

**ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ENHANCING REGIONAL COOPERATION:
CASE STUDY OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby ascertain and declare herewith that this research project is an original study. It has not been declared as a research project under the umbrella of Masters of Arts in International Studies or any other degree in any other institution.

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DEDICATION

I devote this research project to people who have stood by me and who are and continue to be of high value to my life. First and foremost to Mr. & Mrs. Irimu, who have been supportive of me undertaking this degree so that I may further my knowledge and understanding.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EAC- East African Community

EADB - East African Development Bank

HTTP- Hypertext Transfer Text Protocol

HML- Hypertext Mark-Up Language

IUCEA -Inter-University Council for East Africa

ICT- Information Communication Technologies

LVFO- Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization

SMS – Short Message Service

SNS - Social networking sites

SMTP - Simple Mail Transfer Protocol

URL- Universe Resource Locators

WI-FI – Wireless Fidelity

ABSTRACT

The decision to write a research project on the effect of social media on integration was based on the view that there is plenty of technological change in the global, political and development arena, in the nature of member states towards developmental growth and in debates around the social responsibility model theory. This dissertation covers the east African region and in particular the East African Community. This study aims to contribute to the full understanding and interaction that exists between social media and traditional media and how it ascribes to social cohesion within the member states of the EAC. This work shows how the EAC works and more so the communication department and how they integrate social media in their form of communication. The impact and importance of social media in East Africa and more so the institution is not so fully understood within the region. Social media is infamously linked to rise of political tensions, and this leads to the questioning of whether what is imported such as internet-based technologies are relevant in the integration within the region. Social media and related technologies are penetrating the modern world. The speed through which technology is increasing is quite rapid and its insertion in the environment may have some side effects. It is quite common during a live social function for a person to access their social platforms access a live phone call or send a message. However this bridge communities within the region closer. The rapid enhancement and implementation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) has brought about a new global word order referred to as the 'digital world', introducing new concepts such as e-commerce, e-learning, e-citizen, e-administration among many others. This research project will understand how social media is emerging as a new trend among all pillars of the region and more so how technologies are affecting the region.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania form their own economy growing the East African Community and are frequently considered as a regional unit (Mosley, 1900-1963). East Africa was an unknown territory during the last quarter of the nineteenth century (Ingham, 1962; 1963;1965). East Africa gained plenty of recognition after the Arab Slave and ivory traders. Missionaries were recollecting more information about the continent and painting a more clear pictures for other explorers. (Mosley, 1900-1963) All journeys of exploration in East Africa started at the east coast and worked westward into the interior, but the first threat of annexation came from the north. Britain's role in East Africa, was her interest to promote the anti-slavery campaign and to check on the French strategic expansion (Eliot, 1905). In 1871, a Committee of Inquiry was set up in the British Parliament to give a report of the on the East African slave-trade. The British had urged the Sultans (who were the dominating power in the region) to close al slave market and put a stop to the exportation of all slaves within the East African coast (Russell, 1935). There were several early attempts made by the Europeans to infiltrate the East African states and more so the mainland. However, there were several violent political activities faced during the nineteenth century, although experience in other parts of the world suggested that great social revolutions might result. The first Europeans to establish themselves within the mainland of East African were the Christian missionaries, the first of whom was Ludwig Krapf in 1844 (Brode, 1928). The slogan that is known of the EAC region is that of "one people, one destiny." The EAC was re-established in the early 20th century and it is am intergovernmental organization that comprises of six nations. This chapter provides a contextual understanding that provides a brief summary of the research project.

The drive to unite among the East African countries can be dated to this period of ‘scramble and partition of Africa.’ Formal economic and social integration within East Africa begun when the railway was being constructed in Kenya and Uganda during the year 1898. Moreover, there were other establishments that were taking place which include the Customs Center in the East Africa during the year (1919) among many other joint organizations.¹

As mentioned earlier, the initial East African Union failed to hold and collapsed in 1977 and was completely dissolved. Failure of this union was the continued disproportionate sharing of benefits within the member states fueled by differences in the levels of development among partner states (Secretariat, 1999).

However in 1984, there was the idea to unify the member states within the EAC, has proved to be an ongoing and necessary solution, which will lead to the optimization of resources and lead to political stability. Moreover, having the member states unite ensured that they were committed to ‘explore and identify other methods of corporation leading to signing of the treaty for the establishment of the East African Community among Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. This treaty came into force in July 2000. Rwanda and Burundi assented to the EAC on the 18th June 2007 and became full members of the Community on the 1st July 2007.

This new East African Community was formed so as to increase cooperation among partner states so as to maximize benefits within the region more so politically, economically and socially. The revival of the EAC region would lead to the development of regional integration which would strengthen the economy and ensure that the member states to become competitive in the global arena and take advantage of opportunities such as ease in market access, trade efficiency and good levels and sustainable development. To the EAC heads of states, restarting the EAC was important so as to view benefits of the region being better if

the countries acted collectively rather than individually. This paper highlights the digital media was commissioned on the understanding that it is an important and strategic instrument and it plays a role in regional integration.

1. The Scramble for East Africa

The fate of the East African states was crucial during the years between 1880 and 1895. Britain and Germany had divided East Africa between them (Galbart, 1972). Britain enjoyed considerable dominance by the end of the 1870's in Zanzibar's affairs. Her economic ties as well as the abolishment of anti-slavery campaigns gave her great influence. Moreover, Britain's missionaries and adventurers outnumbered those of any other European country. Britain had sea power and a dominant position economically. Prior to the 1870's, France had several revolutions that kept her busy and Germany had yet to be united in a single state (Roland M. a., 1963). Egypt's ruler Khedive Ismail had planned to modernize and expand his domain down the Nile valley into Southern Sudan and Uganda along the coast of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The Khedive appointed an Englishman who worked to abolish slave trade and to increase Egypt's foothold to the Nile Valley (Roland M. a., 1963).

However, he met opposition in Bunyoro through Mukama Kabarega's leadership. He therefore, left Khedive's service. The Englishman was succeeded by General Charles Gordon, whose reputation of bravery and determination superseded him. He too, resolved to wipe out slave trade and expand Egypt's boundaries (Roland M. a., 1963)ⁱⁱ. However, in Buganda did Kabaka Mutesa I grew suspicious of Gordon and his plans. Gordon's plans of establishing fort on Buganda's frontier were abandoned due to British pressure through Sir John Kirk and Mutesa I's skillful diplomacy (Roland M. a., 1963)ⁱⁱⁱ. In 1882 a nationalist revolt broke out

in Egypt under the leadership of Arabi Pasha. Britain had a military intervention and took over Egypt (Roland M. a., 1963)^{iv}.

Germany's claim to a portion of East Africa would be the last she made to African territory. Under her most avid imperialists, Carl Peters, whose aim was to promote German Control over East Africa. He arrived with his companions in Zanzibar in November 1884 disguised as mechanics. They obtained treaties with "chiefs" and returned to Berlin in 1885 February. These treaties were the basis of German protectorate.

Britain was forced to turn to diplomacy to salvage something of her influence in East Africa. In 1885-1886 negotiations were undertaken and a favorable agreement was made/ enshrined in the Anglo – German partition agreement of 1886 (Ogot, 1974).^v Britain and German gave over administration and economic exploitation of their spheres of influence to private companies. The German company was forced out of the field by the Abushiri rebellion and the consequent government took over in 1891 (Galbarath, 1972).^{vi} By July, 1895 the British sphere had come under direct imperial rule as two separate territories, the Uganda and East Africa protectorate.

1.1.1. Rationale for the Establishment of the East Africa Community

Objectives that had been initiated in the Treaty include policy and program development and ensure cooperation and integration among partner states is formed. The formation of communication is central in the cooperation. On one end media is capable of being trustworthy and it paints a picture that is beyond reach. Media has an impact on the creating and making perceptions. The agenda-setting theory has its role in focusing on public attention and also influencing the news topics which can elevate the public understanding of issues, people, organization and institution (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2007)^{vii}. Media globally has been

accepted as the only positive opinion shapers and hence can easily change public priorities because if people are more concerned on some issues, the more they gather knowledge around it and the stronger their opinions are towards it.

Moreover, the EAC was formed so as to achieve the four pillars of cooperation which include *Customs Union, Political Federation, Common Market* and a *Monetary Union*. Objectives of the *customs union* is to liberalize intra-regional trade in both goods and services and ensure mutual beneficial trade exists among partner states. Secondly, is to establish and promote an efficient production within the region. Thirdly, is to remove border controls for duty-paid imports moving across (Lyimo, 2014) ensuring foreign and domestic investments within the region and lastly to ensure that the community diversifies and promotes economic development to grow the region to global standards. The *monetary union* had its aim at ensuring that there is a creation of a single currency, *political federation* was to provide a functioning legislative, executive and judicial organ. Federation is easily described as the distribution of power from a centralized government to other subordinate governments. Furthermore, it deals with the development of an effective and operational fiscal and foreign policies and lastly is the *common market* whose aim is to allow the voluntary movement of goods, services and labor within the region.

In Article 9 of the EAC treaty there are institutions that are responsible for maintaining the independence and moreover in ensuring that there is freedom from national state influence. Under Article 10 of the EAC Treaty, membership of the summit as stated in paragraph shall constitute Heads of State or Government of Partner States and paragraph two states that if a member of the Summit is unable to attend a meeting of the Summit and it is not convenient to postpone the meeting, that member should consult with other member of states within the

summit and elect a representative of Government to attend the meeting. A Minister so appointed shall, for purposes of that meeting, have all the powers, duties and responsibilities of the member of the Summit for whom that person is acting (Secretariat, Treaty for Establishment of the East African Community, 1999)^{viii}.

Summit is where the Heads of State meet to provide a sense of direction. There can be creation of new institutions, acceptance of new members, appointment of judges and the passing of laws. The summit is truly the heart of the EAC. The council consists of ministers who are responsible for regional integration in the five member states and their main talk is to observe the implementation of decisions made by the council in the national context. It is inter-governmental because it also prepares legislation for the legislative assembly. The East African Court Of Justice supervises application of the treaty and compliance with it. Unfortunately, the judicial arm is seen to lack dependence. The assembly passes laws and is charged to confirm budget but its members are elected by the national parliaments.

1.1.2. Relationship Linking Media and Integration

Mass media is a very essential channel that interconnects the world. The media brings about people from media is an increasingly strong channel which interconnects the world. The media serves as an instrument to develop opinions and ideas locally and internationally. The media is a very powerful tool and it can also be used to instigate and propel propaganda and this has seen many powers use the channel to have an upper hand in politics. The media in EAC has the potential to shape and even build the destiny of the economic bloc instead of relying on international news media to carry out the research and also report on the news around the region. The mass media together with the social media responsible in covering issues around the region and this could easily be framed negatively or positively resulting in favorable public

perception, or it could destroy and undermine the goals and objectives that have been laid down by the EAC.

The media can use any channel, radio, television, digital media, and print media and can be put in context as integration, in that its core function is to bring communities that are separated by land or water together to share different beliefs and values that exist.

Media plays an important role in bringing communities and nations together. However, media is also associated with the lack of cohesion among certain groups of people and even among certain nationalities. Hans-Jorg Trenz says that media has challenged the very meaning of democracy and it has also displaced politics (Trenz, 2013)^{ix}.

1.2. Statement of The Problem

Despite the several attempts to integrate member states within the East African Communities, there is very little progress that has been made. The integration process spirals around media which could offer a possible solution to facilitating regional integration in EAC countries. This study looks at the work media plays in the integration process. Ideally several investigators around the media and communication sector have indeed revealed that there is the need to develop media globally. The major area is that of social platform, media merger, content ownership and how this particular content can be regulated and made available. Media has become a forum that is increasingly providing a platform for interconnectedness. Media in its wholesome nature has been an avenue of propaganda and instigation toward a certain position of the world. In its entirety, media serves as an opinion maker, in regards to politics and economics, not only locally but internationally. Media exploitation is at an all-time low in Africa and hence a need to realize it, especially within the EAC and use it to provide an

avenue to reach the global arena from the region itself. A requirement indeed exists that ensures communities come together to transform the region and the lack of cohesion among communities within East Africa could be founded on the absence of media presence within all member states.

Social media allows the creation of public opinions through images posted on social platforms, blogs that discuss a certain view, videos of a particular occurrence that may have occurred in the recent past, or one that is taking place at the exact moment of recording.

1.3. Specific Objectives

The main reason of the research project is to deliver a holistic grasp of digital cooperation and its effect on the EAC by understanding the several approaches to digital networks and the understanding of the particular platform is considered more approachable among members of the EAC.

- a) To determine the extent of digital media usage as a tool within the EAC
- b) To analyze the coverage of the EAC by radio, print, television and social media
- c) To understand the key issues addressed by the EAC through radio, newspaper, television and social media.
- d) To ascertain factors that encouraged the EAC in coverage of a particular event over radio, print, television and social media.

1.4. General Objective

It is to examine the role of social media in enhancing regional cooperation in East Africa.

1.5. Research Questions

The general guiding question:

A. Has social media participated in the cooperation of East Africa?

The precise questions;

- a. What is the coverage of digital media usage within EAC?
- b. How can digital media coverage be analyzed?
- c. How will digital media be used in addressing key concerns surrounding the EAC?
- d. How to determine that coverage within the EAC using digital media is effective?

1.6. Hypotheses

- a) Social media exists to integrate states globally
- b) Social media plays a significant role in strengthening regional integration within the EAC.

1.7. Justification of The Study.

As a piece of research on the social platforms and the effect towards regional cooperation can be grouped into two which include the academic justification and the policy relevance.

- a) Academic justification – the study aims to educate and inform the region on effective digitization, and how it can be effectively used to grow the pillars of the region as well as highlighting the social media platforms that can be used to attract citizens and increase cohesion. The Internet technology is constantly changing and therefore so are the social media platforms, therefore this study can assist students to understand social media and encourage further research to be carried out so as to ensure communities within the EAC can interact freely with the EAC.

- b) Policy relevance – the treaty is very clear on its aim in improving cooperation between partner states. This research project will create a new perception among the EAC citizens and introduce a new area of knowledge awareness and this will work in conjunction with the key policy frameworks that include; using information and communication as a key resource, increasing citizen participation and lead to cohesion among member states.

Media is revolving and the social platforms are increasing with everyday new platforms and software's are being made and upgraded. The integration process is analyzed through social media as a source of public awareness and it must be analyzed so as to provide literature to students who may choose to pursue social media further.

1.8. Literature Review

This research project will seek to understand social media and its origin; social media today in the globalization arena. Initially journalism during the precolonial era had in its nature the oral discourse using communication norms informed by oral tradition and folk culture with communal story-tellers (griots), musicians, poets and dancers playing the role of the modern-day journalist. Here we see the concepts of 'civil society' and 'public sphere' very much evident as the oral discourse style of communication makes it possible for griots, musicians, poets to target different civil society groups as well as 'general' and 'organised' public spheres (Seaga, 2007)^x. Bourgault notes that 'although governments change, this does not mean older forms disappear. The same could be said for all forms of communication – the technological forms change but the pre-existing styles of interaction may not (Bourgault, 1995)^{xi}. In the 20th century, a Ghanaian Scholar Wisdom Tettey (2001) notes that 'the roots of democratic protest by the media can be traced to the colonial era (Farringer, 1991)^{xii}when

in reality it can be dated back even before pre-colonial period as admitted by Bourgault (Randal V. , 1993)^{xiii}.

In the British Style media, as used within the EAC, the “press was established for the use of British businessmen, settlers, teachers, government officials and soldiers....’ (Tunstall J. , 1977)^{xiv}

Media is no longer viewed in its mode of computer technology as a distribution platform or as a form of digital data carried through software and as a Metamedia (Manovich, 2003)^{xv}. New Media is easily misconceived as a platform that function of digitalizing objects so as to spread information and exhibit the same information. Media is evolving and traditional media has been replaced with new media which is constantly changing every day. New media has been associated with digital technologies that use computer and internet so as to provide information or entertainment to those listening or viewing the media and these include; social media, blogs, video games and online news.

The media remains a powerful tool that creates awareness, lobbying and connecting the world through the different channels available, the evolution of the internet and creation of social media platforms has changed the speed with which news is shared while the availability of the internet has eased the flow of information and has made information readily available (Mang'era, 2012).^{xvi}

Experiences of economic co-operation and regional integration go as far back as the 1960’s. However, there was a conspicuous revitalization of the integration process accompanied by a change of approach. This new world of integrated blocs aimed at providing a forum for

negotiations depending on countries membership in a large economic entity. (Kabbaj, 2002)^{xvii}

Chapter 26 of the EAC treaty highlights the importance of good relations with regional and international organizations surrounding the EAC. More so, Article 130 states that partner states shall honor their commitments in respect of other multinational and international organizations of which they are members. In further addition the council, as stated in Article 5 shall constitute Ministers from each member state that will contribute to the regional integration and cooperation.

Regional Co-operation proceeds when states, that are sovereign, enter into regional agreements so as to enhance cooperation through regional institutions and rules. Regional integration is currently and increasingly becoming a global economic which is shaping the global arena. Nations are becoming more open to achieving cohesion so as to quicken economic developments, reduce conflict and build trust within the region.

The accords governing the creation of regional communities and their strengthening in Africa implicitly or explicitly to pursue the objectives of setting up largely integrated economies, the promotion of a fundamentally endogenous and self-sustained development, based on a collective and planned approach. (Bourenane)^{xviii}

The East African Community was formed in 1967, but collapsed in 1997. Each partner state followed its own fiscal and development strategy, and as time passed these strategies became more divergent. (I, 1975)^{xix} Lacking joint policies in crucial areas the community inevitably ran afoul of the differing aims and perceptions of the members (Bourenane)^{xx}. Tanzania followed a socialist economic policy after 1967, while Kenya maintained a policy of African

socialism. These diverging approaches, accompanied by ideological differences, produced strains between, the leadership of the two countries. (Bourenane)^{xxi} Secondly there was a trade imbalance in that Kenya exported more to Uganda and Tanzania than they did to her. In the 1970's the two countries formed about one-third of Kenya's export market. (Gregor, 1968)^{xxii} Kenya's leaders were increasingly unwilling to make sacrifices to hold back her economic progress; the other two states saw Kenya as prospering at their expense (Bourenane)^{xxiii}. The third important factor that contributed to the weakening and eventual death of the East African Community was the continued perception of disproportionate sharing of benefits occurring from economic integration and in particular the lack of adequate compensation mechanisms to redress the situation. The problem could not be resolved easily and it was dependent upon the goodwill and wisdom of the leaders. (Kikwete)^{xxiv}

The new EAC was re-established in 1999 through a treaty and was fully instituted in July 2000 following the ratification of the establishment treaty by the original partner states; Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, which were later joined by Burundi and Rwanda in 2007. (Community, East African Community, n.d.)^{xxv}

The defunct EAC was a successor organization to the East Africa Common Service Organization founded in 1961 in place of the East African High Commission which was in turn formed in 1947.

The EAC had attained a high level of economic integration. The EAC had a customs union, a joint Income Tax Board and regime, a monetary union with a common currency the East African Shilling and an East African Currency Board. (Kikwete)^{xxvi}

Walter Lippmann was among the influential journalists of the twentieth century. He filled the bridge that existed between political and the intellectuals plus the mass readers. Lippmann argued that people do not know the world directly, but only as it appears in 'our heads'. Democracy has a few assumptions in that it deals with the nature of the *public, nature of the press within the state and how the news is organized. Lippmann argues that for democracy to exist, there needs to be development of intelligence within the government so as to achieve overall 'good-life'.

1.9. Regional Cooperation

Ernest Haas describes that there are several problems in regional co-operation

Lack of political will by member states and even the fear of losing their sovereignty is a key challenge in cooperation. 'Even fifteen years of work have not quite sufficed to create a consensus on a clear delimitation (Ernest, 1971)^{xxvii}. Several African states have developed their own national identity, which is the main reason why cooperation is minimal. The lack of equity and justice in Africa and among her states has led to lack of proper cooperation.

Infrastructure development and regional integration and co-operation are positively associated and mutually reinforcing. While infrastructure development can lead to closer integration of national markets, regional co-operation is an effective instrument for improving regional infrastructure. Regional co-operation in Africa usually takes two main forms: project and programme co-operation. (Simuyemba, 1999)^{xxviii}

Regional integration provides an opportunity for us to reduce our weaknesses or overcome them completely. Regional integration moreover, avails us the opportunity of being possible players and not mere onlookers. (Community, East African Community, n.d.)^{xxix} Regional integration in Africa should be pursued within the framework of regional development strategies. These strategies should favor rational and joint economic management of scarce

resources based on the provision of economies of scale, the formation of viable economic blocs, provision of efficient services and production of goods for bigger regional and global markets (Community, East African Community, n.d.)^{xxx}.

Regional integration has one of its challenges when it comes to implementing economic integration when one of the member states is economically dominant.

Challenges in regional integration vary in degree and in magnitude. These challenges include insufficient and undeveloped infrastructure, (road, rail and even air), inefficiency while handling and managing the different resources that exist within the region; due to lack of a central leading body. Another challenge is that African integration is built on the foundation of a closer economic and political tie among other nations within the continent. With the continent integration, there will be wider markets for producers and consumers whom are of African origin Also, states will come together to ensure that there shall be investment on a larger scale so as to reduce risk. There are also problems related to low levels of capital / labor ratios as a result of low capital investments and too small flows of foreign direct investments to Africa. (Community, East African Community, n.d.)^{xxxi}

1.10. Social media Cooperation in East Africa

Information technology and Internet services, which hold great potential for the development of a knowledge-based economy, deserve special attention (Gaudete, 2000)^{xxxii}.

Technologically, Africa has recorded low levels of acquisition and application of technology; low levels of capitalization of technology especially in agriculture as well as low levels of resource allocation dedicated to research and development. The insignificant levels of computerization have reduced the region's access to the information highway and the ability

of the region to access technology. (Community, East African Community, n.d.)^{xxxiii} Digital media integration can easily be classified in two systems (Chaz, 2002)^{xxxiv};

Media that can be classified in the film, web sites, CD that are used so simultaneously so as to bring out a richer experience and display the creative content within it. For example, a movie may have both a soundtrack and a web site.

Media that is distributed in various channels such as newspapers, television, radio, and this is specifically used to a particular targeted audience.

Mass media has its basic functions in providing entertainment, mobilization, social integration and interaction together with surveillance and much more. Third world leaders formed the None- Aligned News Agency (NANA), whose main role was to facilitate and provide factual information concerning non-aligned countries as well as the international community.

1.11. Theoretical Framework

New media is evolving and changing and it affects culture. Old customs and initial recreational activities have been interchanged and are sold to media organizations so that it may reach the different audiences.

A theory that is applicable in this theory is known as the social responsibility model that generally grows from the libertarian theory and according to Siebert “a grafting of new ideas onto traditional theory” (Sierbert)^{xxxv}. This theory emphasis on the media size in regards to print, radio and television, how fast information can be relayed using that form of media and availability of information that can be interchanged and content availability using the new technologies available. These new technologies expanded to encompass cinema, internet, social platforms and the television. The social theory approach (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{xxxvi}

clarifies the notion of social media (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{xxxvii} to be advanced by identifying three social information (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{xxxviii} process that are based on three elements of sociality which include; cognition, communication (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{xxxix} and co-operation

Globalization refers to “the understanding of the world and the increased perception of the world as a whole” (Roland R. , 1992)^{xl} “the globalization can be defined as the intensification of social relations throughout the world, linking distant localities in such a way that local happenings are formed as a result of events that occur many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens, 1990)^{xli}

In international relations, regionalism is the expression of a common sense of identity and purpose combined with the creation and implementation of institutions that express a particular identity and shape collective action within a geographical region (Wikipedia, 2017)^{xlii}.

Regionalism is commonly ascribed to the political and cognitive element of forming regions. It is today, characterized with government involvement, non-governmental actors and non-state actors. It is the formation of ideas, values and objectives so as to modify a particular region. Regionalism in its wholesome nature can also be defined as the functional relation that combines and pulls states with their socio-political, developmental and economic in addition to their cultural inheritance. Regionalization can be defined as politico-administrative process by which regions emerge as relevant units of analysis for economic and political activity and welfare and service provision. (Brockett & Dahlstorm, 2004)^{xliii} It is also described as a concept which is reserved for more spontaneous process of region formation by different actors – state or non-state. (Bjourn, 1999a)^{xliv}

New regionalism theory is also at play when discussing regionalism in the global context. This theory links regionalism to achieve and maintain competition within the global and economic environment. New regionalism is to initiate ways in which both governmental and non – governmental actors can interact so as to form cooperative arrangements.

1.12. Research Methodology

This section presents the research design and methodology used in this research project. It describes the research design, study site, target population, sampling techniques and procedures, data collection and instruments, and analysis. This study uses case study as its research design.

1.12.1. Research Design

This research project will use the qualitative research which works on understanding differing opinions, reasons and inspirations on a phenomenon that is being studied. This kind of research has its aim in providing a complete, detailed description of the research topic and explains it in a more detailed fashion.

1.12.2. Study Site

Selecting research is very important when it comes to writing a research project. The area of research must be relevant and it must be of interest to the researcher. The research area should affect the researcher's career path in the future and contribute to the discipline. The research area is therefore, the EAC as an institution and an understanding will be made to relate social media and its effect on cooperation within the region.

1.12.3. Target Population

The research population must much what is being analyzed. The unit of analysis is the entity under study, or who is being described or analyzed. (Kortz K. , 2012)^{xlv} The research population includes the corporate communication department of the EAC, the Information and Communication technology department and the Media department of the ICT

1.12.4. Sampling Techniques and Procedure

The sampling methodologies have been classified in two categories; probability sampling and nonprobability sampling. Nonprobability sampling will be used in this research project, due to the ease of administrating the data instruments and the fact that nonprobability sampling is less complicated and is less time consuming.

1.12.5. Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The more accurate the data collection is the easier conducting the research will be. Data collection enables the researcher to collect only information that is relevant to the study. Methods that can be used can include, observation, questioning, measuring or even two methods combined. (Abawi, 2013)^{xlvi}

1.12.6. Questionnaires

A questionnaire is described as a set of questions used in data collection as a form of statistical instrument that may be used to acquire useful personal information for the purpose of gathering adequate and reliable information from the target respondents. The questionnaire was invented by Sir Francis Galton. (Wikipedia, 2012)^{xlvii} The questions that will be administered will be clear and the format will have an open format.

1.12.7. Interview Guide

Interviews are a mode of using a set of questions to collect data. This can be through recording, filming of responses or listening to respondents. The structure of the interviews will be semi-structured due to the fact that this kind of structure allows modification of already set questions.

1.12.8. Focus Group Discussions

This mode of data collection is the forming of a group and discussing a particular topic, in this case the social media and its effect on regional co-operation. This discussions have a facilitator who is responsible for posing questions to the respondents, who in turn share their thoughts around the question.

1.12.9. Procedure of Data Collection

Plan and procedure is very significant in research. The plan to collect data highlights in detail what the researcher will assemble from the hypo-research project and their operative repercussions including the last examination analysis of the data^{xlviii} (Kerlinger, 1973) A letter from the University of Nairobi is required to allow the researcher to present herself to the respondents, this will act like the researcher's 'credentials'.

1.12.10. Analysis of the Data

This is the evaluation of data in a procedural manner by use of analytical and logical reasoning so as to understand the components of the data collected by any given researcher. It is the activity of making sense and of interpreting and theorizing data that signifies a search for general statements among various categories of data.

1.12.11. Qualitative Analysis

Data in a qualitative research may be in form of words which have been gathered from interviews or images that have been collected in the form of videos and use of objects in the case of studying archeology and the use of artifacts.

1.13. Ethical Consideration

This study on the topic of social cooperation in East Africa Community has a small pool of data available on it and links with other studies may be difficult to find. The research project aims at describing the role of the four pillars of the EAC in a general way – indicating that the analyses has opportunities in the future to have a more detailed research.

Secondly, plagiarism should be avoided by all means within this research project. The researcher must ensure that there is proper citation and understanding of the topic.

Thirdly all information presented in this study should be genuine and all respondents' information should be held in confidence so as to ensure confidentiality. The information gathered from the respondents should be voluntary and there must be informed consent. All participants or respondents to the study will have their information protected and it shall remain confidential so as to ensure the respondents remain anonymous.

Lastly proper project planning should be taken so as to provide an atmosphere of knowledge acquisition and this can only be done if the researcher knows what information is relevant to the study.

1.14. Scope and Limitation

This research focused on the EAC communications and IT departments in the site area. The study sought to understand the role of social media in regional integration. As such, the

findings will not be applicable to other Regional Economic Communities (REC's). The research covered a period of 3 months effective May 2014⁷. The East African Community has six partner states; Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan.

1.15. Chapter Outline

The research project is grouped into five chapters which are surrounded by introductions and conclusions. The first chapter of the research project comprises of a brief introduction and background of the study, problem statement, and theoretical framework, objectives of the study, existing literature review and methodology.

The second part of the research project concentrates on the historical background and the how social media promotes regional cooperation

The third chapter evaluates the correlation between regional cooperation and social media and it seeks to establish the Treaty of the EAC, the achievements and the challenges within the region to date.

The fourth chapter is on data collected from respondents which will be analyzed through comparing the hypothesis and the framework guiding this study to understand if the research met its objectives and this will result in nullifying or confirming the hypothesis and research.

The last chapter provides a summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA

2. Introduction

The catchword of the new technologies is “digital” a way of communicating in new forms and processing data much more cheaply. (Owen, 1999)^{xlix} Digital communications use discontinuous, discrete electrical, optical or electromagnetic signals that change in frequency, polarity or amplitude. The internet is the most visible embodiment of the new digital technology which consists of millions of interconnected computers. (Kortz K. A., 2012)^l The internet is both a potential form of television and a potential rival to television. The most convenient and cheapest way of getting data from one location to the next involves a combination of computing (digital signal processing) and transmission.

Communication is the transfer of information and regardless of the medium used it can be over the World Wide Web, television, displayed on the standard format as used in computers. Technology contains a ‘bitstream’ of zeros and ones. Similar to old fashioned telegraph codes. (Kortz K. A., 2012)^{li} Bandwidth is the difference in hertz, between the highest and lowest frequencies of a transmission channel. If the bandwidth is great then there can be more data that is being transmitted. Broadband communication means the practice of sending large amounts of data. (Kortz K. A., 2012)^{lii}

The internet is both a collection of software and hardware technologies and collection of services. It is cheaper, attractive and faster. Suppliers of internet-related hardware and software have better reasons to encourage the commercial and domestic use of the internet. The internet can be characterized as an interactive (two-way) communication linking users with one another and with distant computers (servers).

The internet started out in the early 1960 as a Defense Department research project.

Computer scientists at major universities received grants towards development of Defense research. One aim of this research was to develop communication networks that would be less vulnerable to energy attack. They further developed standards and protocols ensuring connectivity among campus computer networks.

The internet is a medium for many different services which are mediated by the Web Browser. In 1906, two-thirds of Internet users polled by Georgia state researchers approved of fees for Internet site visits. (Minoli, 1997)^{liii} The internet was originally means by which military communications (electronic mail) could be reliably exchanged under challenging conditions. (Robert & al, 1995)^{liv} This mode of communication was designed by academics who enhanced their collaborative research by exchanging their own email. This habit spread to students and to individuals outside the academic world.

In 1979, a major changing factor was introduced that was able to permit computers of all kinds to exchange email messages over the internet known as Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP). The Email facility is free compared to the telephone and postal services and it is also speedier. However, not all people have access to email and therefore there are people who are still unreachable. After the email, there was Telnet which was used for information searches. However there was no way to transfer data from Telenet (host) computer to the distant user.

2.1 Technology in International Relations

Technological capabilities and advancements have brought in a change in the global, domestic and even regional arena and some of the inventions are the printing press, gunpowder and the

internet. Technological advancements such as the telegraph, telephone, television have changed the mode in which states interact. (Herrera G. L., 2003)^{lv}

The internet has completely revolutionized communications. It has increased the speed of communication between communities and has lowered the cost of communication.

Platforms have been developed, for example, Facebook, social channels that involves simulated societies that are linked by systems that allow real time communication, sharing images and videos and a lot more content of the interconnectedness of the globe. Social media has been described as a communication innovation that uses technology to redefine the relationship that exists between those who create information and those who consume that information so as to communicate globally.

Online platforms that allow free sharing of information in picture or view format have been classified Web 2.0. Christopher Bronk summarizes the second generation of World Wide Web to include the definition and usage of digital channels and the social platforms;

The transition from static to HTML web pages to a more dynamic Web that is more organized. The functionality of the second generation of World Wide Web includes a more open way of communication that emphasizes on online web based users and open information sharing. It is more focused on the ability for people to collaborate in sharing and receiving information. (Beal, 10)^{lvi}

These social media platforms were founded in and have headquarters in USA including Facebook is a current service that allows an online personal profile display of an individual and was founded in 2004, Twitter, uses short messages under 140 characters to relay information, or opinions about a particular subject. The messages are dubbed “tweets”. This

social networking YouTube site was created in 2006, which is technology of the search-machine Google and it is these that have become very influential and with the introduction of WhatsApp the communities have become closely linked.

The connective power that is social media is continuously contributing to the growth of international politics to a point of solving inter-state, inter-regional issues and finding solutions to conflicting agendas.

The element of social media and the power it has could be referred to soft power in which states avoid using state resources and military power to carry out diplomacy which is based on providing tech-based solution and cyber activism. (New York Times, 2010)^{lvii}

2.2 Rise of social media

After the Internet was begun during the last period of the 20th century, people all around have significantly increased in terms of access to the internet, more so in developed countries. The below figure illustrates in percentages the number of internet users.

Figure1: Internet users by Region

Source ITU (2016)

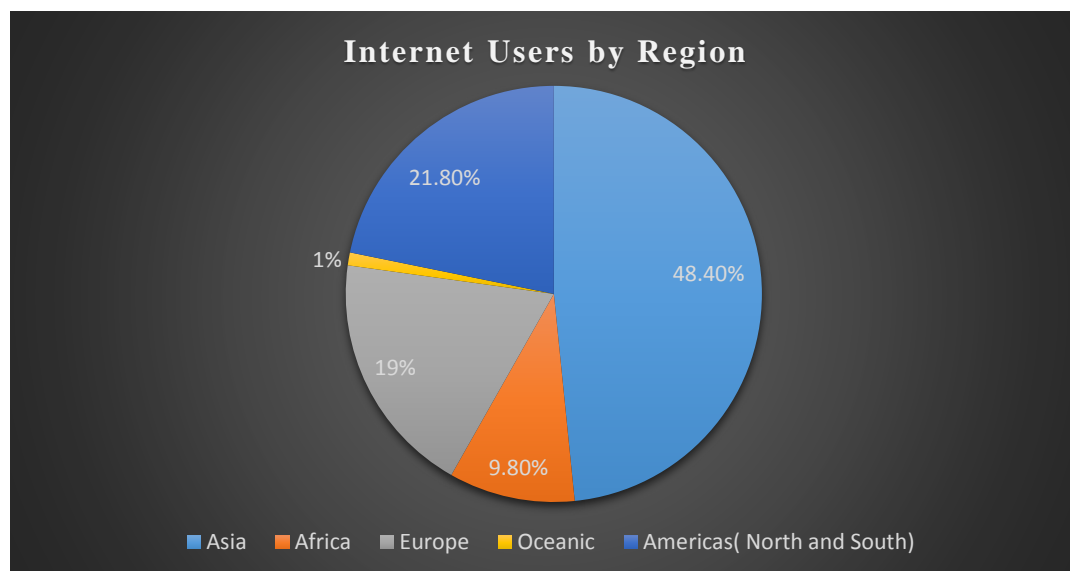
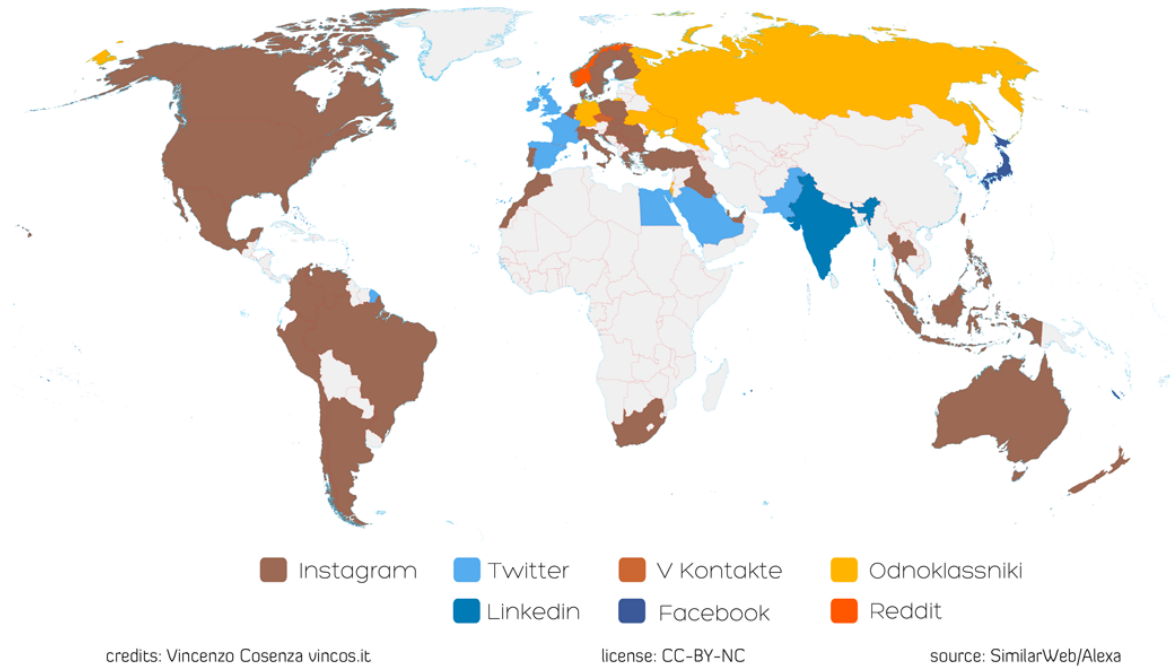


Figure 2: Social Networks 2016

WORLD MAP OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Ranked 2nd - January 2016



Evidently, there has been a lot of growing popularity of social media networks globally with an estimated Facebook Users of over a billion, 500million Twitter Users and roughly around 800million unique users who use the video sharing site YouTube every month. (Zuckerberg & Lunden, 2012)^{lviii}

The Internet is continuously changing the way International Relations is trending and behaving. The provision and dissemination of information initially was a power that was held by the state. However, in any rise in media and even so the growth of internet, the mentioned concept has changed significantly.

In this new era of globalization, any individual who has internet access can circulate any image, video or any other form of content to each section of the globe. With the emergence of

social platforms has reduced the cost in transmitting information, enabling people to have more control over the flow of information instead of the state. Digital devices have increased and this has led to the spillover of social media platforms from the private to public sector.

The growing impact of ICT (information and communication technologies) on globalization can be seen through the hastened application of scientific advances in new products and processes. The ICT has also facilitated communication and reduced the cost of transaction which increases networking and cooperation.^{lix} ICT has emerged as a key instrument for improving service delivery and bringing about new innovations. Through this, the world catches up with technological advancements to solve socio-economic problems^{»lx}

As it is social media, has become a forum for ‘citizen journalism’, in which several citizens can report on news at any time and with the click of a button, using their smartphone or laptop.

2.3 Social media as a discipline

Internet growth and more so the networking social sites in the developing countries has had a wider political implications in that it fuels grass root activism, the spread of democracy and even to some extent human rights norms and also to instigate and mobilize civic protest. Information dissemination has changed through the use of social media and the internet as a channel. Information has always been accessed through institutions such as the state. This information has always been closely monitored and controlled. However, social media as a model is ever changing and hence the need to study it first.

International Relations can use this form of new media to understand how social media is impacting world events. Web 2.0 is affecting the balance of power between the individuals the state. It is now easier for citizens to create alliances with intergovernmental

organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and the diaspora to influence certain policies of their own government.

Most apparent is how the discipline centered around International Relations and in general International Studies has recently engage in ensuring the growth and expansion of digital media and how indeed the platforms have an implication in regional cooperation and global politics. This research project aim will be to focus on social channels as an instrument for regional cooperation and how to integrate the pillars of the EAC to arouse a revolutionary action

2.4 Media within the East African Community

Information must be conveyed using several channels such as radio, television, newspapers and even the Internet and its social networks. The EAC may use different modes to communicate with the citizens of member states and the Heads of State. Relaying information via technology may not be applicable to all countries and this may result to a break in communication. The mode in disseminating information to target a minority people may not be the same in targeting a majority people or group. It is paramount to note that messages may be relayed in different channels and this may serve a purpose of informing, educating or cause partisan ideologies.

The EAC uses mass media (electronic media, print media, and videotexts), information service systems (e-database), workshops and seminars and social platforms.

The media in East Africa is facing a shrinking of press freedom with independent media bearing the brunt of a clampdown by governments (Oluoch, 2007)^{lxi}.

The Public and Media department in EAC, is truly the core and the foundation that acts as a go between to the public and the government. It puts a lot of emphasis to ensure that there is harmonious involvement among partner states through distribution of project commentaries, press release issuance, media conduct, visitor handling, maintenance of the web portal and publicity during special occasions and annual observances. The media center is a fast, reliable news update from EAC organs, institutions and other related stakeholders. It acts as a central resourceful place where journalists who are seeking any information about the EAC, from the Corporate Communication Departments can easily access the information. (Community, n.d.)^{lxii}

2.5 Social Media Technology

Social technology may be ascribed to the social software that is placed through mediated human communication. Social software has the ability to support social feedback, social networks and conversational interaction between individuals or groups. Social media uses social infrastructure which allow developers of software to integrate social functionalities. The presence and idea behind social media communication heavily relies on the products present in social media. The method of communicating among the users vary along the popular social media services. The World Wide Web is a system of network-accessible information. Tim Berners – Lee, who was a computer scientist in the 1980’s for a company called CERN, developed a communication between a web browser and server via the Internet. For the duration of October to December 1990, Tim Bernes – Lee used three software codes to form linkage and connections between documents. These three software include Hypertext Transfer Text Protocol (HTTP), Universe Resource Locators (URL) and Hypertext Mark-Up Language (HML) to create the Web.

2.6 Citizen Media

Citizen media has become significant due to social media in today's media environment. Citizen media bases its content on the local environment and news about a local topic. Due to the internet and social media, a rise in new journalism has emerged. In traditional media, news that did not generate interest would not wind up as content on the said medium however, citizen media allows for special interest topics to be aired in this platform.

2.7 Conclusion

Social media has an impact that is often assumed. Social channels are relevant and important and therefore, need to be understood so as to act as the instrument of bringing societies together and contribute to global change and perhaps so in the region of East Africa. This can only take place through communicating with one another as a form of soft power.

Digital revolution has influenced communities and societies globally by surpassing national borders.

There is need to improve the connectivity of African countries into the information age and intensify the use of information technology applications (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{lxiii}. The African continent still has a long way to go in regards to the telecommunication sector and even if it is lacking in regards to network coverage and small population reception to the technology, there is slow progress due to the extensive networks that are being developed together with the technology. (New York Times, 2010)^{lxiv}

Social media is accessible to some citizens of member states and it is also inexpensive. Many users have the power to create information and put it on the internet and other users can consume the information (New York Times, 2010)^{lxv}. Social media is more interpersonal due to its effective feedback channels.

African countries can push to the cutting edge by ensuring that new infrastructure is based on the latest technology. The continent could leapfrog decades of development in telecommunication and technology. (New York Times, 2010)^{lxvi} The Internet has indeed overcome barriers of space and time. In regards to space, one can use a telephone and communicate with those who are in different regions conveniently without having to run to a particular booth placed in one part of the town. The email and SMS have cut down significantly the amount of time, by ensuring news or information is delivered timely. Social media is immediate, transparent, cheap, available, easy to use, cuts down time and space and furthermore, it is more sophisticated method. Social media sites are being monitored, filtered or censored to allow remote observation by special police forces to identify those who would be protesting or activists. (Paganini, 2011)^{lxvii} Regional integration is a potentially valuable tool for modernization in a sub-optimal world; one characterized by imperfect markets at the national and international level. (Guerrieri & I.Falautano, 2000)^{lxviii}

CHAPTER THREE

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

3.1 Regional cooperation

When states who are in a region enter into an agreement and cooperate through rules and institutions within the region we refer this to regional co-operation. Regional cooperation strengthens the capacity for states to develop in trade and participate in world trade through notifications received via social media. It also increases regional organization by lowering tariffs and reforming the judicial system. Regional integration and cooperation accelerates economic growth, reduces poverty and raises productivity and employment ensuring development of institutions.

Regional integration, co-operation and infrastructure development are positively associated and mutually reinforcing. (Wess, 1999)^{lxxix} Infrastructure development can lead to a closer integration of national markets, regional co-operation is an effective way / instrument for improving regional infrastructure. (Wess, 1999)^{lxxx} Regional co-operation in Africa usually takes two main forms; project and programme co-operation. (Wess, 1999)^{lxxxi}

Project cooperation involves initiating and implementing of regional infrastructure, projects and joint exploitation of energy and water resources. This is also high in areas of telecommunication, rail, road, transport and river basin development. (Wess, 1999)^{lxxxii}

Programme cooperation relates to the protocols and agreements that aim at stimulating the development of regional infrastructure. The Africa mainland has different variations in the condition and efficiency of infrastructure systems, infrastructure policies, legal frameworks,

rules and regulations, standards and documentation and the programme approach removes such impediments (Wess, 1999)^{lxxiii}.

The NEPAD document defines integration as a statement that emphasizes that in order to strengthen African regional markets should not be its goal but a means to reach the wider global economy. Africa needs a thorough strategy that cannot be based on liberalization of Africa nor how the market behaves but by policies that will ensure survival and enhancement of markets within the region (Hayman, K.King, & MacGrawth, *Wooing the West or Championing Africa? NEPAD's Vision for African Integration in The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Internal and External Visions*,, 2003)^{lxxiv}

The EAC is responsible for carrying out and coordinating all joint activities that are to take place within the region. Secondly, the institution is also tasked with providing information on the four pillars of the region, via publications, media forums, and meetings or through their web page. Thirdly, the EAC is also tasked with strengthening the unity of the region and ensuring collaboration in maintaining peace and security. A degree of political cooperation is taking place at inter-governmental level through the creation of continental political bodies and security and other agreements. (Keet, 2004)^{lxxv} There are several overlapping 'regional integration' groupings in Africa pursuing differing and even competing programs, particularly in the trade sphere. (Keet, 2004)^{lxxvi} The hegemonic stability theory is vital in the understanding of the stability and instability within the international political arena. Within this theory, there must be a hegemonic power meaning a single dominant power within the international system that ensures international cohesion among states.

Regionalism must go beyond the reduction of tariffs and the removal of quotas and other non-tariff barriers. (Guerrieri & I.Falautano, 2000)^{lxxvii} Regional integration is one of the major developments in international relations in the recent past. The world structure has been transformed from one based on nations interacting within an international system to one of regions reacting within a globalized framework. (Guerrieri & I.Falautano, 2000)^{lxxviii}

3.2 Regional Integration objectives and the Role of Media

Regional integration is a potentially valuable tool for modernization in a sub-optimal. (Guerrieri & I.Falautano, 2000)^{lxxix} World. Media is the source of information that people need so as to make informed choices and decisions (Fortunato, 2005)^{lxxx}. Coverage, content and information among the EAC member states is dependent on the editing policies within that state, the various target audiences, ownership and management among other factors.

3.3 International Perspectives of Regional Cooperation

Finding equitable ways in forming regional cooperation among states can be difficult. This can be attributed to countries unwillingness to cooperate due to their own self-interest, or due to the pride and political tension that may exist among states. Secondly, countries may withhold in cooperating if they stand to lose their power or their sovereignty. States acting in the presence of international institutions will comply with cooperative arrangements that will be made. Regional cooperation can assist to resolve conflicts through the acts of mediation, arbitration or adjudication and conciliation. Thirdly, international and regional engagements are most often hard to achieve due to the lack of the presence of a higher authority and lack of property rights and even if there are rights they are not clear and not effective at the international level. (Schiff & Winters, 2002)^{lxxxi}

Regardless of whether the gains from cooperation are reciprocal or not, international cooperation agreements must be self – enforcing, usually in isolation, but occasionally as part of a broader package. (Schiff & Winters, 2002)^{lxxxii}

Regional alliances vary from one region to the next. These are forms that are designed to create and promote dialogue and also to share information among states. These can be military, economic or political alliances.

Regional cooperation and integration has become more developmental not only by providing access to global markets and attracting foreign direct investments but also fostering economic and industrial development as well as social protection in the region (Borzel T. A., 2014)^{lxxxiii}.

Mobile telephony and its usage within and among countries in East Africa has improved the economy in regards to production and trading.

Market barriers can only be eliminated through the use of efficient cooperation among states and this at the long run will be of benefit to all partner states and ensure that democracy among the states has been strengthened

3.4 Process of EAC Integration

The EAC is founded on four key pillars that include customs union, common market, monetary union and political federation that is purposed to ensure a fully political and economically united East Africa.

3.5 Common Market

The Common market protocol was signed in 2010 and its main purpose was to ensure and coordinate ease of movement of labor, goods and services in the surrounding region with an

aim in filling the financial and distribution sectors. Cross-border movement and investments has led to increase in opportunities of job creation, wealth distribution. Common market encourages fairness in trade and it establishes a trade bloc that works in promoting economic policies that are pro-market pro-private sector which ensues states come together through pooling of resources. The goods will move freely across borders will by having a one check at the border post that is responsible in having clearance of goods and will be a guarantee and fully functional shop.

3.5.1 Customs Union

It is at the start of the EAC and its objective is to aims at loosening and ensuring that the tariffs and non-tariff barriers are removed from goods originating from among partner states. There is also the adoption of a common customs law, and a common external tariff and this would highlight the East Africa region to be the single investment destination among the international market.

3.5.2 Political Federation

Political federation is the fourth pillar of East Africa Community. Its main aims is to develop a common foreign policy and a common security policy that will ensure the fundamental interests of the community together with her independence are strengthened and safeguarded, However, this pillar is a process and it requires the three organs (executive, legal and judiciary) to work together.

3.5.3 Monetary Union

This pillar led to the EAMU that was effected by the EAC in 2013 (EAC, 2017)^{lxxxiv}. It paves ground work for an effective monetary union for the first decade and it allows member states

to come together and put aside their different monetary currencies and formulate a single currency that can be utilized within the region (EAC, 2017)^{lxxxv}.

Its objective is to lead to the use of one currency among citizens of member states. EAC partners aim to have cohesion in the monetary and fiscal laws, cohesion in structures proper recording platforms that can eventually lead to proper reporting practices. The EAC needs cohesion in policies and more so, the methods involved in the relaying of information and forming the East African Central Bank.

This pillar has several sectors that promote financial strength and stability, investment opportunities, private sector growth hence leading to a sound environment for business to be engaged in and boosting investor confidence. Lastly, monetary union is responsible in providing investment incentives and standardization of products which ensures that the region is a single hub of trade.

3.6 Institutions of EAC

The independence of regional organizations is measured largely by the independence of the institutions within the regional bloc. Under Article 9 of the treaty they include the Summit, the Sectoral Committees and the Coordinating Committee. Other institutions include the East African Court of Justice whose role is to interpret and apply the treaty in areas that are of human rights in origin and jurisdiction. The East African Legislative Assembly is the legal organ of the community. It has elected members (27), nine who hail from member state, ex – officio delegates (5) ,{3} Ministers, Secretary General and the Counsel to the Community}. The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General and four Deputy Secretary Generals assist the secretariat. Autonomous institutions developed by the EAC include the EADB which is

involved in cross border financing, regional development programs, small and medium scale industries. The IUCEA has its objective in ensuring contact between universities of East Africa, which can be classified a forum for discussion on academic matters: higher education, academic standards across the universities within the region. The Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization aim is to foster cooperation among Partner States in ensuring harmonization and development when dealing with national measures whose aim is to conserve, manage and utilize of the living resources of Lake Victoria in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

3.7 EAC Achievements

The EAC established an attractive Community law and a customs union protocol and this led to other states becoming members of the partner states Rwanda and Burundi. Tariffs that had hindered easier movement among partner states, has been reduced and investment procedures have been eased. Trade among citizens of member states has been encouraged and is currently at the EAC's main objectives. Citizens of member states, can move freely across the borders because of the introduction of a single East African passport and there is more interaction between states and among her citizens.

3.8 Social Media

Even before the invention of the World Wide Web / hyperlink concept in 1990 by Tim-Bernes – Lee a researcher at CERN, the European high energy physic laboratory in Switzerland and the subsequent (1993) development of the Mosaic web browser at the National Center for Supercomputer Applications (NCSA) in Illinois, the internet consisted of users with personal computers or mainframe terminals, all connected to one another and to file servers and mainframe terminals, all connected to one another and to file servers and Telnet sites.

(Keirstead & Keirstead, 1990)^{lxxxvi} The World Wide Web and web browser, through astoundingly successful, were not the result of complicated high-tech research. Illustrating this point, Microsoft's chief technology officer, Nathan Myhrvold, had the following reaction to the revolutionary Mosaic Web Browser;

If you'd said up front, "My research program is that I'm going to allow bit maps to get transferred over this simple protocol" [the function of a Web Browser], people would have said, "That isn't research." It isn't! It turned out that a low-tech social phenomenon called the internet has suddenly arisen and surprised people. But it's like asking people in plastics research why the hula hoop was successful (Myhrvold, 1997)^{lxxxvii}.

The fact is that very few people all across the world surf the internet. Doing so requires time, money, technical skill and interests that most consumers lack. (Hartmanis & Lin, 1992)^{lxxxviii} Those who use the internet, other than e-mail, constitute a tiny fraction of the population. Whether the web becomes a mass medium does not turn on the preferences and characteristics of the elite group of current surfers. For households all over the world to use the internet, the personal computer must change. The valiant few who use the internet must overcome barriers created by considerable expense, occult equipment (set up) procedures, obtuse interfaces and the slow responses.

Social media is a group of Internet – based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)^{lxxxix} Digital media or social media has affected the manner in which news all around the globe is presented and reported (Denise, 1992)^{xc}. Social media began when the internet was introduced and people found a new way to share information and even communicate with each other. Social media is intertwined when a consumer produces content which is viewed, shared and exchanged among other consumers. (Denise, 1992)^{xci}

Social media has empowered change in that people can now express their thoughts and opinions with others. Moreover, there is no vacuum in the social media arena. There is however a very vibrant audience who take part in conversations that have been put across. Media has a very important role to play and hence this research project analyzes the problem in three viewpoints; a theoretical, logical and public viewpoint. In the theoretical viewpoint it provides and increases available literature on social media as a way to lead to regional cooperation. The logical viewpoint elaborates and ascertains the strength and the importance of using social media in this era of globalization. The public viewpoint is to understand and intertwine societies that live within the vast region that is East Africa and engage them through the global online and social networks available.

Social channels in the age of globalization decreases the instances of international dependency and increases the positive influence it has in creating cohesion among the communities living among partner states. This provides an avenue to create a regional brand that stands out among all other regional blocs.

According to **Wikinvest**; social media describes websites that allow users to share content media among popular social networking sites for example Facebook. All web based applications which allow for creation / exchange of user generated content and enables interaction between the users can be termed as social media.

Social media heavily relies on Web based technologies to turn comments, status updates into an activity stream. Social media is a different form of media as compared to traditional media in that a person is not limited to consuming information but can also generate information depending on one's interests. Any form of media that allows interaction between and among users via the internet can be referred to as social media. It is a platform that has all the web

based applications which allow for the creation and the exchange of user – generated content and enables interaction between users.

Michael Mandiberg presents a new dimension as to what social media is and how it involves several concepts that are brought together to come up with a basic understanding. “The corporate media favorite ‘user – generated content’. Henry Jenkins’ media-industries-focused ‘convergence culture’ Jay (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{xcii} Rossen’s ‘ the people formerly known as the audience,’ the politically infused ‘ participatory media’ Yochai Benkler’s process-oriented ‘peer-production’, and Tim O’Reilly’s computer-programming-oriented Web 2.0 (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)

It is also a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)^{xciii}

According to Kaplan and Haenlein, there are six different types of social media: collaborative projects (e.g. Wikileaks), blogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking services (e.g. Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g. Second Life) and virtual social worlds. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)^{xciv}

3.8.1 Social networking sites

Societies that have social network being the core functionality will be termed as social network services. Such sites come with an array of features such as self-presentation, networking, communication both privately or publicly. In Network analysis, a network is defined as a system of interconnected nodes. (Stabkey & Faust, 1997)^{xcv} Social network

platforms have emerged for displaying individual profiles, sharing information, photos, videos, experiences among Internet users as well as forming friendships and sending messages to each-other. (Dudovskiy, 2018)

Social networking sites are;

“Web sites that allow members to construct a public or semi-public profile and formally articulate their relationship to other users in a way that is visible to anyone who can access their file” (Hutchinson, 2008)

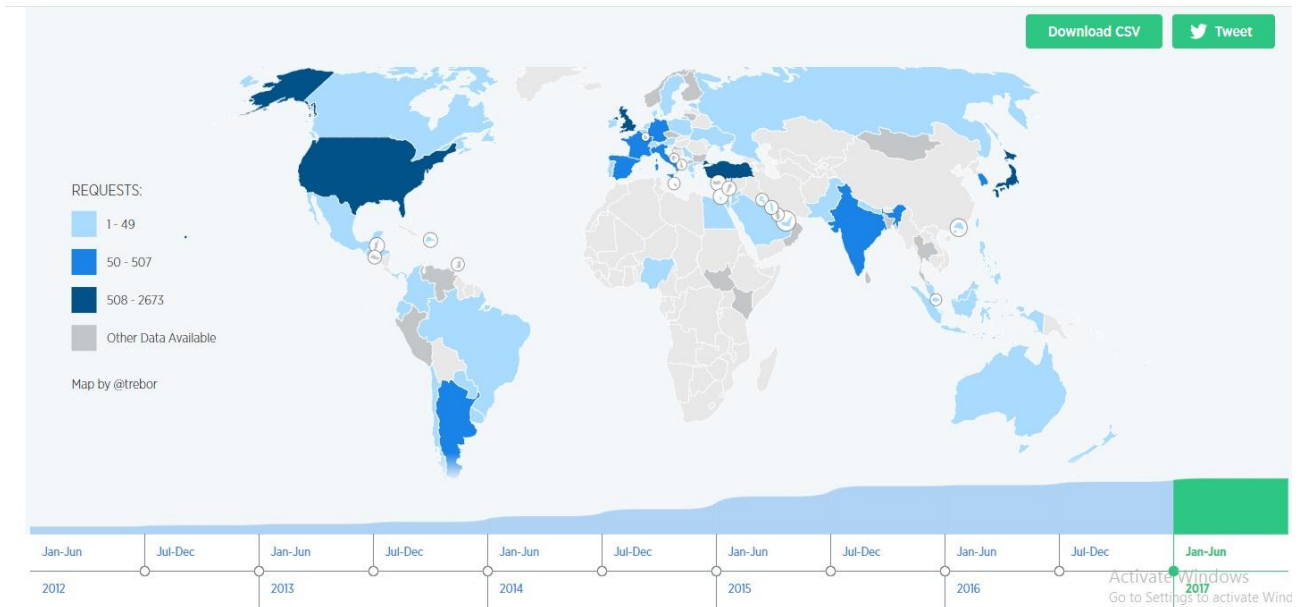
3.8.2 Facebook

Contains constitutive features such as integrated sociality which involves the three parts of sociality (cognition, communication and cooperation) in an integrated sociality. In the case of the EAC, they can publish an article or video on a SNS (communicative level) and it can receive or create a new one (cognitive level). Facebook allows the alteration from one state of “being” in social terms so as to move to the next sphere of social “being.” It also allows integrated role where a person, on Facebook, can create a personal profile. This information may exist in various social spheres making their distinction between public and private life unclear. (Keirstead & Keirstead, 1990)^{xvii}

3.8.3 Blogs and Microblogs

Figure 3: Twitter Users

Source: www.twitter.com



John Barger, in December 1997 coined the term ‘weblog’ while around April / May Peter Merhotz coined the term blog so as to break down the initial coined term ‘weblog’ into two phrases. It is defined as a community of online diaries and journals. Blogs are websites that are constituted of various lengths of entries. Blogs are journal entries that are posted on a web forum and are frequently updated and are generally intended for the public consumption. Blogs are easy to use.

3.8.4 WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a mobile application which was recently purchased by Mark Zuckerberg. The Pros to WhatsApp is that you can share live feeds, audio, video, photos or general information using your mobile phone and the acquisition of bundles from a service provider or the use of Wi-Fi.

3.8.5 Social Media as a platform

Social media is an advanced form of communication. It is a platform on the Internet that can influence both negatively and positively the behavior of its users and viewer's. Social media is the collection of online material and also communication channels that boost content sharing and interaction among a community (TechTarget)while interacting with the consumer of that information. Social / digital Media is a forum that involves web based applications that are founded on the internet programs and have their base on the Web 2.0 ideologies and technologies, which allow information exchange between user and consumer. (Borzel T. A., 2014)^{xcvii}

3.8.6 Social Networking Sites for Public Opinion and Information

Social Networking Sites are a readily available resource which gives an opportunity to different communities, to exchange opinions and views on a particular subject. Public opinion is a collection of thoughts and opinions of the majority of a social group. In the case of a conflict occurring over social media the natural reactions to communicate and try to resolve the conflict. Unfortunately, this is not the case because of public opinion interference and a two party conflict becomes intertwined in a conflict of ideologies.

Jurgen Habermas (1987, 1989) describes the different spheres that exist that make a society modern and this include the element of distinction between the earnings and the economy from the family and the household (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{xcviii} for the emergence of modern economy. Secondly, a society is described as modern is the political environment where people are citizens of a particular state and can vote or engage in public policy.

3.9 Conclusion

The influence of web-sites and portals is not limited to reach alone, but also extends to marketing approach of universities, changing them to be become service oriented. (Strauss & Frost, 2001)^{xcix} In the 21st century, there have been several new developments in the social networking sites and more so the landscape has seen several new entrants for example Friendster, Netflix and many more. Social networks and social media websites make changes and improvements on a fairly regular basis, so it will evolve in the coming years.

The internet is the focus of a great deal of excitement and for good reason. It is a novel communication medium and it provides a variety of services that were not previously available. The internet is also the subject of hype, chiefly by commercial interest such as equipment manufacturers seeking to promote the internet as a mass consumer medium. (Hauben, 1994/1995)^c The users of internet tend to be highly educated, affluent and young. Much internet takes place outside the home, at offices and schools, where better connectivity is available. However, that is not the case with “the East African Region”. (Strauss & Frost, 2001)^{ci}

In the case of EAC adding followers or following certain class of people of whom the entity has never met and even those whom the entity does not continuously interactive with (Hauben, 1994/1995)^{cii}. This form of relationship falls on the communication level and these are loose connections that can easily be lost. With the SNS technological level only communication connections are established and this leads to creation of communities that have social brands (Hauben, 1994/1995)^{ciii}.^{civ} Therefore, a lot of personal and social data about users is generated. (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{cv}

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL MEDIA AND REGIONAL COOPERATION FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

There is hardly any literature available on technologies that have impacted and revolutionized regional bodies in Africa which definitely affects the form in which states interact and challenges states face. The internet has become an avenue that is used in delivering ideas that can be easily used as ‘weapons’. (Hallams, 2010)^{cvi}

The study had its aim in trying to understand and also analyze the element of digital media in regional integration and this study relied heavily on the use of survey methods. The study also analyses and interprets research findings in relation to the objectives. Questionnaires were issued to the informants relevant to this study particularly within the EAC so as to create an understanding around regional cooperation. The information retrieved was obtained from oral interviews, filling the questionnaire and written email interviews that were answered by respondents in the EAC in Arusha.

The characteristics of respondents has been mentioned in the study and findings have been recorded as frequencies or percentages where relevant. Questions that were covered in this study were the EAC Treaty in relation to digital media as an instrument of integration.

The main aim of the study was to understand whether social media can be utilized or is being utilized to gather information and bridge the gap that is between the communities among member states and Heads of the States.

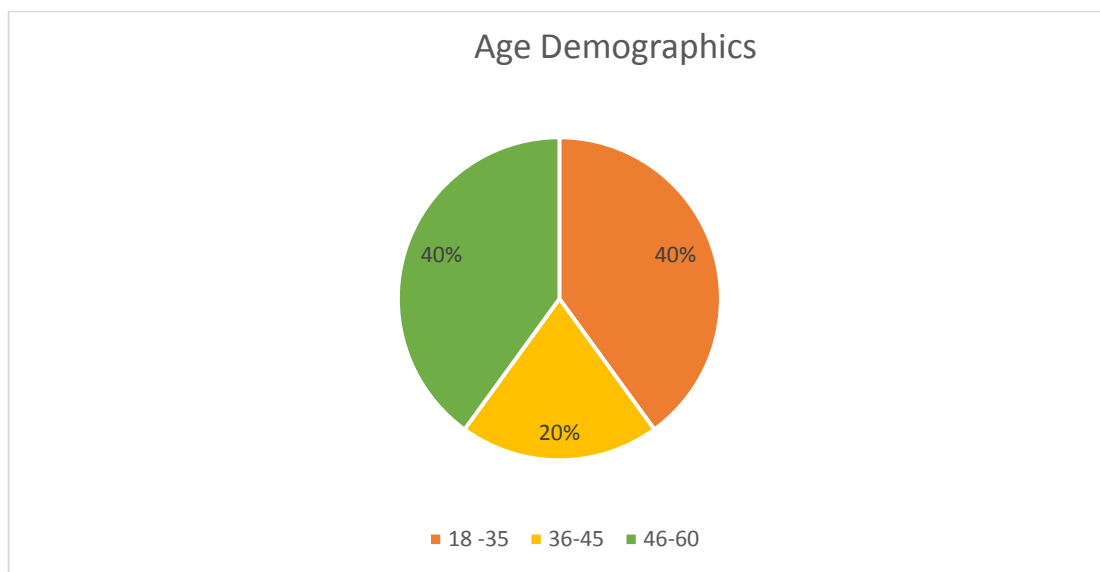
4.1 Demographics

Demographics include the general characteristics of the population. Characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, family, employment, level of education, occupation, income level, marital status and profession. (Franzo, 2012)^{cvi}

4.1.1 Age Demographics

The figure below highlights the age demographics of the respondents as a percentage. 20% were between the ages 36-45, 40% were of two categories of the age demographics which include the 18-35 group of respondents and 46-60 group of respondents. Many people however are sensitive and private when it comes to their age and hence the age group represented as below. Information on the age groups is relevant because this provides an insight of content makers and content viewers. However, this was based on the respondents within the Communication department within the EAC.

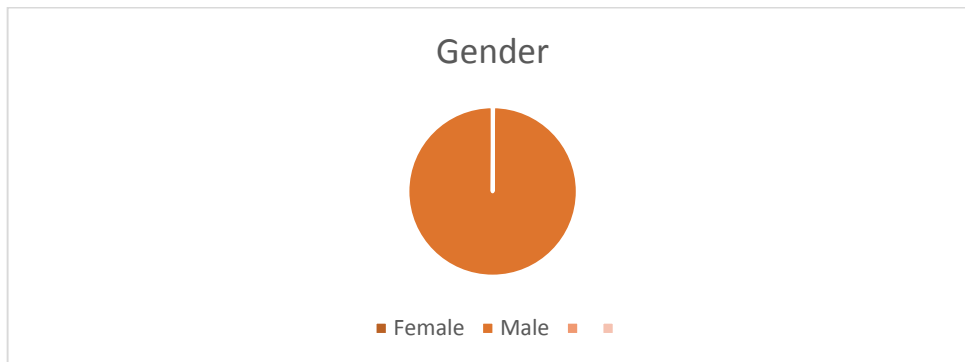
Figure 4: Age Demographics



4.1.2 Gender

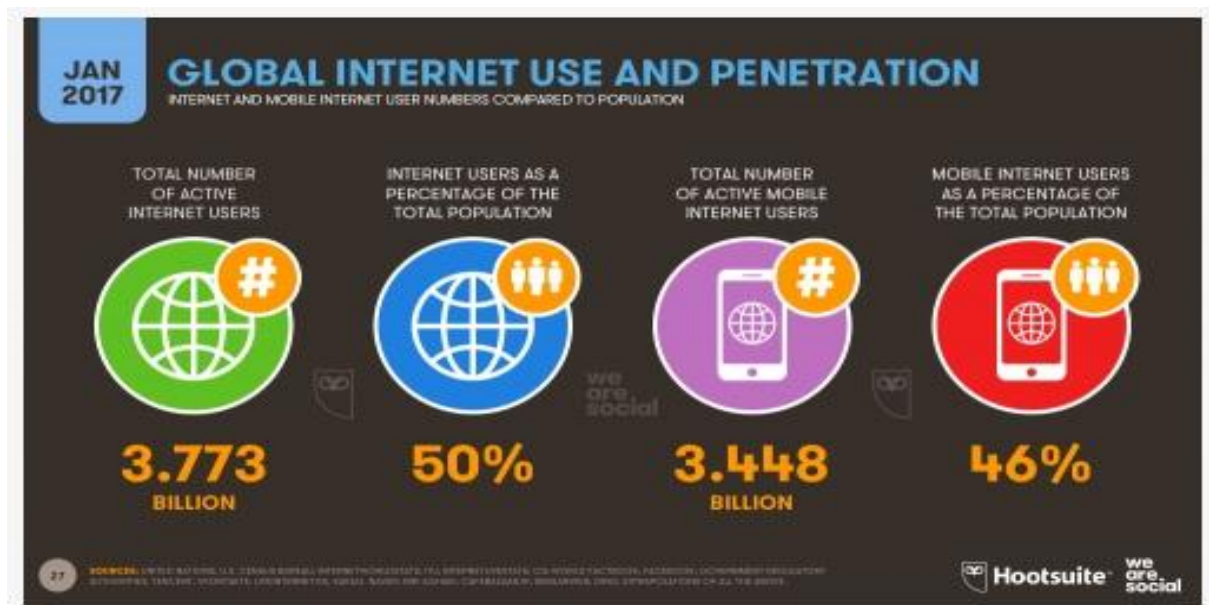
Gender is one of the most fundamental demographic question.^{cvi} Whether it is for political polls or consumer products, gender often reveals disparity in opinions. For this reason, gender is among the most commonly used demographics for segmenting results. (Smith & D.Scott, 2013)^{cix}

Figure 5: Gender



4.2 Global Internet Use and Penetration

Figure 6: Global Internet Use and Penetration (Kemp, <https://wearesocial.com>, n.d.)



12% of the population have mobile connections and are active mobile social users. The most commonly used mobile connections use social platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp.

The EAC respondents indeed highlighted that Facebook was their most interactive platform due to its convenience and timely nature Facebook has live feed, like button, comment box, the elements of images and video sharing which makes this platform very interactive and most used by the regional body. Twitter is a platform in which the respondents highlighted that is very active and preferred due to the fact owing that a maximum characters of 140 is allowed hence only important messages are conveyed to intended audiences.

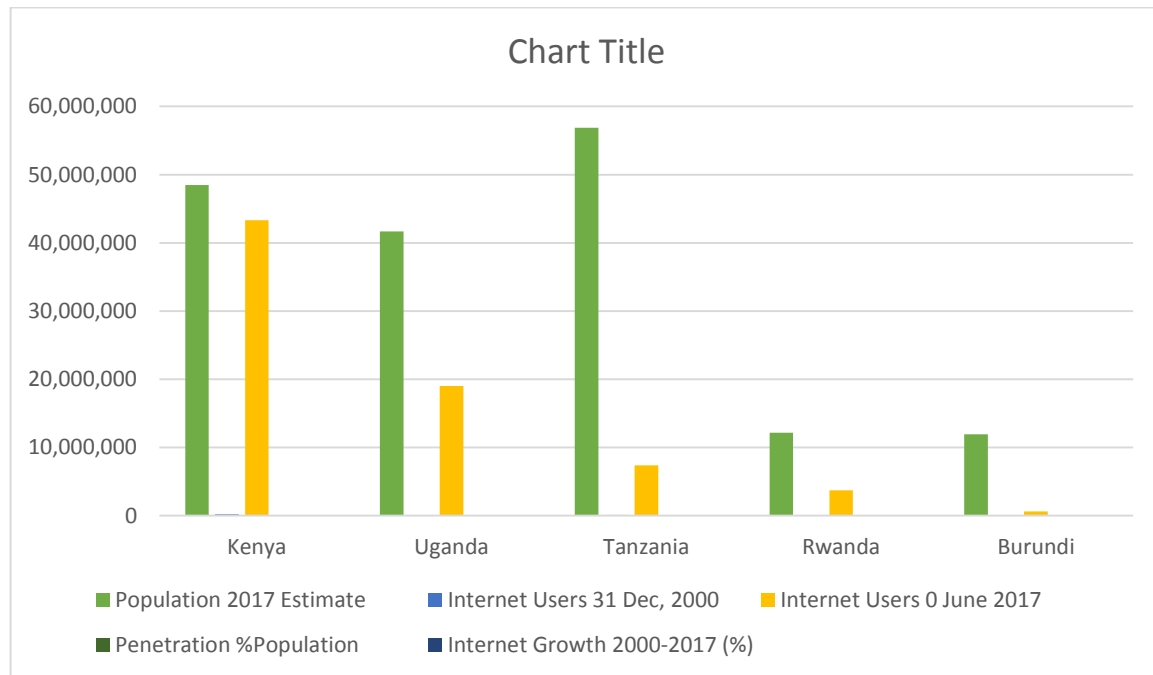
Active global social platforms include Facebook with over 87% of the total world population using it on their phones, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp. With changing trends, the EAC website is being upgraded and it tends to be more realistic and more vibrant. One can access the pillars of the region, the progress within member states and images portraying the events and the heads of state and material that can be downloaded for easy reference.

The digital media can be utilized so as to become familiar with other regions, other identities and even other people of differing origins. Communicating via digital media is the most effective method of bridging the gap between the different groups of people. Digital media channels (including social media networks) allow one to live in the space of the standards, meanings and opportunities of several societies; therefore, the state and other institutions face a challenge: how to bind their citizens/ tax payers together and turn the blurring of borders to their advantage. Supporting the transnationalism initiatives of various media channels, in order to create reasons for mediated communication in various fields also outside of personal relationships, could be one way of 'bringing talent back home'. (Vihalemm, 2017)^{cx1}

The idea around digital media which encompasses audiovisual media content and applications which are scattered over the internet. This includes digital videos (TV- shows; highlights, series and movies), digital music that can be downloaded or streamed live as well as digital games. ICT has advanced human growth and development through its provision of simple basic access to health information education, cash payments that ensure the citizens are involved in the democratic process.

4.4 Digital Use in East Africa

Figure 8: Digital Use in East Africa



(Library, 2017)

The graph above illustrates the digital usage or the internet penetration within member states of East Africa. As is evident the internet penetration as of 31st December, 2000 was a very insignificant number. However, in 2017 June 30th the number shot up drastically. These

statistics do not break down into the various platforms, but this only serves to demonstrate how the region's internet usage is growing rapidly.

4.5 Limitations to Regional Co-operation

Regional co-operation limitations include lack and inaccessibility to regional infrastructure hence stagnant economic growth.

Network routes have not been fully developed within the region which reduces the speed in which private investments can be made. Broadband networks are crucial in the socio-economic development. The mobile connections within the region have reduced the fluctuation of networks that are evident in the region. Effective high speed internet services are easily used for e-applications that increase government and private together with commercial business. Internet usage can be expensive due to its uneven nature and its unavailability. Member states who have internet connection charge very exorbitantly for its usage. The East African region has a poor and weak infrastructure resulting in underutilized and this limit the opportunities that may exist to economies of scale. Investment in the ICT sector has improved slightly with more focus being placed on the mobile industry. High-speed internet service has not been fully realized within the region and Africa at large. With a growth in the internet speed, government e-platforms will increase business conduct within the region and within each member state. However this is a limit because of its unavailability and its expensive nature.

Content regarding social media within the East African region is minimal, making the available content difficult to retrieve and even predict past and present trends.

East Africa is facing a raft of problems that cannot be solved within the national context. (Chikwanha, Linking Security with Development, 2011)^{cxii} Insecurity within the region and the political instability also is a risk towards the growth of social media. This is because with political strife, investors who may be willing to increase the broadband reach in the region may prevent them from investing.

Different communities within the region may have a negative attitude towards integration and this will delay the speed of co-operation among states. Also the citizens may favor one channel of media as compared to digital media which at times may prove expensive to the local citizens who does not rely heavily. There is political disharmony between member states and limited participation of the civil society and the private sector, are still areas of concern. Political instability or conflicts in one member state can also have a pullback factor, especially if the conflict impacts the neighbors negatively.

Selfish pursuits of parochial national interest at the expense of regional interests can be dangerous factor to guard against in the interest of successful regional economic groupings. (Kikwete)^{cxiii} For regional integration to be successful, regional interests needs to be paramount over national ones. (Kikwete)^{cxiv} Regional integration may also suffer as the result of flawed conception, defective policy formulation and haphazard execution of policies. (Kikwete)^{cxv}

4.6 Opportunities of social media in Regional Co-operation

The development of e-platforms can lead to the foundation of building blocks that can be useful in deterring violent and emerging conflicts between nations. With a forum for constructive dialogue, war can be averted and peace can be instigated. Secondly, connectivity is higher now than in comparison to previous years and this is partly due to social media that brings communities, who are in distant places around the region, closer and creating a rapport among the communities builds on trust. Thirdly, with barriers of trade being lowered, there exists an opportunity for broadband sharing across the region. This ensures that it is effective and efficient leading to the creation of jobs and improving the cost of living. Cooperation based on trust will always be more beneficial for all concerned than any other alternative we can imagine. (Frasch & Wolski, 2016)^{cxvi}

We are all aware of Africa's weaknesses: economic, financial, technical as well as technological. Regional integration provides an opportunity for us to reduce weaknesses or even overcome them completely. Regional integration avails us the opportunity of being possible players and not mere onlookers. (Frasch & Wolski, 2016)^{cxvii} Economically, Africa has the problem of small national markets coupled with low effective demand. (Kikwete)^{cxviii} There is inadequate and inefficient economic infrastructure (road, rail, telecommunications, and power among many more) and trade imbalance between partner states. Africa has the lowest recorded levels of acquisition and application of technology; low levels of computerization has curtailed Africa's access to the information superhighway.

Socially, people's incomes are low and hence there is a widespread of poverty. (Smith & D.Scott, 2013)^{cxix} Politically there are threats to security, civil strife, refugees and fragile democratic systems. (Smith & D.Scott, 2013)^{cxx}

Social media brings out the possibility of fostering cooperation among partner states and this particularly reduces duration in policy making and policy ratification more so effective decision making is achieved.

Regional integration in Africa should be pursued within the framework of regional development strategies. (Kikwete)^{cxxi} Africa needs the establishment of viable political systems so as to achieve sustainable economic integration. (Kikwete)^{cxxii} With Africa's long history of being associated with regional integration, she has the necessary experience. This experience enables her to avoid the past mistakes and provide viable regional integration schemes. (Kikwete)^{cxxiii} Africa must make sure that the concepts around policy formulation are not flawed and are not executed haphazardly. Therefore all stakeholders within all regional bodies should be well informed and involved. (Kikwete)^{cxxiv}

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study has attempted to investigate social media cooperation in regional cooperation, the understanding of social platforms, regional cooperation and how the two are intertwined. Communication and bridging of gaps over online media has become effective and easier through the available platforms on the internet. Digital media and social technologies can be used as instruments to reach several people who are all over the world.

Most African countries do not have explicit plans or policies on information technology (Oshikoya & Hussain, 1998)^{cxxv}. In most African countries, the acquisition of information technology and software's is a result of isolated initiatives without preconceived strategies and policies. (Oshikoya & Hussain, 1998)^{cxxvi} There is a need, therefore, to devise clear national and regional long-term strategies and policies that cover the acquisition of information technology, its enabling environment and its applications. (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{cxxvii} Strategies should quantify the investment requirements of the countries and identify the required changes in institutional, training legal and regulatory information societies in Africa. (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{cxxviii} This would then serve as an explicit recognition of the information technology and as instruments for attracting and coordinating donor assistance. (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014)^{cxxix}

This research project has analyzed social media and the impact it has on regional cooperation and more so strengthening it. Social media plays a vital role in influencing international politics, mergers, mobilizing political activism which in a way assists in regional cohesion.

However, there is speculation on how social media poses dangers for global citizens if used to monitor and control the citizens in that particular region.

In depth understanding of this study as a factor in influencing international studies change should be completed so as to understand the platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn can truly intensify digital diplomacy initiatives and reduce the distance between state and citizen interaction. This research can help policy makers in the field of International Studies truly understand the grasp of social media as a model of increasing political cooperation, effective customs market development and can touch on the traditional notions of power. Social media is likely to grow tremendously and therefore, the governments must allow moderately supervised access to these platforms and allow international citizens to have a say in the issues surrounding global issues and develop a multilateral and interconnected system.

The information presented in this research project acknowledge the need for social media as a forum to increase regional co-operation. Citizens within member states rely on all forms of media to understand the various issues surrounding EAC region and to a level provide solutions. It is therefore, important to state that media does contribute to the decisions in which citizens of partner states make and levels of interaction in the political arena and other processes within the region. Media however varies with the user's location (those in marginalized towns, urban or rural), level of education, age, economic status because the EAC region has not fully utilized the optical fibre necklace that had been put in 2002, by Africa One. (Innovation for Construction Engineering Enhancement, 2011)^{cxxx}

The research project argues that social media is becoming a critical and powerful tool in how it impacts regional co-operation in the International Relations arena. Social media is effective, in that it has over the past, influenced regional politics, by mobilizing political activists so as

to aid in the assistance of solving regional governance issues, economic and social occurrences that can boost the regions capacity to become competitive globally .

However technologies do pose global dangers and hence the need to put up surveillance tactics. Such dangers include, cyber- terrorist, hacking, hate speech, negative political temperatures which would result in cooperative dialogues and frequent summits to ascertain the direction necessary for the region.

The high cost of computers and software represents another serious impediment to Africa's accessibility to the world of information technology. (Oshikoya & Hussain, 1998)^{cxxxii} The unit price of personal computers is higher than the per capita income of many African nations. (Oshikoya & Hussain, 1998)^{cxxxiii} However, there are computers that are of good size and can have Internet connections, word processing and graphics for prices much lower than what is being sold today. It will also be possible to produce simple stripped down software at very low prices. One way to comply with such requirements is "bulk-purchasing". (Oshikoya & Hussain, 1998)^{cxxxiii}

Social media has had an impact in mobilizing revolutions, arrange for regional cooperation and hence lead to the use of soft power used in the region. As social media continues growing, so will the number of users, which will lead to expansion of new platforms and software's, resulting in new research modes from the International Studies discipline. This will ensure that there is an understanding in the short and long term ability to inspire change and development within the region. Further research, should be undertake so as to understand the effectiveness and the modes of amplification made by the social platforms such as Facebook, twitter, blogs and other social handles. The research should understand if these platforms can form and lead to cohesive citizen interaction. Once completed the research can assist and

encourage policy makers within the region, better understand the potential in which social media has as a tool or a forum for enhancing regional co-operation and reduce the modes of traditional media as a form for integration.

The global arena has a vast sea of information that centres on global related matters which are present and relayed by regions and governments and even non-state players. Therefore, social media and Information Communication Technologies are vital towards challenges of mending arisen challenges surrounding integration and resolving those challenges.

This research project has analyzed social media and its effect on regional cooperation, and therefore there is evidence that proves politics has become revolutionary and social media has changed the political arena through the sharing of information among different communities. Technology has made it easier for political powers to come together or drift apart due to different social contents. There will be various systems and software that will surface and will revolutionize the meaning of International Relations and these will affect the study for future generations to come. (Herrera G. , 2003)^{cxv}

As a region, there needs to be continued analysis and assessment and the development of thorough reports to be done on flagship programs that are currently being done to increase integration. Moreover, there needs to be proper sensitization of social media as a platform of regional integration to government officials, private sector and civil society to ensure it runs co-currently with developmental policies.

It is important to fully develop a regional instrument that can tackle social media and regional cooperation separately and specifically so as to use all avenues of ICT. This will enable the growth among all four pillars of the region and advance these projects through effective research and development under a conducive environment which is the EAC.

There will be an avenue that will be created so as to have “gate-keepers” who shape the region and influence the direction of co-operation, who would be answerable to the East Africa Community, and their work will be to shape and produce a conducive environment for social media in integration to flourish.

In reference to the research questions, this research project sought to analyze the statistics of Africa and in particular the East Africa region and as is evident the internet penetration is higher among certain regions in Africa.

Digital media is a very personal and human form of communication that uses special social software. The major element of this software is the ability to create digital networks in a social environment. A digital network is created between groups of people who have a similar interest. Networks can easily be described to be the formation of different organizations that ensure the individual and the group he or she belongs are effective. Technology in this global era has increased the human evolution because there is a new way of social etiquette. Regardless of the geographical barrier that exists within the region, social media has seen its penetration within those regions and in this regard produces social networks among citizens of member states.

Social media can be analyzed through the use of the Internet world statistics forum and also on request from social media platforms such as twitter, Facebook, and the search engine Google. However, permission is required from the EAC to analyze effectively all their platforms and to analyze the number of viewers or subscribers the community has. However, there are many software that have been introduced that can monitor the social media platforms, and also analyze the target audience and this will lead to a thorough report on the EAC social platforms. Mapping can also be used to process the networks within the region, and this can

at the long run remove digital barriers that exist in the region. It may require that a model exists in which regional information is collected and constructed by networks that are far superior to the governments of the region, so that this may lead to effective observation and monitoring.

The remaining two research questions, determined that geographical proximity is of importance when understanding social media. There are indeed regions that exist where penetration of the fibre optic cable is at 0%. States play an important role in fusing the region and in facilitating regional co-operation. Hence the need for Heads of State to come together and encourage regional integration. Social media is important in exchanging ideas, observations and information by use of ICT and this ensures barriers such as language, legal and social boundaries are broken to allow ease of communication.

5.2 Future Challenges

Social platforms in reference to blogs, Twitter and Facebook handles together with the social networking sites has allowed for interaction among people and has enabled people to share their opinions and manipulate regional trade, political agenda among much more. Social media is the new platform for political conflicts and biasness together with states showing their political power.

The social platform has become an arena which allows younger demographics to attack the older demographics to attach the older demographics such as clerics and ministers of whom they could easily not attack in person.

5.3 Future Opportunities

The gap among citizens from different areas of the world has been mended due to social channels, social media which bridge societies. Social platforms and social media act as a forum to provide information to states, regional and non-regional actors including individuals and hence provide a positive influence in handling political, socio-economic issues.

Global challenges that have been faced by several state and non-state actors can be maintained and proper solutions can be provided for using the communication technologies that are existing and those that are coming up. Elements like global warming, war, terrorist activities and immigration can be addressed using social media and effective solutions can be sourced and proper policies can be developed.

The impact that social media and social platforms is having on the globe requires the emergence of states and non-state actors coming together so as to fully utilize these technologies. States ought to no longer rely on non-governmental bodies or even inter-governmental bodies but citizens too, who can tackle situations and act as solution providers.

Communication has been made easier, because policy makers can use social platforms to pass across a policy concern at a uniform avenue and ensure that all voices are heard from the citizens who are viewed as being objective to a particular policy. In this regard, heads of state together with its citizens can work together to foster a cohesive working condition with the East African regional bloc. States globally have embraced the impact of digital media and these has even encouraged and embraced the aspect of social media and have even encouraged a participatory parliament over platforms such as Facebook and even YouTube channels, and such a case is that of Iceland.

The internet is creating avenues for citizens and states to network, and governments and regional bodies should be more aware of what they are and how they can be utilized to the maximum and this if effectively used can be a source of soft power.

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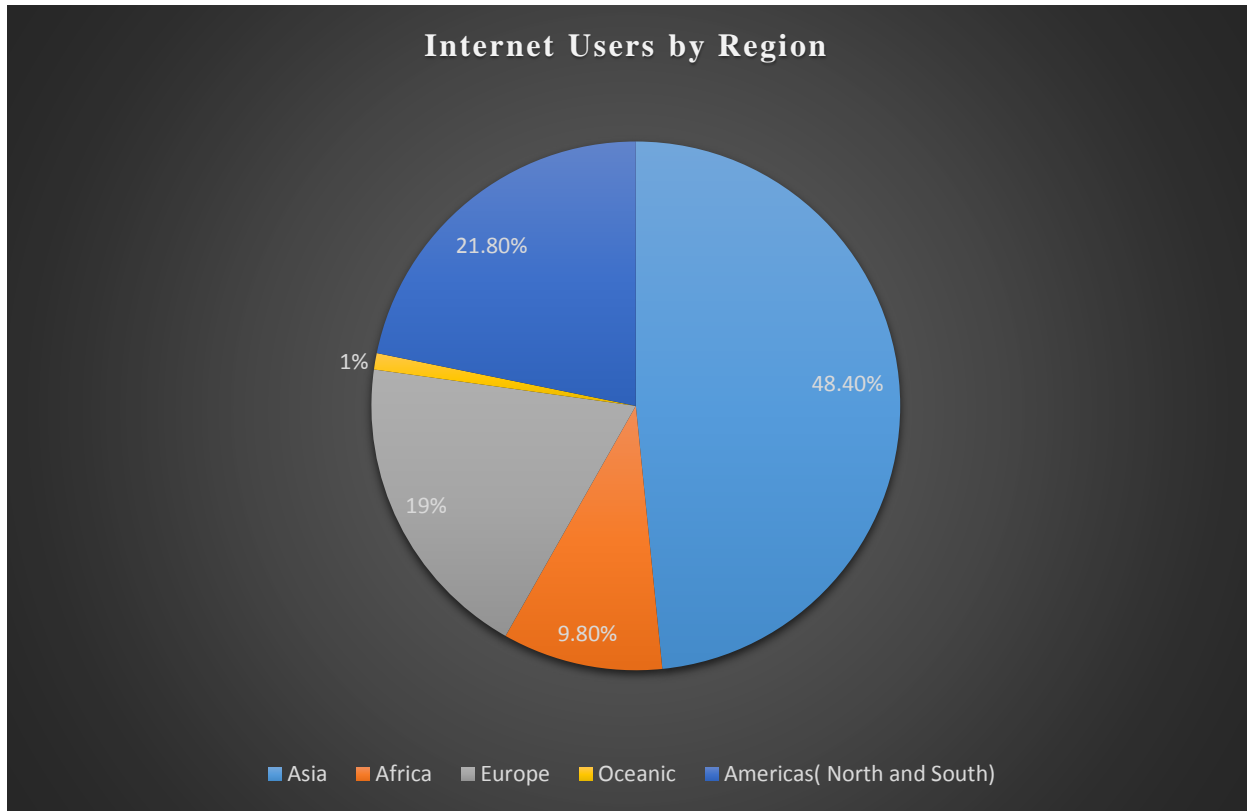
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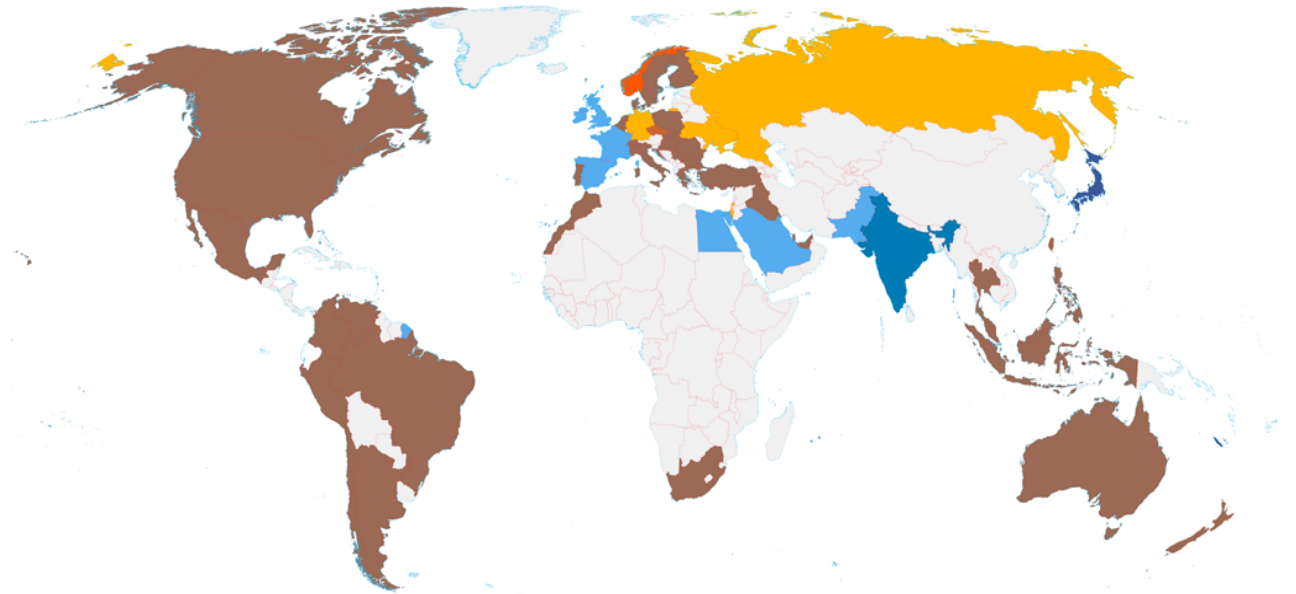
APENDIX I



APPENDIX II

WORLD MAP OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Ranked 2nd - January 2016



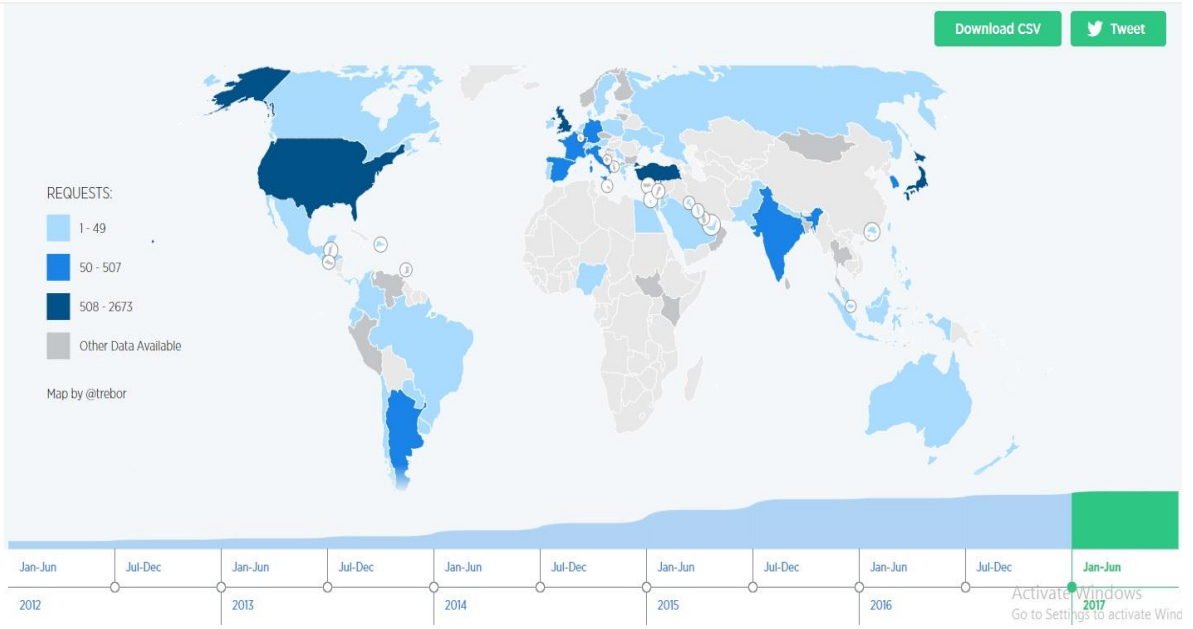
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LinkedIn	Facebook	Reddit	

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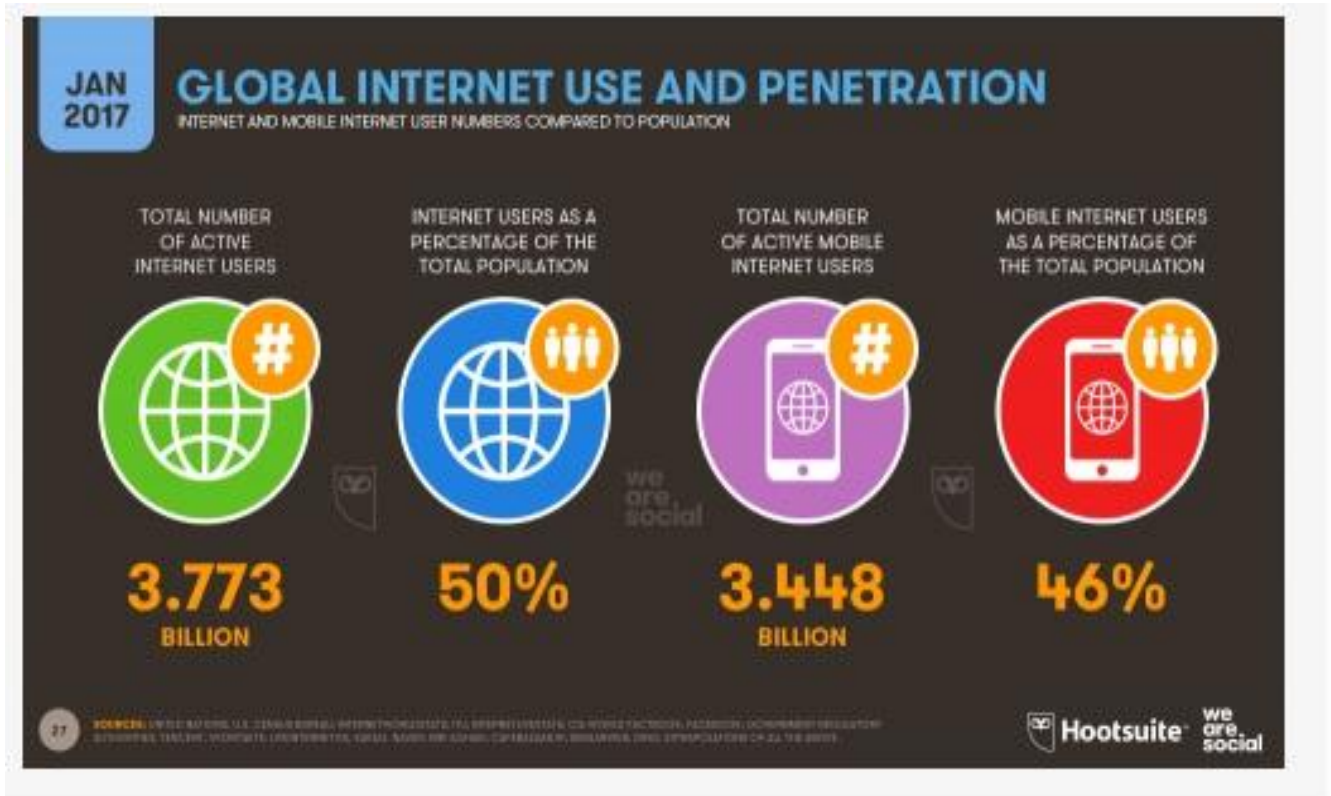
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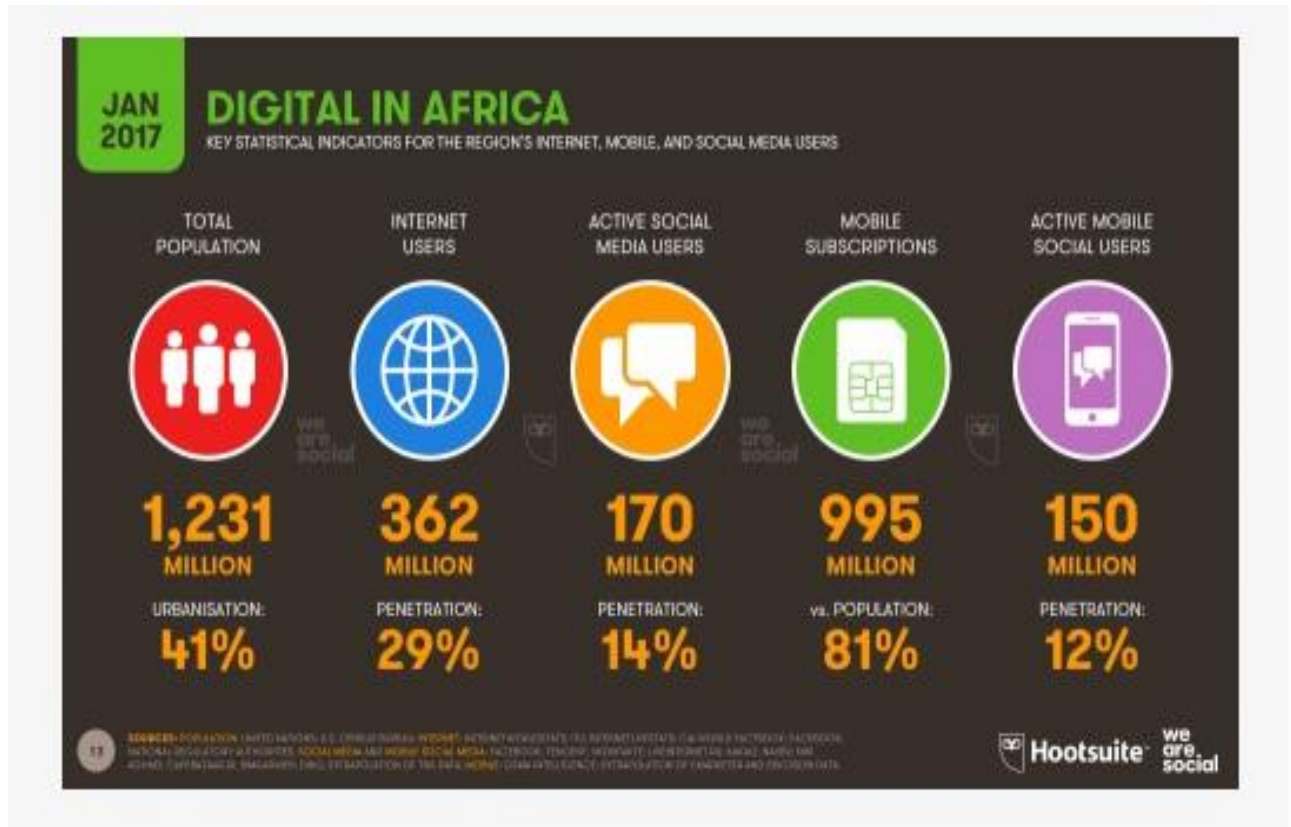
APPENDIX III



APPENDIX IV



APPENDIX V



ⁱ A detailed presentation of the ‘five phases’ of East African Community, see D. Deya (2007) “An Institutional Analysis of East African Community Some Initial Reflections” In Society for International development (SID), East Africa Scenarios Project Research Compendium, Nairobi pp. 107-143

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