

Mapping the Internet's Influence on Electoral Integrity: Evidence from East African Countries

Deodatus Patrick Shayo

Dar es Salaam University College of Education, University of Dar es Salaam
dpshayo@gmail.com

Norbert Kersting

Institute of Political Science, University of Muenster
norbert.kersting@uni-muenster.de

Abstract

While literature examines diffusion, availability and usage of digital technologies, few have analysed its relationship to the integrity of electoral procedures. The growing digital “invited and invented spaces”, the burn out of social networks forums and weblogs offer an amplified opportunity for sharing electoral incidents. Shared election observation information informs stakeholders and public at large in regard to the quality of electoral processes. This paper, therefore, identifies and seeks to map evidences of the influence of digital technologies to the integrity of elections in East Africa. An analysis of digital penetration shows that East African nations – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda not only have the highest mobile adoption, but also the available social networks are used in electoral politics because of the ability of the internet users to use affordable smartphones and data bundles to access social networks. In addition, analysis shows somewhat positive association of digital adoption and perceptions of electoral integrity. This paper concludes that technology diffusion, especially mobile innovations in East Africa is a novel agenda for digital inclusion in electoral politics- and any degree of technology usage by electoral stakeholders will significantly contribute to the shaping of perceptions on the quality of elections.

Keywords: electoral integrity, internet, electoral democracy, social media, East Africa.

I. Introduction

In recent years, the internet has made quite big changes in politics and the internet's networking possibilities are creating opportunities for all citizens to be active engaging participants in democracy (Kersting 2012; van Rensburg 2012:93). Especially it is used in electoral process through influencing monitoring and sharing of electoral incidents in real-time, as well as regime changes and people mobilization and participation such as Arab Spring (Farrell 2012; Norris 2012). Of recent, scholars are beginning to “uncover specific ways in which the Internet may affect politics, and to explore these relationships using both qualitative and quantitative data” (Farrell 2012:36). Omnipresent digital technologies has crucial importance to various global changes, it has a great impact on political changes in Africa where “elections are usually rigged, opposition oftentimes repressed, constitutions changed to fit the incumbent president's needs, freedom of expression is restricted, citizens are suppressed, and human rights are violated” (Madar 2017). On this basis, mapping internet's influence on the integrity of elections is highly relevant for developing or fledgling democracies, especially with regard to newly developed technologies because “politics is likely to change as the Internet becomes ever more assimilated into everyday political activity” (Farrell 2012:36). In East African countries – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, digital technologies and other innovation have become relatively widespread

which constitutes a new important source for strengthening electoral integrity, and its decentralized monitoring of global norms on democratic conduct of elections through crowd-sourcing.

Elections in all five countries in recent years have been seen problematic with regard to their integrity as being “free and fair” and offering a level playing field. In Rwanda surveys data on the perceptions of electoral integrity shows some progress has been made in the integrity of the election - ranked “high” and, Tanzania ranked low/‘flawed’ elections, and Kenya after a high level of post-election violence in 2007/2008 occasions now being low/‘flawed’ for the 2013 elections, but Burundi and Uganda still being the worst case ranked very low/‘failed’ elections (Norris and Grömping 2017a:31). Drawing on this background, Farrell (2012:36) raised important question about “how should political scientists study the Internet’s influence on politics? Political science can surely help improve current public arguments about the Internet, which center around a few very general questions”. Can the Internet help in shaping electoral stakeholders to expose electoral incidents? Based on optimistic perspective of technological determinism (Chadwick 2006), the assumption is that East African countries are facing significant problems of electoral integrity and the higher technology diffusion, the more open opportunity to expose illicit act of election stakeholders in various digital “invented and invited spaces” (Kersting 2013b). Arguably increasing adoption of digital technology is an enabler for sharing electoral incidents, and if there is any link between digital adoption and electoral integrity, then digital tools may shape perceptions of electoral integrity by sharing election related incidents on the digital platforms.

To explore issues of internet’s influence on electoral integrity, the following part established theoretical framework, and plausibly argues that the internet can influence electoral politics in four different spheres of participation namely – representative, direct, demonstrative and deliberative spheres of participation.

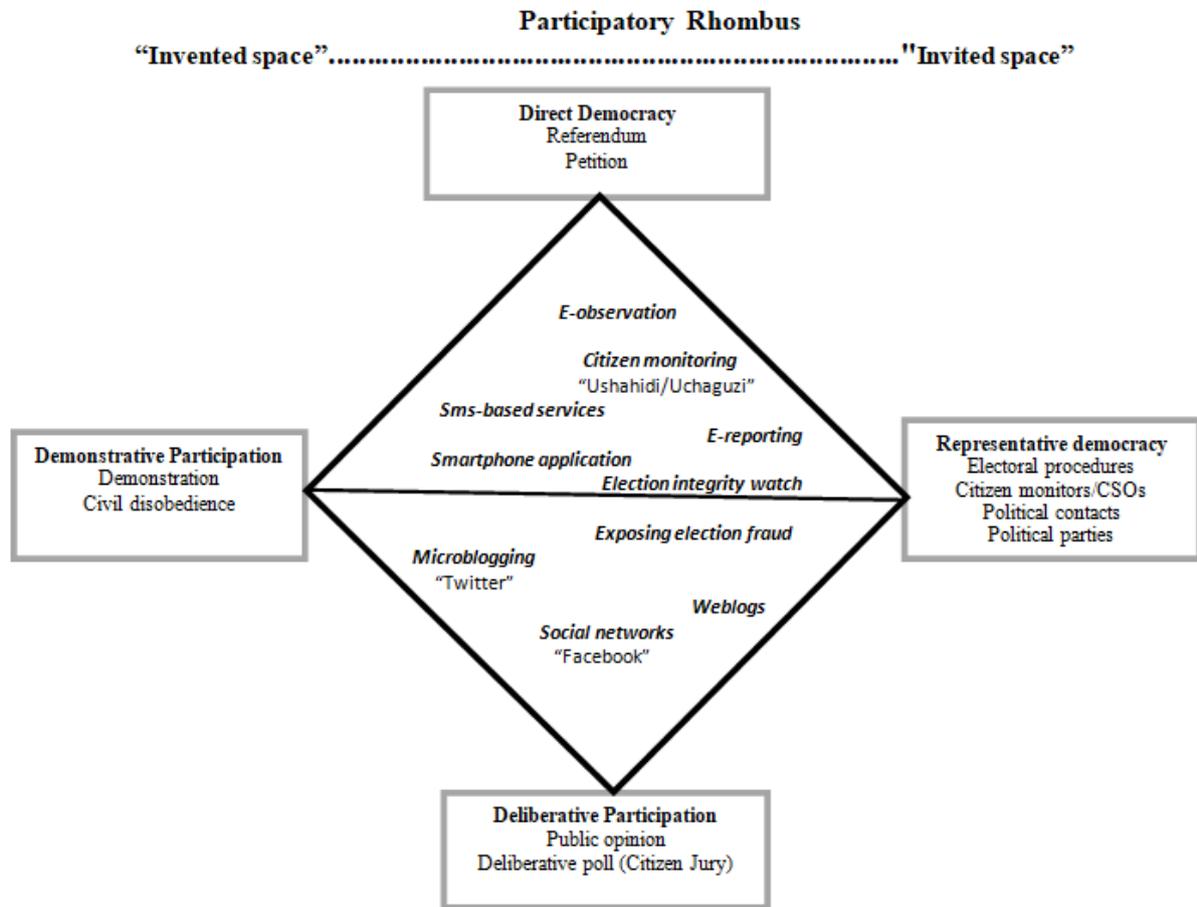
II. A conceptual framework of the Internet’s influence on electoral integrity

The growth of ubiquity of online and offline communication technologies opens up spaces for participation in democratic processes. The new forms of participation are being implemented by government (invited space) and by civil society organizations (invented space) (Kersting 2017). It has been observed, that the demand for pervasive participation in democratic procedures led to reactions by most governments to provide invited space (Kersting 2012). But this invited space (using top-down approach) offered by government “fail to attract the attention of the crowd because they seem too static, are too centrally controlled, or do not offer direct benefits, reputational gains or other incentives to potential contributors” (Bott et al. 2014:13). Accordingly, invented spaces initiated and controlled by ordinary citizens and civil society provide amplified opportunity to the citizens as potential contributors- to share their information with regard to integrity of electoral procedures.

In a similar vein, it has been argued that people are still not satisfied with the invited space offered by the government- as a result citizens in collaboration with civil society groups found an invented space to create more spaces for participation in electoral processes (Kersting 2013b). On this basis, digital tools are used for collecting and sharing incidents related to the conduct of elections. As regards, the invented space by civil society, normally ordinary citizens are invited to participate in monitoring and reporting of the electoral process in the space which is already formalized using established channels of generating observed incidents. Invented space is characterised by new digital instruments used to connect electoral stakeholders to participate in promoting integrity of electoral procedures in East Africa.

Figure 1 shows that citizens can participate in democratic spaces into four different political spheres namely - participation in representative sphere, participation in direct sphere, deliberative participation and demonstrative participation.

Figure1: Participatory rhombus in East Africa



Source: Adapted from Kersting (2012, 2013b)

Participation in *representative democracy* can be seen as the “default case of liberal democracies” (Kersting 2013b:272). This is because participation in representative democracy began in the third wave of democratization, the period of transition from one-party to multi-party electoral system. In this form of electoral democracies citizens are given opportunities to participate through voting of their representatives. This is due to the fact that “institutions of representative democracy are mostly highly formalised and defined in the constitution or in a legal framework” (Kersting 2013b:273). The principle of representation is a characteristic form of modern liberal democracies that promote democratic participation. All other forms and instruments are subordinated to representative sphere. This means that representatives and parties on the different levels of policy making should be elected via majority rule (Kersting 2012). Besides elections, this sphere involves, among others, party membership, engagement in election campaigns, and seeking for and holding an office, as well as direct contacts to politicians via e-mail, Facebook and Twitter accounts and mobile sms. Digital instruments in representative participation range from voter information, online voter registration, voter identification, and candidate watch through citizen-based monitoring systems. This is the case of democratic innovations in East African countries for citizen participation in monitoring elections using crowd-sourcing platform (Ushahidi/Uchaguzi) and

digital tools such as mobile sms, social networks accounts and mobile application. Monitoring integrity of electoral procedures is important because the problem of elections with integrity is obvious in a representative form of democracy especially fraudulent electoral processes (Bailard and Livingston 2014). To overcome some of these problems and challenges of electoral integrity in the representative democracy in a timely fashion way, digital instruments and other democratic innovations can be used to share the electoral incidents in the social media platforms and weblogs with larger communities of voters and key electoral democracy stakeholders for response and feedback action.

In addition, participation in other spheres such as *demonstrative sphere* can be seen as an informal participation and demonstrative participation is often associated with the invented space rather than the invited space (Kersting 2012). Demonstrative participation includes different illegal wave of violent protest like Kenya 2007-2008 and Zanzibar in 2001 post-election violence. The two examples are the results of claimed fraudulent or manipulated presidential election results (Kiai 2010; Diamond 2015). Also, violence and protest in Burundi 2015 after president seeks third term. Another example is violent demonstrations of “walk-to-work” protest in Uganda 2011 which was peaceful to violent demonstrations against the high cost of living. The form of protest in Uganda emerged followed the 2011 general presidential election results, whereby the protest involved opposition parties. The raise of participation in demonstrative sphere is a result of carelessness, weaknesses and challenges of representative democracy, that seek to fill the gap before the next election cycle. It is also a way of expressing dissatisfaction with the conduct of democratic elections and other process (the on-going demonstration in Kenya championed by opposition party following the nullified August 2017 presidential election by the Supreme Court because of “irregularities”), and demonstrators through illicit network air their voices by pointing out the malpractices and other irregularities.

On one hand, participation in *direct democracy* the focus is “not on the election of incumbents” rather on policy-decision making process (Kersting 2013b:273). This is because direct democracy is defined as a direct participation in the issue-oriented to decision-making process (Kersting 2007). On the other hand, the representative and direct democracies are “both confronted with waning interest in politics. These types of democracy are not mutually exclusive political participation instruments, rather they are two sides of one coin and complement each other” (Kersting 2007:33). Also, participation in *deliberative sphere* focuses on consensual deliberative decision-making or instrument of dialogue-oriented political participation and “with normative rigor applied to highly elaborated rational discourses also has elitist elements” (Kersting and Cronqvist 2005:17). Deliberative democracy can articulate protest (Kersting 2013b). It “may produce higher rationality but not broader democratic control. The high normative standard includes empathy; political tolerance and a strong orientation to common consensus within a public reflective discourse but, neglect the articulation of particular interests” (Kersting and Cronqvist 2005:17).

In the context of this paper, the focus is on participation in the representative sphere of electoral democracies because in this sphere elections are the key instrument of political engagement. In this case, invented space provides a high degree of autonomy compared to invited space. Here participation in the invented space is at the co-production and dissemination of election information in the digital platforms such as Facebook forums for sharing incidents related to electoral fraud and malpractices.

III. Political and integrity of elections in East Africa

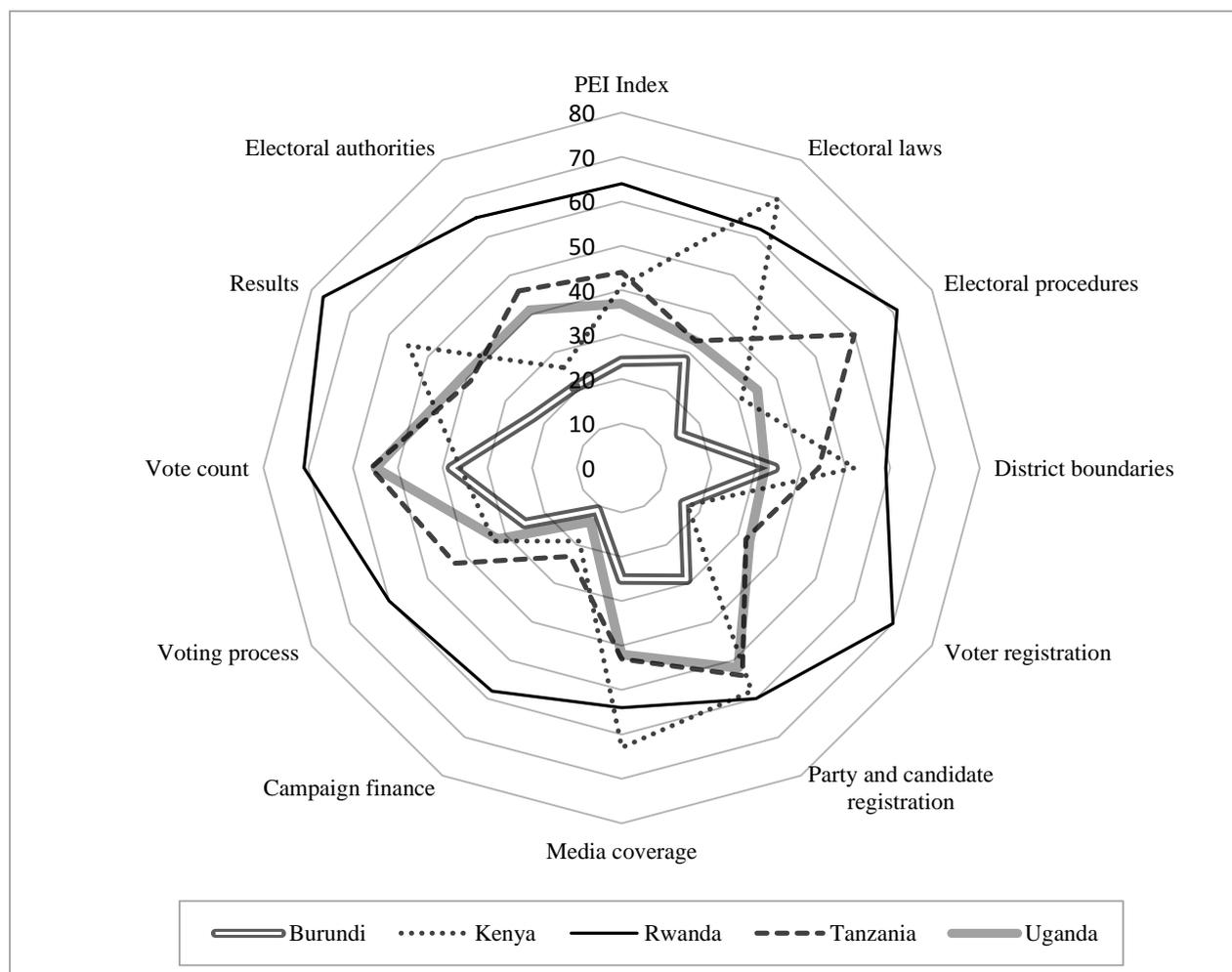
In East African countries, multiparty electoral democracy is a model of elections. Since 1990s East African countries have undergone major transition with the re-introduction of multiparty politics. From 1990s it was a period that led 'many to think that there is something intrinsically new about competitive electoral process in Africa' (Cowen and Laakso 2002). This is due to the fact that before the ban of multi-party system, many African states under British colonial administration such as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda had multi-party politics with universal franchise. The reasons for the demise of multiparty politics inherited from Westminster model of constitution after independence are broadly similar in most of the African countries such as national unity is the most stated reason for the independent African states to adopt one-party state and no-party arrangement. Also, tribal, ethnic groups and religious sectarianism pointed out as a threat to the unity and prosperity of the country (Barkan 1993).

Historically, the shift from one-party state to multipartyism was triggered by the end of the cold war between the East and West as it had an impact on the political and socio-economic of the world (Chand 1997), and East African nations, being part, affected by this change. The transition expected to mark an end to mono-partyism and transform the practice of competitive politics to the rule by the people which is the fundamental principles of democracy. Now, it is re-installation of liberal democratic principles (Dahl 1989) with hopes that citizens have the power of their votes to decide about the office holders. The transition and inception of multiparty system and politics of representation show political democracy is an "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter 1950:269). The principle of democratic autonomy indicates 'individuals are free and equal to determine the conditions of their own lives - they should enjoy equal rights in the specification of the framework which generates and limits the opportunities available to them, so long as they do not deploy this framework to negate the rights of others' (Held 2006). Elections are used to provide legitimacy to the political system by giving people opportunity to choose their leaders who will reign over them in specified period (Dahl 1989; Huntington 1991).

During one-party politics, elections were viewed as "elections without choice" and 'legitimation of state authority' (Hermet 1978). Whereas under liberal democracy, political practices provide for political representation, participation and accountability through regular competitive elections held under conditions of civil and political liberties guaranteed by the rule of law (Dahl 1971, 1989). The success of basic characteristics of liberal democracy always depends on freedom, right to vote, competition, free and fair election as well as the responsive of the government to the preferences of its voters (Dahl 1989). Different political parties have ample opportunity to contest for different political posts and independent candidates (for the case of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda). The first country to undergo the current multipartism was Kenya in 1991, followed by Tanzania 1992, and in 1993 was Burundi first presidential multiparty elections, then Rwanda first multiparty election since civil war was 2003 and in Uganda after a long run of "no party democracy", multiparty system was re-introduced after the referendum in 2005 (Kersting 2013a). The modern liberal "electoral competitive democracy" conducted on periodical interval of five years for Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi, but recently in Rwanda after the constitutional amendment that gave the current President to compete for the third term, established seven years of holding election cycle. For the case of constitutional change to meet the interest of incumbent President is what Fareed Zakaria referred to as "illiberal democracies" as aptly argued "democracy without constitutional liberalism is not simply inadequate, but dangerous, bringing with it the erosion of liberty, the abuse of power, ethnic divisions, and even war" (Zakaria 1997:42-43).

In East Africa, electoral democracy guarantees protection and promotion of civil rights as well as political liberties. The countries have signed many international and regional treaties that focus on the standards and principles on the conduct of democratic elections. For example, international treaties like Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, International Covent on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 and International Covent on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966 which both came into force in 1976. Also, regional treaties such as African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance adopted in 2007 and African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights of 1981 as well as Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa of 2002, and each country national constitution that incorporate fundamental civil and political rights and freedom as well. Since the inception of multi-party electoral system, elections have become increasingly regular and frequent and almost elections have been contested in East Africa. But the negative trend of many of the electoral processes have been ‘arbitrarily limited, manipulated or deliberately rigged’ elections (Diamond 2008). The transition to multiparty electoral democracy engineered the expansion of space for the enjoyment of civil and political freedoms and regular competitive elections guaranteed by the rule of law (Bakari and Mushi 2005), and enhanced the space for participatory democracy in voting process (Kersting and Baldersheim 2004).

Figure 2: Comparing perceptions of electoral integrity in East Africa



Source: Norris and Grömping (2017a): Populist Threats to Electoral Integrity: The Year in Elections, 2016-2017. www.electoralintegrityproject.com

The concept of electoral integrity can be monitored through a range of comparative evidence and analytical techniques (Norris et al. 2014). In order to supplement existing techniques and sources of evidence such as opinion polls, established observers reports etc. the “Electoral Integrity Project has developed a systematic comparative method for assessing electoral integrity by implementing a global survey measuring expert perceptions of electoral integrity” (Norris et al. 2014:38). This, Electoral Integrity Project (EIP) measures the Perception of Electoral Integrity (PEI) world-wide across the electoral cycle, and asks experts to evaluate elections using 49 indicators (Norris and Grömping 2017a). EIP shifted the focus from election-day event in evaluating the quality of elections to process-oriented using expert perceptions index to measure the conduct across the electoral cycle. All five East African nations have been covered by this global survey of expert perceptions of electoral integrity. Figure 2 presents perceptions of electoral integrity data generated from EIP index data for East African nations – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. As regards PEI index in East Africa, Rwanda is leading with 64 for 2013, followed by Tanzania 44 for 2015, Kenya 41 for 2013, and then Uganda 37 for 2016, while Burundi 24 for 2015 general elections (Norris and Grömping 2017a). In terms of the quality of elections in Rwanda is classified as ‘high’, Kenya and Tanzania classified as low or ‘flawed’, Burundi and Uganda very low or ‘failed’ (ibid.). In East Africa Rwanda is the champion in terms of high integrity score compared to other four countries. But the reasons why a country like Rwanda that is labelled “autocratic” is rated higher compared to Kenya and Tanzania in the PEI Index, and even than hybrid regimes or some democratic regimes is unknown (Norris 2015).

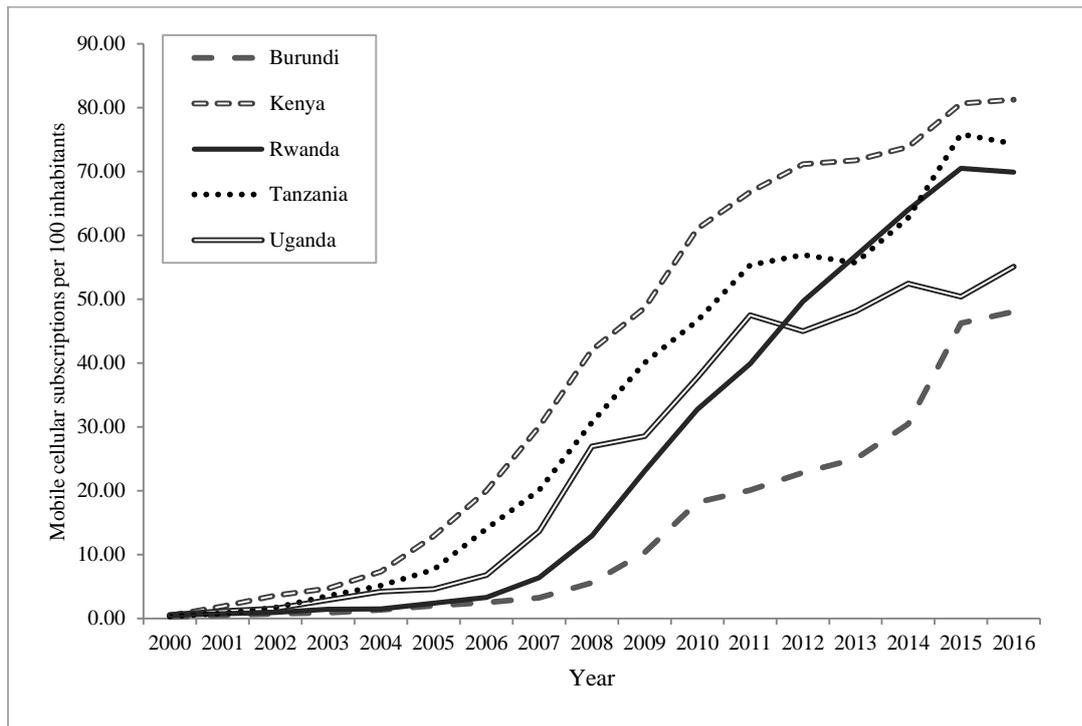
IV. Methodology and empirical findings

This paper analyses cases of internet’s influence on the integrity of elections in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. We argue the case that proliferation of digital technologies in East Africa holds much promise for promoting international standards and principles on democratic conduct of elections. The empirical analysis of internet influence on electoral integrity zoom into various secondary sources of data such as digital adoption index generated by World Bank Group, public opinion polls surveys conducted by Afrobarometer, Pew Research Center and networked readiness index, as well as expert surveys on the perceptions of electoral integrity conducted by Electoral Integrity Project (EIP). Also, we have conducted document analysis of various literatures for the purpose of examining the core arguments of this paper.

a. Growing digital tools for information sharing

The rise of new forms of digital tools and diffusion of innovations are increasingly growing in the East Africa. This growth is important at a time when electoral integrity is a prominent area in modern liberal democracies, and when scholars are looking alternative ways of monitoring and reforms to address these challenges of electoral integrity. Although East African nations are lagging behind in digital adoption compared to developed countries, there are statistics these countries have ‘leapfrogged’ in the area of mobile phones technology and other democratic innovations like crowd-sourcing platform for election monitoring. Statistics on mobile phones shows subscriptions rate per 100 people 48.04 in Burundi, 81.28 in Kenya, 69.92 in Rwanda, 74.36 in Tanzania, and 55.07 in Uganda (ITU 2016). Subscriptions rate per 100 people shows that, for the past 10 years the penetration of mobile phones was high -and as more people are continuing to be connected through mobile cell-phones, it can be expected that the subscriptions rate will increase to nearly all people in the near future.

Figure 3: Mobile phones subscriptions per 100 people



Source: ITU 2016: <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

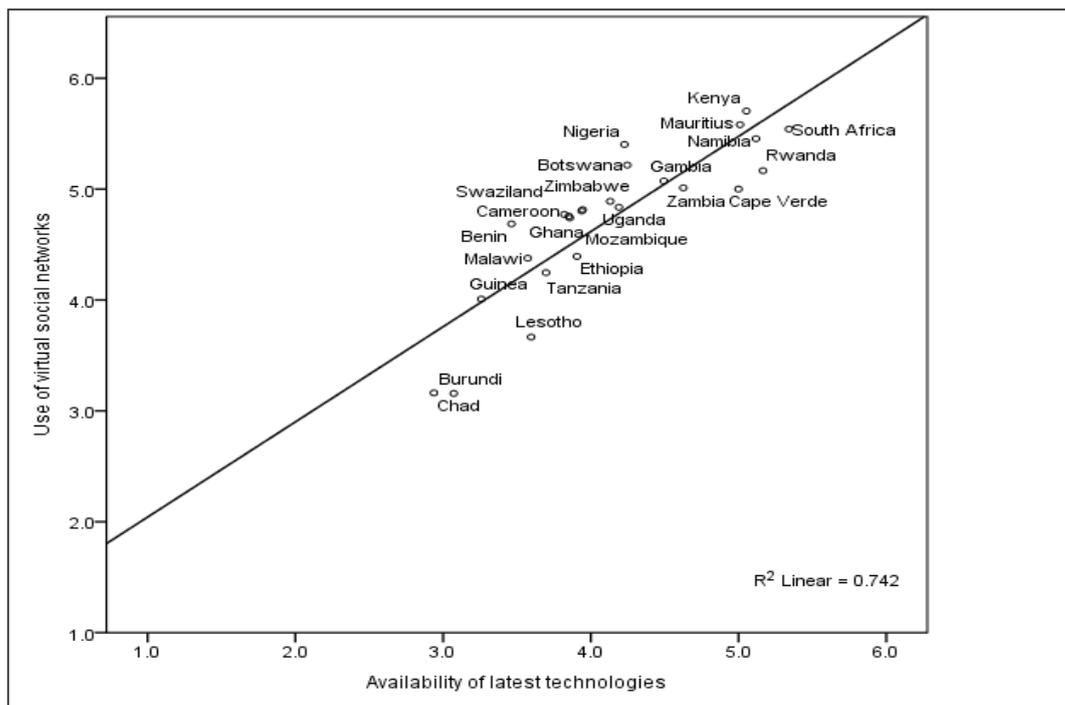
The Internet penetration in the East African countries is low compared to the subscriptions rate of mobile phones technology. But fibre-optic cables installation in East Africa is a digital revolution that connects all East African countries. The on-going investment in ICT infrastructure aimed to address the existing problem of access to internet – for inclusion of digitally excluded population. For example, fibre-optic submarine cables such as Eastern African Submarine Cable System (EASSy), Southern and Eastern Africa Communication Network (SEACOM) and Seychelles Submarine Cable along the East African coast connect East African countries. It is worth noting that Tanzania and Kenya have fibre optic stations that supply the services to landlocked countries. Tanzania provides connectivity to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia and Malawi (URT 2016). In this case, the governments’ initiative of installing fibre optic cables to reach a large number of populations is a strategy of connecting the unconnected population within the countries.

Social networks have increasingly spread and been accessed worldwide through mobile phones more than conventional computers with internet connections. Social networks are communities connected in the World Wide Web to communicate and collaborate (Kersting 2012). Recently, we have witnessed surfing of the mobile internet data via smartphone devices for Facebook and Twitter that has gained popularity in sharing political activities. The strategy of Facebook to split costs of internet access with mobile network operators aimed to make increase of online platform users (Sambira 2013). In some of East Africa countries mobile network operators have launched free data access for mobile users. For instance, the launched “Internet.org” application in Tanzania and Kenya for mobile subscribers breaks data barriers of access to internet data, and the sim-card subscribers will have limited access to internet data without charges for some websites such as Facebook, BBC News, Wikipedia and JamiiForums, among others (Facebook newsroom 2014).

b. Availability and Usage of Digital Tools

The Spring2013 Pew Research Survey covering 24 countries estimated that in 14 of 24 nations surveyed, at least half of 18-29 years old, of the respondents reported to be online. It shows that the young and college graduates are likely to use their mobile phones for internet usage and access to various websites. Median of (38%) among social networkers share views about politics using social media sites. Internet usage in Uganda by the age of 18-29 (18%), 30-49 (9%) and 50 and above (5%), while those who engaged in social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter at the age of 18-29 (12%), 30-49 (4%), 50 and above (1%), and in general (23%) of the surveyed share political information. In Kenya, (76%) of the respondents indicate once they are online they engage in social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Google+ and Instagram and (68%) of them share views about politics (Pew Research Center 2013). But Spring2015 global attitudes survey show that (76%) internet users, they used social networks such Facebook and Twitter. Especially adult internet users, who had access and using social networks in Kenya (82%), Tanzania (78%) and Uganda (76%), said that they used social networks such as Facebook and Twitter (Pew Research Center 2016).

Figure 4: Availability and usage of social networks



Note: In your country, to what extent are the latest technologies available? [1=not at all, 7=to a great extent]
 In your country, how widely are virtual social networks used (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)? [1=not at all used, 7=used extensively]

Source: Networked Readiness Index (2016): Historical Dataset - World Economic Forum:
<http://reports.weforum.org/global-information-technology-report-2016/networked-readiness-index/>

The use of technology in electoral process brought worry in terms of digital divide (Norris 2001, Kersting 2012), especially the cost of technology and skills to use digital tools. But Facebook launched “Internet.org” program for free use of Facebook page, which in turn enabled platform users to access and share information with limited data bundle. As regards

to social networks in figure 4- expand the breadth of possibilities for civil and political rights such as access to information and freedom of expression in the digital social platforms. In this case, there is a promising potential of social networks to contribute in sharing electoral incidents, and even shaping perceptions on the quality of the electoral processes. Just as Bimber (2003:11) observed “process of television news-watching by citizens, which may involve not only becoming informed in a narrow sense, but also diversion, habit or ritual, and fulfillment of a sense of duty or obligation”. Similarly, availability and usage of virtual social networks and other digital technology tools, will facilitate in evaluating the quality of the electoral processes by sharing electoral incidents through social media networks. In this case, figure 4 shows a strong association of availability of latest technologies and use of virtual social networks in some of the African nations. Especially, East African states – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda shows correlation of availability of latest technologies and use of virtual social networks. Kenya and Rwanda demonstrated high availability and usage of social networks, while Tanzania and Uganda at the middle but Burundi found to be below compared to other East African countries. Given the evidence presented in figure 4 implies that citizens are connected and have access to social media platforms, which likely influences the integrity of elections by sharing election incidents on Facebook.

Spring2013 Pew Research Survey shows that while there is limited internet reach in the developing world, once people are connected and have access to internet, they begin to integrate it into their daily lives. The survey showed at least (20%) of the respondents had access to and use internet daily in 15 of the 24 countries (Pew Research Center 2013). Majority of adult internet users in emerging countries are daily users of internet, and data show adult internet users or reported smartphone owners who had access to internet several times a day, once a day or at least once a week or less in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The adult reported had access to internet several times a day was higher (48%) in Tanzania, compared to Kenya (44%) and Uganda (27%). But at least once a week or less of those adult internet users access the internet was higher in Uganda (53%), Tanzania (35%) and Kenya (34%) of the respondents (Pew Research Center 2016). In this case, surveys data have shown citizens participation in democratic process uses different digital tools for sharing news, getting political news, taking pictures and texting, and accessing social networks and even making or receiving payments. For example, Pew Research Center (2015) released survey report for the spring2014, and one of the survey question asked respondents, among other things: their use of cell phones for texting, taking pictures, making or receiving payments, getting political news, accessing social networks and getting health information. The survey revealed majority of respondents said that they use mobile phones for text message. This was reported by (88%) in Kenya, (92%) in Tanzania and (60%) in Uganda. This is followed by taking pictures or videos as reported by (54%) in Kenya, (53%) in Tanzania and (37%) in Uganda. As regards get political news, the findings show that (28%) in Kenya, (21%) in Tanzania and (23%) in Uganda get political news through cell phones. With regard to accessing social networks sites, data shows in Kenya (28%), followed by Tanzania (19%) and Uganda (14%) of the participants have access to social media platforms. Generally, the survey data found that age group 18-34 were more active in sending text messages in Kenya (93%), Tanzania (97%) and Uganda (66%), while age group 35+ in Kenya (83%), Tanzania (84%) and Uganda (52%) reported to use sms text services (Pew Research Center 2015).

Digital divide in terms of age can be measured by using Afrobarometer round 6 2014/2015 survey data on the use of internet and mobile phones and ownership of mobile phone as well. It is found that age group 15-29 often use internet everyday by the following percentages in the three East African countries, Kenya (21.8%), Tanzania (10.4%) and Uganda 8.0%). But the use of mobile phones for age group 30-49 was found to be more active, and data shows

that in Kenya (84.9%), Tanzania (73.6%) and Uganda (59.7%) used mobile phones every day. In Uganda (63.1%) of age group 15-29 used mobile phone every day. In addition, the ownership of mobile phone for the age group 30-49 in Kenya (88.6%) and Tanzania (76.6%) own mobile phone, while in Uganda reported (68.4%) of age group 15-29 own mobile phone compared to other categories. The use and ownership of mobile phone devices is an enabler for political participation and sharing of information. The growth of mobile technology in East Africa has increased the number of users on the one hand, while on the other “significant political effects have resulted from the growth of mobile telephony” (Livingston 2011:10). This is the fact that ‘introduction of mobile phones in Africa transforms people’s ability to communicate. Unlike in the West, where there was already an existing network of communication through landlines, mobile phones in Africa provide communication where previously there was none’ (Ekine 2010).

c. Growing voluntarism of citizen election monitoring

It has been argued that “we are living in the middle of the largest increase in expressive capability in the history of the human race. More people can communicate more things to more people than has ever been possible in the past, and the size and speed of this increase, from under one million participants to over one billion in a generation, makes the changes unprecedented” (Shirky 2008:105). At the same time, East African nations also experienced a digital revolution with the widespread use of mobile technology and similar innovations. This opened the door of supervising the integrity of elections through crowd-sourcing and crowd-monitoring and the use of electronic means by “invented spaces”. Now, citizens are invited by civil society and other electoral stakeholders to participate in the created digital spaces to monitor and communicate information on the electoral process using digital technologies. This involve a process in which citizens observe, create and share election observation information with one another, especially exchange of information with civil society organizations through certain communication channels in a digital platform, in which information are concerned with the conduct of electoral processes, in order to promote integrity of elections. Arguably, in the present age citizens are no longer satisfied with only voting and leaving the voting stations, or participating on the “invited space”, rather citizens want to have a more active role, specifically in the “invented space” (Kersting 2012, 2013b).

Nowadays, ‘democratic innovation seems to be generated mostly in the global South and in the young democracies’ (Kersting 2012). Different digital tools are available in young democracies for capturing and transmitting election information. Some of the emerging new technological tools such as mobile ICT and social networks have been used to observe and report the conduct of elections, and even used as mobilization tool to online potential voters to participate in the electoral politics (Shayo and Kersting 2016; Shayo 2016). As a result, digitalization of electoral integrity using invented space stimulates the emergence of citizen-oriented monitoring and reporting of electoral incidents. The case of *Ushahidi* Kiswahili for ‘witness’ crowdsourcing platform is an example of digitally empowered citizens to participate in democratic process. As a result, Ushahidi software promotes novel forms of digital citizen collective action in monitoring the integrity of elections, in most of the East African countries such as Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The idea behind citizen election monitoring is the timely detection and near-real time provision of information of electoral incidents and response (Fung 2011; Bader 2013).

Digital technologies offer new opportunities in terms of participation in electoral politics. After post-election violence in Kenya 2007/2008 which is considered was a result of lack of trust of the electoral results and executive abuse (Diamond 2015), the call for citizen

participation in monitoring electoral violence and hate speech was introduced early 2008 in Kenya. This citizen monitoring initiative -report incidents related to violence and hate speech, and thereafter generated reports were shared and mapped in the Ushahidi platform, as well as the location of the reports. In this regard, “although not evaluated, the use of crowdsourcing by Ushahidi and its successor Uchaguzi, combined with civil society monitoring, advocacy, and partnerships with government, has helped curtail election violence in Kenya” (World Bank Group 2016:172). In fact, for the elections in Uganda 2011, Kenya 2013 and Tanzania 2015, an electronic election monitoring platform “Uchaguzi” (Swahili for election) has created which serve as a test for improving the functionality and integrity of elections and, thereby, the overall democratic legitimacy of these regimes.

In this respect, analysis of citizen-generated election observation reports through digital tools, especially mobile cell-phones for texting, web-based form and social media accounts witnessed influence of technology in detecting positive and negative electoral incidents in Kenya 2013, Tanzania 2015 and Uganda 2011 general elections (Shayo 2017) and currently nullified August 2017 presidential election in Kenya. The use of technology in monitoring and sharing information on the integrity of electoral procedures shows that pre-election, campaign, election-day and post-election fraud data were generated by citizen election monitors in East Africa. For example, in Ugandan 2011 elections about 430 reports on election fraud and malpractices were generated by citizen monitors using technology tools, 797 in Kenya 2013 and 529 in Tanzania 2015 general elections (Shayo 2017). In this regard, digital technologies expanded and influence modern ways of citizen participation in promoting integrity of electoral procedures using digital tools in detecting electoral fraud, malpractices and positive incidents of the electoral processes.

d. Digital technology and integrity of electoral procedures

Digitalizing electoral integrity matters in monitoring adherence to the international standards on democratic conduct of elections. Promoting integrity of elections requires hybrid and blended form of monitoring and reporting electoral incidents. Admittedly, in the contemporary world, most countries are signatories of global norms governing democratic conduct of elections. In response to this commitment, there has been a growing interest by electoral stakeholders to digitalize integrity of electoral processes using social networks, messaging media applications, mobile sms, open-source forums and weblogs for rapid dissemination of critical information about electoral procedures in real-time. This is because in recent years, “the demand for increasing amounts of information is being driven by the internet where there is now so much discourse, exchange of information and millions of weblogs or “blogs”. The internet is an open network, which is contributing to the development of open information environments” (Milakovich 2010:4).

Evidence presented in Table 1 indicates that digital information and communication technologies on citizen empowerment have made elections freer and fairer by improving voter registration and reducing errors in voting, and by better monitoring them to curb electoral fraud and violence (World Bank Group 2016:171). A response on the scorecard shows high impact of technology in terms of reducing errors and fraud in voting. This means that digital technology tools can be used by ordinary citizens to monitor the electoral procedure which in turn reduce errors and detecting fraud in voting process as well as addressing problem of election information.

Table 1: The impact of digital technology on citizen empowerment: A scorecard

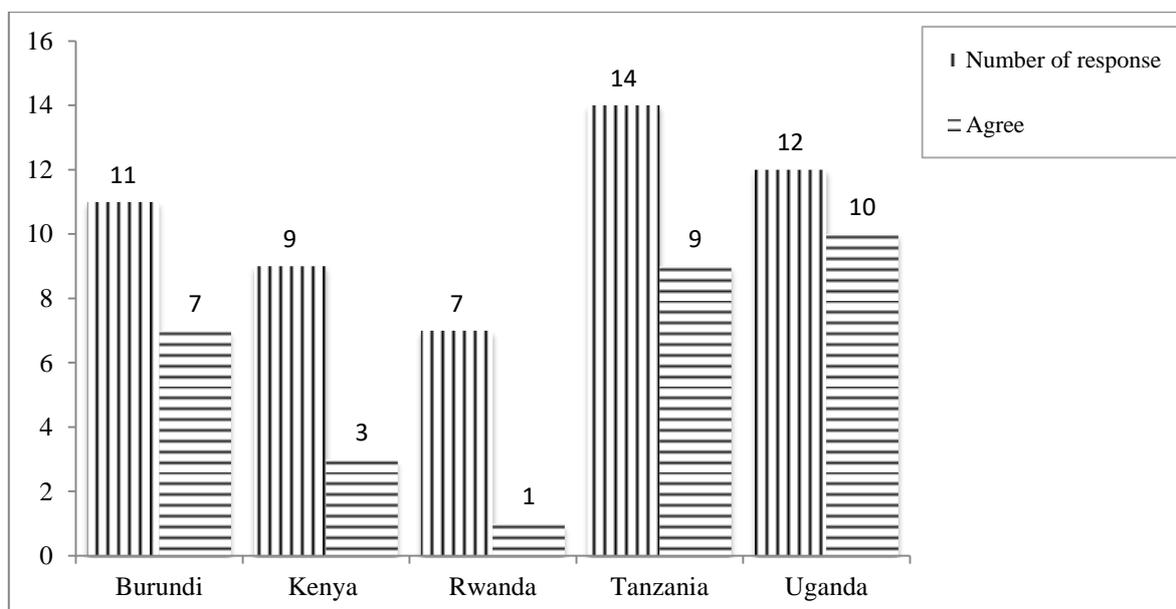
Channel	Impact of technology	Main problem to address	Do digital technologies solve the problem?
Free and Fair elections	H	Lack of information; high transaction costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, monitoring reduces errors and fraud in voting
More informed voting	M	Information asymmetries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, for blatant abuses of office; no, for less newsworthy public service failures • Increase ability of elites to manipulate information
Greater citizen voice	L	Collective action failures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective only when governments are already willing to listen to citizens • Must be complemented by office mobilization by civil society groups

Note: Channels are arranged by degree of technology impact. L=low; M=medium; H=high

Source: World Bank Group (2016:171).

Digital adoption put in practice access to information and sharing of information. Stakeholders on the ground having access to electoral incidents on the ground and taking an initiative of using digital tools to disseminate the incidents, is one way of making problems of electoral integrity known to the large group of people, especially community of technology users. This, in one way or the other likely contributes in shaping the perceptions of stakeholders towards the quality of the integrity of elections. In this case, it is reasonable to argue that growing digital adoption in East African nations -is an enabler to collective action in monitoring and sharing incidents related to electoral fraud and malpractices. The penetration and use of digital online forums such as Facebook and Twitter offer ample opportunities for electoral stakeholders to effectively communicate electoral incidents.

Graph 1: Social media used to expose electoral fraud (Agree)

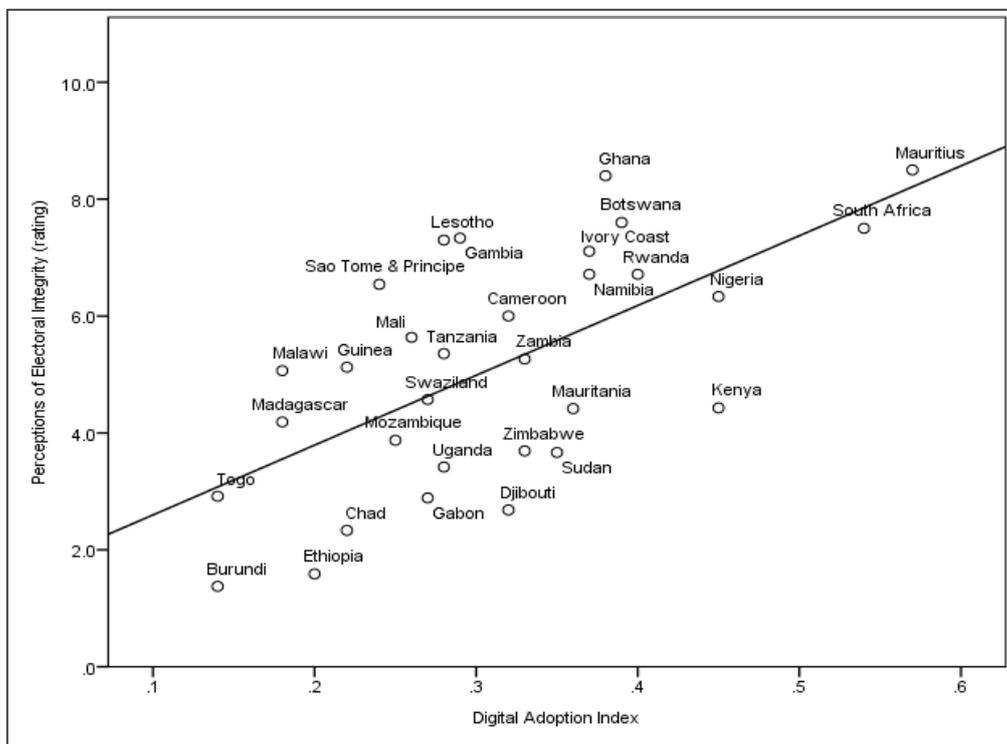


Note: 6-5. Social media were used to expose electoral fraud (1-5). 1. strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. neither agree or disagree, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree

Source: Norris, Pippa; Grömping, Max (2017b): Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, (PEI-5.0), doi:10.7910/DVN/KI5WB4, Harvard Dataverse: <http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/PEI>

As we have shown in the previous part, that there are initiatives of using digital tools for sharing election information, and attempts of social networkers posting electoral incidents in the digital forums. Norris and Grömping (2017b) survey on the perceptions of electoral integrity address among others, data on the use of social media for sharing electoral fraud (see PEI expert level data item 6.5). Experts were asked to evaluate the use of social media in exposing electoral fraud in terms of strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Graph 1 present PEI expert response on those “agree” that social media were used to expose electoral fraud. Graphical presentation indicates that the higher the number of expert responses the more agree social media expose electoral fraud. This is the case in Tanzania 14(9), Uganda 12(10), Burundi 11(7), Kenya 9(3) and Rwanda 7(1) with the total number of those “agree” in the bracket. This response shows the internet had influence in exposing negative incidents in the integrity of electoral procedures in East African countries.

Figure 5: Digital adoption and perceptions of electoral integrity



Source: Norris, Pippa; Grömping, Max (2017b): Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, (PEI-5.0), doi:10.7910/DVN/KI5WB4, Harvard Dataverse: <http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/PEI>

Digital Adoption Index (2017): <http://wbfiles.worldbank.org/documents/dec/digital-adoption-index.html>

On this respect, we have made an attempt to analyse any link of the perceptions of electoral integrity data (Norris and Grömping 2017b), and digital adoption index data (World Bank Group 2016). Figure 5 is the test of the digital adoption index and perceptions of electoral integrity score in Africa. The aim of analysis is to show whether perceptions of electoral integrity correlates with the adoption of digital technologies, and thus may influence elections with integrity using technologies. The results show in East African nations there is somewhat relationship between digital adoption index and perceptions of electoral integrity. There is

moderate level of digital adoption index in Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, and integrity of election is somewhat above the middle in Rwanda and Tanzania, and below the middle in Uganda, and low adoption and integrity in Burundi. Therefore, digital information and communication technologies may influence integrity of elections because across East African countries adoption of technology is somewhat positively correlated with perceptions of the integrity of elections. Arguably, digital adoption in East African countries is necessary conditions for influencing the promotion of the integrity of electoral processes by engaging digital citizens on the ground, but not sufficient conditions to determine the integrity of the electoral processes. On this basis, other conditions need to be incorporated in order to judge the influence of technology on the integrity of the elections.

V. Conclusions and Implications

This paper has attempted to map the influence of digital technology on the integrity of electoral procedures in East African nations – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The key driving factor for this analysis is on-going digital revolution in East Africa, especially on the sector of mobile ICT, as well as availability and usage of social media networks in electoral politics. The implication of this digital revolution is that the emerging different digital tools and innovations can significantly influence and promote integrity of electoral procedures in East Africa. Also, another form of achieving influence already begins in the electronic citizen election monitoring method through invented spaces for uploading and sharing observation reports in the dedicated crowd-mapping platform. This is a contribution of digital technology to the influence of monitoring electoral integrity by different stakeholders namely – citizens, non-partisan election monitoring organisations and technology innovators. This method of electronic citizen monitoring and reporting integrity of electoral processes is frequent in developing and young democracies. For example, deployment of Ushahidi open-source software and Uchaguzi platform for crowd-sourcing and crowd-monitoring elections in East Africa countries facilitated by the growing digital infrastructure and connected citizens with simple mobile technology. In this case, digital communication technology channels may help to influence and improve election integrity, but they are not panacea for all problems of electoral politics.

In addition, the Internet contributes to the overall transparency and integrity of electoral procedures. Not only the electoral procedures, but also overall citizen participation was enhanced by digital tools in strengthening electoral integrity. This was the case of electronic citizen election monitoring in the East African nations namely- Ugandan 2011, Kenyan 2013 and Tanzania 2015 general elections. An analysis so far indicates that digital citizens were able to detect positive and negative electoral incidents that can be used to evaluate the quality of the electoral processes. On the one hand, the influence of the internet in electoral processes has expanded considerably and citizen use of digital technologies is a means to promote credible elections by sharing relevant incidents to the large group of electoral stakeholders on the online platforms. On the other hand, PEI expert survey data on the use of social media to expose electoral fraud demonstrated that in East African countries where elections are rigged and manipulated - at least social networks site can be used to expose illicit act of different electoral stakeholders. On this basis, we can argue that the internet by itself and electronic citizen monitors is not panacea for all possible shortcomings of electoral procedures, but it has to be seen as one additional tool in conjunction with existing traditional methods of monitoring and disseminating information on the integrity of electoral processes.

Additionally, this paper offers potential contributions in promoting integrity of elections in East Africa by demonstrating that diffusion of technological tools enabled citizen

participation in monitoring and reporting electoral incidents, and electoral expert to judge the quality of the elections, and most notably is the use of social media platforms to expose incidents related to fraud and malpractices. Because of the recent demand for elections with integrity, citizens are digitally empowered to actively participate and contribute to an environment in which free, fair and credible elections can take place, and become less attractive for politicians, candidates, electoral management bodies, citizens and other stakeholders illicitly to interfere the process. That is why “elections which fail to reflect the values of transparency, inclusiveness and participation can be seen as lacking integrity” (Norris 2013:569). This paves the way for more use of digital method to promote integrity and adherence to the democratic principles on the conduct of elections. It has been shown that there is a positive correlation of digital adoption index and perceptions of electoral integrity in promoting free and fair elections, and even strong correlation of availability and usage of social networks. If internet use and perceptions of electoral integrity are somewhat correlated in developing or young democracies, then countries with the highest digital adoption rates of the internet use should theoretically have the highest score of electoral integrity and strong association of internet use and perceptions of electoral integrity. In this case, it is possible to conclude that diffusion of mobile innovation and social networks is a factor in detecting problems of electoral integrity, non-free and unfair conduct of elections, as well as addressing exclusion of connected citizens in electoral politics and exposing electoral fraud and malpractices that liberal democracy is facing in East African region.

Reference

- Afrobarometer Data, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, Round 6 (2014/2015): Available at: <http://www.afrobarometer.org/data>
- Bader, Max (2013): Crowdsourcing Election Monitoring in the 2011–2012 Russian Elections. In: *East European Politics*, 29(4): 521–535.
- Bailard, Catie Snow; Livingston, Steven (2014): Crowdsourcing Accountability in a Nigerian Election. In: *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 11: 349–367.
- Bakari, Mohamed; Mushi, Samwel S. (2005): Prerequisites for Democratic Consolidation in Tanzania. In: REDET *Democratic Transition in East Africa*, E&D Limited: 31-48.
- Barkan, Joel D. (1993): Kenya: Lessons From a Flawed Election. In: *Journal of Democracy*, 4(3): 85-99.
- Bimber, Bruce (2003): *Information and American Democracy: Technology in the Evolution of Political Power*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bott, Maja; Gigler, Björn-Sören; Young, Gregor (2014): The Role of Crowdsourcing for Better Governance in Fragile State Contexts. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / World Bank. Washington D.C.
- Chadwick, Andrew (2006): *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chand, Vikram K. (1997): Democratisation from the Outside in: NGO and International Efforts to Promote Open Elections. In: *Third World Quarterly*, 18(3): 543-561.

- Cowen, Michael; Laakso Liisa (2002): Elections and Election Studies in Africa. In: Michael Cowen and Liisa Laakso (eds.) *Multi-party Elections in Africa*. Palgrave Publishers Ltd.
- Dahl, Robert A. (1971): *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Yale University Press.
- Dahl, Robert A. (1989): *Democracy and Its Critics*. Yale University Press.
- Diamond, Larry (2008): The State of Democracy in Africa. Conference Report, National Intelligence Council, Ghana Center for Democratic Development.
- Diamond, Larry (2010): Liberation Technology. In: *Journal of Democracy*, 21(3): 69-83.
- Diamond, Larry (2015): Facing Up to the Democratic Recession. In: *Journal of Democracy*, 26(1): 141-155.
- Digital Adoption Index (2017): <http://wbfiles.worldbank.org/documents/dec/digital-adoption-index.html> [13.07.2017]
- Ekine, Sokar. (2010): SMS Uprising: Mobile Activism in Africa. Available online from: <http://www.pambazuka.org/activism/sms-uprising-mobile-activism-africa> [18.07.2017].
- Facebook newsroom (2014): Available: <http://newsroom.fb.com/news/2014/10/internet-org-app-launches-in-tanzania> [16.11. 2016].
- Farrell, Henry (2012): The Consequences of the Internet for Politics. In: *Annual Review of Political Science*, (15): 35-52.
- Fung, Archon (2011): Popular Election Monitoring: How Technology Can Enable Citizen Participation in Election Administration. In: Charles, Guy-Uriel E.; Gerken, Heather K.; Kang, Michael S. (eds.) *Race, Reform, and Regulation of the Electoral Processes: Recurring Puzzle in American Democracy*. Cambridge University Press: 192-208.
- Held, David (2006): *Models of Democracy*. Third Edition, Stanford University Press.
- Hermet, Guy (1978): The State Controlled Elections: A Framework. In Guy Hermet; Richard Rose; Alain Rouquié (eds.) *Elections Without Choice*. London: Macmillan Press: 1-18.
- Huntington, Samuel P. (1991): *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- ICCPR (1966): International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Available online from: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx> [22.07.2017].
- ICESCR 1966: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Available from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx> [22.7. 2017].
- ITU (2016): ICT Facts and Figures 2016. Available from: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2016.pdf> [15.09.2016].
- Kersting, Norbert (2007): Assessing Local Referendums and Innovative Participatory Instruments. In: Delwit, Pascal; Pilet, Jean-Benoit; Reynaert, Herwig; Steyvers,

- Kristof (eds.) *Towards DIY–Politics: Participatory and Direct Democracy at the Local Level in Europe*. Vanden: Broele: 31-50.
- Kersting, Norbert (2012): The Future of Electronic Democracy. In: Kersting, Norbert (ed.) *Electronic Democracy*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich: 11-54.
- Kersting, Norbert (2013a): Referendums in Africa. In: Qvortrup, Matt; Kersting, Norbert (eds.). *Referendums around the World: The Continued Growth of Direct Democracy*. Cranfield: Palgrave Macmillan: 186-206.
- Kersting, Norbert (2013b): Online Participation: From ‘Invited’ to ‘Invented’ Spaces. In: *International Journal of Electronic Governance*, 6(4): 270-280.
- Kersting, Norbert (2017): Demokratische Innovation: Qualifizierung und Anreicherung der lokalen repräsentativen Demokratie. In: Kersting, Norbert (ed.) *Urbane Innovation*. Springer VS: Wiesbaden: 81-120.
- Kersting, Norbert and Baldersheim, Harald (eds.) *Electronic Voting and Democracy: A Comparative Analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan: 3-19.
- Kersting, Norbert; Cronqvist Lasse (2005): Comparative Studies: Problem or Solution. The Political Culture of Democratization. In: Kersting, Norbert; Cronqvist, Lasse (eds.) *Democratization and Political Culture in Comparative Perspective*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: 15-36.
- Kiai, Maina (2010): The Criss in Kenya. In: Diamond, Larry; Plattner, Marc F. (eds.) *Democratization in Africa: Progress and Retreat*. Second Edition, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press: 212-218.
- Livingston, Steven (2011): Africa’s Evolving Infosystems: A Pathway to Security and Stability. Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Research Paper No. 2, Washington, D.C.
- Madar, Hassan H. (2017): Influence of New Media on Political Changes in Africa. Available online at: <https://wpmu.mah.se/nmict171group4/2017/03/01/influence-of-new-media-on-political-changes-in-africa/> [14.07.2017]
- Milakovich, Michael E. (2010): The Internet and Increased Citizen Participation in Government. In: *eJournal of eDemocracy*, 2(1): 01-09.
- Networked Readiness Index (2016): Historical Dataset. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-information-technology-report-2016/networked-readiness-index/> [22.06.2017]
- Nolle, Eva (2016): Social Media and its Influence on Democratization in Africa. Available at: <https://intpolicydigest.org/2016/08/11/social-media-influence-democratization-africa/> [14.07.2017]
- Norris, Pippa (2001): *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty and the Internet Worldwide*. Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, Pippa (2012): Political Mobilization and Social Networks. The Example of the Arab Spring. In: Norbert Kersting (ed.) *Electronic Democracy*. Barbara Budrich Publishers: Opladen: 55-76

- Norris, Pippa (2013): The New Research Agenda Studying Electoral Integrity. In: *Electoral Studies*, 32: 563-575.
- Norris, Pippa (2015): *Why Elections Fail*. Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, Pippa; Elklit, Jørgen; Reynolds, Andrew (2014): Methods and Evidence. In: Norris, Pippa; Frank, Richard W.; Martínez i Coma, Ferran (eds.) *Advancing Electoral Integrity*. Oxford University Press: 34-50.
- Norris, Pippa; Grömping, Max (2017a): Populist Threats to Electoral Integrity: The Year in Elections, 2016-2017. www.electoralintegrityproject.com
- Norris, Pippa; Grömping, Max (2017b): Perceptions of Electoral Integrity. (PEI-5.0), doi:10.7910/DVN/KI5WB4, Harvard Dataverse, V1, <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/PEI>
- Pew Research Center (2013): Emerging Nations Embrace Internet, Mobile Technology. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/02/13/emerging-nations-embrace-internet-mobile-technology/> [22.06. 2017].
- Pew Research Center (2015): Cell Phones in Africa: Communication Lifeline. Available online from: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/04/15/cell-phones-in-africa-communication-lifeline/> [22. 06. 2017].
- Pew Research Center (2016): Smartphone Ownership and Internet Usage Continues to Climb in Emerging Economies. February 2016. Available online from: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/02/22/smartphone-ownership-and-internet-usage-continues-to-climb-in-emerging-economies/> [23.07.2017].
- Sambira, Jocelyne (2013): Africa's Mobile Youth Drive Change. Available online from: <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/may-2013/africa's-mobile-youth-drive-change> [05.04. 2017].
- Schumpeter, Joseph R. (1950): *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. Third Edition, New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Shayo, Deodatus P. (2017): Crowdsourcing and Digitalization of Electoral Integrity: A Comparative Analysis of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Muenster, Germany.
- Shayo, Deodatus P.; Kersting, Norbert (2017): Crowdmonitoring of Elections through ICT: The Case of *Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* Crowdsourcing Platform in Tanzania. In: Peter Parycek and Noella Edelmann (eds.) *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government*, 17- 19 May, 2017, Danube University Krems, Austria. IEE Computer Society, Los Alamitos, California, pp.36-45.
- Shirky, Clay (2008): *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organization*. New York: Penguin Press.
- UDHR (1948): Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Available online from: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> [18.06.2017].
- United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication (2016): National Information and Communications Technology Policy. May 2016.

- Van Rensburg, Aletta H. Janse (2012): Using the Internet for Democracy: A Study of South Africa, Kenya and Zambia. In: *Global Media Journal African Edition*, 6(1): 93-117.
- World Bank Group (2016): *World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends*. Available: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2016> [15.04.2017].
- Zakaria, Fareed (1997): The Rise of Illiberal Democracy. In: *Foreign Affairs*, 76(6): 22-43.