SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

Kenya

June 2022

This report is part of a broader initiative to analyze online discourse and specifically monitor hate speech in Kenya in the lead up to the August 9th 2022 general elections in order to help mitigate the threat of hateful language in fueling violence on-the-ground.
Insights gathered from the monitoring efforts are shared with a few civil society actors to inform their interventions geared towards peacebuilding and an inclusive democracy on digital spaces

BUILD UP Λ

Exploring online discourse in Kenya- 2022

A. Media coverage of candidates on Facebook – June

The month of June saw three presidential candidates (Raila Odinga, William Ruto and George Wajackoyah) launch their political manifestos detailing their governance plans should they win the elections. This triggered multiple conversations on social media with misinformation and hateful rhetoric as online users critiqued and supported the different manifestos and ultimately increasing polarization online.

In this report we take a look at some of the polarizing political discourse on social media platforms. This first section explores the media coverage of the presidential candidates on Facebook. Facebook is selected for this section of the analysis because in Kenya 76% of adults use social media as a source of News (Statista, 2021) and according to Maseko, (2021) Facebook is a leading source for news in Kenya. The four candidates included in this analysis are the ones that have been officially cleared by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission to run for the presidential position.
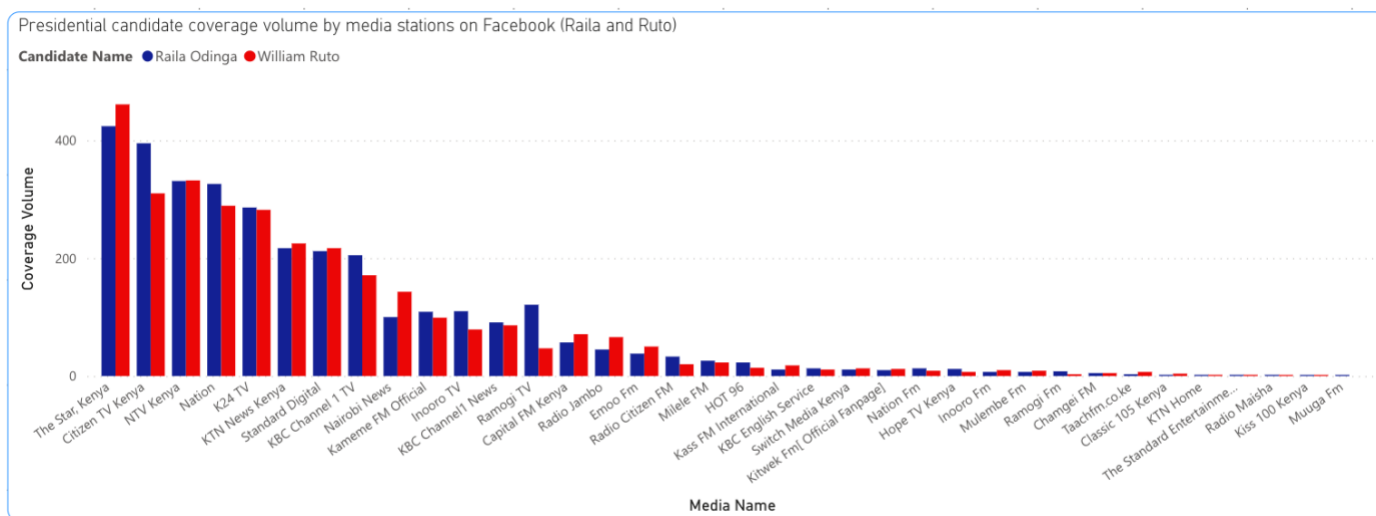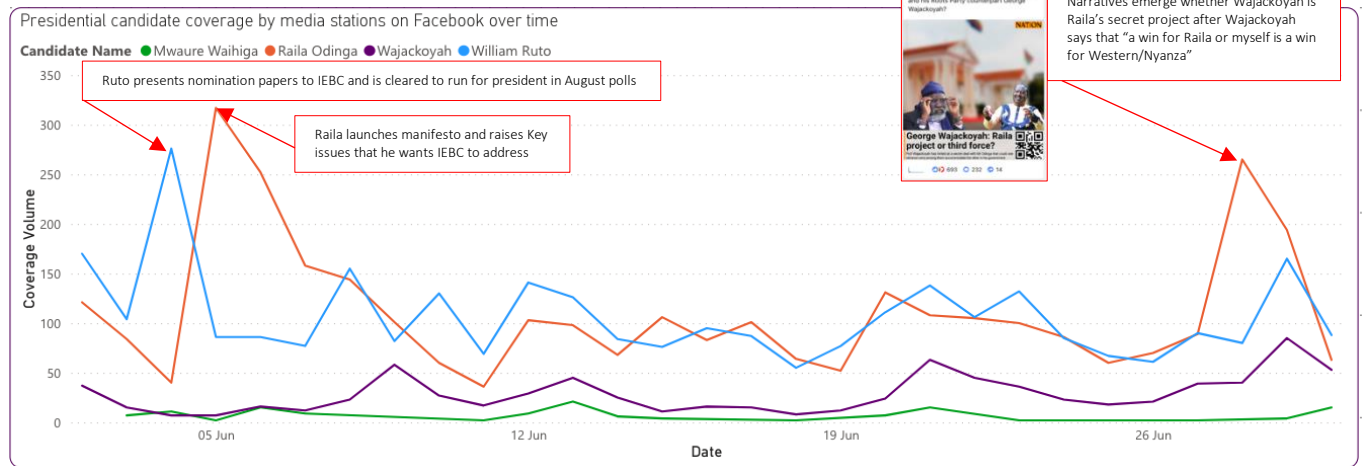

Coverage volume of Presidential candidates on Facebook
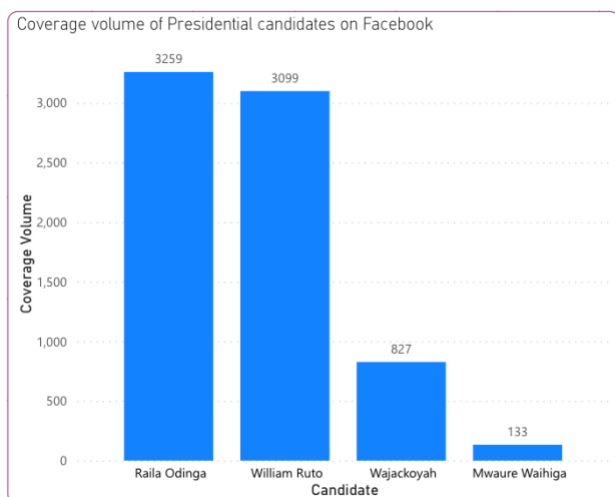
In June, Raila continued to be hold the lead as the presidential candidate receiving the most coverage by Kenyan media stations on Facebook followed closely by Ruto.

While this pattern follows the trend in the previous months, in June when we compare Ruto's coverage to Raila's we find that it increased from 46.9% to 48.7% slightly closing the gap with Raila by 2.5%.

George Wajackoyah was the third most covered candidate on Facebook and Mwaure Waihiga came in fourth.

When the data is disaggregated by specific media outlets and compared between Raila and Ruto, content about Raila Odinga continues to receive more coverage across most of the media outlets. In June, The Star led other media outlets in the coverage of the two candidates compared to May when it was Citizen TV. Ramogi TV registered the largest reporting difference between Raila and Ruto on Facebook with Raila receiving 72% coverage and Ruto 27.9%

Presidential candidate coverage volume by media stations on Facebook (Raila and Ruto)

Presidential candidate coverage by media stations on Facebook over time

Candidate Name ● Mwaure Waihiga ● Raila Odinga ● Wajackoyah ● William Ruto

Ruto presents nomination papers to IEBC and is cleared to run for president in August polls

Raila launches manifesto and raises Key issues that he wants IEBC to address

Narratives emerge whether Wajackoyah is Raila's secret project after Wajackoyah says that "a win for Raila or myself is a win for Western/Nyanza"

During this period, different events contributed to misinformation. We identified three events that resulted in a significantly higher media coverage and had also generated instances of misinformation.

Fake Academic Qualifications: As Ruto went to present his nomination papers to IEBC, narratives suggesting that his Phd was questionable/ fake emerged online. This resulted into a polarized debate with his supporters citing that Raila was the one without a degree. This conversation continued and spiked again on June 17th when a fake University of Nairobi degree with Ruto's name began circulating online. The University of Nairobi tweeted the picture of the degree with the word FAKE across it. This document emerged at around the time when Ruto claimed that Raila's degree was questionable. In a response to Ruto's claims, some Raila supporters surfaced a degree with Raila's name from Otto von Guericke technical university to prove that Raila did indeed graduate. The German university has not yet made any statement regarding this document.
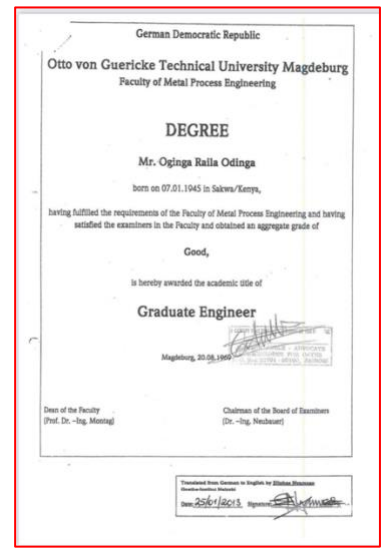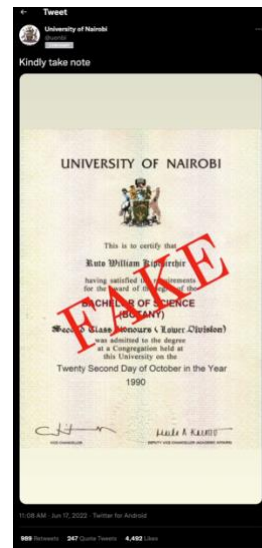
Fake Promises: After Raila Odinga launched his coalition's manifesto in early June, some social media users began terming it as a fake manifesto. These posts discredited the manifesto arguing that it was full of lies and that Raila sympathizers were faking opinion polls to control the damage made by Raila during the launch when he said he would ban second hand clothes.
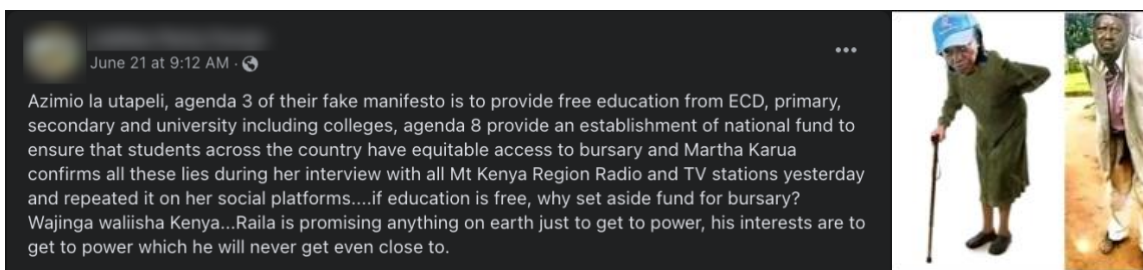
In this particular example above, we see the depiction of Martha Karua as a Cucu/Shosho (old/grandmother) that we saw in our earlier monitoring (April/May) is combined with the criticism of the party manifesto.

While critiquing a manifesto is not considered false content, it is when the criticism includes allegation of people faking opinion polls to get political millage t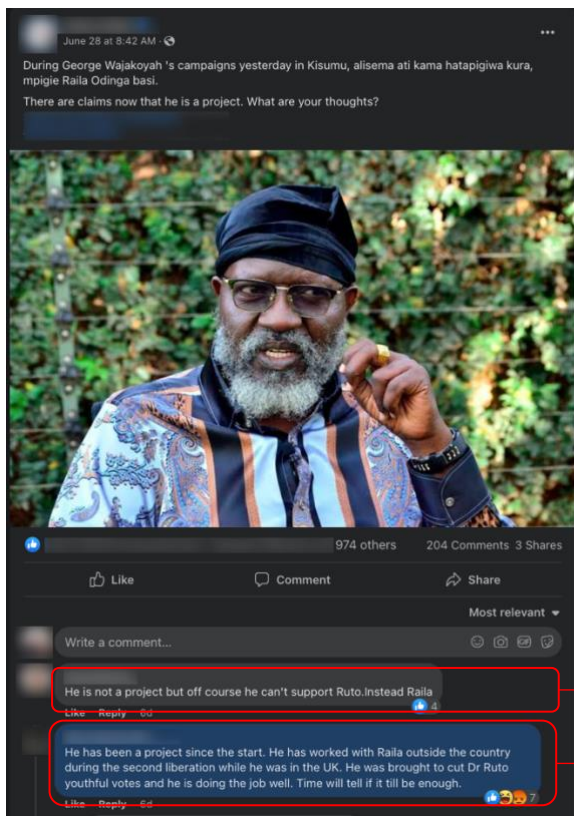hat it begins to be harmful. (See Below). We have also noted an increase in misinformation around opinion polls when they are released.

June 8 at 1:41 PM · 🌐
FACTS:
1.If you want to know that Rt.Hon. Raila Odinga has already lost the Fifth Presidency to H.E William Samoei Ruto ,just look at the manufactured fake opinions polls from Radio Africa,Mizani and Infortrak which are all owned by his sympathizers.
Also see how KEMSA thief David murathe / Hon David Murathe / David Murathe / David Murathe, EGH through his many Facebook accounts is ranting insults to any post made about fifth President William Ruto or any post made by him.

2.The manufactured opinions polls you are seeing is to counter the damage made by Raila Odinga during his manifesto launch at Nyayo Stadium when he said he ban Mitumba clothes in Republic of Kenya since they belongs to dead people if he will be elected on 9th August 2022 as fifth President,of which it is a wet dream for him.
The desperate Harambee House prefects are trying to mend the damage now and it so impossible.
Almost 50M Kenyans are either involved directly or indirectly with Mitumba clothes and going against it is the worst thing any Presidential Candidate can do and expect votes.
Raila Odinga huwa anafungua mdomo akili ikiwa imelala... ❓❓

3.Kenyans decided who is their Fifth President more than 4 years ago,and it is Dr.William Samoei Ruto.
Numbers don't lie..
So Azimio la Utapeli tulizeni boli....

NB:For the Transformation and Economic Recovery of our Nation, kindly vote H.E Dr.William Samoei Ruto as our Fifth President.

~ HUSTLER 011.

Fake Candidate: On June 28th, George Wajackoyah stated that "a win for Raila or myself is a win for Western Nyanza" among other statements that seemed to support a Raila presidency. This statement raised a lot of questions on social media that were met with claims that Wajackoyah was Raila's project deployed to sabotage Ruto's efforts in securing the hustler and youth vote. We picked up 48 posts with 1380 interactions that had generated this debate in June but have since seen a spike of this narrative in July especially after Wajakoyah and Ruto launched their manifesto on the same day.

June 28 at 8:42 AM · 🌐
During George Wajackoyah 's campaigns yesterday in Kisumu, alisema ati kama hatapigiwa kura, mpigie Raila Odinga basi.
There are claims now that he is a project. What are your thoughts?

974 others   204 Comments 3 Shares

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ↗ Share

Most relevant ▾

Write a comment...

He is not a project but off course he can't support Ruto.Instead Raila
Like · Reply · 6d

He has been a project since the start. He has worked with Raila outside the country during the second liberation while he was in the UK. He was brought to cut Dr Ruto youthful votes and he is doing the job well. Time will tell if it till be enough.
Like · Reply · 6d

Does not support the "project narrative" citing the choice of who to support

Supports the "project" narrative citing that the two have history together.

In past elections, there have been similar narratives targeting candidates and their ethnic groups. In this instance a narrative will emerge that that some presidential candidates are put up by the government or a political party to run for office, not with the intent of winning but of splitting the vote from an ethnic block in order. For instance, if a party was worried that the Luhya ethnic community was going to vote as a block for one candidate and they wanted to ensure that the candidate would not get the full Luhya vote, then they fund a Luhya candidate to "spoil the vote" and ensure that the candidate they were worried about does not get the full vote. **This has however never been ascertained to be true or false** -It is a narrative that has emerged in the past.

What is different however, in this Wajakoyah narrative is that the focus has moved from ethnicity to age (youth) and social class (hustler). That he is a project to spoil the youth and hustler's votes for Ruto through his political ideologies

B. County Level Polarization – June

During this period, we monitored content at the county level to understand how local politics were contributing to tensions online

Nairobi County

On June 19th chaos erupted at the Jacaranda grounds during the Kenya Kwanza rally as rowdy crowds from both the Azimio and Kenya Kwanza supporters clashed and engaged in violence against each other. The conflict was linked constituency level politics. The United Democratic Alliance (UDA) candidate in the upcoming Embakasi East Election Francis Mureithi booked the Jacaranda grounds to host the deputy president who was attending a church service but the incumbent member of parliament also booked the grounds on the same day. When their supporters met, it resulted in violence. Immediately the violence broke out a video began circulating on social media with a caption that implying that it was a video of the violence in Jacaranda Grounds and that Luo goons would attack Kikuyus if violence broke out again in Nairobi.

The video was found not to be from Jacaranda grounds but from Congo and was of a violent incident between two gangs[1] [2]. The video we captured here had over 10,000 views, 253 comments and 288 reactions. The video has since been reported to Meta.
Looking at the comment section, revealed commentors that believed this was true and were really worried. Another group of commenters pointed to the fact that the video was fake and not from Kenya but were mostly ignored. Then there were other commenters that believed the video was from Kenya and some suggesting that if there was violent conflict in Nairobi it would take an ethnic angle between Luos and Kikuyus, while others noting that this was just a rehearsal of what would happen if the old witch doctor becomes president.

In addition to the video, the hashtags - "*Azimio La Vita*" and "*Azimio la Fujo*" targeting Azimio la umoja as a political alliance of war/violence and blaming the alliance for the violence at Jacaranda grounds were also spreading online. These hashtags have been used in the past to link the party to violence

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[1] [No, these men are not Tutsis hunted down by Congolese](#)!
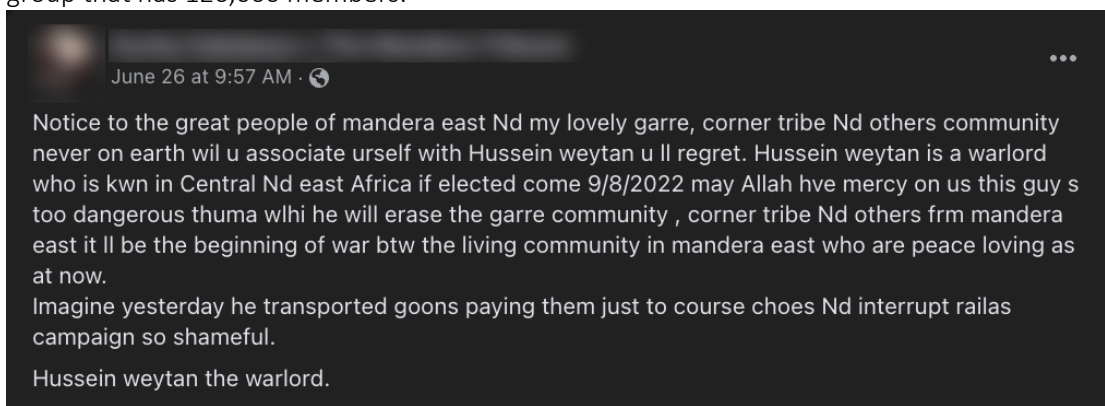
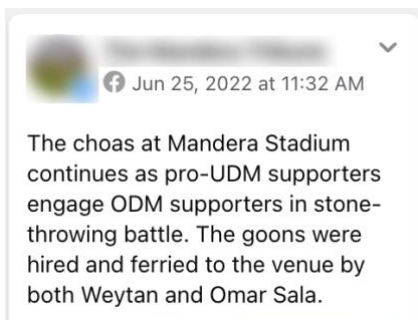[2] [Tutsis chased by Congolese machetes in hand? Attention, fake!-](#)

Mandera County

On June 25th violence broke out in Mandera county after supporters of Mandera East MP Omar Maalim of United Democratic Movement (UDM) clashed with those of his rival Hussein Weytan of ODM at the Mandera Stadium on Saturday morning. After the violence was reported, the hashtags AzimioLaFujo, AzimioLaMawe and AzimioLaVita began being used to label the Azimio La Umoja alliance. Raila was targeted as the "father of violence" in these posts.
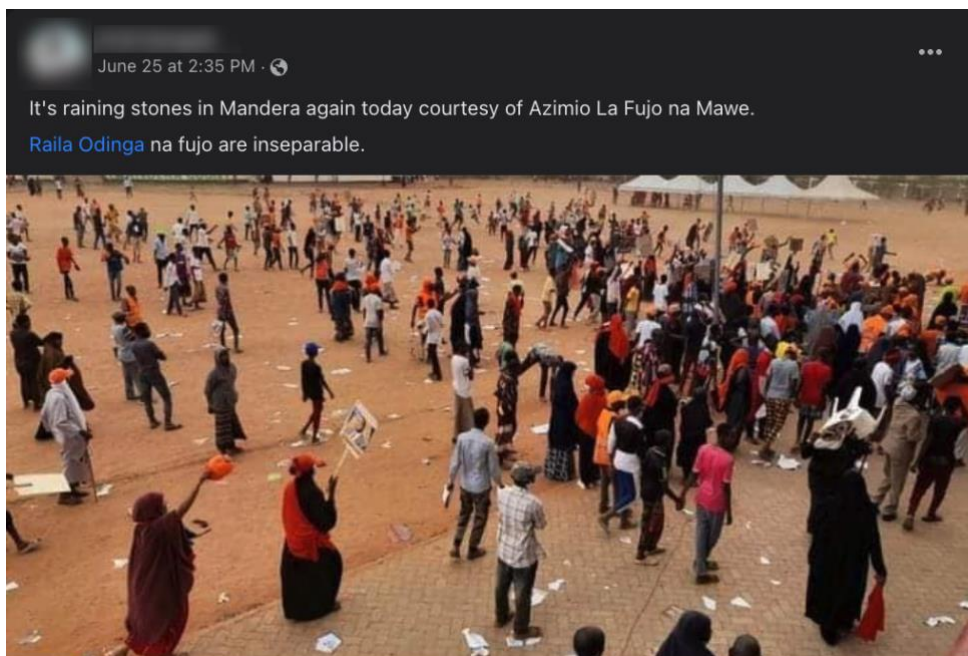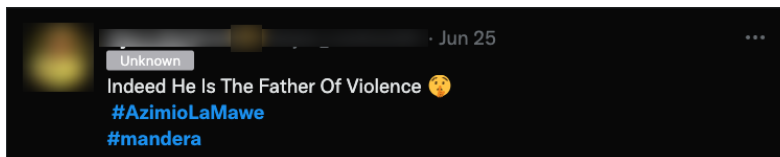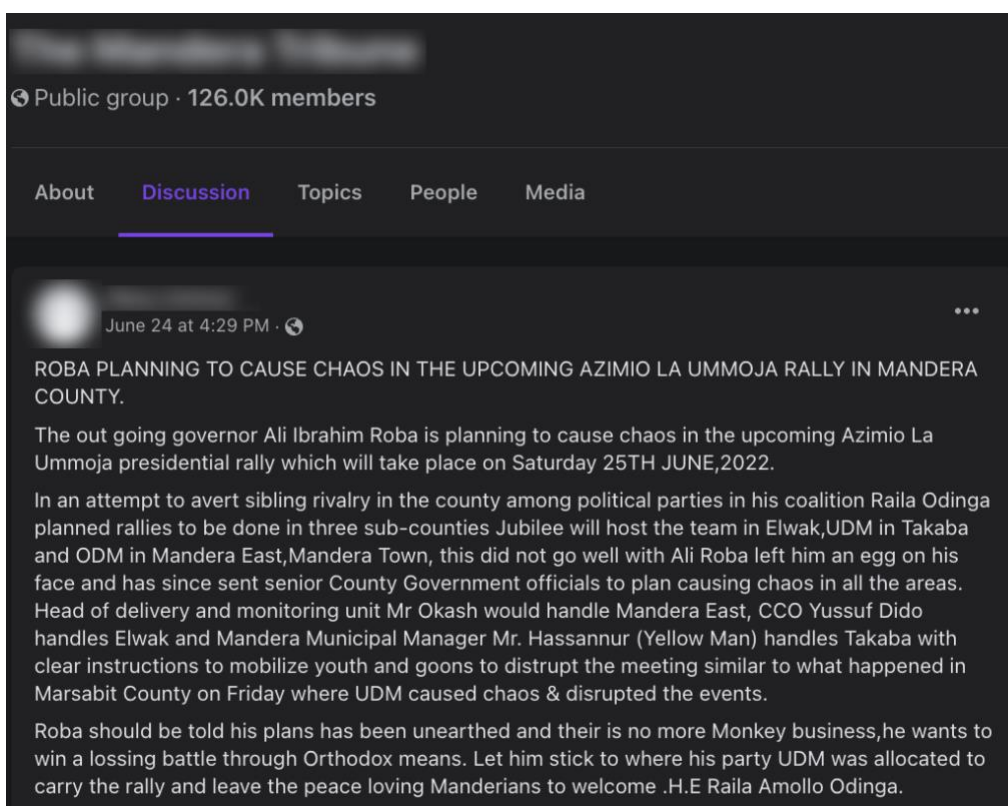

Beyond the targeting of the presidential candidate, we found interesting narratives emerging around the local politics. This one post in particular caught our attention at how the Hussein Weytan was being labeled as a warlord after the violence. The posts also suggests that there will be a war between the communities in Mandera if Weytan is elected. While smear campaigns are not new to Kenya, it's the linking of the candidate to future violence that creates opportunities for harm to be realized both online and offline. The post was shared in a group that has 126,000 members.

> **The Mandera Tribune**
> ⓕ Jun 25, 2022 at 11:32 AM
>
> The choas at Mandera Stadium continues as pro-UDM supporters engage ODM supporters in stone-throwing battle. The goons were hired and ferried to the venue by both Weytan and Omar Sala.

Another post in the same group suggested that the goons that disrupted the rally and turned it chaotic were hired by both candidates. This narrative as witnessed in 2007 and 2017 that positions both actors as responsible for the violence easily creates increase polarization because no one side accepts the blame and issues an apology without pointing to the other as also responsible, resulting into a very tense stalemate, that can spiral into more chaos.

Further social media analysis revealed that <u>someone had issued a warning on Facebook a day before the rally</u>. The person cited that; the sitting governor Ali Roba was planning to cause chaos due to internal county and party differences. The governor has not responded to any claims that he was organizer of the chaos. Early waning messages especially during elections can sometimes be ignored as an attempt to discredit an opposing candidate even in cases where heeding them can avert multiple crises.

> **The Mandera Tribune**
> ⊕ Public group · 126.0K members
>
> About   **Discussion**   Topics   People   Media
>
> June 24 at 4:29 PM · ⊕
>
> ROBA PLANNING TO CAUSE CHAOS IN THE UPCOMING AZIMIO LA UMMOJA RALLY IN MANDERA COUNTY.
>
> The out going governor Ali Ibrahim Roba is planning to cause chaos in the upcoming Azimio La Ummoja presidential rally which will take place on Saturday 25TH JUNE,2022.
>
> In an attempt to avert sibling rivalry in the county among political parties in his coalition Raila Odinga planned rallies to be done in three sub-counties Jubilee will host the team in Elwak,UDM in Takaba and ODM in Mandera East,Mandera Town, this did not go well with Ali Roba left him an egg on his face and has since sent senior County Government officials to plan causing chaos in all the areas. Head of delivery and monitoring unit Mr Okash would handle Mandera East, CCO Yussuf Dido handles Elwak and Mandera Municipal Manager Mr. Hassannur (Yellow Man) handles Takaba with clear instructions to mobilize youth and goons to distrupt the meeting similar to what happened in Marsabit County on Friday where UDM caused chaos & disrupted the events.
>
> Roba should be told his plans has been unearthed and their is no more Monkey business,he wants to win a lossing battle through Orthodox means. Let him stick to where his party UDM was allocated to carry the rally and leave the peace loving Manderians to welcome .H.E Raila Amollo Odinga.

Marsabit County

On June 23rd violent clashes erupted in Marsabit Stadium in Marsabit County. Supporters of gubernatorial aspirant Pious Yattani of UPIA party and governor Mohamud Ali's supporters with UDM party clashed at the stadium where Raila was planned to hold a rally.

Among the first narratives to emerge on social media were that, some television stations that are allied to Azimio La Umoja decided to not broadcast the violence and skew their broadcast to the peaceful part of the rally. However, they would cover violence incidents when the Kenya Kwanza coalition was involved. The post shown below was shared by a blogger with over 11,000 followers. It generated 57 comments, 4 shares and 459 likes.

This type of narrative has been used in the past to plant doubt in the independence of the media during election time. Offline, we have been informed that a similar narrative is quite strong- rural communities believe that the main stream media is not broadcasting the violence cases due to government restrictions.
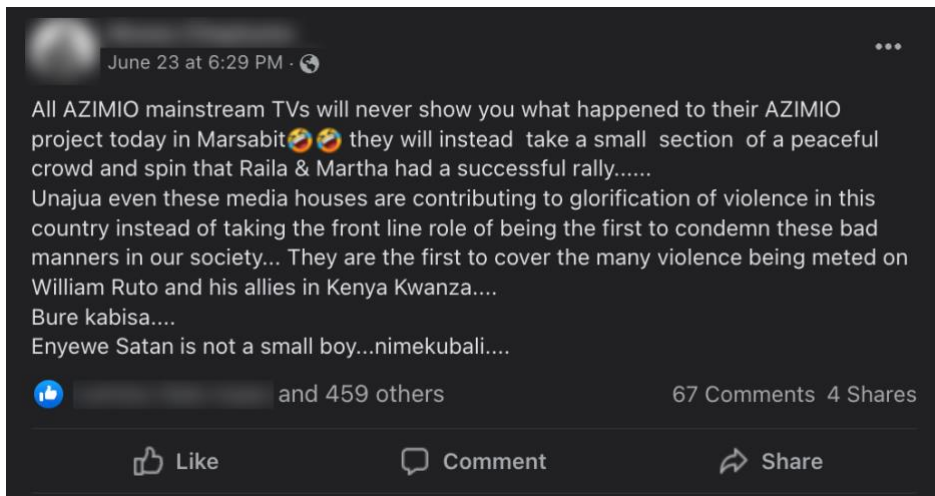
Our analysis further showed blame being thrown at both the incumbent governor and his opposition as either one being responsible for planning the violence. One video was circulated and each camp gave it a different narrative stating it was the other that was responsible. In this era of mis/disinformation a piece of information is given multiple realities to fit a particular narrative[3].
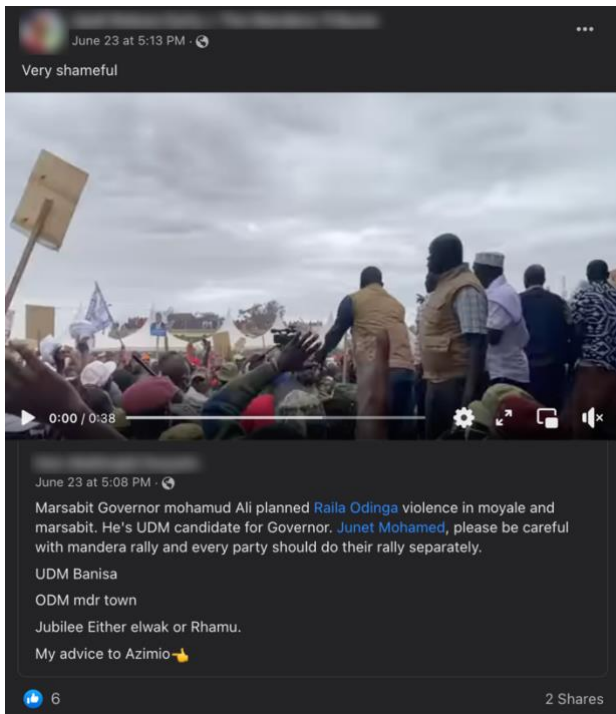
Post 1- Narrative 1
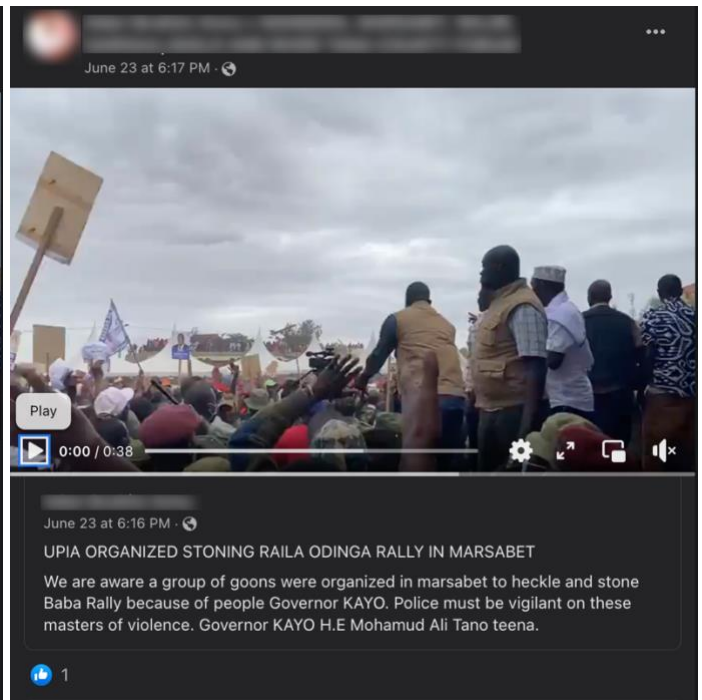
Post 2- Narrative 2

 The first post blames incumbent governor Mohamud Ali for the chaos while the second post blames the UPIA party that Pious Yattani is contesting the gubernatorial seat with. Both posts use the same video. The video was

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3 See Ben Nimmo's 4Ds of Propaganda- Ben Nimmo, Anatomy of an Info-War: How Russia's Propaganda Machine Works, and How to Counter It, Stop Fake, May 19 2015 - original description of the 4Ds

posted 6 times in groups that totaled 133,100 followers. 4 videos contained narrative 1 while 2 videos had narrative 2

It is also important to note that in the three instances of violent clashed the following hashtags were being used interchangeably on Twitter
#RejectRailaOdinga, #Rejectkuzimia, #AzimioLaVita, #AzimioLamawe, #AzimioLaFujo, #Rejectmartharao

On TikTok we found the #azimiolamawe hashtag being used to compare women politicians in the Kenya Kwanza coalition and Azimio la umoja . This Tiktok video captured below had 439,000 views , over 8000 likes and over 200 comments- This content matches the pattern of previous content on Twitter and Facebook where younger female politicians were given names such as slay queens and socialites and compared to older politicians that were labeled as ugly and old.

Uasin Gishu County

In Uasin Gishu county, Jonathan Chelilim, the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) candidate running for the gubernatorial seat was targeted on Facebook with using inciteful rhetoric to the residents of Eldoret.
The post below was circulated on Facebook, resulting in a debate on the message we was trying to pass and to

who. There were 13 posts on Facebook with this image that had begun spread and some of the captions that accompanied the post were;
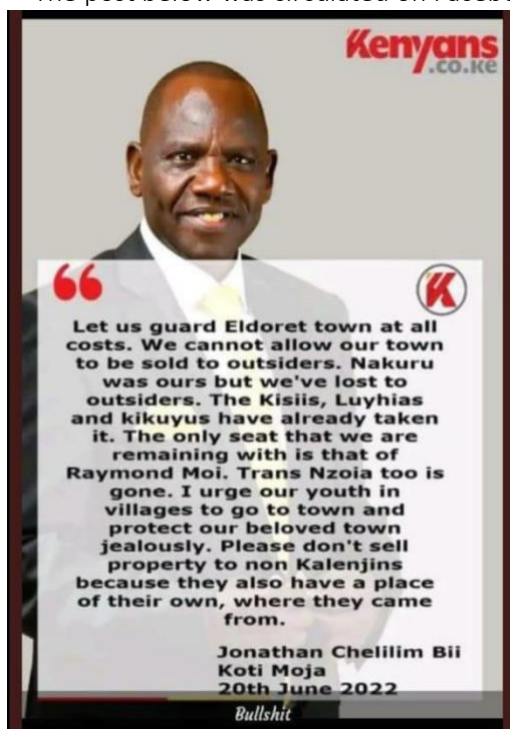
- *Huyu pia n mkenya 🤣🤣🤣UDA mko na maneno kweli .Hii manifesto n Kali . 🤣🤣😳😳.Be careful outsiders !!— feeling sad.*

-Wameanzia vitisho mapema aje? 🙄🙄🙄
#teamuongo
#TukoMacho

-Kenyans we should condemn and rebuke in strongest term the Leaders who are inciting their people to hate other tribes and calling them Outsiders. Leaders like this should have been arrested and face trial as an example to others. We are all Kenyans and have the rights to buy and to have properties anywhere.

-Çhelilim the gOD of hate speech

-WAKIKUYU MUKO NA AKILI KWELI KAMA HII NGOMBE INAONGRA HIVI
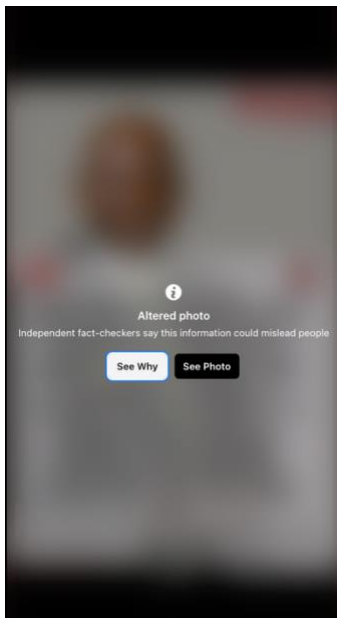
We reported this post to Meta and they responded by including stating: Altered photo- Independent Fact checkers say this information could mislead people. Important to note is that Uasin Gishu county has been labeled as county at risk of violent conflict by government institution and local peacebuilders. With this context, a post like this can easily stir up tensions that could lead to violent conflict.

The fact that people were posting the image with a caption like ***Another "KIAMBAA CHURCH" roasting loading! Be weary*** 😫***!*** Triggers memories of the 2007/8 post-election violence where 50 people were burned inside a church in Kiambaa, Uasin Gishu county and suggests that they believe that the message in the image is real and was uttered by the politician.

Manifesto Launch

On June 30th the Kenya Kwanza Alliance launched its manifesto to Kenyans. On the same day the Roots party led by George Wajackoya launched its manifesto as well. During the launches the hashtag #liefesto[4] began trending on Twitter targeting the Kenya Kwanza Alliance. A variation of this hashtag was #mahenifesto[5].
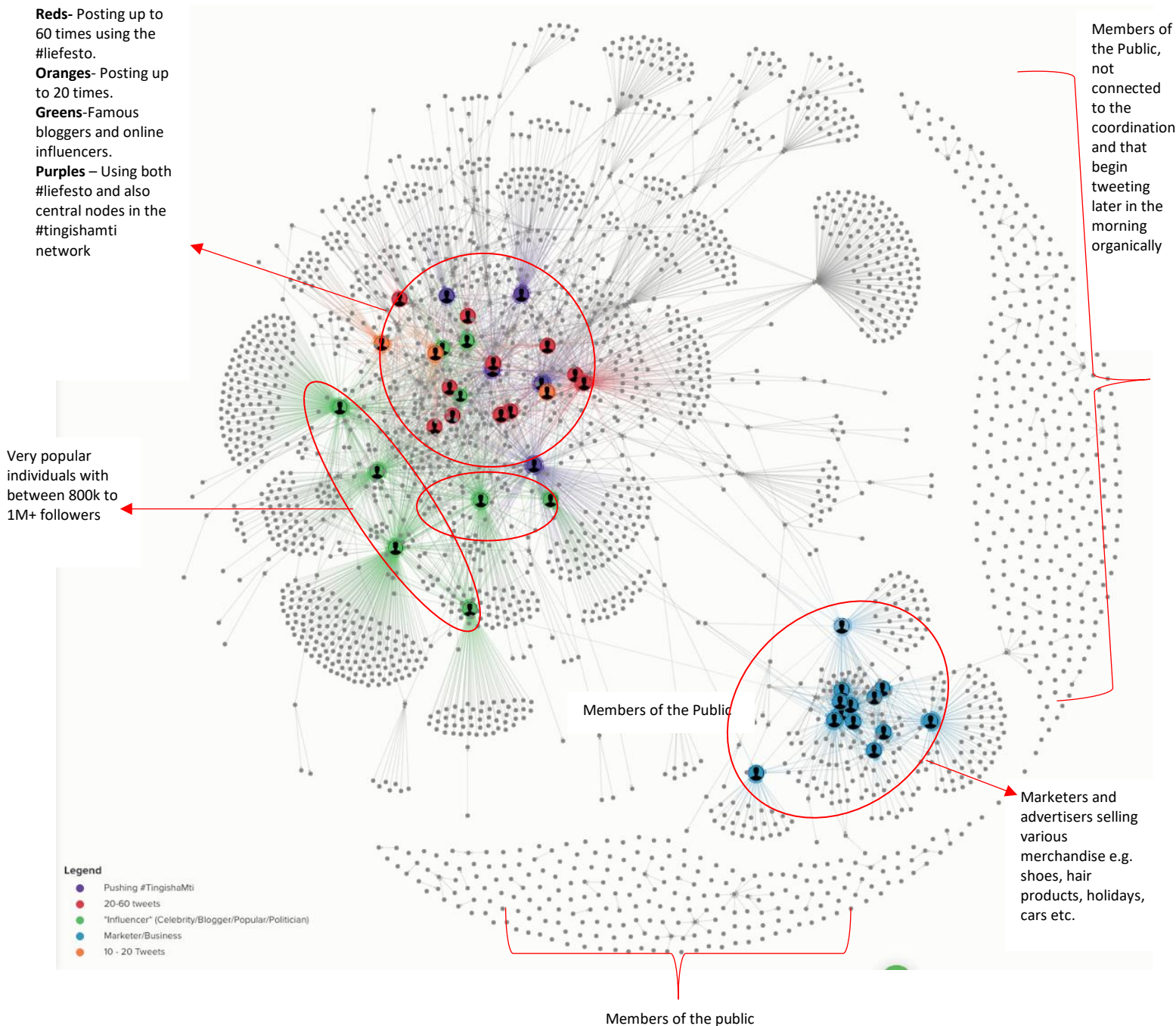
When we analysed these hashtags we found an organized network of actors pushing this narrative to stifle a healthy conversation around the Kenya Kwanza manifesto, similar to the reaction Raila's camp received after they launched their manifesto. As the same time #tingizamti[6] -from the roots party was also trending, however it was not an attack but a show of support to the roots party.
A look at how the hashtags were used revealed there was coordination on twitter to drown out the Kenya Kwanza conversation by targeting the party with #liefesto while supporting the roots party through the hashtag #tingizamti. The network map below captures the nodes using the #liefesto hashtag and explains the different key actors that helped the hashtag flood the conversation on twitter regarding the Kenya Kwanza manifesto.

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[4] *Liefesto is a combination of the word lies and manifesto, to mean that the party's manifesto is full of lies.*

[5] *Mahenifesto is a combination of the word maheni – (a kikuyu word meaning lies) and manifesto with the same MO as liefesto*

[6] *#tingizamti (shake the tree) was a phrase popularized by Wajackoya during the launch of his manifesto and was used to show support of the roots party.*

Reds- Posting up to 60 times using the #liefesto.
Oranges- Posting up to 20 times.
Greens- Famous bloggers and online influencers.
Purples – Using both #liefesto and also central nodes in the #tingishamti network

Members of the Public, not connected to the coordination and that begin tweeting later in the morning organically

Very popular individuals with between 800k to 1M+ followers

Members of the Public

Marketers and advertisers selling various merchandise e.g. shoes, hair products, holidays, cars etc.

Legend
- Pushing #TingishaMti
- 20-60 tweets
- "Influencer" (Celebrity/Blogger/Popular/Politician)
- Marketer/Business
- 10 - 20 Tweets

Members of the public

At the dense end of the network, we found the "reds" that were rapidly tweeting and retweeting each other using the hashtag and they had between 20-60 tweets per account. They were followed by the oranges that had 10-20 tweets per account. These nodes had followers ranging from 5000 to 30,000. As they were tweeting, they were joined by the "purples" who had 3-10 tweets but the purples were also pushing another hashtag - #tingizamti. This triggered the narrative seen under the section "fake candidate" (see page 3), where Wajackoya was labeled a spoiler and Raila's supporter. We looked at the twitter network for #tingizamti and found the purples at the center of that network as well.

The very popular "greens" had 1-4 tweets that were amplified and retweeted by their massive followers. They are however, not at the center of the dense network but slightly outside but still supporting the center. In the

past we have witnessed these accounts show up in support of a trend usually in major political/ social events e.g. when the Raila and Ruto announced their running mates, when the Senator for Meru county used an inflammatory slur in Eldoret etc.

The "blues" are the joyriders of the hashtag. Jean Githae[7] and her team have a name for these guys the ambulance chasers They turn on social media and see a trending hashtag and use the hashtag to sell their products. They also have a significant level of organization in their cluster to retweet each other and support each other's products. But it contributes to the spread of a hashtag.

Finally, there is the Kenyan public that will engage with the hashtag in an organic way later in the day. Many will believe that the hashtag is a sign of consensus on a certain topic, for instance that the manifesto was full of lies or in relation to #Tingizamti that most people liked the Root's party manifesto.

What this level of coordination and targeting does is drown out other voices in the conversation by warping realities by manufacturing consensus.

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[7] The African Investigative Journalism Conference (2021) - *Nairobi - The techniques of political mis/disinformation campaigns in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIzgHen6xig (Starting from the 9:30 mark)*

Methodology

This report is part of a broader initiative to analyze online discourse and specifically monitor hate speech in Kenya in the lead up to the general elections in order to help mitigate the threat of hateful language in fueling violence offline. Hate speech in this context is defined using section 13 of the National Cohesion and Integration Act, where the threshold is underlined by proof that the speech or expression threatens, abuses or insults others based on their ethnicity, and must be intended to stir up ethnic hatred, OR, under section. 62, inciting ethnic hatred, hostility or violence. The report also acknowledges the role of "dangerous speech," which is a heightened form of hate speech that can catalyze mass violence.

The report provides an analysis of digital and social media discourse related to the electoral process over a 30-day period, including search trends on digital platforms, social media conversations and popular digital news content. Content is tracked using different newsgathering tools that are centered and deployed by a media monitoring process called Phoenix. Twitter is monitored through twint, Facebook and Instagram are monitored through the Crowdtangle platform, WhatsApp insights are gathered through anecdotes from community networks and from third party fact checking reports- No data is scraped from WhatsApp. Telegram is monitored via TGStat API, YouTube is also monitored through its API, while TikTok content is scraped directly from the platform using a browser plug in.
The resulting monitoring loop (keywords and selected tools) allows the process to track relevant online discourse data including social media posts, comments or articles. Data collected is analyzed to
identify harmful content and developing themes or trends related to the elections and is analyzed for volume, engagements generated, networked patterns, sentiment of conversation, user comments and reactions. Where sentiment and tone analysis are included, they are gathered and generated by humans.
Due to the sensitivity, utility and relevance of the content and context, the report is scaled to only show a snapshot of Facebook and Twitter trends. For a full report with Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube that includes the network analytics kindly make a request using the email below.

For any comments or questions about this report, or to be removed from the distribution
list, please contact Caleb Gichuhi at caleb@howtobuildup.org

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The African Investigative Journalism Conference (2021) - Nairobi - The techniques of political mis/disinformation campaigns in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIzgHen6xig (Starting from the 9:30 mark)