, Lefebvre's concept of 'social space' helps understand how people and organisations create ideas and practices, embody them, and enact them. In the context of the current study, respondents' description of peacebuilding as an absence of violence can be viewed as 'spatial practices' such as artefacts of government security apparatus or information and communication systems, i.e., community information centres and community media. In volatile situations, particularly during elections, heavy police presence may stand in for peace for individuals worried about physical violence and forceful evictions.

One interesting result in this study is that traditional information and communication systems such as community centres, chiefs' offices, and places of worship are still relevant and intricately linked to the ways individuals search for and access peace-related information. In this study, I consider these information systems as examples of spatial practices among grassroots because they make visible dominant ideas and practices of their information and communication. More importantly, these results show that emerging citizen online practices are intertwined with legacy information and communication systems. Thus, peacebuilder needs to map out how the emerging online media practices interfacing with legacy information and communication systems. Furthermore, the various ways people define peace signals practitioners' role in communicating ideas, policies, or programmes. Galtung's definition of peace illustrates how prevailing social structures such as ethnic-based political parties can influence the course of interventions to enduring problems. In this regard, PeaceTech's KEVP initiative can be considered as a representation of space. The KEVP can stand in for mechanisms by which diverse individuals and organised groups forge ties with ideas and causes. The KEVP provided structures through which people could

negotiate ideas and practices and engage in activism. Thus, participants' motivations and actions made possible by the KEVP initiative are crucial to understanding the effect of online activism. As such, one can cross-analyse the varied ways respondents described peace being related to their motivations and levels of engagement. Indeed, this study suggests that for individuals motivated by the need for peaceful co-existence, peacebuilding is a process of non-violent actions. Therefore, people's varied ways of describing peacebuilding reveal a complex reality – how peacebuilders' interventions represent peace may not necessarily be how individuals live and enact it in their locales (Lefebvre, p. 40).

Furthermore, empirical data show varied ways respondents understand peace – this could reflect a dynamic relationship between the mechanisms by which they forge ties with others and their social situations. Empirical data analysed in Chapter 4 demonstrate how online activism can create opportunities for personalised engagement by enhancing collective security and interactions. However, online activism can also exacerbate harmful practices such as cyberbullying, false information, surveillance, and political incitement. This finding is in line with Edelman's (p. 32) suggestion that a 'definition of a social problem hinges on whether a sizable part of the public accepts it as one'. On the one hand, for most respondents, data in this study show that their acts of co-creating groups and content may mean intensified sense of collective security and interaction. While on the other hand, it may enable corrosive practices such as political incitement, cyberbullying and surveillance.

Similarly, Tandoc et al. (2018, p.148) argue that the legitimacy of information to some degree depends on members of the public. In this sense, how people think about peacebuilding and the mechanisms they engage in have consequences for activism. For instance, in the most extreme form, if ethnic tensions define the contours of an election campaign, and social identities are seen as a problem, then in order to maintain internal harmony, incitement to violence and evictions of or attacks against rival ethnic groups become excused from public concerns and are not liable to sanctions (Edelman, p. 12). Therefore, these findings should be of interest to peace communicators because defining problems and solutions can either intensify or alleviate social problems.

However, there are other possible explanations for the varied ways respondents describe peacebuilding. In Edelman's (p.15) idea, 'diversity of meanings in every social problem stemming from the range of groups' concerns can be a challenge to

communication solutions. Thus, testing how individuals think about peace in fragile societies is critical when discussing peace activism because online activism enables people to ‘manipulate reality through representations, seeing and acting at a distance’ (Manovich, 2001). Moreover, the capacity of people to manipulate reality through representations – ‘play a critical role in understanding how people assess and make decisions concerning their everyday risks’ (Shields, 2003, p. 184). Thus, peacebuilders' media practices apply mainly to the different mechanisms individuals seek to associate with causes, ideas, or political organisations' (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013, p. 5). Furthermore, if peacebuilders want to use online media for activism, they need to know how proposed engagement mechanisms resonate with targeted groups, stimulate a response, and transform the problem of "violent elections". Indeed, the cited case of the "Peace Pledge" rally illustrates how a political campaign can 'arouse and deepen public interest by appealing to moral concerns and condensing elections into a symbol of peace-making' (Edelman, p. 22).

Up to this point, it can be said that citizen media practices as mechanisms by which individuals and organised groups forge ties with others' concerns provide data for understanding how increasing online media use can help shape activism with positive and harmful implications for inter-ethnic relations. For instance, in ethnically polarised contexts, individualised online media discourses can bear on the 'localised doing of peace, safety and security' (Mac-Ginty & Firchow, 2016). Thus, the findings discussed in this section show a significant relationship between individuals who frequently use available media platforms and perception of (in)-security in their localities. These perceived changes can be attributed to intensified localised experiences of peace and conflict. Moreover, citizen media practices contribute to or undermine actions furthering peace by intensifying dynamics of options and threats people experience.

5.2. Organisation-enabled peace communication strategies

In the preceding section, I argued that emerging citizen media practices are, in the context of online activism, the building blocks for common causes. Therefore, peacebuilders need to know how and why individuals use specific media platforms for activism – finding out if what individuals do with available media platforms directly influences the goals for peace. Answers to these questions presuppose peacebuilders' role as enabling or constraining individuals' options to realise causes for their actions.

In this sense, peacebuilders' role can include co-creation and curating communicative practices for peace activism. This is because the increasing use of online media expands options for individuals and organisations to co-create and disseminate content with implications for established communicative practices. Before delving into a detailed discussion, I highlight some direct answers to questions under this proposition. Overall, analysed data show that the varied ways members of the public, including peacebuilders, represent peace activism depends on how particular media platforms are embedded in their activities. For some respondents, online activism means spaces for enhancing their collective security, alternative media for information sharing and learning, or spaces for interaction. It answers the question of how individuals describe peace activism. While on the question of how peace activism shapes perceptions of one's locales, this study finds a significant relationship between the frequency of use of available media platforms and perceived changes in one's locality. Finally, on emerging online media practices, data show trends and practices that have both positive and negative outcomes, such as mechanisms for monitoring and responding to threats, and harmful practices such as online hateful online content, cyber-bullying, automated political messaging, and surveillance. These findings apply to individuals' and organisations' strategies to cope with emerging media practices stemming from increased online activism for peacebuilders.

Therefore, civil society groups' role in peace communication is (co)-creating causes, mobilising individuals or exerting pressure for social change (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Bourdieu, 1998). For this reason, emerging media practices can be a factor in the dynamics of peace and conflict management. They enable individuals and peacebuilders to co-create media practices and spaces for activism. However, in contexts where a wider population does not share efforts to further peace or peace goals are not transparent, 'peace activism' can be a tool for silencing dissent. In Kenya, the efforts to bring justice to victims of election-related violence have led to protracted disputes between human rights defenders and some government officials and politicians, to the extent that some authors criticise sustained peace campaigns mainly during elections that inadvertently silence robust public debates on issues such as historical land injustices or institutionalised ethnic marginalisation (Galava, 2015, p. 238; Lynch et al., 2019, p. 604; Odote, 2020, p. 6; Willis, 2015, p. 105). As discussed in Chapter 4, civil society groups remain an integral part of Kenya's development agenda in the field of conflict management and peace communication. Therefore, civil

society groups play a vital leadership role in creating innovative ways for individuals and groups to cope with the effects of increasingly mediatised conflicts and peace practices.

Individuals' varied ways of representing online activism bring into sharp focus issues dividing authors about online activism's supposed impact. The findings that respondents experienced online activism differently put into context social processes prefiguring groups' emergence. For instance, Castells (2015) and Shirky (2011) endow media platforms with liberating potentials – singling out excluded groups as evidence for this power of switching on or off. In contrast, Fominaya and Gillan (2017) and Morozov (2011) point to negative aspects of these platforms because they allow political and economic elites to spread their influence and control. The latter critique cites, as examples, the repressive practices of growing trends by some governments to use targeted spyware against political opponents and human rights activists (Marczak et al., 2018). Both arguments seem to emphasise that what individuals do with available media platforms matters but in different ways.

On the one hand, for those emphasising emancipatory aspects, access to available media platforms matter because it offers solutions to extant social problems, including inclusion to the excluded, voices to the voiceless or engagement to the disengaged. On the other hand, for those pointing out the threats of access, it is what people do with available media platforms that make it possible for practices such as surveillance, internet shutdowns, repression, or political manipulation to materialise (Shahbaz & Funk, 2019). More importantly, these arguments bring to the fore communication challenges peacebuilders must contend with, particularly in contexts of increased options for individuals to create and disseminate unregulated militant content in ethnically polarised settings. Attention here is turned towards these processes because they reveal the changing dynamics of peace and conflict. The options for individuals and organised groups to (co)-create and disseminate unregulated content impose new challenges upon peace organisations. In conflict situations, besides their established social functions, many peace organisations must fact-check and react to numerous other actors and information sources about conflicting issues. Indeed, the demand for fact-checking to some degree is modifying the communicative role of peacebuilders. Moreover, diversified information and communication systems and communicators have consequences for facts and narratives about conflicting issues because unregulated militant contents breach established principles of peacebuilding.

Therefore, when some respondents experience online activism as spaces for social interaction, engagement, or safe space for people residing in volatile regions, it points to aspects of social practices that intensify and become significant for them over time.

The previous section drew attention to the link between respondents' information-seeking behaviour and their engagement patterns. It referred to the KNHRC (2008) and Waki et al., (2008) reports about the effects of polarising political campaigns. These reports uncover some crucial dynamics of polarising political campaigns, i.e., voters' social expectations and normative behaviour in an election. So, in analysing how polarising political campaigns are performed and what peace activism means, it is crucial to distinguish three linked indicators: the normative expectations of those engaged in practice; their conditional preferences; and empirical expectations (Bicchieri, 2017, pp. 50-51). In the context of polarising election campaigns, at the normative level, the question is whether individuals engaging in actions furthering or undermining stability expect others to do the same and how it matters for them. For instance, because of constant contact, online media users may experience intensified kinship ties. In an ethnically polarised context, intensified kinship ties may limit robust public engagement. This is how one can interpret the finding that some respondents fear being misunderstood when using online media platforms. Thus, this finding helps explain the social effect of normative expectations in online activism. In contemporary Kenyan politics, ethnicity is a basis of political mobilisation and affiliation, as seen in voting patterns (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). Similarly, ethnicity is salient in public communication because of the re-emergence of vernacular media (MCK, 2012).
In this sense, many political elites and their respective communities expect their social identities to structure political affiliation and support. Such social expectations point to another essential dynamic of peace and conflict: the degree to which prevailing social structures (in this case, polarised ethnic relations) mediate individual actions. Bratton's and Kimenyi's (2008, p. 287) study about Kenya's voting patterns and the practices of opportunistic political coalitions among ethnic elites referred to in Chapter 1 illustrate this point. Bicchieri (p. viii-ix) argues that people's social expectations influence their beliefs about others' behaviour. In Kenya, because of opportunistic political tendencies in inter-ethnic political alliances, there is a widespread belief that the incumbent, President Kenyatta, will not reciprocate his Deputy’s Mr Ruto support. As a result, this has caused anxiety and a feeling of betrayal among their respective political bases.

So, in the context of an election campaign, if individuals (co)-create and disseminate militant and hateful content, they may believe that their reference networks will endorse it (empirical expectations). Similarly, when individuals circulate rumours or false information about rival political groups, they do so with the belief that other people think they should do so (normative expectations). Further, Bicchieri suggests that the presence or absence of expectations determine different collective actions.

The evidence in the KNHRC and Waki et al., reports that individuals (co)-created and disseminated hateful messages illustrates the strategic role organisations such as vernacular radio stations play in integrating individuals into common causes. In this case, vernacular media platforms mediated social expectations. Individuals' preferences to engage in actions furthering peace are subject to others' social expectations. Following Lefebvre's (1991) social space concept, vernacular media platforms are (co)-created out of existing social structures (ethnic relations) and defined by users' embodied ideas and practices and how they are enacted. Here, instructive is Bourdieu's (1984, p. 1010) argument according to which cultural goods and tastes are a product of internalised social conditions and the conditioning this entails. In Bourdieu's (p. 114) conception of cultural capital, `vernacular media avail users' actual usable resources' (cultural music, fables, or sayings) that can enhance individuals' social capital and efficacy. Therefore, if individuals experience online activism as spaces for social interaction, these platforms' significant effects can be found in 'multiple relationships and voices layering' their engagements (Sundar, 2016). Besides, the multiple voices and relationships dominating individuals' or groups' social expectations can help shape peace and conflict dynamics. If multiple voices and social relations layer individuals' actions, they help shape the 'who', the 'what' or the 'how' of peace and conflicts. In particular, how individuals and organisations co-create spaces and practices for negotiating and participating in collective goals. Moreover, these dynamics have implications for social integration structures, posing a significant challenge to peacebuilders' role in communicating peace, particularly in 'truth-recovery and truth-narration' (Girelli, 2017, p. 43). If the who, what or how of 'truth recovery and narration' are transient because of emerging communicative practices, with consequences for peace activism. For instance, Lynch (2014) argues that Uhuru-Ruto's Jubilee Alliance campaigns reframed the 2007/08 post-election violence 'truth recovery and narration' processes, i.e., the investigations and indictments as a performance of injustice. Therefore, this study's finding draws attention to the social

character of peace and conflicts – the extent to which actions furthering or undermining stability unify and dissociate people. Peace communication brings into sharp focus circumstances under which people expect and are likely to conform to divisive political discourses.

In Kenya, political campaigns are contested along ethnic lines; a vital question is how different groups' communicative practices reinforce what their members do and find appropriate (Bicchieri, p. 5). Moreover, these findings show that online activism's social character establishes circumstances under which individuals are likely to engage in collective goals. More importantly, citizen media practices can intensify fault lines among groups, where the communicative practices signal valued pursuits – such as power, social identities, and status (Shove et al., 2012, p. 157). However, some respondents emphasised peace communication's social functions because peace activism under certain conditions can facilitate social integration. These social functions are apparent during emergencies and crises when citizen media practices enable unmatched access to sources and information, including rumours, misinformation, and militant ideas.

A question that needs unravelling for peacebuilders is: what makes individuals or organised groups co-create and disseminate rumours or provocative ideas? For instance, Castells (2015, p. 12) suggests that social movements' roots are fundamental social injustices facing societies. This might be true to some extent; however, some groups can also be inclined to violence, perpetuating the very causes motivating alienated groups. As discussed in Chapter 2, Latour's (2005) assertion that 'an actor is anything that modifies by making a difference in the state of affairs' implicates media platforms in the growing problem of false information, militant, and hateful content online. When individuals' motivations and intentions are conflated with appropriated media platforms, it obscures the reasons which motivate people to co-create and disseminate false information or hateful content and who assign accountability. As Bicchieri (p. 78) suggests, motivated reasoning sees individuals search for information supporting their biases and beliefs with publicly justifiable reasons. In this study's context, motivated reasoning relates to individuals' perceptions of peace and conflicts, as discussed previously. In ethnically polarised contexts, online activism is understood as a platform for social interactions or collective security, and its impact is in social relationships that layer how people access and share information.

In this sense, the phenomenon of rumour or false information, as Kapferer (2013, p. 14) argues, implies the effect of social relations on communicative practices, i.e., how the contents of why individuals forge ties with other's concerns (in this case, collective security) shape and are shaped by available media platforms. This point is significant in discussing how citizen media practices structure peace activism. For instance, emerging media practices have expanded options for individuals and organised groups to access diverse content and co-create social spaces for activism. To some degree, these expanded options can impact how people and organisations engage, particularly in contexts where social identities structure the quality of public discourse (Schudson, 2019, p. 152). Empirical data analysed in Chapter 4 show that many respondents when using online platforms, are concerned about practices such as incitement to violence, false information, rumours, and hacking and scamming sites. These practices, to some extent, may undermine processes of how individuals integrate into collective causes. In this sense, social relations structures that emerge from the increased use of online media affect peace activism. Thus, citizen media practices, particularly those enabling production and dissemination of corrosive content, may influence established norms of public communication. Ethnic polarisation may narrow the diversity of opinions, creating a deliberation enclave (Sunstein, 2019). As such, highly individualised media practices can intensify how people experience social divisions. In Anderson's (2006, p. 42) concept of imagined community – 'the rise of vernacularised media practices can lead to a decline of an imagined community – the nation'. In Kenya, according to the 2008 KNHRC and Waki et al., reports, it seems vernacular radio stations have helped shape diverse ethnic groups' communicative practices by creating a possibility for novel forms of 'imagined communities', particularly in the way people engage in peace activism (Anderson, p. 46). The notion of 'imagined communities' relates to the findings of the respondents who attributed their sense of collective security to online activism. Why is this important? For strategic communication, peacebuilders need to know individuals' thresholds for engaging in specific causes and how they may mirror proposed interventions. For instance, where individuals have expanded options to co-create and disseminate unregulated content, peacebuilders need to know how this can influence individuals’ and organisations' quality of social interaction.

In volatile situations, a sense of community can tend towards echo chambers of voices intensifying how people experience political rivalries, thus '(re)-making one's experiences of peace and conflicts' (Mac-Ginty, 2017). This point reflects Anderson's assertion that 'social activities around media technologies can transform existing social realities in this case, the everyday experiences of peace and conflicts to novel forms of imagined communities' (Anderson, 2006). Therefore, if individuals or organised groups experience an enhanced sense of (in)security in their neighbourhoods, it could be because of intensified social relations shaped by how people 'share stories far more quickly and widely, and from diverse sources' (Polletta & Callahan, 2017, p. 400). Moreover, it is illustrative of the potential of citizens media practices to influence existing social relations by 'disrupting official voices and sources' that binds relationships together (Kapferer, p. 14). Furthermore, this study's findings show that the layered localised web of relations and sources can also produce 'exclusionary social systems, institutions, social structures, and social spaces' (Fuchs, 2019, p. 143; Rid & Hecker, 2009). Therefore, the role of peacebuilders in the context where media platforms are embedded in activism is to co-create social spaces and practices that 'make and remake people's everyday experience of peace' (Mac-Ginty, 2017). By helping create and moderate media practices such as online neighbourhood watch groups, or short-text/audio-visual platforms, peacebuilders can facilitate the (re)-making of social expectations and norms. For most respondents, if online media platforms are spaces of social interactions and engagement, as this study shows, the peacebuilders' role is to enhance the experiential peace actions that individuals and groups expect of others. In Kenya, during elections, many actors often display generalised beliefs and expectations that violence will mar the process (Ellison & Bisson, 2017; ICG, 2017). Such widespread assumptions may signal and reinforce practices likely to undermine public confidence and help to legitimise repressive government actions. Therefore, this study's findings can be interpreted in light of how people's social expectations about peace and conflicts during elections shape their 'mutual alignment with varied opinions' (Powers, p. 204). Often, mutating inter-ethnic political alliances provide structures through which individuals and organised groups align politically.

Other authors characterise such an alignment as 'political homophily – the number of outbound ties directed to users who share political orientation' (Bakshy et al., 2015; Colleoni et al., 2014, p. 324). In such a context, peace communicators' role is to

‘mobilise, motivate, organise, orient, and focus individuals’ and groups’ attention to address and resolve’ the challenges resulting from political homophily (Northouse, 2016, p. 259). In this sense, communicating peace should focus on co-creating practices and spaces with the potential to influence 'rules that govern everyday life in deeply divided societies' (Mac-Ginty, 2014, p. 548). This is so because the ubiquity of online media can give new impetus to the role that vernacularised stories, rumours, and false news come to play in people's everyday activities and experiences of peace and conflict. For instance, media practices such as texting peace messages or online neighbourhood groups can lead to the creation of communities and transmission of values and beliefs' (Powers, 1995, p. 199). These media practices can intensify people's sensitivities to generalised social expectations and beliefs about peace and conflict. This argument is relevant to some extent in situations where elites, including peace activists, are trying to influence processes by 'controlling important events, the flow of information and the ability to mobilise broad consensus to support their policies' (Wolfsfeld, 2015, pp. 24-25). Moreover, peace activism understood as 'social practice' is because a group of people is engaged in it, constituting specific social relationships and interactions (Powers, p. 204). It is these relationships and interactions that determine how media practices can influence social contexts. In this respect, mapping out social expectations and preferences that motivate peace or acts of violence within online activism is at the core of peace communication (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 111). Therefore, what people do with available media, depends on how these platforms enter their social relationships and practices, what meanings and symbolism they invest it with, and what it represents (Hughes, 1987, p. 51; Kirkpatrick, 2008, p. 2; Pinch & Bijker, 1987, p. 25; Street, 1992, p. 10). For this study's purpose, increasing online activism represents enhanced collective security, social interaction and public engagement.

Civil society organisations, both local and international, play a critical role in innovating and mobilising peacebuilding interventions (Bah, 2013, p. 322). As discussed in Chapter 1, interventions in Kenya after the 2007/8 post-polls crisis by the African Union-led mediation team relied on wide-reaching support, including diplomats, the United Nations agencies, and consortia of local and international civil society groups (Lindenmayer & Kaye, 2009, p. 23). Consequently, it is crucial when discussing various peacebuilding interventions to focus on the challenge of communicating peace, particularly in an ethnically polarised context, and how it can influence the

'who', the 'what' and the 'how' of peace and conflict resolution. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the influence of online activism depends on how emerging media practices exacerbate existing tendencies. So, emphasising technical aspects of available media platforms over existing social tendencies overlooks how specific technical features become significant for individuals. For instance, a conflict ensuing in a socially polarised society, real-time social networking platforms may intensify the crisis, undermining conflict resolution norms.

The following section discusses findings that emerging online media and information use patterns and practices may have implications for peace activism in volatile situations.

5.3. Online activism and shifting dynamics of risks and opportunities

Discussion in the preceding sections drew attention to the need for further analysis of how the emerging citizen media practices, peace-related information-seeking patterns, and participation in social or political causes are linked to individuals' and organisations' localised experiences. Such an analysis can help reveal potential consequences of the emerging online media practices to (peace) activism in socially (ethnically) polarised contexts. In the context of conflict dynamics in Kenya, the analysis in Chapter 1 brought to light the influence of inter-ethnic relations on information and communication systems' functioning. Where inter-ethnic tensions pervade social relations, they corrode structures of social communication. Such media practices may help shape opportunities for (peace) activism – because of expanded options for individuals and organisations to (co)-create and distribute content (credible or otherwise), and also because of the risks of continuously breaching established norms with a potential to cause new fault-lines. Most respondents acknowledge both the positive and negative contributions of online activism.

Therefore, the question of how peace and conflict dynamics are shifting because of the increasing use of online media can partly be understood via the positive contributions of these platforms to strategies with which individuals engage in varied social processes. Simultaneously, regardless of how individuals understand peacebuilding and the positive contributions of these platforms, most worry about the adverse effects of some citizen media practices. As such, this study's findings suggest that opportunities, threats, or conflicts resulting from increased online activism are

dynamic – they depend on salient features of social processes. For this reason, there is a need for continual testing and identifying of the elements which are intensified in the relationship between individuals' communicative practices and social causes. These results are consistent with Hjarvard's et al. (2015, p. 8) suggestion that the effect of media can be understood via the dynamic relationships between media and other social spheres and the resulting new conditions for communication and interactions. In this study, the dynamic relationship between media platforms and other social spheres can be conceptualised at three levels. The first level is how individuals' options to create and share instant peace or hate content through hashtags, microblogs or online memes enhance or undermine their strategies for connecting with other people. In this sense, people attribute their sense of collective security to online activism. This is because online media enable individuals to share information and monitor and report cases of violence. However, many respondents worry about intensified incidents of ethnic profiling, hate speech, divisive rhetoric, or intimidation.

Second, the emerging patterns of information and media use suggest variability of causes for which individuals forge ties with others. In this study, critical attention is paid to the conditions under which individuals forge ties with others. For instance, peacebuilders need to know why and how individuals use specific media platforms; and what different social causes represent for strategic peace communication. More importantly, expanded options for individuals and organised groups to (co)-create content and social spaces shifts "the who" of conflicts because diverse voices are drawn into causes. Thus, how people engage with available content can be subject to numerous relationships layering their information sources. In Kenya, recent elections have seen increased micro-targeting of online users with negative political messages and active citizen involvement in disseminating these polarising contents (GeoPoll & Portland, 2017). In both the 2013 and 2017 elections, Cambridge Analytica (CA) aided political candidates to create and micro-target online users with harmful content (CA, 2018a; Davis, 2018). These online practices have expanded spaces for both collectives and fault-lines. So, the changing of "the who" of activism illustrates the respondents' findings attributing an enhanced sense of their collective security to online activism. Moreover, the shifting "how" of peace and conflict relates to expanded repertoires of practices with which individuals engage in activism, the scale in which activism is routinely possible, the process, and the range of actors (Couldry, 2012;

Hjarvard et al., 2015). This study finds that respondents understand peace activism in varied ways so are their participation modes of participation.

The third way of conceptualising the relationship between the increased use of media platforms and activism is how fringe, militant, or unregulated practices – hate content, false information, and vernacularised political campaigns – constantly challenge established social norms. The previous sections discussed how in Kenya, during elections, political and ethnic elites regularly use polarising language to mobilise their bases – and empirical data show that most respondents worry about the shifting dynamics of opportunities, risks, or conflicts individuals and organisations may experience because of online activism.

This study shows that corrosive media practices are barriers to robust online peace activism because people worry about political manipulation, especially when content is unmoderated. Examples referenced throughout this study suggest that in Kenya's election campaigns, 'violence is ever-present in the guise of order, security or development' (Willis, 2015, pp. 99-100). As such, election campaigns provide means by which political elites can connect peace to order and claim authority. This can be a means, on the one hand, of 'delegitimising opposition groups and legitimising state violence, while on the other hand, it can be 'a tool for entrenching a political order as peace' (Willis, p. 105). In the context of the influence of online activism, Willis's assertion applies to this study's findings in how citizen media practices amplify or (re) frame individuals' way of appropriating and displaying social practices (Hjarvard et al., 2015). Waisbord (2018, p. 4) notes that the problem of false information cannot just be about ethical practices of communicators, misinformed or naïve members of the public.

On the contrary, the fact that individuals can express and identify themselves with fringe and unmoderated content poses fundamental public communication challenges. Waisbord's argument points to social processes by which media practice becomes significant for established practices of who speaks, what one can speak and how. The finding that respondents concerned with an enhanced sense of collective security worry about false information illustrates Waisbord's point. Here, a reference can be made to Simmel's argument (1950, p. 318) about social trust being the most crucial ‘synthetic force within society that mediates between knowledge and ignorance and a person who knows entirely need not to trust’. So, the worry about false information is that it corrodes social trust, which is the synthetic force that ensures collective security.

The seemingly sprawling echo-chamber tendencies intensified by the increased use of online media further illustrate how individuals try to enhance their social trust when ethnic tensions corrode this trust (Benkler et al., 2018; Currarini & Mengel, 2016). Similarly, Tandoc et al. (2018, p. 149) argue that social divisions facilitate people's willingness to believe information confirming their biases toward outgroups. Therefore, empirical data about the shifting dynamics of opportunities and threats help account for features within (peace) activism exacerbated by media practices such as cyberbullying, stalking, harassment, privacy loss, and false information. For instance, respondents who said online activism enhanced a sense of collective security also worried about threats such as loss of privacy, hate speech and false information. This finding can be explained by the fact that individuals concerned about collective security, false information, incitement or hate content undermine strategies with which they forge these ties with others. So, it can be said that the options for individuals to (co)-produce and disseminate positive or negative content influence their 'communication patterns', and in turn, the 'situational geography of social life' (Meyrowitz, 1985, p. 6). In this study's context, the situational geography is the adaptation peacebuilders must make in their communicative practices to vernacularised elections campaigns. Besides, in Kenya, violent conflicts mainly involve ethnic elites; therefore, they form inter-group coalitions to negotiate with others for positions and resources (Horowitz, 1985). These dynamics of conflicts means that peacebuilders must adapt, as in the case of the "Peace Pledge" rally referred to earlier in this chapter, where religious groups convened political elites for peace activism. Therefore, what individuals do with available media platforms matters to peace activism because it helps shape their media and information use patterns, quality of social interactions and integration into causes. In this study's context, citizen media practices are the basis of online activism because these media practices enable peacebuilders to mobilise and co-create resources for peace activism. Also, these media practices enable individuals to co-create and disseminate content that undermines the quality of social interaction because of practices such as ethnic profiling, hate speech and intimidation.

This chapter has discussed the study's main findings and highlighted potential challenges of communicating peace in societies dominated by deep social divisions. The discussion drew attention to how citizen media practices become socially and

politically significant to peace activism. On the one hand, the social significance of media practices such as false information, hateful content, and cyberbullying is underlined by their impact on established conflict management and resolution norms. On the other hand, increased access to available media platforms may expand options for individuals and organisations to co-create social spaces for common causes and social integration. However, these media practices have consequences for the quality of social interaction among people.

Therefore, I argue that while the increasing online media use may expand opportunities to further peace goals, there are specific ways in which they can exacerbate ethnic conflicts. These specific ways may include processes by which available media platforms become significant for access, social interaction, and public engagement. In this study, such processes include reasons individuals and organisations forge ties with each other's concerns – in this case, collective security or social interactions. As a cross-analysis of various salient variables showed, there are positive and negative correlations. For instance, the frequency of use of available media platforms is linked to positive and harmful effects. That is to say, online media practices such as cyberbullying, stalking and false information helped shape respondents' perceived sense of (in)security. Moreover, online activism increased respondents' likelihood of being exposed to criticism, privacy loss and surveillance, undermining their quality of social interactions in cases where online activism represents spaces for information access, interaction and civic engagement. Thus, emerging media practices are mechanisms with which individuals co-create social spaces for common causes. However, these expanded opportunities for activism can shift the dynamics of threats they may experience. Hence, what individuals do with available media platforms impacts peace activism only to the degree that it helps shape strategies by which people integrate into common causes. For instance, online neighbourhood watch groups or hashtags on pressing social concern issues may enable individuals and organisations to engage in causes over and above their localities. Here, the defining factor is the enabled web of relationships brought into force when individuals forge ties with others' concerns. In Kenya, political campaigns are contested along ethnic lines. Vernacularised election campaigns reinforce group biases, i.e., what their members do and find appropriate (Bicchieri, 2017). Thus, media practices with echo chamber tendencies such as vernacularised election campaigns

or hateful content can undermine the ‘quality of social interactions’ in a multi-ethnic society by alienating outer groups (Simmel, 2009, p. 350).

Overall, analysed data show that the varied ways members of the public, including peacebuilders, understand peace activism depends on how particular media platforms are embedded in their social processes. For some respondents, online activism means spaces for enhancing their communities' security, alternative media for information sharing and learning, or spaces for interaction. It answers the question of how individuals describe peace activism. In this instance, the peacebuilders' role is to co-create practices and spaces with the potentials to influence ‘rules that govern everyday life in deeply divided societies’ (Mac-Ginty, 2014) because the ubiquity of online media can give new impetus to the role polarising stories, rumours, and false news comes to play in people’s everyday activities and experiences of peace and conflict.

Finally, this chapter illustrates how citizen media practices, together with the reasons individuals (co)-create ideas or entities, form the basis for analysing how increasing online media use can help shape or even increase activism with positive and negative implications for inter-ethnic relations. In this sense, peace activism can be seen as a product of a dynamic relationship between reasons for individuals affiliating with causes and appropriated media platforms. However, the tendency to conflate enduring social problems with available media platforms or making these platforms stand in for the reasons individuals or organised groups join common causes overlook the varied forms of social actions and salient social structures – polarised social relations, gender or social inequality.

Chapter 6 Conclusion and Recommendations

6.0. Introduction

This study set out to understand how the increasing use of online media has helped shape peace activism. I explored processes by which individuals' acts of (co)-creating and disseminating contents, media platforms, election events and ethnic identities all come together in peace activism. The study found that what individuals did with available media platforms could help shape the dynamics of peace and conflicts through media and information use patterns. Empirical data showed a relationship between individuals' peace-related information-seeking behaviour and their participation in activism; and a correlation between the frequency of use of available media platforms and perceived changes in one's locality. Indeed, many people who frequently used online media for peace activism associated it with positive outcomes and worried about its negative consequences. This is because, in volatile situations, the options for people to (co)-create and disseminate unregulated contents impose undesirable consequences for established norms and practices of conflict resolution. Many ordinary people and peacebuilders worry about online practices such as political incitement, false information, or cyberbullying because they undermine their quality of social interactions in cases where online activism represents spaces for information access, interaction and civic engagement. In most societies, but particularly in fragile situations, increased online media use makes more powerful practices such as facts manipulation, micro-targeting negative campaigns, and bullying opponents into silence. Thus, there is a need for social investment in new skills to determine when and how social media can be used positively and when they are destructive. Moreover, where ethnic tensions dominate social life, emerging citizen media practices can define the contours of conflicting issues because of the vastness in social interactions and content sharing modes that breach established norms and practices.

Therefore, I argued that while the increasing online media use may expand opportunities to further peace goals, there are specific ways in which they can exacerbate existing tendencies. These specific ways may include processes by which available media platforms become significant for access, social interaction, and public engagement. In this study, such processes included reasons individuals and organisations forge ties with each other's concerns – in this case, collective security

or social interactions. Thus, increased online media use for activism, and the resulting practices can lead to more robust and dynamic strategies with which individuals and organisations forge ties for common causes. However, the strategies and reasons for which individuals forge ties with others presuppose underlying social relations structures. In this study's context, polarised ethnic relations dominate the causes for which individuals get mobilised. For instance, empirical data showed that despite the perceived positive contributions of online activism, many people worried about ethnic profiling, political incitement, hate speech, and false information because of polarised ethnic relations. Thus, these concerns show that the underlying social processes, i.e., strategies and causes for which people appropriated available media platforms, can have both positive and negative impact in the way that they influence engagement, media, and information use patterns, and in turn, perceived changes in one's locale. The concerns that online activism exacerbated existing tendencies, including ethnic profiling, political incitement, or false information, show how emerging media practices may influence 'message carrying structures such as fables, rumours, memes, or threats' (Powers, 1985). Empirical data showed that several processes influenced people's engagement patterns, including incidents of conflicts, political events, and violent conflicts.

Furthermore, in socially polarised contexts, the messages individuals and organised groups co-create and disseminate can constrain peacebuilders' roles. Indeed, unmoderated real-time witness accounts from an ensuing crisis can render fluid dynamics that define "who speaks and how" statuses. Therefore, in the light of online activism, citizen media practices are the basis for peace communication because they enable peacebuilders to mobilise and co-create spaces, meanings or symbols with which individuals and organisations participate in common causes.

In this three-part chapter, I conclude from the study's main findings and discuss its contributions to policy and practice in the field of peace and media. The first part synthesises the main study findings to answer questions posed for this thesis and explore its implications for peace activism. The second part discusses this study's limitations and suggests possible areas for further study. The final part offers final remarks about this study.

6.1. Synthesis of the main findings

In this study, I proceeded from the assumption that what people and organised groups do with available media platforms apply to peace activism only to the degree that it mediates the reasons people forge ties with others to further peace. For this reason, I argued that civil society organisations play a crucial role in integrating diverse social actors into common causes. However, in light of emerging citizen media practices, such a role can either enable or constrict individuals' options to understand the causes of their actions. Moreover, this role also points to other possibilities, i.e., peacebuilders' role of co-creating and curating communicative practices that may enable interested parties to engage in activism. Throughout this study, the evidence presented and discussed emphasised that the impact of media platforms on peace activism is through the processes by which these platforms become socially and politically significant for information access, social interaction, and public engagement. In this study's context, these processes help define the significance of online media for activism. Thus, citizen media practices become significant only when they influence how individuals relate to each other, i.e., influencing their acts of tweeting or posting peace messages into meanings and purposes for which people forge ties with others to further peace. The cases of ethnic media cited in this study illustrated the political impact of polarising communicative strategies on the way individuals relate with each other and causes. In these cases, vernacular media practices offered users communicative resources in the form of cultural artefacts that enhanced their social efficacy and capital. Thus, if respondents in this study experienced online activism as spaces for collective security or social interaction, these platforms either enhanced or undermined their quality of social interactions. Therefore, a critical focus on social processes revealed salient strategies and purposes by which individuals and organised groups mobilise, such as the need for collective security or information sharing and media and information use patterns. These salient strategies thus structured how individuals appropriated and innovated with available media platforms. This study systematically analysed ideas, practices, and meanings through which individuals and organisations engaged in peace activism. The analysis showed that individuals and organised groups appropriated available media platforms had consequences for peace and conflict dynamics. The following questions guided this study:

1) How can citizen media practices contribute to peace activism?

2) In what ways do civil society organisations strategically promote peace activism?
3) What are the implications of the emerging online media practices for peace activism in volatile contexts?

On the first question, this study found that emerging citizen media practices apply to peace activism because they enabled individuals and organisations to co-create spaces and practices strategic to peace communication. However, some people worried about online practices such as cyberbullying, online micro-targeting of users with false information and hate content that undermined strategies through which individuals forged and sustained ties with others. A cross-analysis of the perceived positive and negative impact of online activism revealed some degree of correlations. For most people, online activism served different purposes. However, some of these purposes can be correlated with what individuals are worried about. For instance, their main concern was political incitement for individuals who viewed online activism as providing communities with alternative platforms for sharing information and learning. Thus, these media practices imposed undesirable conditions on peace activism and undermined communicative strategies linking individuals' actions to common causes. Furthermore, emerging media and information use patterns offered insights into the form and character of peace and conflicts, particularly in Kenya's ongoing quest for sustainable peace. The cited cases of polarising campaigns during elections revealed fault-lines of Kenyan politics to the extent that peace or enmity emerged after new political alliances. For instance, a political alliance between Mr Uhuru Kenyatta and Mr William Ruto in the aftermath of the 2007/08 post-election violence appeared to resolve conflicts between their respective ethnic communities. However, their coalition did not address lingering historical injustices of illegal land displacements in the Rift Valley and atrocities committed against ordinary citizens. In 2018, President Uhuru Kenyatta and the opposition leader Mr Raila Odinga reached an agreement to work together. President Kenyatta’s and Mr Odinga’s political alliance endeared the former to the latter’s supporters but caused wrangles within the ruling coalition. Thus, the finding that many people worry about ethnic profiling, political incitement or hate speech illustrates the precariousness of peace founded on mutating political alliances. In a socially polarised context, media and information use patterns may tend towards like-minded enclaves, limiting opportunities for robust public debates. Thus, concern about ethnic profiling or political incitement may polarise media users creating

‘deliberation enclaves’ that limit alternative news reports and discussions (Sunstein, 2019). This is because, in deliberation enclaves, media users may ‘search for positions and information supporting their biases and beliefs, i.e., publicly justifiable reasons’ (Bicchieri, 2017). Therefore, I argued that in Kenya, campaigners, during elections, exploit kinship ties for political mobilisation. In the context of peace activism, intensified kinship ties against polarised situations may enable people to undermine peace goals. In the sense that real-time live-chat shows and video streaming on an ensuing conflict may immerse people into a conflict and intensify how they experience it. Because these media practices allow for unprecedented ways of co-creating and disseminating content, they may offer individuals options to validate and harden their positions.

To some extent, opportunities for individuals and organised groups to co-create content also allow for the alternative depiction of social reality. The seemingly thwarted transitional justice process following the 2007/08 political crisis illustrates this point in Kenya. Several reports and public inquiries into this crisis seem to have failed to create generalised public support for the process's outcomes – investigation and prosecution perpetrators. Understanding how communicative practices, particularly vernacularised political campaigns, helped shape the aftermath of the 2007/08 crisis can explain why truth commissions failed to produce public support for transitional justice. Therefore, if prevailing media practices helped intensify echo-chamber experiences of public debates, they polarise positions, undermining public deliberations’ quality.

On the question of civil society organisations’ strategic role in promoting peace activism, this study found that peacebuilders and members of the public appropriated available media platforms and co-created spaces for negotiating ideas, meanings, and causes for activism. Through media practices such as instant messaging services and portals, peace organisations and ordinary citizens co-created spaces for common causes, facilitating access to much needed public services in regions where the government had limited reach. Respondents interviewed for this study were recruited from low-income settlements with deprived social amenities and physical infrastructure. So, using online media platforms for conflict management and resolution may help bridge grassroots groups' information and communication technology gap. However, there are varied ways people view online peace activism because of the causes for which they appropriate available media platforms. Empirical data showed that some people viewed online activism as a space for enhancing their

collective security, while others saw it as a means for social interaction. The variety of meanings for which people appropriated media platforms may require that peacebuilders continually evaluate these processes for effective communication. Thus, there is a need for assessing how emerging citizen media practices interface with features that make up peace activism and, in the process, helped create social realities. For most respondents, online activism helped enhance their collective security, while for others, expanded options to co-create and disseminate content helped shape risks and conflicts they experienced. A critical assessment of relevant literature on this topic showed a considerable focus on rudimentary access to available media platforms. However, it also overlooks the social processes by which these platforms may become socially significant for people and organised groups. This study took a view different from the literature that often conflates why social networks emerge with the media platforms through which they are mobilised.

In this study's view, the impact of online media on peace activism ought to be assessed through the processes by which these platforms become socially or politically significant for individuals and organisations for peacebuilding. When analyses conflate reasons why networks emerge with media platforms in use, they obscure underlying social processes. For instance, the cited cases of vernacular radio stations and ethnic polarisation showed that these media practices become significant by exploiting kinship ties, i.e., turning how individuals relate to each other into a polarisation tool. Polarisation helps shape how individuals relate to each other and cause into meanings of political inclusion and exclusion. This point about how and when media platforms become socially significant matters for peacebuilders is vital because it has implications for the direction planned interventions to perceived social problems may take. For instance, false information, cyberbullying or hateful content is not only about rudimentary access to available media platforms. It is also about the dynamic relationship between available media platforms and meanings or the purposes for which individuals and organised groups appropriate them. As empirical data showed, these processes influence how members of the public and peace organisations define the contribution of online media to peace activism.

Moreover, these processes also help shape individual's media and information use patterns that are the basis of peace activism. For this reason, it is vital to pay attention to how emerging citizen media practices may influence established norms and conflict resolution practices. Therefore, I argued that online practices such as false

information, cyberbullying, and micro-targeted harmful content are detrimental to recognised conflict resolution mechanisms, requiring new capacities for truth-telling and truth-affirmation. As such, peacebuilders' communicative role and the credibility of established conflict management norms may require new capabilities, such as fact-checking.

Furthermore, expanded opportunities for individuals and organisations to constantly contact their reference networks may mean limited perspectives, hence intensified and entrenched sectarian positions. Thus, online activism's possibilities of intensifying one's reference networks' experiences may mean that peacebuilders must critically evaluate their interventions. For instance, peacebuilders may need to know individuals' peace and conflict thresholds for effective interventions. Empirical data showed that many people worry about online practices such as ethnic profiling, political incitement or hate speech. Polarising political campaigns and mobilisation thrive on ethnic tensions. Therefore, in this study's context, these findings demonstrated that the threshold for people joining interventions critical of norms and practices perpetuating ethnic animosity would be high because they worry about the likelihood of ethnic profiling and political incitement. Additionally, empirical evidence supported this point, showing that some people feared being misunderstood when engaging in online activism. Here a reference can be made to possible contributors to political polarisation in Kenya, such as vernacular media and regional political parties, which help intensify sectarian positions by limiting the diversity of opinions on issues of public concern. Intensified sectarian positions can, by default, silence alternative perspectives; that is why some people are worried about being misunderstood. Therefore, besides expanding options for individuals and organisations to co-create spaces, contents, and dissemination, online activism also allows assessing people's engagement threshold within prevailing social conditions. In Kenya, political participation is often mediated by ethnic-based coalitions, which means that the threshold for mobilising individuals to challenge violence against outer groups is high. Intensified echo chamber experiences because of constant access to reference networks can undermine efforts to construct common grounds.

Moreover, when it comes to political support, the cases (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008; Waki et al., 2008) cited in this study showed that because many Kenyans have a high sensitivity to in-group norms, particularly in their voting patterns – they tend to vote for "one of their own" regardless of candidates' probity. Those critical of these practices

are often bullied and intimidated into silence. This point is crucial, particularly when discussing the varied ways people think about peace. Empirical data revealed that there are at least three ways people understood peacebuilding. In ethnically polarised societies, these varied ways people understand peace can presuppose mechanisms for resolving conflicts. In a socially polarised context, conflict resolution may be dissociative through domination by voting for one of their own – ethnic hegemony, direct violence against rival groups or ethnic cleansing (Galtung, 1976). In this study's context, these findings point to the complexities of communicating peace because they can influence people's engagement level and interpretation of proposed solutions to existing problems.

On a practical level, the different ways people understand peace may reflect how they (re)-make peace induced by mutating inter-ethnic political coalitions. In Kenya, most inter-ethnic political alliances are short-lived, and it points to arguments constructed for peace. In Kenya, during political campaigns, different actors tend to depict elections as violent. Accordingly, voters are implored to "vote peacefully". Thus, by portraying elections as violent and imploring voters to be peaceful, to some degree, peace campaigners help maintain political violence. So, peace discourse is often used to justify brutality against opposition groups and silence critical debates about lingering historical injustices. As argued throughout this study, a serious impediment to peacebuilding in fragile societies is the difficulty of communicating sustainable peace demands. Some politicians have often used numerous public inquiries into historical injustice in Kenya to polarise their respective communities further and undermine peaceful co-existence. Thus, Kenya's failure to productively address enduring legacies of injustice has undermined its commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16) – to promote a peaceful and inclusive society. Under this Goal, there are at least ten targets that the UN member countries use to measure their progress. This study's findings may apply to Target 16.1, reducing all forms of violence and deaths; Target 16.7, responsive and participatory decision-making processes; and Target 16.10, access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms. For more concrete results in the agenda of peaceful society at a country level as set in Target 16.1: an index may need to be developed to continually document how ordinary citizens, states, and non-state organisations construct meanings and practices about peace. The idea of this index is to establish the basis of meanings and practices of

peace, i.e., disaggregating proxies and social processes dominating individuals' or states' sense of peace. This index of vernacularised peace (localised peace) is crucial for understanding practices that legitimise prevailing social orders, such as regional and ethnic-based political parties. For instance, across Kenya, many ethnic groups have a designated spokesperson, kingpin, or council of elders to whom all dealings with the communities usually are channelled. Therefore, its primary basis is vital for transforming conflict dynamics and sustainable outcomes when designing peace interventions. Additionally, an index of how individuals and organised groups construct and enact peace meanings may help clarify specific interventions' legitimacy and effectiveness through everyday actions. Here the concern will be on the direct measure of individual and group idea of peace and its localised character in a peaceful and inclusive society.

As discussed in the preceding section, peace campaigns can exclude debates of dissenting voices, particularly where political regimes lack legitimacy. Several episodes cited in this study showed that peace discourse had been used to sanction state violence against opposition groups. Ethnic elites use ethnic profiling, incitement, bullying, and hate content to undermine public deliberation quality. In Kenya, as argued in Chapter 1, gender identity mediates inequalities in the political arena. Although these inequalities are generally acknowledged in public debates, they are often restricted according to the influence of different groups' positions. Relevant to this study's findings is the problem of bullying online and offline because election campaigns are portrayed as violent. When election campaigns are vernacularised into cultural norms, they help reproduce existing social tendencies. For instance, in some communities, “what it means to be a leader” may include oath-taking ceremonies and leader’s installation rites that exclude women, young people, or people living with disabilities. As Bell (2009, p. 181) argues, these rituals aim to ‘constitute a specific dynamic of social empowerment’, which forces participants in the case of oathing ceremonies to align with that which has been sacralised. These oathing and installation ceremonies also help define what is reprehensible should one defy the orders. As such, oathing ceremonies are also used to mobilise aggression and violence against alternative voices. Through such polarising processes, one can explain why more female than male political candidates suffer bullying and harassment, particularly during elections. Therefore, paying attention to how ordinary

citizens negotiate and appropriate ritualised election campaigns narratives can reveal how they may help shape the dynamics of peace and conflicts.

On the third question about the implications of increased online media use for peace activism: this study found that increasing online (peace) activism has expanded individuals' and organised groups' options to co-create spaces and content, including militant material. These media practices help shape peace and conflict dynamics and can be detrimental to the credibility of established conflict resolution mechanisms. Research data showed that most people attributed positive and negative outcomes to increased online media use for peace activism. This finding revealed the dynamic relationship between salient social processes influencing people's ties with others and access to available media platforms. Therefore, I argued that increased online media use impacts peace activism through these platforms' positive and negative outcomes on strategies with which individuals and organisations forge ties with each other. For instance, a cross-analysis of online activism's positive and negative outcomes showed that media practices such as cyberbullying, stalking, harassment, hate speech, and false information undermined people's sense of collective security. Collective security is both a strategy with which and for which individuals forge ties with others for peace. Therefore, access to available media platforms is necessary. However, this is not a sufficient condition to explain the consequences of the shifting dynamics of opportunities and threats people and organisations may experience. According to this study, the shifting peace and conflict dynamics because of increased online activism can be explained at three levels. The first level of analysis accounted for how citizen media practices such as instant sharing of peace or hate content enhanced or undermined strategies for which and by which individuals connected and sustained relationships with other community members. On this issue, the study found that online activism enhanced and, at the same time, undermined strategies through which individuals and organised groups forge ties for common causes. For instance, a cross-analysis of the perceived positive contribution of online activism and harmful content or activities revealed that most people found ethnic profiling, hate speech, bullying and privacy loss damaging: possibly because these media practices undermined their sense of collective security and quality of social interactions.

At the second level is an analysis of the way that salient processes influenced how media practices became significant for activism. In this study's context, such

processes may include political campaigns or ethnic polarisation. This study found that numerous processes motivated how individuals participated in peace activism. For instance, cases cited in this study revealed that polarising elections campaigns exploited the salience of cultural practices to mobilise political bases and intensify tensions. In this case, individuals' acts of creating and disseminating peace or hate messages became socially significant for activism because they helped shape media practices and reasons with which and for which people forged and sustained ties for common causes. In situations where hateful content is pervasive, emerging media practices may help intensify tensions and corrode strategies through which societies sustained stability. For this reason, most respondents worried about ethnic profiling, hate speech and cyberbullying.

Finally, the third level of analysis assessed the dynamic relationship between activities at levels one and two, i.e., what individuals did with available media platforms and salient processes influencing how specific platforms became significant for peace activism. In this regard, empirical data analysed showed that increased online activism had helped structure the dynamics of threats and conflicts for individuals and organisations. Concerns about cyberbullying, stalking, harassment, and false information reveal how embedded media platforms can intensify these dynamics. Besides, this data helped to account for features within peace activism that get intensified, hence influencing how people experience them. For instance, as argued in preceding sections, political elites often use vernacular as a linguistic strategy during political campaigns to exclude outer-groups, polarise and limit engagement levels. If the focus is only on access to available media platforms and not salient social processes, it overlooks elements in communicative practices that emerging media practices may intensify. This point is critical if one conceives the impact of media as a dynamic relationship between the elements that make up social practices and emerging media practices. If one agrees with this view in the context of peace and conflicts, then there is a need to revisit the concept of media practices as a way of understanding the prevailing logic of individual social actions. Accounting for these links helped reveal how and why specific media platforms became socially and politically significant for peace activism. Privileging media access over doers' social agency (of peace and conflict) undermines the basis for establishing political accountability. Quests for peace or political expression may drive people to innovate

and appropriate available media platforms; these underlying processes may influence how increased online media use exacerbates ethnic tensions.

Consequently, emerging citizen media practices point to the need to analyse how specific everyday discourse structures (rumours, threats, gossip, or sermons) can inflame tensions in volatile situations (Powers, 1995). If citizen media practices of texting peace messages or online neighbourhood groups can lead to the 'creation of communities, and transmission of values and beliefs' (Powers, p. 199), they intensify group sensitivities to generalised social expectations and beliefs in how individuals and groups are connected. This is relevant in situations where elites, including peace activists, try to influence processes by 'controlling important events, the flow of information and the ability to mobilise broad consensus to support their policies' (Wolfsfeld, 2015, pp 24-25). The control of information flow may include polarising media practices that exclude alternative voices. Thus, peace activism is only effective because of cooperation among different people and organisations and are engaged in it through specific relationships and interactions (Powers, p. 204). These relationships and interactions, such as intensified kinship ties or diverse groups, may influence how specific media platforms become significant for peacebuilding. In this respect, understanding' social expectations and preferences' that motivate peace or acts of violence in the emerging online media practices is at the core of media significance and social change (Bicchieri, 2017, p. 111). Therefore, what people did with available media, in this study's context, depended on how specific media platforms entered their social relationships and practices, what meanings and symbolism they invested them with, and what they represent (Hughes, 1987, p. 51; Kirkpatrick, 2008, p. 2; Pinch & Bijker, 1987, p. 25; Street, 1992, p. 10).

6.2. The study's limitation and areas of further inquiry

Although this study is limited to individuals and organised groups already motivated to engage in peace activism, threats that people worry about while using online platforms apply to the rest of society and thus, call for a more in-depth analysis of the impact of emerging media practices on peace activism, particularly in volatile situations. This study showed that increased online media use enhanced their sense of community among most respondents, perhaps because online activism intensified and sustained kinship relations — as it helped to 'maintain, reinforce and disseminate' their cultures

(Powers, p. 206). Equally, regardless of how people perceived online activism's contribution, most worried about online practices such as bullying, stalking, intimidation, incitement, false information, and rumours. More importantly, this study illustrates that the contexts of peace and conflicts in Kenya might have been (re)-shaped by two interrelated media dynamics: the processes by which online media practices became socially compelling such as polarising political campaigns together with expanded options for individuals to access, share, and generate unregulated content. These forces can help shape communicative practices beyond what people do with the media available.

As discussed in Chapter 3, this study did not aim at a global sample that may have benefited this study to systematically compare how diverse social groups understand and engage in peace activism. Moreover, this study is limited to the strategies and mechanisms with which peacebuilders and citizen members engage in activism. Thus, it does not include a systematic content analysis of selected peace organisations' project reports and other administrative documents, which would have aided a comparative analysis of peacebuilders discursive strategies. Therefore, interpretation of this study's findings is limited to what participants in the KEVP recalled about their role during the 2017 elections. However, the findings give insights into possible areas for further investigation at the country level, such as a need for systematic analysis of how the meanings of peace and social identities influence peace activism at a country level.

Furthermore, some studies on this topic may favour a focus on a single unit of analysis, i.e., media platforms, peace organisations or members of the public. In this study, I preferred an in-depth study design combining media practices of peacebuilders and the members of the public. In this regard, I combined several data sources: peace organisations and ordinary citizens, and methods: survey and structured interviews. Data collection from different analysis units allowed for a cross-analysis of multiple variables such as how people described peace, engagement levels, and perceived media technologies' impact. This analytical approach is generalisable because it may allow researchers to combine and triangulate several variables to answer different aspects of questions about meanings and purposes individuals attribute to their peace activism and media use patterns. For instance, to understand the different dimensions of the impact of increased online activism on peace and conflict dynamics, the methods applied allowed a cross-analysis of the variables of information-seeking

behaviour and engagement in activism. The cross-analysis of people's perceptions and values towards peace and conflicts allows researchers to establish how social norms influence media and information use patterns. In short, by triangulating data gathering techniques and data sources, this study offers an analytic framework for initiating peacebuilding work. This is because peacebuilders need to establish in a structured way a basis of individuals' sense of peace or (in)security in their localities relative to media and information use patterns.

For transformative peacebuilding initiatives, comprehensive empirical datasets are needed about when individuals are likely to engage in actions furthering or undermining peace goals and by what means. In this case, combining cross-sectional survey questionnaires and structured interviews allowed this study to triangulate diverse participants' responses and their perceptions, meanings, and purposes for engaging in peace activism. Nonetheless, as pointed above, the data analysed, findings discussed and interpreted are limited to the strategies and mechanisms with which participants in the KEVP engaged in activism. Furthermore, this analytical approach proceeded from the assumption that the impact of media platforms on peace activism is defined by a dynamic relationship between contexts and processes by which available media become socially significant for (peace) activism.

6.3. Overview of the study

Peace communication brings into sharp focus the social and political problems influencing the framing of solutions and their justification. The various ways peace is conceived and performed illustrate a continuous negotiation process and appropriation by which people forge ties with others and conform to different ideas and practices. Therefore, to effectively communicate peace, one may need to continually evaluate the circumstances in which people seek to engage in actions either furthering or undermining peace. Accounting for these processes allows peacebuilders to gain deeper insights into what motivates people to use particular media platforms for activism and how such motivations can be strategic to peace actions.

Peace organisations play a critical role in integrating diverse individuals' and organised groups' concerns into common causes. The shifting dynamics of peace and conflicts because of increased online activism may impose undesirable conditions on peacebuilders' capacities to communicate peace. Therefore, peacebuilder may need

to develop new capacities for ‘mobilising, motivating, organising, and orienting individuals and groups’ attention to resolve’ the challenges of communicating peace in volatile situations (Northouse, 2016, p. 259). In this sense, analysis of online activism’s impact should focus on increasing access to available media platforms and developing capacities to co-create and curate communicative practices for peace activism. This is because increasing online media use has expanded options for individuals and organisations to co-create and disseminate content that can help shape established norms and mechanisms for conflict resolution.

Therefore, this study has illustrated that two interrelated communicative dynamics are influencing peace and conflict context in Kenya to a certain degree: polarising media spaces and stories (from both individual citizens and licenced news media) and pervasive use of online media to access, share and generate content. These forces have had effects on communicative spaces beyond what people do with available media platforms. This study has also illustrated how online media practices can give new impetus to polarising discourses and stories, i.e., media practices that tap into extant fears, biases, and threats, making peace initiatives perpetually vulnerable to ethnicised politics.

Finally, this study tested several assumptions to establish the extent to which media users are likely to engage in specific social causes, particularly in shifting media practices. Accordingly, this study tested the assumption that what individuals and organisations did with available media platforms apply to peace activism because they help shape "who speaks", "what one can speak", and "how", thus influencing their media and information use patterns. Second, I tested the assumption that communicative practices of diverse actors, particularly peacebuilders, apply to peace activism because it can enable and constrict how individuals engage in common causes – the cases of polarising election campaigns illustrated this point. Lastly, this study tested the assumption that diverse entities’ communicative practices can exacerbate existing tendencies because of shifting dynamics of opportunities and threats individuals and organisations may experience. Thus, I drew attention to everyday citizen media practices as the basis of activism because, through these media practices, peacebuilders can mobilise and co-create options – spaces, meanings or symbols with which individuals and organised groups can take part in common causes. To the extent of the study's objective, I conclude that within the ongoing quest for sustainable peace in Kenya, the increasing use of online media for

activism is relevant because the emerging media practices have helped shape peace activism with positive and negative implications for inter-ethnic relations and electoral peace.

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