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Constructing and Defending Gender Justice Narratives on Facebook: A Digital Ethnographic Study of Kenyan Feminist Organisations

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Author: Saul Kiptoo Kogei

Supervisor: Oscar Andersson

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Abstract

Around the world, hard-won feminist progress is facing an organised and severe backlash. This thesis examines how formal feminist organisations in Kenya construct, defend, and sustain gender-justice narratives on Facebook amid a challenging "post-truth" digital landscape. Drawing on Nancy Fraser's theory of subaltern counterpublics and employing digital ethnography, the study investigates how these organisations adapt their messaging, respond to online backlash, and navigate platform affordances to create both safe spaces and sites of agitation. Key findings reveal that these Kenyan feminist organisations strategically vernacularize advocacy language, employ visual storytelling, and curate digital "safe houses" to foster solidarity and resilience among followers while managing backlash and algorithmic constraints. The study identifies the dual role of digital platforms as both refuge and battleground, highlighting the extensive affective and logistical labour required to sustain digital activism in the face of networked misogyny and algorithmic suppression. By presenting the lived experiences and tactical innovations of formal feminist organisations, this thesis advances understanding of digital counterpublics and hybrid activism in the Global South. It concludes that while digital spaces offer potential for collective empowerment and mobilisation, their liberatory promise can only be realised through intersectional practices that centre the needs and voices of the most marginalised.

Keywords: Feminist campaign, Gender-justice, Digital Ethnography, Subaltern Counterpublics, Post-truths.

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List of Key Concepts and Definitions as used in the study

i. Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Any harmful act directed at an individual based on their gender, encompassing physical, sexual, emotional, or economic abuse. GBV often reflects and reinforces gender inequality and discrimination.

ii. Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TF-GBV): Acts of GBV that are enabled, amplified, or perpetrated through digital technologies such as social media, messaging apps, or other online platforms. Examples include cyberbullying, online harassment, doxxing, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and stalking.

iii. Feminicide/Femicide: The intentional killing of women or girls because of their gender. Recognised as an extreme form of gender-based violence, femicide is often perpetrated in contexts where misogyny and gender inequality are prevalent.

iv. Gender Justice: The pursuit of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all genders. Gender justice seeks to address and dismantle systems of oppression and discrimination based on gender.

v. Digital Activism: Collective action that utilises internet platforms and digital tools to promote social or political change. In this context, it specifically refers to feminist activism conducted online, particularly through social media campaigns.

vi. Hashtag Activism: The use of hashtags on social media platforms to raise awareness, mobilise support, and foster collective identity around a social or political issue. Examples include #EndFemicideKE and #MyDressMyChoice.

vii. Counterpublics / Subaltern Counterpublics: Parallel discursive arenas where members of marginalised or subordinated social groups create and circulate counter-discourses, allowing them to develop oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs. (Nancy Fraser, 1990)

viii. Vernacularization: The process of translating global or technical concepts into local, everyday language and idioms to make them accessible and relatable to grassroots audiences.

ix. Hybrid Activism: The integration of online (digital) and offline (physical) activism to create a combined strategy for mobilisation and advocacy.

x. Digital Safe Houses: Curated online spaces (such as Facebook pages) designed to provide protection, solidarity, and a sense of safety for activists and survivors of violence. These spaces are actively moderated to minimise harm and foster supportive community interactions.

xi. Affective Moderation: The emotional and logistical labour involved in managing digital communities, especially in contexts of trauma, backlash, and online harassment. Moderators perform care work to protect both community members and themselves.

xii. Algorithmic Affordances: The technical features and constraints of digital platforms (e.g., Facebook algorithms) that influence what content is visible, how campaigns spread, and how communities interact online.

xiii. Vernacular Counter-Language: The deliberate use of locally understood expressions, slang (such as Sheng in Kenya), or idioms to communicate advocacy messages in a way that resonates with non-elite or grassroots audiences.

xiv. Table Banking: A community-based financial model, especially prevalent among women in rural Kenya, where members meet regularly to pool savings, repay loans, and immediately lend funds to one another.

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“the digital no longer serves as a useful separable feature distinguishing a type of work. Work today always entails the digital, even when the work itself does not directly involve a computing device.”

(Orlikowski and Scott 2016, 88)

1.0 Introduction

In the contemporary "post-truth" world, emotion and personal beliefs compete with objective facts in shaping public opinion. Misinformation and populism on social media often fuel this trend, making the accuracy of information less important. Unfortunately, with this trend, feminism has borne the brunt of it with what scholars refer to as the “post-truth anti-feminism” or “networked misogyny” (Ging, 2019; Marwick & Caplan,2018). Feminist progress is being pushed back further by anti-feminist groups, who have adopted a tactic of using “righteous outrage.” Some of these patriarchal, retrogressive, and repressive groups define themselves as “pro-family,” “traditionalists,” or defenders of “free speech” (Evans & Riley, 2020) to further conceal their true intentions and reinforce the existing patriarchal structure, reversing the already limited advances made by feminism around the world. As a result, feminist online campaigns have become more than merely a means of bringing about societal change. Concerningly, though, such campaigns have become the most targeted by trolling, backlash, harassment, and disinformation campaigns from these anti-feminist groups. Countering this, feminists have fought to bring about change even in the face of these hindrances and the so-called “righteous outrage.” Accordingly, feminists continue to mobilise through online public activism, creating campaigns that have altered the narrative and addressed the inequities women face (Nyabola, 2018).

This thesis investigated how registered feminist NGOs (herein, formal feminist organisations) in Kenya shaped and defended gender-justice narratives campaigns on Facebook. To do so, it centred on the digital strategies of these formal feminist organisations for constructing and protecting gender-justice narratives, focusing on responses to digital challenges and core strategies. In this case, gender

justice refers to equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all genders (Thory & Manda, 2020). For these reasons, the data collected were social media posts on Facebook that called for, advocated for, or championed gender equality in all aspects of life, interviews with their leaders, and my own field notes from my unobtrusive online observations.

Indeed, campaigns that previously operated solely in analogue spaces can now operate in digital and combined formats (online and offline), where contestation and mobilisation for gender justice occur simultaneously. In this combined activism, referred to herein as hybrid activism, digital and offline activism are integrated. Hence, digital activism may use the internet and social media to build awareness and recruit, while offline activism may include marches, protests, and community meetings (Caren et al.,2020).

To further contextualise, drawing on Mendes et al. (2019), digital feminist activism is a results-oriented, deliberate approach that uses the internet and social media to facilitate and channel collective action among transnational and intersectional feminists in the struggle against male-dominated systems. Kenya has developed rapidly over the last 10 years as a major force in tech, including in other fields such as digital political advocacy (Nayabola, 2018). For instance, the term Silicon Savannah has been coined to reflect its standing relative to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa (Littlewood & Kiyumbu, 2018; Poggiali, 2016; Okech, 2023). Okech (2023) describes Nairobi as a site of "livestreamed revolutions," where digital counterpublics include phenomena that radically transform communications. Consequently, much of Kenyan digital feminist activism has utilised digital advocacy tools developed by the tech market to challenge deeply embedded patriarchy. Although the positive effects of this technical innovation are evident, according to Ingutia (2025), more needs to be done.

The emergence of digital protests such as #MyDressMyChoice in 2014 and the #EndFemicideKE marches in 2024 demonstrates how internet platforms now function as parallel arenas for dialogue. Through these platforms, marginalised groups, such as Kenyan feminist groups, can craft counter-narratives about identity and needs. Nyabola (2018) argues that these campaigns can address existing power

imbalances, particularly gender-based ones, and empower women by raising societal consciousness and galvanising active participation. Concerningly, social media activists and feminist groups rely on the most basic engagement metrics, such as likes, shares, and retweets of a hashtag, to gauge the success of their activism (Balkaran & Masha, 2025; Okech, 2021; Ligaga, 2025). The meaning of most usage metrics is mainly a measure of reach, not the level of discourse or the degree of social engagement.

Herein lies the problem: previous research has mainly focused on spontaneous hashtag activism by individual activists and viral content in Kenya (Kamau, 2016; Nyabola, 2018; Littlewood & Kiyumbu, 2018; Kanyogo, 2019; Okech, 2021), relying exclusively on metrics such as the number of *shares* and *likes* to gauge campaign success. Moreover, another scholarly area investigates women's purposeful use of digital domains, such as social media, to evade what Nyabola (2023) refers to as traditional gatekeepers, address online gender-based violence (Magenya & Hussen, 2022), and establish digital counterpublics (Mendenhall et al., 2025), which are all important. Nonetheless, a significant gap exists regarding the digital practices of formal feminist organisations. Specifically, there is limited research on how these organisations create, adapt, and respond to content on their social media platforms, such as Facebook. This study concentrates on these legacy platforms, which function as the primary historical archives of Kenyan feminist discourse and mobilisation. Available research does not provide accounts of coping, such as the tactical balancing of public activism with internal safe space, the evasive algorithmic silencing, the estimation of digital reach, the psychological health support for staff, and staff's coping with public online harassment backlash. Nyabola (2018) draws attention to the many dangers of publicly identifying as a feminist in Kenya. Many of these activists are pseudonymous. On the other hand, formal organisations do not afford this level of anonymity.

This absence of inquiry into the organisational logic behind the scenes, for example, in decision-making and internal digital safety, means that available research remains superficial, focusing only on visibility and virality. In this regard, a significant gap persists in understanding how ideas like subaltern counterpublics

adapt and endure in the current hostile digital environments faced by feminist groups and organisations. The main argument is that Kenyan formal feminist organisations systematically use digital strategies, such as online campaigns, to construct, defend, and sustain gender-justice narratives in the face of digital backlash and operational risks. Importantly, through digital ethnography, the study clarifies these operational methods, which occur behind the scenes, providing targeted insights for Gender Studies and Social Work and fitting neatly within the broad theme of the Person-in-Environment Perspective.

Therefore, I selected 30 feminist organisations to collect their digital artefacts (see appendices 3-4). Of these, I interviewed 5 in Nairobi, Kenya, who attract significant digital engagement and have demonstrated activism in digital feminist campaigns. I chose two hashtags as the basis for my primary data collection in this study, namely #EndFemicideKE and #StopKillingWomen, which document the participatory actions of the aforementioned organisations and were used on social media to coordinate physical marches across 44 countries (see Appendix). Conceptually, I draw on Nancy Fraser's (1990) theory of subaltern counterpublics to examine the twofold nature of feminist digital activism: both as spaces of safety and as sites of agitation. Nancy Fraser argues that the “dual character” of counterpublics is characteristic of stratified societies. On the one hand, counterpublics “function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment.” On the other hand, counterpublics also “function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics” (Fraser, 1990, p. 68). The study observed all the required ethical issues.

1.1 Purpose and Research Questions

This thesis research investigated how formal feminist organisations in Kenya used Facebook platforms to post gender justice campaigns that shaped and sustained counterpublics as part of their advocacy. Importantly, the primary focus of this thesis was on how these organisations adapted messaging posts and developed practices to manage backlash, implement safety measures, and interpret online affordances for gender justice. For this reason, this thesis utilised digital ethnography as a method, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with the leadership of these organisations. The following research questions were thus presented as follows-

i. RQ1: In what ways do organisations modify their feminist counter-discourses on Facebook for different audience segments on the platform?
ii. RQ2: How does organised online backlash affect the visibility and framing of Kenyan formal feminists' digital activism?
iii. RQ3: What internal procedures do Kenyan formal feminist organisations use to manage public anger and maintain digital "safe houses"?
iv. RQ4: How do feminist organisational leaders perceive and navigate algorithmic affordances?

1.2 Disposition

This study is organised as follows: first, a review of previous studies is presented. This section provides a narrative literature review of studies on the digital activism landscape. This is followed by the theoretical framework that guided the study, which draws on Nancy Fraser's (1990) concept of subaltern counterpublics to examine the double nature of feminist digital activism: both as spaces of safety and as sites of agitation. Thereafter, in the methods section, digital ethnography is discussed, and the section concludes with a clear elaboration of how the study adhered to and addressed ethical issues. The next section presents the results and analysis, followed by the concluding discussion in the final chapter. The study's bibliography follows, and thereafter the appendices.

2.0 Literature Review

This chapter opens with a narrative literature review of research on feminist digital activism. It first outlines the following: (1) Digital feminist campaigns are formed by intersectionality and hashtag activism; (2) Counterpublics and networked affordances drive activism's form and reach; (3) The literature transitions from global to African regional and finally to local Kenyan perspectives, taking into account its sociopolitical context. The review explicitly examines how these areas of scholarship inform, differ from, or leave gaps regarding formal feminist organisations in Kenya as a counterpublic. Despite growth in the literature on digital feminist activism, a key gap remains in how formal feminist organisations in Kenya use digital and hybrid spaces to create counterpublics, address local intersectional issues, and shape digital and offline realities. There is limited empirical research on Kenya's socio-political realities as well as the lived experiences, strategies, and conflicts faced by such organisations.

Numerous empirical gaps continue in the growing body of literature. In particular, research remains insufficient on how formal feminist organisations in Kenya develop strategies to engage with digital and hybrid spaces, especially given political and gender-based backlash. Insufficient attention is also given to how these organisations manage intersectional issues of ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and geography. Furthermore, tensions arising from contestations over access, representation, and sustainability amid online activism and offline mobilisation are underexplored. This lack of inquiry into organisations' digital safety, particularly the absence of internal structures, was the focus of the current analysis. There is also a lack of research on other forms of digital surveillance, trolling, the constraints of digital media, and the role of researchers in digital feminist campaigns. The lack of interest in activists' and advocates' intra-movement relations, their relations with other counterpublics, and advocates' participation in feminist organisations stressed the need for research.

These unanswered questions warrant research, specifically in the Kenyan context, of how formal feminist organisations engage in digital activism and form counterpublics. In the context of this study, 'formal feminist organisations', as noted

earlier, are defined as registered entities such as NGOs, trusts, associations, and other legally recognised groups that have an explicit feminist mandate, structured leadership, and established organisational procedures. Therefore, in response to this gap, this study researches their digital activism strategies and the ways they form counterpublics. Through digital ethnography, the study then provides detailed, contextual accounts of these organisations' experiences and practices.

The review explores the shift from single-issue to multi-issue campaigns in online activism, focusing on the digital activism of racialised, gendered, aged, locationally marginalised, and other oppressed groups. It then examines hashtags and counterpublics, showing how marginalised users on Facebook challenge hegemonic power. The chapter ends by examining how activist feminist discourses are enabled or constrained by network affordances and performances.

After examining the literature, this chapter outlines the theoretical framework that underpins this study. Based on Fraser's theory of subaltern counterpublics, this thesis treats feminist digital activism as both safe spaces and sites of agitation (Fraser, 1990), which in turn dictates how to analyse formal feminist organisations in Kenya. During the literature search, the following keywords were used in various open-access scholarly databases: “digital feminism,” “online feminism,” “cyber feminism,” “intersectionality,” “hashtags,” “counterpublics,” “affordance,” “networked,” and “performance.” Searches were limited to the years 2010 to 2025. To ensure academic integrity, I excluded non-English articles and non-peer-reviewed articles. It should also be noted that, although this is intentional, focusing on Kenya and Africa as a whole regionally centres the research. At the same time, comparative literature is included only when it is directly pertinent. I accept that the decision to include only work published in English is a limitation, and I have noted it.

2.0.1 What is digital feminist activism?

Digital feminist activism is collective action using internet platforms to challenge patriarchy and other forms of gender injustices (Parry et al., 2018; Mendes et al., 2019; Fotopoulou, 2016; Jackson et al., 2020). Accordingly, it includes community learning (Simões et al., 2021), feminist education (Mendes et

al., 2019), and awareness-raising (Sylvina et al., 2023; Baer, 2015). Clark-Parsons (2022) calls it "Do-it-ourselves". This activism is complex, visible, and affected by gender, age, and class barriers (Mendes et al., 2019). Back-end labour often goes unnoticed and, as Jouët (2018) notes, is precarious, invisible, and time-intensive.

Despite delivering important insights, literature has considerable limitations and biases. Notably, much of the existing literature is embedded in the Global North context. As such, it may overlook the specific sociopolitical, cultural and technological issues unique to African and other non-Western contexts. Additionally, several authors examine prominent campaigns, neglecting grassroots and informal activism. With that said, prominent digital practices may lead to the undervaluation of offline organising and of those excluded from the digital domain due to systemic and/or traditional factors. These issues indicate a lack of a contextual and intersectional approach, particularly in overlooked areas such as Kenya.

It follows, therefore, that this literature review is structured around three main concepts that best correspond to the study objectives: intersectional digital activism, hashtags and counterpublics, and data network affordance and performance.

2.1 Previous research

2.1.1 Intersectional digital activism

Intersectional digital activism shows a clear shift, moving from a critical to a fully participatory approach, grounded in evidence and aimed at influencing the digital domain in which we operate. In this regard, Fabbri (2022), Vardeman and Sebesta (2020), and More (2023) are among a growing number of scholars who have recently noted that online activism is steadily focused on and handling interlocking and opposing phenomena such as race, class, and gender. For example, Yin & Sun (2020) propose an intersectional digital feminist framework that adopts an integrative approach to evaluating feminist actions and protests in the digital period, considering impact/backlash, inclusion/exclusion, and visibility/invisibility. The authors analyse the MeToo movement in China and identify a technological paradox: technology enables women to speak out and be heard about violence, but

in the same manner, it consistently silences rural and working-class women. This indicates that technology, in and of itself, does not change the prevailing political economy, pointing to the necessity of intersectional digitised activism. Likewise, Ragnedda et al. (2022) argue that increasingly inclusive, targeted frameworks are to be situational, specifying particular political and chronological contexts. They contend that digital visibility must translate to actual improvements for the disadvantaged and marginalised

Across borders, research shows that digital translation is becoming increasingly complex and sometimes departing from its radical academic roots. For example, Kanai (2020), in his study of retheorizing and translating intersectionality in digital feminist knowledge and cultures, warns that in the Australian digital blogosphere, intersectionality is often seen as an individualistic whiteness practice that sidesteps structural critique. This finding corresponds with Fabbri (2022), who notes a shift in their study that can unintentionally re-centre whiteness and liberal multiculturalism, reducing intersectionality to a ‘theoretical’ framework that ignores embodiment and situated knowledge from other regions. Indeed, these studies reveal a tension between the commercialisation of virtual platforms, which aligns with their capitalist nature and amplifies superficial visibility of intersectionality rather than genuine intersectionality, and efforts to maintain their political core. In contrast, Eten et al. (2025) offer a more optimistic perspective in their study on youth activism in the UK, analysing Twitter discourse. They find that young activists using intersectional solidarity to link different forms of activism transform individual efforts and build a shared space for action, supporting many movements and adapting to changing global politics. In the context of the current study, the study attempts to understand how these formal feminist organisations link gender justice to everyday political agitation.

Another key part of feminist activism is health, especially sexual and reproductive rights. Studying feminism's digital rise in cities has pushed an intersectional approach to reveal and fix institutional inequality. Carvalho, in a study "Reclaiming inclusive city areas in the post-digital era," explored how feminist activists use the internet and digital channels to challenge male-dominated

norms in cities (Carvalho, 2025). She points out that these activists use digital tools such as “Her City Toolbox” and “Free to Be” and, through participatory mapping, work to make cities increasingly inclusive. On the other hand, Figueroa et al. (2021) argue that while digital health can promote gender equity, most digital health tools still lack an intersectional approach; therefore, women of colour are more often victims of design bias and stigma. They argue that this design exclusion leads to what they call “technological redlining,” which further restricts the already unequal opportunities available online.

To prevent such exclusions, some academics argue that the future of digital advocacy may involve "hybrid" participation models which integrate online mobilisation with offline engagements (Vancsó & Kovács-Magosi, 2024; Schradie, 2018). Based on this, Gede et al. (2025) mention that social media has changed how activism is practised by providing a new form of visibility and decentralising advocacy. However, they note these shifts create opportunities for the voiceless and oppressed, albeit at a considerable emotional cost and with the risk of cyber violence. Furthermore, through incorporating cultural and local contexts, contemporary digital feminism forms strong activism for social justice. While digital media deliver advocacy and visibility through decentralised infrastructure, their real impact lies in creating just equitable communities that honour diverse and intersecting identities and ensure justice for the digitally oppressed. Therefore, digital activism and activists, including formal feminist institutions and organisations, the focus of this study, must address the structural and institutional issues faced by the digitally oppressed. This connection stresses the need to examine how organisations in Kenya use cyberspaces and hybrid mobilisation to address local inequalities.

Concerningly, in Africa, feminist engagement with digital technology focuses on state surveillance, decolonisation, and digital citizenship (Emmer & Kunst, 2018; Ilori, 2024), as well as resisting state and patriarchal cultural surveillance (Imam et al., 2025). Africa faces a unique “digital divide” compared to other regions and needs intersectional approaches that consider language, geography, and data costs (Mwansa, 2025). Khalafallah et al. (2025) mention that

transcontinental movements have used digital technologies to oppose traditional patriarchal media power structures, which some researchers call “insurgent modes of care” (UNFPA Robinson et al., 2021). It is worth noting that, while scholarship spotlights the “insurgent” and revolutionary capacity of technology, other scholars contend that African feminists are victims of alarming rates of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF-GBV) (Hartmann et al., 2025; UNFPA et al., 2021). Accordingly, some researchers argue that effective digital feminism in Africa requires shifting from the norm of hashtag activism to hybrid mobilisation, in which digital activism should broaden to include grassroots participation, legal activism (both physical and digital), and safety nets (Akiwowo, 2021; Iyer, 2022; Nyabola, 2018). In that context, there is a clear need for formal feminist organisations to develop strategies to safely and sustainably advance hybrid mobilisation to improve outcomes, which is one of the current study's aims.

Maleche and Langmia (2025), in their study of digital and traditional media and social change in East Africa, argue that the economy and gender oppression serve as barriers in the digital space and that the two intersect. Similarly, Panek and Netek (2019), in their study of collaborative mapping and digital participation in Kenya, contend that ‘collaborative mapping’ and other digital resources have empowered urban Kenyan women to reclaim control of the city from men. Likewise, the research by Muya and Onyinge (2025) on the role of performative art in political activism in Kenya, Mwangi et al. (2026), Mwingiliano Kati ya Wenye Madaraka na Wananchi (Swahili-written study), and Kamau et al. (2025) analyses the function of digital activism and reveals that the 2024 and 2025 Kenyan political crises were periods when activists using the TikTok platform and X combined accountability activism with feminist activism, making certain that the fight against economic injustice maintained its feminine face. With that being said, this form of localised digital feminism is firmly established, responsive to specific political and technological contexts, and also connected to transnational feminist activism. In this context, the current study's use of subaltern counterpublics as a theoretical framework will shed light on how such organisations function as a medium of political agitation in the public sphere, where an intersectional approach is needed.

This also speaks to the first question, where a gap in literature exists-RQ1: In what ways do organisations modify their feminist counter-discourses on Facebook for different audience segments on the platform?

2.1.2. Hashtag activism and counterpublics

In the field of digital feminism, theorists have begun to explore how online spaces can shape identity formation and protect against offline threats. Dixon (2014) states that hashtag feminism has created a safe online space by using social media platforms such as Facebook, which enable those experiencing institutional discrimination to find solidarity and present an alternative narrative to physical, patriarchal spaces that silence victims. In contrast, Dixon points out that these online expressions of feminist views often result in backlash, which can diminish clarity about what feminism truly is (Dixon, 2014). Similarly, Barker-Plummer (2017) challenges the idea that online spaces are just for communication, arguing that they can and should be viewed as a "resource" for feminism. Analysing the hashtag #YesAllWomen, they suggest that these hashtags are comparable to the identity-building "consciousness-raising" of second-wave feminism, serving a dual purpose: supporting collective identity and participation, as well as shaping agendas. Lindgren (2019) expands on this idea by introducing the term "narrative agency," viewing the flow of social media posts as creating a communal, fluid entity that empowers marginalised groups to confront dominant, oppressive social structures.

Nonetheless, both internal and external friction characterise the shift from online discourse to successful activism. Digital media and supporting mass media shape meaning and influence activism, as Görgülü and Cinar (2023) argue, even as others stay critical of the so-called emancipatory potential of social media. In contrast, Zulli (2020) criticises the uncritical privileging of hashtags, noting that, like the field's dominant idea of "liveness," they are vulnerable to co-optation by commercial and oppositional actors whose main focus is profits. Similarly, Trott (2021) argues that mainstream networked feminism often reproduces colonial oppression. Focusing on the #MeToo movement, Trott contends that the dominant neoliberal narrative privileges (white) voices and excludes the multiply

marginalised voices of survivors, including the championed voices of Burke and other Black activists in the #MeToo movement. Likewise, Kuo (2018) and Jackson and Banaszczyk (2016) argue that digital feminism requires a critical technocultural discussion of the mutability and intersectionality of online racialised feminist publics to undo, rather than reproduce, the historical oppression of digital counterpublics. Haynes (2024) analyses the disruptive effects of the #LifeInLeggings movement initiated by the Caribbean Alliance Against Gender Violence. Haynes notes that leggings became an “other” space in the mass media by documenting common acts of sexism and became a “feminist counterpublic.” Importantly, Haynes captures the “transnational reach” of such movements, uniting women across silenced borders and therewith fostering sisterhood.

In Southern Africa, digital technology has become a key tool for strategic communication among marginalised groups excluded from the public sphere. Sutole (2024) shows how these communities use hashtags to generate public discourse. Sutole cites "Black Twitter" in South Africa as an example of marginalised groups making use of the public sphere to "remix" the "dominant discourses." This is evident, for instance, in Sebeelo's (2020) work on #RhodesMustFall and #ThisFlag, who argues that the "digital divide" in Sub-Saharan Africa has increased online political activism, especially activism aimed at fighting majoritarian dictatorship. Likewise, Mpofu et al. (2021) contend that the #ZimbabweanLivesMatter and #EndSARS movements achieved some successes in obtaining concessions from the government. This success has been attributed to what Mpofu et al. (2021) refer to as "cross-boundary pollination," in which digital spaces fostered transnational solidarity and the use of parody accounts as tools for counter-hegemonic efforts.

The wider African scholarship indicates that the digital aspects of feminism cannot be separated from the governance and socioeconomic realities of the 'analogue' context. Hussen (2025) examines African feminist counter-movements and explores the difficulties of digital advocacy. He argues that while the internet encourages political participation, it also creates special challenges, especially through the ‘multiple layers’ of meaning. He further notes continuing concerns

about internet governance and the extent to which states can use it to restrict rather than expand feminist networks. Similarly, Salzinger et al. (2022) note that the gap between political visibility and its actual exercise remains substantial. Although women leading digital activism campaigns in Sub-Saharan Africa appear politically absent from the region's parliaments, this is still troubling. In this context, the current study considers how formal feminist organisations in Kenya use these cyber spaces to advocate for equal representation in governance, consequently addressing gaps highlighted in the existing literature.

The African digital experience goes beyond the continent itself. Ademolu (2023), in a study on #TheAfricaTheMediaNeverShowsYou as an example of 'Afrodiasporic Subaltern Counterpublic,' shows how the African diasporic community in the UK uses digital spaces to challenge the portrayals of 'development' and 'white media.' His study points out that African digital feminism is a multilevel movement connecting local grassroots struggles with transnational diasporic efforts to oppose whiteness in development. Just as Gajjala (2023) promotes 'hashtagged intersectionality,' this is a form of intersectional activism that reclaims and repurposes corporate social media platforms for collective and coalition-based actions. Kenya demonstrates an advanced stage of digital feminism's growth. Okech (2021) explores how 'rage' energises Kenyan feminist counterpublics. Using tags like #JusticeForSharon, a woman murdered by a politician, Okech shows how anger over femicide mobilises a community based on knowledge and solidarity. She argues that this digital rage acts as a 'concrete resistance' against both online and offline forms of misogyny. In her later works, Okech (2023) provides a historiography of these protests, looking 'beyond the streets' to show how, in Kenya, hashtag activism has evolved into strategic litigation and advocacy at the national level. This change reveals a 'hybrid' model in which digital advocacy is fully integrated with legal initiatives and physical safety efforts.

The Kenyan digital ecosystem also shows marked internal hierarchies. Mendenhall et al. (2025) studied digital activism surrounding Long Covid in Kenya and identified a 'centre and periphery' structure. They reveal that elite Nairobians access global digital hubs, whereas non-elite patients participate in peripheral

networks in which the digital and the non-digital are inextricably interwoven. This emphasises a differentiated understanding of ‘access’ that emphasises the geography, culture, and language of activism. Just as Mukhongo (2020) refers to ‘viral cultures’ in Kenya and notes that, while ordinary Kenyans use social media to participate in political contestation, the use of social media risks reframing sophisticated political contests as ‘entertainment’ through humour and memes, leaving the critical core issues unaddressed. Indeed, dynamic cross-pressures aptly describe the current state of feminism in Kenya. In the same way, Kaskinen (2025) claims that while the rise of femicides has invoked a demand for a ‘uniform movement’, young activists are articulating dissent to dominant frameworks, particularly to calls for inclusion of activism around LGBTQI issues and the invocation of fragile material conditions. This illustrates a hybrid feminist positionality in which activists advocate exercising their political agency amid violent episodes of state and intra-movement silencing.

As mentioned earlier, in the context of this study, 'formal feminist organisations' refer to registered entities such as NGOs, trusts, associations, and other legally recognised groups that have an explicit feminist mandate, structured leadership, and established organisational procedures. This distinguishes them from informal or grassroots collectives, which are often loosely organised, less bureaucratic, and may lack legal status or formalised membership. Clarifying this distinction is vital to understanding the unit of analysis and the limits of the organisations examined in this research.

This study specifically examined how formal feminist organisations in Kenya utilised such positionalities to articulate dissent against online trolls and negotiate complex digital and offline environments, thus adding to the literature on hybrid feminist activism. Hence, the theory of subaltern counterpublics served as a key starting point for this thesis; it also addressed the second question regarding the backlash arising from the clash between feminist voices and antifeminist groups. RQ2 How does organised online backlash affect the visibility and framing of Kenyan formal feminists' digital activism?

2.1.3 Networked affects and affordances on feminist activism

The impact of modern technologies on feminist activism has created a dialectical tension between online feminist activism as a potential space for freedom and as a site of control. Özkula et al. (2024) observe that social media has opened paths for feminist discourse to reach hostile social environments, while simultaneously, it has been exploited by the alt-right to target and marginalise women. Their research finds a duality within social feminist fronts that utilise social media to promote social justice. On the other hand, opposing groups practice "platformed visual misogyny", including doxxing plus meme battles, to sustain the heteropatriarchy. Likewise, Are (2020) claims that the once-positive view of social media as a means of "democratising" has increasingly given way to a negative view of the collateral damage it inflicts on the most at-risk. Are additionally claims that social media's "active inactivity" demonstrates a form of systemic harassment that is the result of algorithmic prejudice and online male gaze.

Eichhorn (2019) draws focus on this shift and recognises the changes that have led to the expansion of young girls' public participation; however, being visible can be risky. Young women's opinions, which participate in hashtag activism and dissent, are accepted by profit-based internet platforms that harvest data from their activism. There is a significant disconnect between young women's dissent, often expressed through digital activism, and the compliance they exhibit in the digital space. In a similar vein, Banet-Weiser et al. (2015) describe networked misogyny as an abundance of opportunities in cyberspaces. They assert that the pervasive, hostile online environments directed toward women are not simply bugs in the system, but rather that they are symptomatic of a much larger issue that is embedded within the structure of society. By exposing the relationship between the technical and cultural dimensions of the issue, they refute the notion that online harassment is merely the work of trolls. They contend that there is a unique relationship between the digital expression of feminism and toxic masculinity, and that the will of the legislature alone cannot solve the issue.

To understand these spaces, we need to define what we mean by the 'public clearly'. Boyd (2010) states that networked publics are both places and people, and

that technology changes how individuals control the flow of information. They further explain that the difference from traditional publics lies in the design of social identity systems embedded in persistent, searchable structures. Similarly, Lijeström (2010) considers the ongoing pursuit of cohesion in feminist discourse and notes that the rhetoric of difference is often viewed through an integrationist lens. This conceptual tension is also evident in Pruchniewska (2019)'s research, which observes that private Facebook groups facilitate professional networking and consciousness-raising, comparable to those of second-wave feminism. However, she emphasises that these online spaces can be exclusionary to women based on race, class, and age, showing that the so-called "fourth wave" feminism still faces many of the same problems as earlier waves.

The concept of affordance, which refers to the perceived and actual properties of a technology that determine how it can be used, remains central to assessing activist performance. Kitzie (2019) notes that LGBTQ+ millennials are skilled and proficient at navigating affordances such as visibility and anonymity, yet they must constantly negotiate sociocultural barriers embedded in platform features. Supporting this view, Brathwaite and DeAndrea (2025) reveal a paradox in which visibility and genuineness seem mutually exclusive. Their study shows that men's ally posts on the social platform led women users to attribute increased authenticity to men's allies, demonstrating how social perceptions influence performers' sincerity. This indicates that a platform's technical "warranting" can help close the gap between performance and perceived sincerity, provided the affordances are properly utilised.

In Africa, where technology intersects gender, there are examples of local struggles against local patriarchy and the global imperial order. Because of this, Daramola and Etim (2022) claim that there are no (or very few) local, sub-Saharan, or East African settings for native-language support or multimodal interfaces that lead to the poor and illiterate being excluded from the digital world. According to Olayoku (2024a, 2024b), technology radically transforms power structures and enables the visibility and agency of women 'vanguards' of movements in Sudan, Lebanon, and Nigeria. He describes digitally assisted movements as 'rhizomic' in

that they are spontaneous and have a direction in the use of the female body in active resistance to the state. Technologies of oppression, or imperialism by other means, are still present while many tech 'affordances' are being deployed. Also, in the same spirit, Aderemi (2020) analyses the digital humanities within Nigeria as a means of socially and culturally transforming narratives. Nigerian women, previously constructed as research subjects and not as active agents or researchers, are using blogs and digital archives to overturn patriarchal accounts and advocate for justice in the disparate socio-economic status. Although Aderemi acknowledges this, she stresses that technologies such as Twitter may invite forms of exclusion that are even more pronounced for people with low incomes.

Despite this, digital progress encounters considerable barriers. Iyer (2022) confirms that online spaces in sub-Saharan Africa are sites of structural violence. She argues that women's oppression is reinforced by the online reproduction of gendered practices from the physical world, creating a continuum of oppression. Therefore, she suggests radical "Afrofuturism" and decolonial strategies for network alternatives. Similarly, Lasade-Anderson and Sobande (2024) introduce "ideology as/of affordance" as an intervention. They claim that the design of internet platforms is based on a white supremacist patriarchal ideology that influences who gets "cancelled." From a Black feminist perspective, digital autonomy is heavily influenced by the raced and gendered considerations embedded in platform design.

The quest for fairness is the driving force for the uptake of new technologies. For instance, during street harassment, Fileborn (2017) distinguishes between victims who employ online spaces as an avenue for informal justice and those who do not. However, she is critical of the informal justice mechanism because, in her view, it is not sufficiently satisfying. Salamoun et al. (2024) raise similar concerns, focusing on the smartphone affordances of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Their study shows that while the "actualisation" of affordances may fulfil legitimate safety needs, it might also increase feelings of oppression. They find that anticipation of negative power outcomes often prevents people from fully exercising the range of options available to them, meaning that "empowerment" is often absent in access.

The continent's economic situation and infrastructure additionally influence the effectiveness of digital activism initiatives. Daramola and Etim (2022) confirm that while digital media support employment opportunities, they commonly lack the "multimodal" and "native language" affordances useful to those below the digital competence threshold. They suggest that the "digital divide" concerns not only physical access to tools, but also poor interface design that excludes those at the bottom of society. Similarly, Badran (2021) emphasises considerable disparities in e-commerce share between Africa and the rest of the world, highlighting the need for decision-makers to understand "network effects" and the unique economic structures of platforms to achieve inclusive growth.

Okocha and Aihunume (2025) further confirm the role of social media as a public sphere in Nigeria. They highlight social media's ability to shape and reshape feminism in Nigeria. However, they claim that the 'ever-widening digital divide' underrepresents women, especially those who are marginalised. They also argue that Nigerian feminists need to be more active in the digital public sphere and keep it vibrant. Just as Nigerian activists face these problems, Colom (2022) shows, through digital ethnography in Western Kenya, that certain features of WhatsApp help facilitate the building of 'citizenship.' She emphasises that WhatsApp is key for creating accounts and communities, but gaps in online participation may deepen social disadvantages relating to class, age, and location. On the other hand, Colom mentions another dimension: "communications strategies used by activists or organisations in civic engagement processes" (p. 1). In response, the current study uses digital ethnography to explore formal feminist organisations in Kenya that practice online activism, utilise specific communication tactics, and tackle intersectional disadvantages in the digital public sphere. This study centres on a range of intersectional identities, such as class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, and geography in Kenya, in order to understand how these factors play a role in the processes of inclusion and exclusion in digital feminist activism. This framework encourages an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, strategies, and obstacles these organisations encounter.

Technological success can also be interpreted through local forms of "domestication."[1] Ogone (2023) notes that social media in Kenya was adopted by 'taming the wildness" of foreign technology. He describes "cultural affordances" as how local values and practices form the basis for different uses of foreign technologies. Similarly, Wyche et al. (2019) examine how rural Kenyans use mobile phones, focusing on the physical and sensory affordances they create, and how the purposeful design of these devices both enables and limits certain types of communication. This evidence is supported by Njiru (2019), who confirms that social networks and gender relations in Kenya are interconnected and that the dominant (or intersectional) social relations, whether online or offline, must be addressed in any social intervention aimed at transforming gender power relations inside social intersections. Evidence shows that network effects can increase surveillance and harassment of women, but feminist activism also demonstrates the positive potential of networks. Therefore, activist efforts involve managing the platform's affordances, users' cultural settings, and the political environment of the technologies. This study intends to fill these gaps by employing digital ethnography as the primary method to address RQ 3 and RQ 4 on affective labour and algorithmic imaginaries. This immersive method allows for the observation, interpretation, and analysis of the digital practices, narratives, and interactions of formal feminist organisations in Kenya from the perspective of an insider, offering rich, empirical insights which are often lost in previous studies.

2.1.4 Kenyan feminism evolution

This movement has roots that run much deeper than Western influence. The movement has its origins in previously utilised radical forms of indigenous female agency. Prominent individuals such as Mekatilili wa Menza were political leaders who mobilised the Giriama people in the face of British colonial labour and tax wars in the early 1900s, thereby paving the way for more women to step into roles as political leaders and community protectors (Gikandi, 2003). The Mau Mau Rebellion was a prolongation of this resistance, in which Field Marshal Muthoni

[1] It describes the process of media (technology) adoption in everyday life, and especially within households.

Kirima was a warrior and tactician. This rebellion was a deliberate effort to assert the role of African women in the colonial era, where Anglo-Saxon patriarchal ideology placed African women in the fold and to be only consumers of the domestic space.

After 1963, independence signified a shift toward representing women in institutions and handling issues at the interstice of the environment and social justice. Grace Onyango's election to Parliament in 1969 was the first time a woman had broken the political glass ceiling. Phoebe Asiyo's introduction of the Affirmative Action motion in 1997 established the basis for gender quotas. The most notable figure of this time was Professor Wangari Maathai, who in 2004 devised the Green Belt Movement and advocated for a new African feminism that interlinked environmental conservation, democracy, and the economic empowerment of women. Maathai was arguably the most notable figure of this time, and the Nobel Peace Prize reinforced the position of feminists advocating for the political and economic empowerment of women as the primary drivers of climate change (Maathai, 2006).

For Kenyan feminists, reclaiming the public space means holding the state accountable through public acts of defiance. In 1992, the first claim to this civil defiance was made when the mothers of Political Prisoners camped at "Freedom Corner" in Uhuru Park. After being met with state violence, the Women used the culturally charged defence of nakedness to curse the police, a phenomenon that radically defied the Moi regime and caused the release of their sons. In the age of the internet, the tradition of nakedness evolved to the 2014 "My Dress My Choice" movement, where thousands marched against the public stripping of women, and the 2024 Historic Femicide Marches, where the largest assembly of feminists in the country's history mobilised to end the systemic killing of women.

As a result of several decades of activism, the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya was the first of many legal victories won by Kenyan feminists. It made gender rights from simple policies to enshrined rights and made them a fundamental principle. For example, article 27(8) of the Constitution created the "Two-Thirds Gender Rule", which required the legal representation of women

in governance. Also, the Sexual Offences Act of 2006 meant that for the first time, there was a legal provision that comprehensively criminalised violence. On top of that, the 2013 Matrimonial Property Act was an economic justice win because it recognised unpaid, non-monetary domestic work as a contribution to the family's assets. Aside from the above-mentioned organisations, the Advocates for Women in Law and Development in Africa (FIDA-Kenya) and the Federation of Women Lawyers, along with the rest of the civil society, continue to funnel aid and backing for developing Kenyan feminism, which is a democratic avenue for addressing the injustices affecting women in Kenyan society.

2.1.5 Reflections on the Future of Digital Feminist Advocacy and Social Media

Facebook has become a vital tool for advocacy among formal feminist organisations in Kenya and other regional stakeholders, particularly digital feminist organisations that use the platform as a virtual space for advocacy (Gwenzi, 2020). Facebook's dominance and ease of use have made it the primary platform for the collective organisation of feminists, informal advocacy, and engagement with local constituencies. It enables organisations to utilise accessible, relevant narratives and resourceful visual advocacy to reach multiple audiences (Sambuli, 2020).

Facebook has the potential to play a positive role in feminist organising and advocacy, but this depends on three key factors: the development of artificial intelligence (AI), the ongoing struggle for control of technology, and the construction of a feminist internet. There are already significant shifts in advocacy practices driven by new moderation systems, AI-driven decision-making, and the automation of interpretative tools. While some mechanisms within AI frameworks can reduce harmful online activity and foster constructive engagement, there is a substantial risk that these frameworks will reinforce existing structural and advocacy biases by silencing marginalised voices and prioritising content aligned with feminist and market-friendly perspectives (Noble, 2018; Association for Progressive Communications [APC], 2021).

As the findings illustrate, Kenyan feminist-led organisations are acutely aware of these algorithmic constraints. They have actively developed their

“algorithmic literacy” and moderation practices. However, as AI continues to evolve, these organisations will need to champion not only moderation practices but also structures and frameworks in the AI space that will guarantee their voices are not silenced (Costanza-Chock, 2020). Control over one’s architecture and content within the digital space is immensely critical. In particular, reliance on profit-maximising platforms such as Facebook exposes regional movements to risks, including externally generated, controlled data and ever-changing policies (Milan & Treré, 2019).

Kenyan-based (and wider) feminist organisations are starting to question and encourage the foundations of digital (and broader) spaces owned by specific communities (Pollozek & Passoth, 2019). As such, we may see demand for locally based social media, open-source options, or other cooperative platform-edge governance grounded in feminist principles.

The aspirations for a Feminist Internet include a digital, empowering space and a safe horizon for women and all marginalised genders. In line with the Feminist Principles of the Internet, the challenge is to oppose online gender-based violence and the misogyny that underpins it, while fighting for accessible design, participatory governance, and an intersectional approach that ensures all voices are heard in digital policy. It also encompasses defensive activism for digital rights, a hybrid form of activism interwoven with the digital and real worlds, and sustained activism for change (Chenou & Cepeda-Másmela, 2019).

3.0 Theoretical Framework

In this section, we will turn to the second key aspect of this literature review: Nancy Fraser's theory of subaltern counterpublics, to analyse how it functions as a safe space and a site of protest. This theoretical framework will open with an overview of its scope, discuss its main concepts, and conclude with a theoretical perspective on its application to problem analysis.

3.1 Theory of Subaltern Counterpublics

This thesis analysed the convergence of internet platforms and Kenyan formal feminist activism, using Fraser's (1990) conceptualisation of subaltern

counterpublics to contest Habermas's bourgeois public sphere. In this thesis, I applied Nancy Fraser's Concept of Subaltern counterpublics to the discursive public sphere from a critical feminist perspective, demonstrating how feminist digital activism and campaigning subvert structural dominance. Accordingly, Fraser's concept of Subaltern counterpublics describes "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups create and share counter discourses, which allow them to develop oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1990, p.67). Fraser claims that in such a sphere, feminist women develop new terminology to describe social issues like sexual harassment, sexism, marital rape, and others. This helps reduce, though not eliminate, the disadvantages women face in the formal sphere (Fraser, 1990). These counterpublics arise as a response to exclusion from what Fraser terms "dominant publics," helping to expand the "discursive space" and stimulating more extensive discussion, which Fraser describes as "a good thing in stratified societies" (Ibid pp.67-68). Essentially, they spotlight issues that might be ignored or intentionally ignored by mainstream publics.

Frasers emphasises that the key role of subaltern counterpublics as a contestatory force in a stratified society operates in two ways: the concept of counterpublics ultimately hinders separatism "because it assumes an orientation that is publicist" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67). In other words, the "dual character" of counterpublics in stratified societies is that, on one hand, they "function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment," and, on the other hand, they "function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics" (p. 68). The conflict between these two functions, Fraser claims, is exactly where the "emancipatory potential" of counterpublics lies. Moreover, this conflict is linked to the enabling of subaltern counterpublics and to partially reducing the unjust participatory privileges that members of a dominant social group have always enjoyed in these stratified societies.

Therefore, I argue that feminists' digital platform campaigns serve as a counterpublic to the dominant groups and publics (such as the state, religion, patriarchy, trolls, etc.). Thus, it creates an opportunity to stage and challenge

discursive practices in space or through digital internet platforms. For instance, campaigns such as #MyDressMyChoice, #DeadbeatKenya, #EndFemicideKE, and #RejectFinanceBill2025 have all been able to get the Kenyan feminist community to address issues of gender-based violence, economic violence against women, and femicide. #MyDressMyChoice and #DeadbeatKenya were the first online feminist campaigns to mobilise the community to take to the streets to protest and to launch new online campaigns: End Feminicide in Kenya and Reject Finance Bill 2025. The Kenyan feminist community and other new and old feminist movements on social media were able to organise the advocacy against the bill and to end economic injustice against women and have been able to advocate for the disposal of the bill, and for the disposal of the feminicides. By analysing digital media through this system, I see these organisations as less institutional actors and more as participants in "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67). In a stratified society where the state, dominant publics, and religious patriarchy often omit or silence feminists, digital media become vital for providing the infrastructure to develop what Fraser calls the "oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67).

What makes the subaltern counterpublic approach advantageous for feminist organisations is that it leads them to shift their focus to reframing their entire approach to the fight against inequality through feminist digital campaigns. The first step in this approach is determining the dimensions of counterpublics in social media networks that have coordinated their work, and, within those networks and counterpublics, those that have advanced the social justice work of those networks. The second counterpublic dimension encourages feminist organisations to identify connections and alignments among social movements within several networks. In this case, for instance, the use of campaign hashtags and online narratives can create a collective identity among members and extend their calls to expanded audiences and decision-makers. Moreover, this system calls on organisations to identify specific constellations of alliances and entry points to

integrate digital and offline activism, thereby closing the gap between digital discourse and realising broader social or legislative outcomes.

As I have noted, the primary criticism of the unified, conventional public sphere is important to this framework. Fraser (1990) challenges Habermas's concept of the "bourgeois public sphere," arguing that it is neither fully inclusive nor integrative because it has "notable exclusions" in the domains of class, race, and gender. In this context, I argue that social media can help formal feminist organisations bypass those historical gatekeepers (Nyabola, 2018). Having said that, this approach delivers for exploring how organisations develop digital campaigns to "name" issues like gender-based violence, systemic and financial inequalities, reproductive health rights, and more, thus creating a new political discourse that addresses the 'disadvantages of women within the official sphere' (Fraser, 1990). The digital counterpublics that have formed, as Aoko (2021) notes, are a direct response to being excluded from the 'dominant publics,' which expands the 'discursive space.' As a result, the contest for power intensifies (Fraser, 1990, pp. 67-68).

Moreover, this framework captures what Fraser calls the 'dual character' of counterpublics in socially stratified contexts. To apply Fraser's theory to this study, I asked interviewees about particular digital spaces, such as feminist community forums and activist social media groups, where marginalised groups in Kenya engage in discourse beyond the mainstream. For instance, I study to what extent the hashtag campaigns #EndFemicideKE and #StopKillingWomen function as subaltern counterpublics by forming spaces for Kenyan feminist organisations to articulate dissenting positions on gender-based violence and economic injustice.

In these campaigns, I conduct discourse analysis of posts and other digital materials to show how feminist actors resist dominant accounts and promote policy reforms. I examine posts in which narratives from these counterpublics cross into mainstream conversation, for instance, when digital activism translates into mainstream media coverage or a parliamentary bill.

In this regard, Fraser's framework has strengths in recognising multiple audiences and in focusing on the role of marginalised communities, such as Kenyan

feminist networks, in discourse formation (Fraser, 1990). Empirical studies have utilised this framework in contexts such as feminist digital forums and social justice activism (Fernandez, 2011; Hargreaves et al., 2024; Venema, 2024; Copeland, 2024). However, some scholars have pointed out the absence of structural inequalities that could affect the dominant spheres of influence of counterpublics (Venema, 2024b) and the fact that the borders of counterpublics and the dominant spheres of the public can become vague, and result in the co-optation or dilution of oppositional voices (Kampourakis, 2016). Given the existing debates, this study intends to apply Fraser's theory in the Kenyan context and to assess the dual nature of digital campaigns functioning, both as a call to action/streets and advocacy; in doing so, the digital ethnographic method was deemed fit and deployed.

4.0 Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological approach and procedures employed in the study. A digital ethnography framework was adopted to investigate the digital practices of formal feminist organisations in Kenya. Data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations are outlined in the sections below.

4.1 Epistemological Framework and Positionality

I conducted this research from a situated-knowledge perspective. It follows, therefore, that my research is rooted in Donna Haraway's concept of situated knowledge. Haraway (1988, p. 581) questions the "God's eye view" of infinite vision, which is the idea that one can see and know everything from nowhere. In contrast, Haraway argues that all meaningful knowing is partial, embodied, and situation-specific (ibid). When studying Kenyan feminist counterpublics on Facebook, I deliberately avoid chasing 'universal' digital phenomena and instead aim for what Haraway calls a 'faithful account of a real world' (ibid, p. 579). I focused only on how digital spaces are shaped and influenced by specific bodies and histories. Therefore, this study is based on what Haraway describes as 'a limited location and situated knowledge,' meaning that the production of knowledge is inherently situated in the bodily context of the "knowing subject" (Haraway, 1988,

p. 590), permitting a more ethical and complex analysis of how subaltern groups in Kenya use digital technologies to confront dominant patriarchal discourses

It is important to point out that identifying as a Kenyan man shapes the 'partial perspective' of this thesis and the use of digital ethnography most. As a gendered position, it places me at a specific point within Kenyan society, one historically centred in the dominant public discourse (the patriarchy), while the subaltern counterpublics being studied have been marginalised. In that regard, it is fair to say that I subscribe to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's[2] definition of a feminist: "a feminist is a man or a woman who says, yes, there is a problem with gender as it is today, and we must fix it, we must do better. All of us, women and men, must do better." Indeed, this position serves as my moral guide; I do not approach these feminist organisations as an objective, detached observer, but as a stakeholder in the collective "fixing" of gender inequality. Moreover, while my Kenyan-ness equips me with the social and linguistic skills to navigate the details of the local digital environment, my advocacy ethics align with feminist movements and the social revolution, as Mendes (2021) notes: their digital labour, beyond being merely data, is central.

To reduce potential bias arising from my positionality when analysing the data collected, I deliberately adopted multiple strategies. First, I conducted member checking by sending my interview transcript and, later, the emerging themes to the leaders of feminist organisations. In doing so, participants verified that they were quoted correctly. Secondly, I sought assistance from feminist colleagues, drew on feminist methodology and the literature, and drew on training I acquired during my internship with a leading feminist organisation in Denmark, KVINFO[3], to co-develop the coding framework to minimise unintentional bias in my interpretation. Finally, in the spirit of feminist research, I invited organisational leaders, if they wished, to participate in later stages of the analysis and interpretation as co-analysts, who not only evaluate emerging themes but also contribute to constructive

[2] Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian writer whose works include fiction, nonfiction, and lectures. She is widely recognised as a central figure in postcolonial feminist literature.
[3] https://kvinfo.dk/?lang=en

interpretation. However, since this was an academic exercise, it was not necessary. It is worth noting that this spirit promoted co-ownership of research and established collaborative writing with the study as a central tenet in feminist writings. Furthermore, I maintained a reflexive journal documenting my decisions, observations, and assumptions, along with a critical review of my journal field notes and, where feasible, peer feedback.

It follows, therefore, that my reflexivity involved fully understanding my position within the power relations of a male researcher analysing the digital resistance of patriarchal norms by feminist organisations. In line with Haraway's (1988) 'politics and epistemology of location,' I acknowledge my male digital situatedness and presence during the semi-structured interviews. I was able to preserve the integrity of the 'subaltern' voice by not treating digital posts and interview transcripts as objects to dissect. Instead, I considered them 'material-semiotic actors' with the agency to challenge my preconceptions. Finally, by positioning myself as a Kenyan man and feminist (in the Adichian sense), I strived to contribute knowledge that is not only academically sound but also socially responsible. As Haraway puts it: "The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision" (1988: 582).

4.2 Digital ethnography

This project adopted a traditional stance within the feminist philosophical framework of counterpublics and used digital ethnography to explore how formal feminist organisations in Kenya used digital activism (Facebook posts) as a counterpublic to the dominant spheres' narrative. In general, ethnography enables researchers to produce knowledge that is not based on "hearsay" or "secondary accounts" (Hine, 2015, p.2). Christine Hine stresses that the internet is "embedded, embodied, and part of everyday life," encompassing vital aspects of daily existence that are often overlooked (Hine, 2015, p. 9). This study adopted this approach, which was especially suitable because it helped interpret the meaning and aim behind the overlooked existence of each post, discussion, photo, and conversation shared online. Importantly, it presented to the public the perspectives of individuals, organisations, or groups, revealing their worldviews (Borkovich, 2022). Central to

this method was the abductive method. Hine (2015: 5) states that “An ethnographic study cannot be wholly designed in advance, for the Methods of inquiry that an ethnographer develops are uniquely suited to the Specific situation being studied.” Hence, this method afforded an opportunity to study and consider all methods that could provide a rich, well-developed study.

Digital ethnography gathered data through non-participant digital observation (monitoring selected campaign spaces with daily or regular logging), Trace Ethnography (tracking hashtags, reposts, and sharing patterns), and semi-structured interviews (Airoldi, 2018). Integral to this research was its aim to go past surface-level metrics to explore the cultural and political aspects of feminist digital activism in Kenya. In this regard, this study utilised Facebook campaign posts and fieldwork observations of users' reactions, complemented by semi-structured interviews with the leadership of these organisations.

4.3 Data Collection Method

Relevant to this research were publicly available feminist campaign posts on Facebook accounts/pages of these feminist organisations, complemented by extensive, semi-structured virtual interviews with activists and organisational representatives. In the interest of maintaining methodological honesty and rigour, participant organisation and interviewee selection were carried out using predetermined criteria. Formal feminist organisations were selected through purposive sampling, focusing on those with high visibility in feminist advocacy digital campaigns such as #EndFemicideKE and #StopKillingWomen. A combination of publicly accessible campaign documents, organisational websites, and listings from feminist networks and, importantly, my situated knowledge as a Kenyan, was important in identifying organisations of interest. Campaigners, communication leads, and individuals in leadership, such as managers and those in monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) roles, were initially contacted via official organisational email addresses extracted from their social media pages and websites. The initial outreach contained an invitation letter explaining the research; attached to the email was also an introductory letter from the University and a consent letter, which was to be signed and sent back. Thereafter, the next step

entailed screening the participants' roles nominated by their respective organisations for interview conduct and assessing their relevance to this study.

4.3.1 Online artefact: Facebook posts and field notes observation

Digital ethnographers operate in a "mobile, multi-sited or un-sited" (Borkovich, 2022) environment where fieldwork is conducted digitally, virtually, across networks, and on multiple platforms. As mentioned above, ethnographic research involves participant observation (both online and offline), organising semi-structured interviews, and conducting online archival research (Hine, 2015). Accordingly, Karhapää (2025) states that digital ethnography combines methods, data, and digital mediums/gadgets to produce rich, comprehensive research. More specifically, in this study, digital ethnography involved collecting data from Meta fieldwork, Facebook posts, and fieldnotes from the Facebook pages of formal feminist organisations in Kenya on matters of gender justice. Facebook was chosen for several reasons. First, Facebook is the most popular and used social media app in the world, with over 3 billion users[4].Second, Facebook is the most widely used mode of communication for the feminist organisation in Kenya due to its ease of use and accessibility to the majority of the population. Thirdly, in addition to its mode of communication through asynchronous and synchronous posts, comments, and reactions (Arvidsson,2016), its social interactions take place in public; hence, this study employs open-access Facebook pages of feminist organisations in Kenya.

These Facebook posts were collected manually. The first step was to *follow* the organisation's Facebook accounts/pages with a personal Facebook account opened or created specifically for this task, on my personal smartphone. Whence the *following* was approved/succeeded, a meticulous collection of screenshots of posts authored by Kenyan feminist organisations that qualified as part of a feminist campaign was compiled in an Excel spreadsheet/table in a research framework matrix format, see Appendix. This involved collecting and classifying posts by message and type (pictures or words), as well as field notes of my observations of users' interactions. It is worth noting that the study also considered other social

[4] https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/

media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and X, as data collection platforms; however, following extensive consultation, Facebook was selected because it is considered an open platform, unlike the others, which are private and also to avoid ethical issues that might result from collecting private data.

4.3.2 Virtual semi-structured interviews

To supplement data gathered from Facebook posts and fieldwork observations, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the leadership of 5 selected feminist organisations who were driving these online conversations. According to Cocq and Liliequist (2024), given the nature of qualitative methodologies, an interview is a unique encounter that manages the exploration of individual stories with a focus on key research questions (pp. 6-7). In interviewing the leadership, this study considered them to have expertise important to the analysis of this thesis. Four of them were the communications officers, and one was a manager. These virtual interviews were conducted via Zoom and lasted 30 to 45 minutes each. The interviews aimed to understand how the authors of this digital campaign post and the logic they sought to mobilise and sustain a counterpublic within Kenya's social and political context. Hence, their input was important in addressing research questions on algorithmic affordances and the backlash these organisations faced. In other words, what usually happens behind the scenes when developing, constructing, posting, and engaging with users. Therefore, these interviews enabled examination of insights into the obstacles, such as affordances, trolls, and digital misogyny, that organisations may have faced, as well as challenges often hidden from public posts we see, such as being directly messaged with threats. Importantly, by triangulating the public conversation on these Facebook campaign posts with field notes and the interview reflections of organisational leaders, this research went beyond simple social media analysis. It provided a comprehensive view of in-depth use of digital spaces and platforms such as Facebook to bridge what is referred to as "the street and the screen", highlighting the interrelation among online activism, calls for marches, and participation in those marches.

To be consistent with collaborative research and build trust, organisational leadership interviewees were allowed to review and provide feedback on interview transcripts after cleanup and before analysis. The feedback enables organisational leaders to improve, adjust, or build on their views to best represent them, and it also centres the spirit of feminist collaboration in writing. Indeed, this research benefits from feedback incorporated into the final analysis and from a more unbiased distribution of power in the knowledge production process.

4.4 Data Analysis

4.4.1 Multimodal digital ethnographic analysis

Digital ethnographic analysis involves breaking down collected data into component parts to make sense of it (Borkovich, 2022). It should therefore be noted that the analysis and interpretation of a digital ethnographic study is not simplistic but a holistic endeavour, as it seeks to identify the "essences, themes, unifying ideas, or discourses" (Miles et al., p. 10). Accordingly, this thesis's analysis and interpretation of the collected data are based on a multimodal digital ethnographic approach that examines how formalised feminist organisations in Kenya create digital counterpublics on Facebook. Within this context, it is important to note that my principles as the researcher align with Hine (2015) in considering the Meta-Facebook field, particularly the Facebook page, as a "field site" of social performance rather than an ephemeral or static social archive. It follows, therefore, that the first phase of analysis involves textual and discursive analysis of the organisations' posts. Using Fairclough's CDA approach, the study assesses how these organisations' posts deploy "counter-language" (Sheng, local idiom, and other forms of language) to challenge hegemonic patriarchal structures in Kenya's mainstream media (Mutsvairo, 2016). The study's coding of specific rhetorical implications and communications implied by these posts and users' reactions demonstrates how feminist theory and praxis are "vernacularized" (Merry, 2006) and subsequently translated into culturally disruptive resonances across formal and informal discourses, thereby challenging the prevalent social, legal, and political norms and the exclusion of the feminine. Consequently, following Haraway (1988),

given my positionality as the researcher, I do not see myself as a neutral, detached, or disinterested observer; rather, I see myself as a situated observer. Accordingly, and in line with Borkovich's (2022) assertion that the unit of analysis in digital ethnography is not the individual or the "utterers," but rather the behaviour, speech, or act known as "utterances" (p. 127). In this context, the feminist campaign posts, not individuals or the people contributing to the discourse, were analysed.

The analysis's second phase is based on the rhetorical layer; in this context, it is discourse and textual analysis. In this phase, the analysis focused not only on textual content but also on visual semiotics, given that digital counterpublics are defined by their "aesthetic regimes" (Pink et al., 2016). The analysis sought to deconstruct the symbolic value of infographics, photographs, and the movement's "branding," including the use of particular colour palettes as symbols of Kenyan feminist resistance. In doing so, the aim was to gain insight into the visual artefacts as "cultural signifiers" that build a collective identity and emblem a safe digital space for silencing dissenting voices from the margins. The analysis of the synergy between the image and the text attests to the "multimodality" of digital activism, characterised by visual elements playing a larger role in "stopping the scroll" and thereby inviting the user into the counterpublic (Jewitt, 2013).

Finally, the culmination of this analysis was an interactive, relational layer focused on the 'affective labour' of comment sections and reactions. Rather than engaging with the metrics at the level of simple quantitative engagement, the study employs a 'trace ethnography' (Geiger & Ribes, 2011) to study the ways in which community is defended and how moderation is employed, alongside how users' express solidarity through digital rituals, such as 'threaded testimonies' or the communal 'Care' reaction. This layer was central to my attempt to understand the site as a counterpublic and to access the 'deliberative' quality of the space where women articulate alternative understandings of their identities (Fraser, 1990). Along with this, I utilised a reflexive journaling (field notes) through the research process to document my own observation through my positionality in the Kenyan digital space, and to make sure that the 'thick description' on these digital traces is ethically sound and culturally sensitive (Geertz, 1973; Markham & Buchanan, 2012).

4.4.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA), using Braun and Clarke's (2006) recursive framework, was applied to the five semi-structured interviews with representatives of Kenyan feminist organisations. This began with the verbatim transcription of the interviews using Microsoft Word's transcriber, followed by the initial cleanup stage of re-listening to the audio and correcting mistakes in the transcripts. In doing so, I was also able to re-familiarise myself with the data to determine the 'latent' meanings, or the ideas and assumptions embedded in the digital presence of the organisations.

Using NVivo software, the data was thematically coded. Importantly, I adopted a deductive approach to this analysis, coding specific research questions and in search of certain themes pertinent to the theoretical framework

Moreover, I used inductive codes to analyse the digital labour, perception of Facebook as a 'counterpublic' formation, and the distinct challenges of gendered cyber violence in the Kenyan digital context. Because of the 'institutional voice' aspect, these interviews capture the content, outlining the organisational reasoning that informs their social media strategy.

4.4.3 Data Triangulation and Synthesis

To capture the 'transcription' of a holistic digital culture, the study employed methodological triangulation, combining findings from digital artefact analysis and semi-structured interviews (Flick, 2018). In digital ethnography, this synthesis is essential to connect 'online traces' and 'offline intentions.' This triangulation consists of a comparative thematic matrix in which the organisational objectives derived from interviews will be compared to the actual performative actions observed on Facebook.

This ’ back and forth movement between the discursive performance, which is the Facebook posts, and the strategic rationale, which is the interviews, allowed for thick descriptions in the, “what” and “why” (Geertz, 1973) of the case of Feminist Digital Activism in Kenya, This according to (Geertz, 1973) is an attempt to control the “digital determinism” which, in this case, is an intrinsic value in the human agency of the activists and how they shape these spaces, which gives digital

counterpublics a rich and deep understanding of how they are constructed and maintained.

4.5 Limitations

Perhaps one of the main limitations of the study is its scope, as a master's thesis, the data collected is limited to only 100-200 Facebook posts. However, these were supplemented by 5 semi-structured interviews conducted across different organisations. Also, its focus on the Facebook platform is a limitation, as it does not account for other available social media platforms. In addition, while hashtags like #EndFemicideKE and #StopKillingWomen act as a strong counterpublic, the platforms hosting them, such as Facebook, use algorithms that either promote divisive and inflammatory content or restrict the visibility of posts to specific demographic and geographic groups. Moreover, as the researcher, I must acknowledge that the digital spaces I analyse only partly represent urban, technologically proficient, and mostly middle-class Kenyans. Therefore, the 'subaltern' identified here is a particular subaltern to that geographical location; I recognise that the data may sharply contrast with the conditions of rural or offline Kenyan women who face structural violence and are also subaltern, but due to the digital divide's geographical and structural connectivity limitation, they are unable to participate in the counterpublics and remain silenced. To lessen this exclusion, however, I was able to identify and utilise references or testimonials in digital campaigns, such as Facebook posts that address or bridge the online-offline divide. Furthermore, this limitation was limited as I attempted to record the strategies that feminist organisations use to amplify rural voices or showcase the barriers faced by offline communities, such as partnering with grassroots collaborators or sharing the stories of people living outside cities, which was brought out during the interview sessions as I intentionally asked these feminist organisation leaders.

Another key limitation in feminist studies, and in particular in this thesis, centres on positionality; the epistemological concern about the 'male gaze' was especially relevant in this context. While I support and subscribe to being a feminist, my identity as a Kenyan man might unknowingly influence how I interpret the data or impact the comfort level of the interview participants. In that regard, there is a

risk of 'mansplaining' women lived experiences or of missing the gendered nuances in online interactions that women naturally understand in these spaces. To address this limitation, I practised member checking and sharing my initial thematic findings with some organisational leaders to ensure that my interpretations accurately reflected their intended meanings and the realities they faced. I believe I was able to address some limitations by maintaining reflexivity, keeping notes to capture my thought processes and analyses at each stage of data collection and analysis. This self-questioning technique and other critical methods enable me to find and fix any biases. Additionally, consultations with my supervisor from time to time were of enormous importance.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

This section will describe the steps for conducting an ethical digital ethnographic study. It begins with the main challenges of studying digital ethnography, then explains how informed consent and legal compliance, both from social media platforms and institutional requirements, will be addressed. The section will conclude with a discussion of how anonymity and accountability will be managed.

4.6.1 Understanding the Public/Private Dilemma

The main ethical concern in digital ethnography is balancing what is considered public and what is considered private during the data collection process. As one of the main conundrums in the operationalisation of ethical principles in digital environments, and in line with ALLEA's (2023) principles of Reliability and Respect, this study will use a “venue-based” approach. I recognise that, while Facebook is a public “venue,” participants are likely to see their interactions as socially private (Hudson & Bruckman, 2004; Markham, 2003; Schumann et al., 2018). Therefore, data will be gathered from a wide range of feminist organisations; Importantly, only open-access Facebook accounts were utilised. This means that only the social media accounts of feminist organisations with disabled privacy settings and active in feminist online campaigns are included. Therefore, by focusing on content meant for the "commons," in this context, the public, this

research respects users' speech and the “contextual integrity” of the posts (Ferguson, 2017, p. 694).

4.6.2 Informed Consent and Legal Compliance

To initiate data collection, I first had to request a research data collection license from NACOSTI (the National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation), as it is the only institution in Kenya that issues these licenses to researchers. Since the data collection will take place in Kenya, I had to obtain their authorisation. Moreover, Lund University's confidentiality policy and GDPR stipulations entail a tiered system for obtaining consent, in which participant consent is obtained step by step or continuously throughout the interview. In this regard, written consent from participants in this organisational interview was obtained. Additionally, participants were informed and understood that they were at liberty to withdraw consent before, during or after the interview. Accordingly, this was after they were informed of the interview's goal.

Obtaining consent from the thousands of users of the viewed post who contributed comments and reactions was, consequently, substantially impracticable; hence, the study opted to analyse only the posts made by these organisations. This, of course, is in accordance with the perceived or actual ethical obligation to obtain participants' consent before data collection (Borkovich, 2022). In doing so, I avoided a narrow focus on individual data to avoid infringing on data rights. Instead, I focused on aggregated data on organisations' actions; however, I was able to make observation fieldnotes on users' reactions, which were helpful in the analysis. This was also in line with the legal obligation in Kenya under the Cybercrimes Act, 2018, and with the platform's terms of service. The collected data was stored in encrypted, password-protected folders and backed up in accordance with Lund University's data management policies. Importantly, I had SOLE access to the folders, and, in line with the University's policies, all collected data were permanently deleted after analysis and reporting were completed.

4.6.3 Anonymity and Accountability.

Another main conundrum in digital research writing concerns anonymity (Salinas, 2023), with tough questions such as whether publicly available data should

be used. Is it even visible, and most importantly, how can it be preserved? To answer this question, this study operates in situated knowledge. In this regard, the Kenyan digital environment is considered dynamically chaotic, as online harassment poses a real danger; therefore, the study considered anonymising posts from organisations that would require anonymisation; however, none of the organisations demanded it. Gerrard (2021) notes that anonymity is always an option for any organisation or participant during and after the study. Before, during, and after data collection, participants were informed of anonymity, changes in consent status, and the removal or redaction of identifying information, and these were explained to them. They understood that they were at liberty to request at any time to exit the study (Salinas, 2023). These options were explained during the consent phase, and participants were provided with several methods to convey their preferences (e.g., email, telephone, or face-to-face during the interview).

5.0 Results and Analysis

In the analysis of the data collected, four major themes were identified, which will be presented as follows: (1) Vernacularization and Aesthetic Counter-Narratives, (2) Digital Safe Houses and Affective Moderation, (3) Digital Frontlines of Backlash and Defensive Activism, and (4) Navigating Algorithmic Affordances and the Implementation Gap. These themes, with their subtopics, were derived through a systematic process of coding and thematic analysis, involving close reading, a comparative matrix table in Excel, and comparison of interview transcripts and ethnographic data to ensure consistency and reliability. This section will present the results, followed by a discussion of these findings in relation to the themes, theory and research questions.

5.1. Vernacularization and Aesthetic Counter-Narratives

5.1.1 Making Feminism Accessible: Everyday Language and Local Voices

One of the central themes that recurred in the analysis was the consistent and deliberate use of local, everyday language by the feminist organisations in their communication and also in the construction of feminist campaigns. These entailed blending various campaign content with local, familiar interpretations of human

rights concepts and feminist theories to deconstruct patriarchal discourses in an easy-to-understand way. These strategies can be understood by relying on words, stories, and visuals that ordinary people use in their daily lives, rather than on complex legal or academic jargon and concepts. This is similar to translating technical terms into familiar language, making the message more relatable and less intimidating, a process called vernacularization (see Levitt Merry, 2009). Within a framework for shaping counterpublics, these Kenyan feminist organisations used adaptive messaging to articulate global gender justice in local idioms and visual styles (Fraser, 1990).

Analysis of the observable data, artefact posts, and interviews revealed diverse perspectives on language-related practices, i.e., everyday deployment, understanding, and social ways language is used and experienced, rather than just abstract concepts of grammatical rules, particularly regarding the audiences being addressed. My asynchronous observation of analysed Facebook artefacts over a ten-year period showed that the language has shifted from technical and legal language (e.g., the '2/3 Gender Rule') to explain representation and has been replaced by hashtags like womenforleadership. The change was also noted in my fieldwork observations, where simpler, operational and practical language was used. One of the respondents explained the reasoning behind this particular strategic shift, which they referred to as 'counter-language':

> "…for us, we nowadays say language that lives in the boardrooms and courtrooms will forever stay in the boardrooms and the courtrooms and will do nothing on the ground… For us to engage and move forward in Kenya, we need to engage the 'Mama Mboga[5] and the youth with the language they understand the most... let's provide the law in a manner…aaah like Sheng (a blend of English and Swahili)so that they feel like it's part of them and not the NGOs" (Participant 3).

This explained the use of terms like #HakiZaAkinaMama (Rights of Mothers) and #FormNiDialogue (the plan is dialogue), as noted in the fieldnotes.

[5] Mama Mboga is used to refer to an everday person-avaerage Joe

Hereby, these feminist organisations will use hashtag footnotes in their campaign posts to rally support for the cause. The analysed data suggest that this kind of language use breaks new ground in outreach to communities that have been largely neglected, particularly within Kenyan society, where some may view feminism as a foreign or elite imposition by these feminist organisations. It is possible to interpret this strategy of vernacularization as perhaps a conscious attempt by these feminist organisations to directly respond to critiques that feminist discourse is sometimes inaccessible or alienating to grassroots audiences in the Kenyan society. These are constituents of women who are mostly uneducated and living in rural areas or ghettos. Therefore, by leveraging familiar hashtags and local idioms, these findings demonstrate that these feminist organisations bridge the gap between abstract, formal organisational language and international feminist concepts, and everyday lived experience and language use. By doing so, these feminist organisations foster greater identification and engagement among everyday people and the communities they serve; in turn, their campaigns are well received and understood. However, a recurring point of contention for the participant was the lack of standardised advocacy language, such as a written, agreed-upon glossary of feminist concepts that could serve as a uniform resource for the entire feminist community and its stakeholders.

Apart from the need to translate international concepts to a local language, participants also noted the importance of what they referred to as 'name-calling' or simply 'name', which refers to naming vices met on women, such as battery, rape, doxxing, etc., for what it is rather than giving it a blanket name such as 'disagreement' or 'issues'. Participant 1 notes the importance of name-calling in feminist advocacy:

> "Mainstream media tends to romanticise violence by calling it a passion killing or a love triangle… We aim to do away with that in our digital strategy…We call it Femicide. We name the systemic failure because when a crime is unnamed or incorrectly labelled, accountability weakens" (Participant 1).

These were also observed in my multi-sited fieldwork, in which the social media activity of these feminist organisations emphasised the significance of the 'name' and the importance of challenging the norm of not naming these vices as a form of warfare, rather than refusing to name them for what they are. This refusal to call it anything other than 'Femicide', as noted by participant 1, encourages organisations to adopt a gender consciousness perspective. These findings add to our understanding of the importance of language: the language used on social media is not just about words but also about power, underscoring language's role as a powerful tool in feminist activism. All the participants agreed that calling a crime by its true name is a way to demand accountability and challenge harmful norms. Participant 3 also identified the importance of connecting global climate reports to the lived, everyday reality of women in rural areas, and of naming the issue or problem as it is, rather than using language from international organisations that an everyday person struggles to understand and instead localising it. Participant 3 articulated these sentiments by giving an example of an international term, such as "carbon footprint," a concept that local women facing climate change don't understand. Saying that:

> "We don't talk about carbon footprints with the women here; we talk about the heat, about lack of rain and food…because during birth, when the taps and rivers are dry. Pregnancy does not pause for climate disasters, and birth happens in silence. If climate justice is real, it must start where life begins, in those fragile spaces where drought has taken everything else" (Participant 3).

The significance of these localisations of global language lies in their ability to contextualise global issues, such as climate justice, within the immediate and material realities of local communities. This is very important, as there is a global shift from materialism to materiality. In that regard, these strategies/behaviours can be understood as a form of drawing on women's tangible experiences; these feminist organisations can translate complex, often abstract policy language and concepts into relatable narratives, making advocacy more resonant and actionable in the grassroots level and the whole nation. This approach can also be understood as

highlighting how feminist activism intersects with other axes of marginaliation, such as rural livelihoods and environmental vulnerability, and demonstrating the importance of grounding digital advocacy in the realities of those most affected and living within it or in it.

5.1.2 Visual Storytelling: Colour, Imagery, and Identity on Social Media

One of the central shared meanings is that the Kenyan feminist organisations utilised "aesthetic regimes", i.e., visuals, colour, and imagery in constructing their messaging and posts to describe their approach to establishing a collective identity in order to 'stop the scroll'[6] of the average Facebook user. These findings add to our understanding that Kenyan feminist organisations use this strategy, employing eye-catching colours, images, and designs to grab people's attention and pique their interest in the message. Drawing on visual culture, which emphasises the role of images and symbolic codes in social meaning-making, the analysis of visual Facebook posts revealed how the deliberate selection of colour combinations such as Purple for solidarity, Red for loss, emergency, or mobilisation, and Orange to call for action functions not only as visual stimulation but as a deliberate language of communication of these feminist organistions resistance that is readily legible to both movement members and the broader public. These findings correspond to theories of counterpublics (Fraser, 1990), in which visual strategies construct alternative discursive spaces that challenge normative, mainstream representations. Perhaps, by mobilising these "aesthetic regimes," it is possible to interpret these feminist organisations as materialising safe digital spaces and signalling inclusion and belonging to their audiences, users and followers. These findings indicate that the use of colour and imagery is not merely decorative but enacted as an intentional intervention to create sites of safety, solidarity, and activism for marginalised

[6] Creating digital content—images, videos, or headlines—so engaging, unexpected, or visually striking that it forces a user to pause their mindless, fast-paced scrolling on social media.

groups. See Figure 1 below, which shows different uses of colours by feminist organisations.

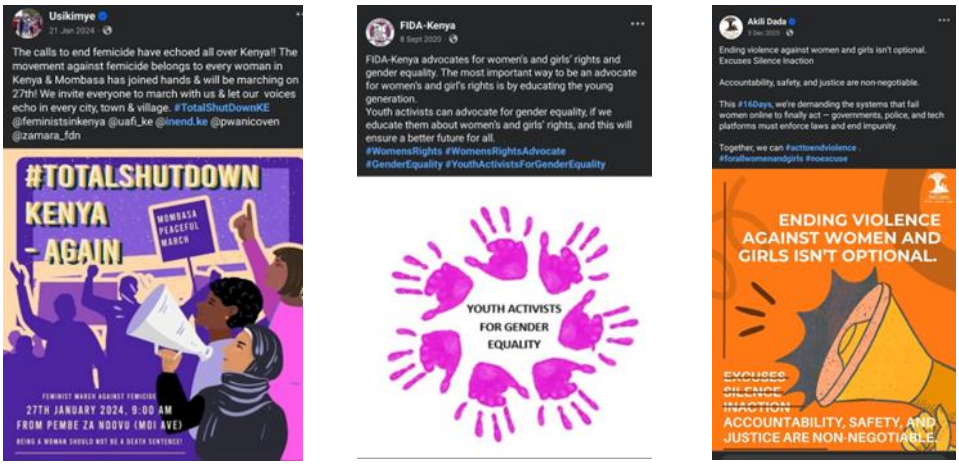

Figure 1 Different uses of colours by feminist organisations

In addition to using different colours, Participant 4 noted the importance of using characters in their attempt to break down complex political theories.

> "We realised that long threads on fascism or adultism were being skipped. So, we changed tactics and aimed for something both familiar and disruptive. Using bright colours and humour, the 'Baddie Feminist' expresses what it means to be believed. It allows the theory to be easily shared and removes power from the academic gatekeepers." (Participant 4)

The removal of academic gatekeepers, as referred to by participant 4, through the use of characters and colourful images and colours, enables relatability with an everyday person who is not able to read the many long written reports that have always been the norm of communication.

5.1.3 Breaking Down Barriers: Humour, Characters, and Inclusive Engagement

This shift toward accessible, shareable content reflects a wider trend in digital feminism: moving away from academic jargon and gatekeeping toward inclusion and mass participation. The significance of barrier breakdown is that it enables inclusiveness, so that not only experts or academics can join the conversation, but anyone can understand, share, and discuss these ideas being put forth leveraging visual strategies and humour by these feminist organisations, these

findings contribute to our understanding that these feminist organisations democratise feminist knowledge and make complex ideas accessible to a wider audience, thereby expanding the reach and impact of their advocacy. Additionally, the significance of using characters lies in these feminist organisations' ability not only to disrupt traditional norms but also to empower followers to engage with feminist discourse in playful, relatable ways.

This point was affirmed by my fieldnotes, which revealed that numerous feminist campaigns used, for example, animations and caricatures (Figure 2) to frame the psychological constraints of victim-blaming, rather than using real images of people or survivors to communicate their messages. In doing so, this finding adds to our understanding of how these feminist organisations do away with those trolls who, instead of showing solidarity and empathy to the survivors, end up blaming these survivors for bringing or causing the harm they suffered. This perspective was echoed by all the interviewees, who affirmed that this kind of digital pedagogy aligns with the population, challenges the normative culture that shuns alternative views, and allows them to bypass algorithmic censorship, since using such a method means their content cannot be pulled down or banned.

Figure 2

Focusing on the coexistence of the visual and the textual in making and deploying these animations, images and caricatures, these feminist organisations theorised that economic empowerment needs to be, in a sense, visually grounded in the collective of grassroots campaigns. This was noted by Participant 5 when describing their organisation's use of imagery, animations and caricatures to depict

women and men sitting together (Figure 3), and the use of table banking[7] as a means of empowering women and men:

> "Table banking is not about the money; it is about the support system. When we show the pictures of women sitting in a circle and counting money, we show the power of the collective. It undermines the perspective that women's income is a danger to the family and shows that the income is actually protective of the family" (Participant 5).

Figure 3 Men and women participating in Table Banking

Such images emphasising community and mutual support challenge old stereotypes about women's economic activity. In that, instead of seeing women's financial independence as a threat, these visuals help the public, especially in communities where the patriarchy is so strong, recognise that women's empowerment is not a threat but rather a protective and empowering force on families and communities at large. Next, we consider how these images draw users into the counterpublic. The "joined hands" images in anti-femicide graphics campaigns as noted in my fieldwork observation notes and collected Facebook artefact (posts), adds to our understanding the significance of these actions to utilise such imagery as it's depictions lies in its power to a vivid idea of togetherness, support and solidarity, which in turn communicates to the wider public that they're not alone in these fights for gender equality. As noted in my fieldnotes observation analysis, it is possible to interpret that many of these feminist organisations would document the violence and still encourage collective gain, along with joyful

[7] Table banking is a community-based financial model in which members, typically women in rural areas, meet monthly to pool savings, repay loans, and immediately lend funds to one another.

resistance, solidarity, and togetherness, despite the violence being recorded, i.e., gender-based crimes and technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

In addition to imagery, analysis of my field notes shows that these feminist organisations use humour as a tactical tool to combat the disenfranchisement felt by most followers, stemming from marginalisation by the dominant sphere; as such, humour is used to confront such anti-gender spheres.

This is in line with what Participant 4 described as:

> "We use humour especially on Facebook to express our disappointment in our leaders, especially those who are elected or nominated to positions, especially to champion for gender equality, yet they do nothing…so we use humour to point out their hypocrisy…in that way we say, we see you." (Participant 4)

5.1.4 Humour as a Tool for Resistance and Resilience

This commentary on participant 4's use of humour reveals its deliberate role as both a coping mechanism and a form of resistance. Put simply, jokes, memes, and witty posts are used not only to make people laugh but also to point out serious problems or failures by leaders. In the context of digital activism practised by these feminist organisations, the significance of humour lies in the ability to serve as a tool for calling out hypocrisy and holding leaders, i.e., civil or political leaders, accountable while also diffusing the tension and emotional burden of advocacy work. It is therefore possible to interpret these findings of use of humour by these feminist organisations as enabling them to maintain morale and solidarity, even in the face of systemic inaction and opposition, and as signalling to both supporters and detractors that the movement remains vigilant and resilient.

It is also important to note that in tough environments, humour is not just a way to cope. However, it is a powerful way to build solidarity, stay motivated, and remind everyone that activism can be both joyful and serious. This exchange speaks to an underlying trend in the data: the use of visual artefacts as "cultural signifiers" can be understood as emblematic of a safe digital space while silencing dissenting voices from the margins. Given the prevalence of this theme, it appears to signify that Kenyan feminist organisations are not merely seeking visibility; they are

actively translating juridical, international concepts and frameworks into community-led action. Whether through the communal table-banking images of Joyful Women and Men Organisation or the “joined hands” motifs in anti-femicide graphics observed, the visual argument remains that gender justice is a “collective gain” for the entire societal structure. These findings on how messaging is adapted for different segments, i.e., population in terms of level of education, geography and age, lead directly to the second theme:

5.2 Digital “Safe Houses” and Affective Moderation

Another theme emerging from the data is the construction and maintenance of digital “safe houses”; In this context, digital “safe houses” refers to the intentional creation and maintenance of these feminists organization’s Facebook pages that act as protected, deliberative spaces where activists and survivors build and conceptualise their identities and aspirations for gender justice, free from the violence of the online and offline trolls and mainstream public sphere. Indeed, this is a theme that emerged most from the interviewed participants. The analysis of the data suggests that these feminist organisations culturally curate online spaces to maintain safety. Moreover, the Facebook pages of these organisations are much more than conduits for message dissemination; they are spaces where intensive “affective labour”, which denotes the labour undertaken in the background to create, maintain and interact with the users online, and self-regulation are negotiated daily, with the sole goal of creating and maintaining fortresses of safety, wellbeing and agitation for the community. Importantly, this theme directly addresses the first and second research questions by illustrating how feminist organisations use digital spaces to both foster community-based support for survivors and to develop alternative spaces for collective action and identity formation towards gender justice. By analysing how these digital safe houses are constructed and managed, the findings demonstrate how online strategies move beyond visibility to create tangible forms of safety and empowerment, particularly in response to mainstream exclusion from the dominant sphere of violence. At the same time, maintaining these digital safe houses is not without its challenges. The data shows that these feminist organisations must continually navigate threats from

trolling, targeted harassment, and platform algorithm changes that can undermine safety or limit visibility of their online campaigns. Additionally, the findings show that the resources for moderation and emotional support are often stretched thin, as participants noted, and the pressure to balance openness with protection can introduce further complexities, i.e., miscommunication. These findings show that limitations highlight that curating safe digital spaces is an ongoing, difficult process that requires constant adaptation, vigilance, and resilience.

Analysis of the interactive layer of the posts revealed a recurring pattern of “digital rites of solidarity” under these safety houses. This is where all the users come together in solidarity, or "sisterhood," as the participants call it. Within the comments section, as noted in my field notes, followers or users of these organisations spend considerable time and energy on what is known in the feminist communities as “threaded testimonies” and/or “threaded testimonials.” Referring to users sharing their story with the rest of the community as a mode of teaching and healing. Fieldnotes analysis on aggregated communicative content from observed posts sparked a conversation about the importance of trauma-informed disclosure in testimonies, which drew an unusually high number of comments that went beyond engagement metrics and into deep discourse. These interactions suggest that the collective use of the care reaction and expressions of support served as digital healing not only for survivors (in the feminist community, survivor is used instead of victims) but also for the general public.

Coalescing around this, all participants emphasised the importance of a safe online space. Participant 1 articulated these sentiments by saying that:

> “For survivors, our page has to be a sanctuary. In a country where survivors are threatened to be quiet about abuse in order to save what is left of family honour, for the first time, it is our page where ‘We believe you’ is seen and heard. That belief and trust are priceless.” (Participant 1)

Similar thoughts concerning the need for a safe online space for survivors to share their stories, and their journey of resilience and healing were shared by participant 5:

"What's important is not just posting. It's about making sure the moment she comments, there is no similar violence there, as the violence she experienced offline." (Participant 5)

It is therefore possible to interpret "safe houses" as relying on strict internal practices to contain anger and anxiety. Equally, the digital artefact data analysis shows that these feminist organisations use the Facebook platform as a "digital dispatch centre," serving as a call centre or a link to getting assistance /help from other stakeholders within the gender justice advocacy groups, i.e., legal, police, or healthcare. By sending real-time messages such as "She is safe now. She's showered, changed, and eaten" (Figure 3), these feminist organisations leverage the platform's openness and transparency to reassure the concerned public of the outcome or wellbeing of the survivors. However, as participant 3 stated, such updates to the Facebook pages require a well-maintained infrastructure, including an internal system of content creators, moderators, counsellors, and other relevant personnel that connect digital tags to offline actions. In that, after the online mobilisation for a cause, this is followed by a physical meeting to agitate for the cause, such as a march, public disruption and civil disobedience or sit-ins and die-ins, which involves occupying a space or a building such as a government institute, to disrupt their daily routines and agitate for change. All participants noted that this coordination process involves a lot of work done in the background that the public does not get to see or appreciate.

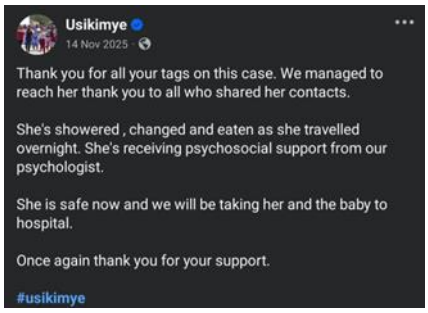

Figure 4

Participant 2 elaborated further on the invisible work done by feminist personnel behind the scenes by stating that:

> “People see a post, but they don’t see the five staff members behind the scenes, reaching out to a shelter, a lawyer, and the police because someone was tagged in a comment. We have protocols. You cannot just ‘exist’ as a feminist page; you have to be a rescue unit… We contain the collective trauma of the people that are following us by showing them that justice moves, even if in a painfully slow way.” (Participant 2).

5.2.1Behind the Scenes: The Emotional and Logistical Work of Digital Activism

This reflection by the participants highlights the often invisible emotional and logistical labour involved in digital activism. This means that people running these online pages are not just posting messages; they are also dealing with real-life emergencies and providing support to people in danger or distress. The metaphor of a rescue unit captures the expanded role of feminist organisations online, where digital engagement can have immediate offline consequences, for example, when a Be On a Look Out (BOLO) alert has been posted online concerning a perpetrator of a heinous crime, such as femicide, who is being sought after. It also points to the affective dimension of moderation, where staff managing these Facebook pages must process and respond to traumatic disclosures while maintaining hope and a sense of progress for their followers. This blending of advocacy, care, and crisis response deepens our understanding of the hallmark of trauma-informed digital spaces, as demonstrated by Kenyan feminist organisations.

Diverging from traditional social media management and its use of Facebook, these Kenyan feminist organisations interpret online affordances through a lens of “trauma-informed curation.” Fieldnotes observation reveals that there is a deliberate choice of imagery employed by these feminist organisations in that instead of utilising visually graphic or highly traumatising photographs of attack and violence meted out on victims, these organisations opt for and use flowers, silhouettes, and/or symbolic art such as the “Blue Umbrella.”. however, it important to note that not all of these feminist organisations confirm to these strategy or way of doing things. However, rather, they operate differently by opting to show everything online, bearing in mind the repercussions of the affordances, which

might result in being banned or a temporary suspension of their Facebook pages. These behaviours, such as using silhouettes and/or symbolic art, can be understood as a choice made for aesthetic safety, intended to solicit participation and avoid causing secondary trauma to the survivors. Participant 3 described this way of doing things as a "shielding" strategy, and further elaborated by stating that:

> "We use narrative and art because the raw image can be a weapon used against the survivor later. In our interviews with the community, we found that visibility is a double-edged sword. So, on Facebook, we curate a space that focuses on the 'after' this entails ah the healing and the resilience rather than the 'during' of the violence. …which in that and we believe by doing so make the digital space feel like a home rather than a crime scene" (Participant 3).

5.2.3 Ethics of Representation: Healing and Safety

This approach to visual moderation illustrates a nuanced understanding of the ethics of representation. In other words, the organisations are careful about how they show stories of violence online. By choosing to prioritise healing and resilience over graphic depictions of violence, organisations protect survivors from further harm while fostering a sense of safety and community. Instead of sharing shocking or upsetting images, they focus on stories of recovery and strength. This also serves as a counter-narrative to mainstream media's often sensationalist framing of gender-based violence, reinforcing the principle that survivors' dignity should be at the centre of advocacy and storytelling.

Despite these feminist organisations' attempts to maintain "safe houses", they are often challenged by "algorithmic determinism": automated, data-driven systems on Facebook predetermine the visibility and perception of content shared on the platform. Interviewees showed broad awareness of how the algorithm can turn their "safe" community into a highly toxic environment. Participant 4 expressed the need for a special community, referred to as "defensive moderation," that will enable and resist these predetermined outcomes.

All the participants had an experience to share when it came to their way of dealing with the algorithmic affordances by sharing as follows:

Participant 3 stated that: “The algorithm loves it when people argue. If a post goes viral, it’s often because men's rights activists have found it and started attacking us.”

Participant 2: “It is really hard for us to operate at times…it’s like you're tiptoeing on an eggshell it you should make some noise…anyway, we try, but you never know when the thing will do what it does.”

Participant 1: “At times, you post something and go home and sleep …then in the morning you wake up with a thousand and one missed calls…then you know…has hit the fun.”

Participant 4 later added that:

“We must make a choice. Do we leave the comments for the 'reach', or do we delete the posts and block people to ensure the safety of our girls? This is a decision we are forced to make most of the time. A safe house loses its purpose as a safe house when the door has been broken and isn't safe. Our community, as a whole, is more important than Meta metrics.” (Participant 4)

This reflection of algorithms from the participants highlights a critical tension in digital activism. It is important to make it clear how much of a compromise safety vs visibility really is to these feminist organisations, and these findings add to our understanding that these feminist organisations possess their own internal plan of action, such as the use of “moderation handbooks” within which they handle what they describe as “gendered cyber-toxicity”.Contrary to earlier assumptions, the data showed that all the participants acknowledged that they do comment screening, respond to their users or follower DMs who threaten physical self-harm, and engage in online “peacekeeping” to quell cyber fights among followers, especially during the heated discourses in the online forum, as the work that has to be done, even if no one takes the time to appreciate it. Participants also expressed the view that deeper, gendered labour is needed, along with the safety of the moderators or staff of these feminist organisations.

Participant 5 articulated these issues concerning the safety and ethics of their staff by stating that:

> “The hostile environment of social media remains highly charged. Most of our moderators are women. Some are survivors, too. When the public’s angry or trolls are nasty, our moderators carry that anger home. We’ve already had to give our moderators ‘digital wellness’ days. People may think our safe house for followers is good, but it’s really become a prison for our staff. We try to keep a support system using the platform, but the platform doesn’t support us.” (Participant 5).

This reflection suggests that the content moderation of Kenyan feminist organisations involves a high-risk psychological profession that may not be recognised or appreciated by the communities they serve. These findings also add to our understanding of the desperate need for feminist organisations to fundamentally redesign how these platforms protect those who protect the internet and the community at large. The research findings also indicated that a ‘digital safe house’ serves as a place where numerous dialogues and deliberations take place and fosters a space in which alternative forms of identity are constructed, in agreement with Fraser (1990).

Unpacking this interactive layer further, the data show that the safe house also acts as a deliberative space for alternative understandings of women's agency in their identity formation and gender justice (Fraser, 1990). As seen in (Figure 4), these feminist organisations, especially those operating within the religious underpinnings in their vision and mission, are normally referred to as faith-based feminist organisations operating under the umbrella of politics of piety (see Saba Muhamood, 2004). where these faith-based feminist organisations are advocating for family relations by challenging patriarchal norms, even within the religion, such organisations create a “Live” dialogue space that allows their followers to engage in the “digital ritual” of questioning and calling for equality reform. Unobtrusive field notes suggest that these sessions act as a virtual town hall, where “care” is used as a stand-in for the nod of agreement, as in in-person dialogue or face-to-face meetings, as it also removes the shyness of speaking in public and the backlash or the stigmatisation that might come with it when sharing one's perspectives.

Figure 5

As demonstrated by this overarching theme, digital "safe houses" and affective moderation, the Kenyan feminist organisations have shifted the use of Facebook beyond its basic functions of connecting, sharing, and communication. The participants described these shifts as moving away from their earlier use of Facebook, where they would post once in a while, and toward a more casual way of connecting with their fan base, as they saw it. However, now the Facebook pages of feminist organisations act as a living, self-organising organism that incorporates the collective power of individuals and the consciousness of action. Perhaps these add to our understanding that digital spaces of feminist organisations act as entities that learn, react, and grow. In addition, these feminist pages not only house sophisticated, self-regulated infrastructures of care. Nevertheless, also end up curating their pages to incorporate trauma-informed practices and care-driven moderation to counter-validate and provide an online sanctuary of a digital safe house for Kenyan mainstream women, to both their users and staff. Even though running these pages is burdensome and goes unnoticed by their followers or users, these feminist organisations consider them a solid foundation for their subsequent broader legal and political advocacy. The success of these digital safe houses provides a useful model for activists in other contexts who are seeking to combine care, safety, and effective advocacy online. The subsequent findings state that these safe houses are defended when they inevitably come into conflict with organised backlash from the manosphere and other hate groups against feminist activism.

5.3 The Digital Frontlines of Backlash and Defensive Activism

The data analysed strongly indicates a clear understanding of the "digital frontlines" and that the formation of feminist counterpublics on social media can

provoke an organised online backlash. The respondent indicated that they initially focused on Facebook as a tool for general awareness. However, all interviewees agreed that the platform has now become a space for a virtual war, in which advocacy has transformed into defensive activism. In response to this hostility, respondents expressed divergent views on the visibility of their campaigns. One participant stressed the need to engage in accountable and direct confrontational activism, stating that:

> "I believe that the time has come to abandon the idea of ignoring trolls. As they say, the enemy is the person calling the legal trolls…they are each in a different one. Direct legal accountability to their members ensures that they will be confronted… It is now the law that sustaining threats to life is also the law… We will not surrender, and we will not be silenced." (Participant 4).

Based on participants 4 reflecting on how to deal with online trolls, it is important to note that there is a shift happening as observed by my fieldnotes whereby some feminists organisations are no longer fighting trolls with politeness but rather employ the tactic of name and shame whereby they can pick a negative comment and share on their pages asking the public what they think of such as person with such a comment. In doing so, they believe there will be fewer hateful messages as trolls will fear being publicly shamed.

Referring to the respondents' reflections on the effect this backlash has on their activism, Participant 4 further stated, "Silence is not silence…Silence is a consequence," which they called the "concession to violence" (Participant 4). This participant's response, however, contrasted with that of another participant, participant 2, who suggested managing public anger in a more structured manner, relying on a systematic, cooperative-like structure for managing conflicts rather than on individual accountability through naming and shaming, which, to them, is counterproductive.

> "Everybody's frustrated, and I think that frustration can easily turn into criticism when the big stage isn't being changed or isn't reflecting that frustration." (Participant 2).

This kind of frustration is apparently emerging from society at large, as action is not being taken. A participant gave an example of where neighbours never report the violence meted out on women within their neighbourhoods until it is too late.

Participant 2 further elaborated their point by stating that:

> "I think a lot of people think, 'Oh, I made a post, used a hashtag, but nothing changed,' so then they start to look at the criticism and start feeling disenfranchised. I think that people need to see and know that there is absolutely no shortage of frustration that is directed at the people in power who enable this to happen and do nothing to stop it." (Participant 2).

Representing the first recognition that there are significant constraints to 'digital' agency when faced with a 'lynch-mob' mentality of cancel culture or social media outrage, participant 3 stated that:

> "I think that there is no shortage of criticism that is brought to people's attention…I think if people want to stop the hate that spreads online, they need to stop the statements and the ideas that they bring to online social forums that pushes people's common sense; otherwise, it'll be business as usual." (Participant 3).

Coalescing around this, Participant 1 suggested that, for digital activism to sustain in the long run, it needs to be protected and that all the feminist organisations should 'create a space that is safe for people to engage and to protest'. Consequently, the focus on managing backlash from trolls and antifeminist groups through a systemic legal way of reporting them to the authorities and Facebook platforms through its use of support inbox appears to be on the common 'defensive digital labour' of feminist activists in Kenya. In this regard, the participants described the 'ontics' of online violence and are trying to make sense of the violence, where they relate doxxing, a form of malicious act of releasing individuals' private information to the public, to physical violence in the real world,as shared by participant 3:

> "Doxxing and stalking are examples of digital violence and are extensions of the violence and inequality that exist in the real world…in our

organisations, we believe that these should be linked to economic structures and the ideas about men owning the digital world the same way they own the physical world." (Participant 3).

Participant 4 connected their ideas to the concern about getting visibility:

> "There was a feeling that if we just make the right graphics, the right posts, and we disseminate this content, we would avoid the hate. However, we are witnessing this huge, persistent, ongoing, systemic, and structural retaliation which is really very hard for us." (Participant 4).

The same participant later added that.

> "You can't separate the topic of violence and femicides and address the culture of rape that contributes to the comments. It's a network of issues." (Participant 4).

These contrasting views show just how complicated and stressful it is to do activism online. While some activists advocate for confronting online abuse directly, others emphasise the need for systematic change and support. What unites them is the recognition that digital violence is just as real and damaging as offline violence, and that fighting it requires both new strategies and a lot of emotional resilience.

All the participants also agreed upon this idea. As they stated, there was a need to address the various aspects of this network of issues that lead to a crisis, especially when they spend a lot of time online moderating their pages. When asked about their perception of algorithmic reporting, Participant 3 stated that:

> "We shouldn't have to spend all day reporting trolls…Why are the platforms thinking about 'engagement metrics' (the participant used a quote gesture) rather than changing the mindset of these trolls?" (Participant 3).

Similar sentiments were shared by participant 2:

> "…We have the evidence of hate already, just not the political will to prosecute it." (Participant 2).

These findings largely indicate initial concern about digital safety, as all participants preferred a systematic legal framework to a platform-driven 'solution,' whereby there can be a smooth working setup and an easy way to prosecute the

perpetrator once identified online. As it is now, the participants lamented the slow pace of how the legal institution works whenever dealing with issues of gender-based abuse, let alone crimes committed online, such as an ex-lover releasing intimate pictures of their exes to the public. Closely linked to engagement with radical ideas, participants indicated a desire to commit to advocacy in the "lethal reality" that survivors face, as described by Participant 3.

The advocacy campaign to sustain engagement of legal institutions and these feminist organisations in working together to speed up the time such cases take to be prosecuted in the courts was further described by Participant 3 as preferable to post-engagement, as "people are dying from the existing digital network, let's focus on social justice even if the platform's engagement was lost".

These losses are a wide consideration of these feminist organisations, as somehow the algorithms' affordances are and will always be against them, as most of these platforms, like Facebook, are manmade and controlled by men, as they put it. In providing examples to illustrate the support, all the participants recognised the need for education that fosters and counters "rape culture," to the wider community and that it should start in the affirmative ages of education, all the way up to the tertiary education. However, they all agreed that more needs to be done than "shadow banning" to stop the perpetrators, especially in the courts, to speed up prosecutions and to be harsher to the perpetrators.

Participant 4 further stated that:

> "I have memories of learning about rights a long time ago, and everyone seems to have a basic level of comprehension about them. The real issue is that people get easily convinced by victim-blaming, which is prevalent in many comments. For a long time now, people have not seen the state supporting women in the digital sphere. People feel disenfranchised." (Participant 4).

This was followed by a prompt question about the ineffectiveness of "polite" speech in defusing a digital mob of trolls and manosphere, as they refer to anti-gender groups.

Participant 4 stated that: “Doesn't really get taught how to stop a gang-rape confession from going viral on Facebook, unfortunately.” (laughter).

Though the participant was likely making a sarcastic reply, this reply nonetheless reflects a real need among a growing number of organisations and participants, especially to focus more on “defensive organising.” This can also signify the Kenyan culture of laughing at a sad reality they feel powerless to change. They were also using a laugh to address a need many participants have, likely due to the intense nature of the struggle, which was inverted in the sessions.

For example, participants actually laugh where their organisations are even “nicely” asking to end femicide, and the response is often met with greater resistance and violence. When posed with the same question, the participants stated as follows:

Participant 3: “So, can we advocate for a ‘total shutdown’ of the hate?”

Participant 2: “What…advocate for getting rid of the patriarchy in one weekend?” (laughter)

Participant 5: “The advisors to the Kenyan government…”

Participant 1: “Disband the status quo and all of the silence” (laughter).

Given that this theme is the dominant one, the response to the backlash was a new “defensive critique,” which seemed to have a slight positive effect on commitment to the cause. These findings not only evaluated participants' laughter and thought engagement but also moved beyond surface-level advocacy to a more critical examination of how digital traces could be used as a weapon. Therefore, in the subsequent section, these findings are illustrated in the following theme. .

5.4. Navigating Algorithmic Affordances and the Implementation Gap

This final theme explores how feminist organisations in this research understand and respond to the technical features of effects and affordances in the Facebook platform. In this final theme, there is a tension between the platform's "digital determinism,” where algorithms, for the most part, decide what can be seen and what cannot be seen on the platform, and not forgetting the human engagement of activists who pursue the question of accountability in an organised way by moderating their pages to make sure they conform to the platforms ethics and guide

of conduct. The data analysis suggested a level of strategic understanding of the 'game' the game here refers to a strategy of passing sensitive information online without risking a ban from the platforms algorithms, or hate from the antifeminist groups platform to shift engagement from passive 'likes' and 'shares' in the Facebook community which at times doesn't translated to actionable offline actions such as an active 'calls' to 'demonstrations' and marches to agitate for change.

There was some debate in the data about whether the platform is best conceived as a temporary "rescue post" instruction or as a "permanent" digital "public square" where times and other digital spaces will be used for the digital mobilisation required to achieve 'real' offline changes. One of the participants brought attention to the crowded digital space and the competition for visibility in their campaigns, stating that:

> "…we've come to understand about one thing about these algorithm…it seems like the algorithm rewards what is trending, but justice, unfortunately, doesn't always trend, it is a deliberate choice by us… for us we use Pop-Feminism and digital graphics to encourage scrolling but ultimately encourages users to move from likes to signing a petition or providing vocal support to their MP." (Participant 1)

Concerning what has been termed the "implementation gap," the participant claimed that even though they had successfully reached thousands of users, whom they refer to as 'digital noise', inaction from relevant bodies, i.e., the parliament, remains the greatest challenge to mobilising support for policy change.

Another participant shared a different experience, arguing that the platform's affordances empower them to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and bring data to the state, judiciary and parliament. When asked what was going on when politicians read the reports generated by these feminist organisations, such as those concerning femicide, gender-based violence and representation. Participant 3 responded by stating that:

> "We tag the government on Facebook…We are working to make them see the data. We are supposed to capture the technology we have for the

politicians to see the crisis and crisis magnitude containment in real-time." (Participant 3)

When it comes to the "hashtag activism", a response was provided from Participant 2, who explained that engagement on the platform is often algorithmic labour whereby they have to channel out their campaigns in an easy-to-understand way, bearing in mind the networked effects:

> "We simplify Kenya's macro-level task force reports to graphical form for Facebook…We still have action to take on the reports. Facebook likes, infographics, and posts should be brief…We should break the 200-page evidence requests to 10 slides, so the duty bearers have no reason to fault the lack of promotion or be lazy as to not read the whole document, as it has been known to happen" (Participant 2).

Although partial, this focused and calculated response to the growing accommodation of activism reflects how various digital traces can contribute to positive social change across diverse dimensions, including participants, users, and even the highest legislative forums. In response, Participant 4 argued that the movement needs to develop "algorithmic literacy".

Participants delved in depth into the "platform accountability" topic, revealing that participants in the protest are beginning to assess the morals of the platforms they use.

When unpacking these positions, most participants began discussing the "affective labour" of algorithms and noted that the platform often favours outrage and quick reactions over sustainable, constructive communication. Participant 1 also pointed out that:

> "I think people feel if we do enough posting, we'll get results. But the algorithm works for profit, not for justice. There was a video of someone confessing to a gang rape that went viral, while educational threads on consent get hidden. You can't try to resolve a conflict on a platform that profits from it" (Participant 4).

These insights show that the technology behind social media platforms is not neutral; it often amplifies negativity and hides important educational messages.

These findings add to our understanding that their efforts to promote justice can be undermined by the very platforms they rely on. Understanding how algorithms work and finding creative ways to work around them is now a crucial part of successful digital activism.

Participants understood that this kind of online work should always connect to activities done outside of the digital space. Just like participant 4, Participant 5 was on the same line of thought, stating that the "digital" should always link to the "physical": Hence, the online-offline relationship, elaborating this was an example of women's savings and loans referred to as table banking, where participant 5 shared as follows.

> "Our table banking photos perform well on our social media, as everyone loves to see empowerment…We see it as a digital trace…It reflects to our donors and the government we mean something." (Participant 5).

Because education is centred on agency, participants posited that the platform's greatest affordance is "the digital construction of intergenerational feminist movements." The platform's "archival" nature was discussed in the context of older posts resurfacing, forming a continuum of unfulfilled promises. Participant 2 expressed frustration with "ending the year exactly where we started," but to the digital record.

Despite the overwhelming nature of the struggle against both patriarchal systems and algorithmic bias faced by these Kenyan feminist organisations, humour was regularly observed in the interview sessions and the Facebook posts collected. Most participants found it hard to believe that the "meta-verse" could one day help to address violence. They remarked that "we have the tools, just not the enforcement." These findings suggest a pattern in the data: the appropriation of "digital sovereignty." Using these terms, feminist organisations seek to create a digital space of their own making, rather than being forced into one by the platform's dictates. Indeed, these results reflect a Kenyan feminist movement that utilises advanced tactics of "digital sovereignty" to neutralise the "digital determinism" on which it relies most. In light of these findings, the Kenyan feminist movement performs and strategises simultaneously to exercise discursive and

strategic control over the “digital determinism” that threatens to define their movement.

6.0 Concluding Discussions

The following discussion will be centred on the themes, their links to the research questions, and the interpretation of the collected data, synthesising the findings with the theory.

6.1 Vernacularization as a Strategic Counter-Discourse (RQ1)

Regarding RQ1, it appears that the “Vernacularization” of feminism is currently being strategically interpreted within the Kenyan feminist advocacy community as a mode of modifying their feminist discourses on Facebook for different audience segments on the platform. While the structural, formal organisations still situate themselves within international legal conventions, there is a growing acknowledgement that advocacy messaging must be vernacularized to appeal to the average person. This is likely to be augmented by the shift of digital activism from an academic or formal “boardroom” style to Sheng and local vernacular. Although this is a promising paradigm, the Kenyan feminist advocacy community is grappling with the challenge of creating easily shareable content while maintaining a comprehensive, critical stance and position regarding patriarchal systems still in place. From the study’s results, it is evident that there is a growing understanding that vernacularization is the strategically right techno-pragmatic approach to addressing the advocacy community and the most extreme articulations of women’s voice within the Kenyan public sphere. Because of this understanding, the phenomenon of vernacularization is considered “damage control” rather than a technical, emotionally distanced separation of the community from activism.

Participants' views of the shift towards local vernacular advocacy were influenced by the belief that this approach would enhance community involvement. These views were further supported by advocacy for “Pop-Feminism” as an emergency pedagogical signpost to be managed by the organisations themselves. This support for local vernacular advocacy is easily understandable, given the

"nightmarish" (to put it lightly) GBV emergencies already faced. This revealed an apparent need for more "cultural translation" in the eventual eruption of whatever dire emergency would be so great as to require nuanced vernacular advocacy.

However, this is not without its risks. A tactical choice ultimately produces consent to a "watered down" feminism that shys away from more difficult, structural critiques of the capitalist state. The slippery-slope problem of content devolving into entertainment further increases the possibility of the movement's more radical, undermined, or normalised roots. The question is: what motivation would the state have to ease the kinds of violence caused by systemic inequalities if a digital "lever" exists that creates a false sense of progress through viral hashtags? Therefore, the manner of speaking and the appeal of political and social digital campaigns are both expressions of that system of thinking and of the political system in which they are conceived.

6.2 The Fragility of Digital "Safe Houses" (RQ2 & RQ3)

I turn to the second and third research questions, how organised backlash affects visibility and the internal procedures used to maintain digital "safe houses." This discussion is deeply informed by Nancy Fraser's theory of subaltern counterpublics, which emphasises how feminist organisations occupy digital spaces both as sanctuaries for re-groupment and as sites of agitation targeting broader publics. In this thesis, Facebook pages curated by feminist organisations function as subaltern counterpublics: they provide safe spaces for survivors and activists to withdraw from mainstream hostilities while simultaneously serving as launchpads for public agitation and advocacy.

To establish the premises of a "safe house" built by the participants in this study, internal governance systems and a social agreement, of sorts, backed by the general public, are a necessity. While organisations are aware of the risks associated with using digital research and rescue tools on global platforms without comprehensive regulations, these tools also provide sites of affective labour. Though these safety recommendations are concrete, they lack the support and intervention of Meta–Facebook, thereby negating the organisations' own risk statements. In doing so, the platforms place the burden of governance on the

activists by not supporting “defensive moderation” as a precondition for global safety frameworks.

In this regard, platform creators must demonstrate their ability to facilitate respectful debates that uphold knowledge and provide tangible assurances to prevent gendered cyber toxicity. Engaging in a digital counterpublic, as theorised by Fraser, means not only creating alternative arenas for discourse but also directly contesting the structures and actors dominating the mainstream public sphere, including platform owners, states, and patriarchal institutions. The work of feminist organisations in Kenya exemplifies the “dual character” of subaltern counterpublics: their pages are both refuge from hostile publics and strategic sites for agitation and collective action directed at changing the mainstream narrative. It is important to note that the tension between withdrawal/re-groupment and outward agitation is continually negotiated in their daily digital practice, particularly when they respond to backlash or to algorithmic constraints imposed by the platform.

Indeed, those actors currently colonising digital space are capitalist self-interest affirmers. There is injustice in the centre-north-originated social media, as it is mostly viewed by actors from the global south as a colonising space. As such, expecting a shift to a platform that privileges users from the centre or north will also be unjust, and expecting compliance from those within the centre and north’s social systems in order to balance the numerous self-governing systems and ungoverned networks in the peripheries is also unjust, given the social justice system's complete or partial absence from international social systems. Moreover, resting deliberation on the calls of actors advocating digital self-governing systems that shift the focus to platform growth, leaving safety for an “after”, will only result in issues of global winners and losers in the digital future. This is my motivation; those who advocate for digital self-governing systems believe in justice and in the exclusion of the centre, the north, and the peripheries from social networks. The absence of new deployments of advanced self-governing networks at the centre, north, and peripheries also represents a form of social justice. The technologies that change our collective environment are still self-governing digital networks.

Furthermore, due to the potential to own them, ‘techno-fixes’ were later perceived as problematic, with the scope of the focus shifting to assessing the impact of organisations, especially the “radical” ones. Fraser’s concept of subaltern counterpublics is helpful here in understanding the collective, iterative nature of these movements: each episode of digital agitation, each campaign, and each act of regroupment in “safe house” spaces contribute to building oppositional identities and strategies that incrementally challenge dominant structures. The study shows that these Kenyan feminist organisations are not only responding to backlash but are actively reconstituting the boundaries and collective identities of their counterpublics with each engagement, sometimes defensive, sometimes agitational, always in negotiation with the mainstream.

If a platform advocate wishes to represent the intersection priorities, they need to design and develop strategies that acknowledge multiple alternative epistemologies and offer substantive safeguards against the highly probable gendered cybervoting. To be in true alignment with a digital counterpublic, one must have a critique of social media's “Imperial World Order,” one that champions the militarisation of hostile actors and the corporate hijacking of expansive cyber territory, while simultaneously deferring the social injustices of the platform, located in the Global North, within the hatred and the long limbo of governance. It is unreasonable to expect local feminists or indigenous people to accept the terms of a platform in light of the lack of adequate representation in the international governance structures of technology.

At the outset, the desire for digital sovereignty must be emphasised. It is patronising to develop a platform while postponing the debate on safety. It is also patronising to ignore the current and future winners and losers in the digital world. Just like, if a State invests in research and ignores execution, digital safety, at best, is a hollow promise.

6.3 Algorithmic Navigations and United Liberation (RQ4)

This research began with the concern that digital politics of feminism, through digital activism, may be construed as not earned, and, as a result, that unjustified activism may attempt to disrupt algorithms.

The results of the study advocate for the inclusion of “digital literacy” and argue that it cannot go unnoticed. An adaptation and a collective response are demanded due to the shift that digital technology causes in our commons.

The success of these feminist organisations stemmed from the breadth of the issues they addressed. Organisations incorporated scaling analysis to better contextualise the opposing contradictions inherent in the ‘power’ of capital's limitlessness. Through their actions, they understood the issues.

The final research question, on these feminist organisations' persecution and navigation of affordances, demonstrates the necessity of analysing the relationship between radical education and counter-hegemonic movements. Praxis should be situated within a framework of radical and internationalist solidarity. Theory and praxis, when pursued in isolation from the feminist climate and economic struggles, in the face of a highly organised and shared enemy, cannot be justified either. Systems change cannot be accomplished in a single post. Each subsequent act of advocacy moves the more organised and structured collective nearer to the more organised goal. Hence, there is a greater need for counter-hegemonic movements to achieve greater collective liberties, since the same powers that uphold systematic oppression are the same forces that obstruct the achievement of gender justice.

6.4 Conclusions

This thesis set out to explore the use of Facebook by formal feminist organisations in Kenya to construct a counter-narrative to the dominant sphere, using digital campaigns to sustain a gender justice narrative. Grounding the analysis in Fraser’s 1990 theory of subaltern counterpublics, the study demonstrated that formal feminist organisations in Kenya go beyond participation in digital activism, focusing on the construction and negotiation of counterpublics that function as a retreat for regroupment and a point of departure for action.

The research shows that, for Kenyan feminist organisations, Facebook pages serve as digital 'safe houses' for the community, offering affective labour and care, where activism traditionally undertaken in the public domain is carried out in the online domain. They maintain the community's visibility by also ensuring its safetyof this community. However, for this to happen, the leadership of these

organisations has to navigate the tension created by the debate over visibility and safety. Additionally, these leaders have to negotiate the dual demands of ensuring communal identity and protecting against backlash and algorithmic suppression. Indeed, the duality of their digital presence, where it is both protective and agitative, aligns with Fraser's (1990) withdrawal and contestation of the public and the conceptualisation of counterpublics in the stratified society.

This thesis study details the hurdles not just of algorithmic governance but also of platform design and the global digital divide. Kenyan feminist organisations work within the constraints and affordances of Facebook to shift their supporters from online to offline activism, where change is mostly realised through marches and agitation. However, they find that in the digital activism field, inaction by platforms, systemic inequalities, and the emotional toll of digital activism undermine their efforts. Despite these frustrations, these feminist organisations continue their work, drawing on their resilience, and have shown a great deal of innovative work that reflects their radical solidarity. These efforts are seen to transcend activism in the digital world.

Recognising the importance of contextual and global activism, this thesis research validates the need to further examine feminist digital activism. Drawing on the experiences of formal feminist organisations, there is a need to focus on lived experiences to promote work in digital activism and to highlight the emotional and strategic efforts of such organisations. In doing so, greater digital activism might show positive potential that overcomes digital activism's chronic patriarchal and algorithmic oppression. Finally, future studies and research should explore the dimensions of digital counterpublics intersectionally, focusing on the defensive tactics of moderation and the long-term impact of online-offline feminist mobilisation. In conclusion, and with a sad note, during the writing of this thesis, 4 femicides were perpetrated in Kenya. In that regard, this thesis offers both inspiration and caution: digital spaces can be harnessed for collective empowerment, but only through deliberate and critically reflexive practices that centre the needs and voices of the most marginalised groups in society.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Questionnaire

Section A: Organisational Background

i. Can you briefly describe your organisation's mission and main areas of focus?
ii. What role does digital activism (especially Facebook) play in your advocacy and campaign strategies?

Section B: Messaging and Audience Engagement

iii. How do you decide what messages or campaigns to share on Facebook? Who is involved in this process?
iv. In what ways do you adapt your messaging to reach different audience segments (e.g., youth, rural women, policymakers)?
v. How do you balance global feminist discourses with local realities and vernacular language in your posts?

Section C: Backlash and Digital Safety

vi. What forms of online backlash or harassment have your organisation or members experienced?
vii. How does organised online backlash affect the visibility or framing of your campaigns?
viii. Can you describe any internal procedures or protocols your organisation has developed to manage public anger, trolling, or coordinated attacks online?
ix. How do you ensure the digital safety and well-being of your staff and community members (e.g., moderators)?

Section D: Digital "Safe Houses" and Community Building

x. How do you create and maintain a sense of safety and solidarity for survivors and activists on your Facebook page?
xi. What practices do you use to moderate comments and foster supportive online interactions?
xii. Can you share examples of how your organisation has responded to follower disclosures, threats, or urgent requests via Facebook?

Section E: Platform Affordances and Algorithmic Challenges

xiii. How do you perceive and navigate Facebook's algorithmic affordances (e.g., visibility, trending, moderation tools)?
xiv. Have you noticed any changes in engagement or reach due to platform algorithms? If so, how have you adapted?
xv. What strategies do you use to move supporters from online engagement (likes, shares) to offline action (petitions, demonstrations)?

Section F: Reflections and Future Directions

xvi. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities you see for feminist digital activism in Kenya today?

xvii. How do you measure the success or impact of your online campaigns beyond basic metrics (likes, shares)?

xviii. What advice would you offer to other organisations seeking to strengthen their digital advocacy and resilience?

Closing

xix. Is there anything else about your organisation's experience with digital feminist activism you would like to share?

xx. Do you have any questions for me?

Vote of thanks

Appendix II: Consent Form

Consent to participate in a Master Thesis at the Faculty of Social Sciences

I agree to participate in ***the study, Digital Counterpublics: An Analysis of Kenyan Feminist Organisations and Digital Activism.***

This is a student project. I will not collect personal data but will use online public discourse (i.e., users' comments) and interview data from the organisation to understand digital advocacy.

Information on the processing of personal data

The following personal data will be processed: Names of interviewees, professional job titles, organisational email addresses, and audio/video recordings of the interviews.

The following sensitive personal data will be processed:

Political opinions related to gender justice and advocacy, and experiences regarding online harassment or "trolling."

Personal data will be processed in the following ways:

Data will be recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis. Files will be stored on a password-protected drive and will be deleted upon the successful completion and grading of the Master's Thesis (expected June 2026).

We do not share your personal data with third parties.

Lund University, Box 117, 221 00 Lund, Sweden, with organisation number 202100-3211 is the controller. You can find Lund University's privacy policy at www.lu.se/integritet

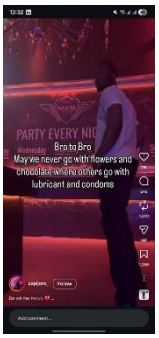
You have the right to receive information about the personal data we process about you. You also have the right to have inaccurate personal data about you corrected. If you have a complaint about our processing of your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at dataskyddsombud@lu.se.

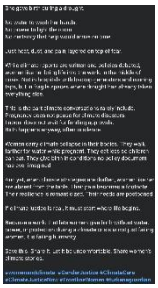
You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority (the Data Protection Authority, IMY) if you believe that we are processing your personal data incorrectly.

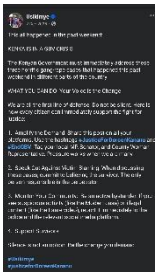
I agree to participate in ***Digital Counterpublics: An Analysis of Kenyan Feminist Organizations and Digital Activism***

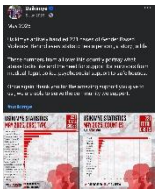
Location	Signature
Date	Name clarification

Appendix III: Facebook artefacts posts



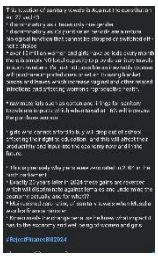




#SAY NO TO TAXING SANITARY PADS AND DIAPERS#
STOP TAXING OUR DIGNITY!
NO TAX ON PERIODS & PAMPERS
ESSENTIALS, NOT LUXURY. KENYA.







8th March
we are
all equal








SHE'S
SOMEONE

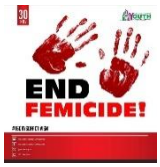






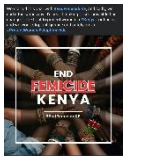
5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT
SEXUAL VIOLENCE





END
FEMICIDE!






END
FEMICIDE
KENYA









Blue
Umbrella
Day

STAND AGAINST
FEMICIDE,
PROTECT WOMEN







What's
Your
Story?...

FASCISM
LOVES...

102
Women Killed
in Kenya in 2025
Real Men Protect.
Love Does Not Kill.


I RAISE MY VOICE IN
SOLIDARITY, I STAND
FOR JUSTICE, AND I
HONOUR THE STRENGTH
OF EVERY BRAVE SOUL.

END
FEMICIDE
KENYA


ENDING VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND
GIRLS ISN'T OPTIONAL.

Appendix IV: Field notes and reflections.

Organisation	Original Text	Field Notes	Assigned Theme
Center for Legal Support & Inmates' Rehabilitation - Celsir	What happens when survivors of violence find themselves in the courtroom? Following the recent Capital Defenders Gender and Death Penalty Training, the Center for Legal Support & Inmates' Rehabilitation - Celsir will host a public dialogue: “When Violence Leads to the Courtroom: Gender, Justice & the Death Penalty.” Join us as we explore the intersection between gender-based violence, justice, and legal defence. Live Public Dialogue. #GBV #GenderJustice #JusticeReform	Poster for a live public dialogue in Eldoret, Kenya, focused on the complex issue of GBV survivors facing legal consequences, potentially even the death penalty. Celsir, with its focus on rehabilitation, is hosting this to unpack the gender and justice dynamics. Date: Wednesday, 18 March, 2026. Note the future date, suggesting this is a proactive campaign.	Legal Aid, Justice Reform, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Intersectionality
(organization/)	Day 2 Reflection: Building Capacity to Combat TF-GBV... The workshop in Nakuru, today brought the challenges of digital violence into sharp focus. ... The final session focused on designing an effective Early Warning System (EWS). ... Today's workshop reinforced that combating TF-GBV requires prevention, preparedness, and people-centered systems... #KomeshaTFGBV #DigitalSafety #GenderJustice	Reflection from day 2 of a capacity-building workshop on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TF-GBV) held in Nakuru. Mentions specific cases (political aspirant, activist, student). Key outcome is the co-design of an Early Warning System. The reflection focuses on solutions: shared responsibility, digital first aid, and community action.	Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TF-GBV), Digital Safety, Capacity Building, Early Warning Systems
FIDA-Kenya	The reality of femicide and intimate partner violence (IPV) in Kenya is alarming. ... Join One Billion Rising Kenya on February 16, 2025, from 2 PM - 8 PM at Lava Latte, Nairobi for a powerful event on femicide and IPV. What to Expect: Guided painting session... Live performances... Critical conversations... Expert insights... This is a safe space for learning, sharing, and standing together against violence. Entry is FREE. #EndFemicideKe #StopGBV #iwillrise #onebillionrising2025 #OneBillionRising #WomenEmpowerments #GenderJustice	FIDA-Kenya is inviting the public to an event organized with "One Billion Rising Kenya" at Lava Latte, Nairobi. The event is clearly focused on combating femicide and IPV, but uses creative methods: art (painting session), music/performances, alongside "critical conversations" and expert legal/psychological advice. The tone is community-oriented, creating a "safe space," yet firm in its stance against violence. The date is in the near future, early 2025.	Femicide, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Community Engagement, Artivism, Healing, Legal/Psychological Support
Usikimye (Blue checkmark)	The calls to end femicide have echoed all over Kenya!! The movement against femicide belongs to every woman in Kenya & Mombasa has joined hands & will be marching on 27th! We invite everyone to march with us... #TotalShutdownKE @feministsinkenya @uafi_ke	A graphic poster-style image announcing a feminist march against femicide in Mombasa. It uses bold, graphic-art visuals of people with megaphones and protesting. The hashtag #TotalShutdownKE indicates a national call to action. The post tags several other women's rights	Femicide, Direct Action/Protest, National Mobilization, Coalition Building, Feminist Activism

Organisation	Original Text	Field Notes	Assigned Theme
	@inend.ke @pwanicoven @zamara_fdn	organizations, showing evidence of coalition building. It also includes the specific date and location: 27th January 2024, at Pembe za Ndovu. The focus is direct action and protest.	
FIDA-Kenya	FIDA-Kenya is with Dr. Ida Odinga. Our Deputy Executive Director, Janet Anyango, led the FIDA-Kenya family at the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York... sharing FIDA-Kenya's experience, including the advocacy on 2/3 gender rule, dialogues with university students... legal representation for election Dispute Resolution among others.	An informational update showing FIDA-Kenya's international engagement. They are reporting back from the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York (CSW69). It lists specific areas of their advocacy: 2/3 gender rule, university dialogues, political participation, and legal representation. This demonstrates their engagement in high-level policy discussions on a global stage.	Women's Political Participation, International Advocacy, Policy Reform, Legal Representation, Global Engagement
Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK)	We are glad to officially welcome Internews as a key partner for the upcoming AMWIK Women in Media Conference. ... focusing on the promotion of a democratic, safe, and inclusive digital environment... #WomenMediaConfKE #AMWIKAwards	Partnership announcement for a "Women in Media Conference" in Nairobi. The key partner is Internews, an organization focused on media freedom and information access. The explicit focus is on creating a "safe and inclusive digital space" (KenSafeSpace project), showing AMWIK's specific focus on digital safety for women journalists. Date: 23rd April 2026. The graphic is illustrative with silhouettes.	Women in Media, Digital Safety, Journalism, Media and Democratization, Partnerships, Conference Announcement
Kenya Muslim Women Alliance	Mental health is a universal human right. The overall objective of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness of mental health issues...	An image-driven post celebrating "World Mental Health Day." It features a standard green ribbon graphic. The text provides a generalized statement about mental health as a right and the goals of awareness. This post uses a specific date-driven, cause-related awareness event to start a broader conversation.	Mental Health, Human Rights, Awareness Campaign, Health and Well-being
Kenya Muslim Women Alliance	(Poster image) FAMILY RELATIONS. JOIN US LIVE THIS FRIDAY... September 23rd @ 2:30PM AND SHARE WITH US YOUR VIEW ON FAMILY RELATIONS... (Also mentions "Lonamac" organization)	An infographic poster inviting people to a "Live" dialogue on Facebook and Instagram about "Family Relations." The image shows a friendly, nuclear-style family. It's a collaborative event with "Lonamac." This post suggests a format for direct community engagement and open	Family, Social Support, Community Dialogue, Online Engagement, Healthy Relationships

Organisation	Original Text	Field Notes	Assigned Theme
		dialogue on social and familial topics.	
Kenya Muslim Women Alliance	Mental health is a universal human right. The overall objective of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness...	Commemorative post for World Mental Health Day (Oct 10). Links individual well-being to universal human rights. Uses the green ribbon iconography.	Mental Health & Advocacy
FAWE Africa	We're proud to spotlight three extraordinary political leaders taking the stage at the Women Deliver Conference 2026: Hon. Dame Jacinda Ardern, Hon. Helen Clark, Hon. Julia Gillard AC...	Promotional post for a major international conference (Women Deliver 2026) in Melbourne. Highlights high-profile global female leaders to build prestige and urgency for gender equality.	Women's Leadership & Global Networking
FAWE Africa	Change calls us to the Women Deliver 2026 Conference... From 27 to 30 April 2026, more than 6,500 changemakers will gather...	A "call to action" post providing logistical steps (Register, Sponsor, Exhibit). Positions the conference as a space for co-creating solutions for gender equality.	Institutional Mobilization
FAWE Africa	Save the Date | FAWE Panel Discussion at Youth SDGs Week 2026... "Bridging the Gap Between Education and Employment for African Youth"...	Focuses on the "Future of Work." Targets youth and girls specifically, linking education systems to economic viability. Scheduled for April 21, 2026, at the Kenya School of Government.	Youth Empowerment & Education
Joyful Women Organization	Today, the Joyful Women Organization officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND)...	Documents a formal partnership for climate resilience in Cherangany Forest. Links environmental conservation directly to "improved livelihoods" for women in Elgeyo Marakwet and West Pokot.	Climate Justice & Livelihoods
Joyful Women Organization	Table banking is not just about money. It is about: Confidence, Support systems, Hope for the future...	Rebranding financial services as holistic empowerment. The image shows a close-up of hands handling cash, grounding the abstract concept of "empowerment" in tangible economic activity.	Economic Empowerment

Joyful Women Organization	When a woman earns, a child stays in school. When a woman saves, a family is protected...	Uses a "ripple effect" narrative to explain the social impact of women's income. The image shows a communal table banking session, emphasizing the "power of the collective."	Social Impact & Community Growth
CREAW Kenya / French Embassy	Yesterday, we joined Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) and French Embassy... to rethink and reimagine a world where "Off the tarmac" Women's rights organizations have easy access to funding...	Highlights the "PISCCA Decid'her" project. Uses the phrase "Off the tarmac" to advocate for grassroots organizations that are often ignored by major funders in favor of urban/centralized ones.	Grassroots Funding & Sustainability
CREAW Kenya	The GBV & Femicide Taskforce Report confirms a hard truth: Violence continues not because we lack laws, but because systems fail survivors...	A high-stakes advocacy post breaking down a government-commissioned report. It moves the conversation from "awareness" to "systemic accountability." Infographics list specific findings like "Femicide is not recognized in law."	Systemic Reform & Accountability
CREAW Kenya	PUBLIC STATEMENT: The killings of 6 year old Tabitha and 9 year old Shantel are not isolated crimes. They are symptoms of systemic failure...	A reactive, urgent public statement following specific tragedies. Lists 6 concrete policy demands (e.g., dedicated GBV Fund, legal recognition of femicide). Uses a tone of moral outrage linked to legal expertise.	Policy Advocacy & Crisis Response
Organisations	Original Text	Fieldnotes	Theme
CREAW Kenya	Kenya does not need another report. It needs action on the one already written...	A strong, impatient stance against "report culture." The graphics demand 4 specific actions: Legal recognition of femicide, declaring a national crisis, ending informal settlements (illegal "negotiations"), and fixing court delays.	Systemic Accountability & Legal Reform
CREAW Kenya	Ending GBV requires leadership at every level... In 2025, we saw: 7,965 survivors access justice...	A 2025 Annual Report snapshot. Uses heavy data visualization to prove institutional impact. It lists engagement with 8 specific national and county policies, showing their role as a policy influencer.	Data-Driven Advocacy & Institutional Impact

CREAW Kenya	What does adolescent-responsive SRHR look like in practice? ... training 710 providers, strengthening 59 facilities...	Focuses on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) for youth. Highlights "Community Score Cards" to hold health facilities accountable, making SRHR a matter of public service quality.	Youth SRHR & Service Accountability
CREAW Kenya	What happens when economic empowerment is integrated with survivor support? Better justice retention...	Explicitly links financial independence to the legal process. Argues that when a survivor has money (grants/loans), they are more likely to stay in the justice system rather than drop cases due to poverty.	The Economics of Justice
Usikimye	May 2025 Usikimye actively handled 221 cases of Gender Based Violence. Behind every statistic lies a person...	Monthly statistical reporting. The bar charts show "Livelihood," "Emotional Abuse," and "Domestic Violence" as top case types. Nairobi is shown as the highest reporting county, likely due to urban density/access.	Frontline Case Management & Data
Usikimye	Let's talk about body safety. Do your kids know about the PANTS rules?	Child protection education. Uses a simple acronym (PANTS) to teach children about consent and body boundaries. This represents the "preventative" side of their digital work.	Preventative Education & Child Safety
Usikimye	A time has come when we need to call out rape culture... When a preacher stands and says he was involved in a gang rape...	Direct confrontation of religious leaders using "forgiveness" to bypass legal accountability. It frames rape as a "capital crime," not a "sin," challenging the cultural power of the church over the law.	Challenging Rape Culture & Religious Influence
Usikimye	Thank you for all your tags on this case. We managed to reach her... She is safe now and we will be taking her and the baby to hospital.	Demonstrates "Digital Rescue." Shows how social media tagging/mentions lead to real-world intervention. It humanizes the process by mentioning the survivor ate, showered, and is with a psychologist.	Digital Mobilization & Direct Intervention
Usikimye	KENYA IS IN A GBV CRISIS... address these three horrific gang-rape cases... Amplify the Demand #JusticeForDoreenKananu	Urgent call to action following specific weekend atrocities. It provides a 4-step guide for citizens to "pressure" the government, showing how they turn digital outrage into a coordinated campaign.	Crisis Mobilization & Citizen Pressure

Usikimye (Samaki Mtaani)	Since 12th January... working on this fish project with our women in Soweto... Grants the women agency and financial freedom.	Documentation of a grassroots economic project. It uses a "repayment" model (repaid kits fund other women), emphasizing sustainability and mentorship over simple charity.	Grassroots Livelihoods & Agency
The Mulika Campaign	Every 48 hours, a woman is killed in Kenya simply because of her gender... Declare Femicide a crime!	Uses a stark statistic (48 hours) to move femicide from a "tragedy" to a "pattern." Focuses on a specific legal goal: a Change.org petition to make femicide a distinct crime.	Legal Advocacy & Statistics
Kieni Kwanza	SAY NO TO TAXING SANITARY PADS AND DIAPERS... extra KSh 150 per packaging item...	Focuses on a specific 2026 NEMA regulation. Links pads and diapers, framing them as "Essentials, not Luxury." The graphic uses a fist breaking a chain labeled "TAX," a powerful symbol of economic liberation.	Economic Policy & Menstrual Equity
Akili Dada	205 femicide cases were reported between 2019 to 2021... end victim-blaming; no one deserves violence!	Uses a historical data range to show long-term failure. Focuses specifically on the "culture" of violence—challenging gender norms and the specific psychological barrier of victim-blaming.	Social Norms & Historical Data
Feminists in Kenya	Message us all the people that think murdering womxn is justifiable. Our dedicated legal team is reaching out to their employers...	Represents a more "confrontational" digital strategy. It threatens direct professional consequences for those who support violence online. Demonstrates "cancel culture" used as a tool for safety and accountability.	Aggressive Accountability & Digital Defense
Africa Youth Trust	Violence thrives in silence... text HELP to 21094, our confidential SMS service...	Focuses on the "how-to" of survival. Promotes a specific tech-based tool (SMS help line) to bypass the "silence" that protects perpetrators. Focuses on immediate, confidential rescue.	Confidential Support & Tech-Intervention
Africa Youth Trust	Today at the Reuben Centre... brought together case managers, police, court officials...	Documents a multi-stakeholder meeting. It explicitly identifies "broken links" between the police station and the courtroom as a cause of justice failure. Shows the "unseen" work of administrative reform.	Institutional Coordination & Reform

Africa Youth Trust	We condemn the recent increase in femicide cases... Stand Against Femicide, Protect Women.	A high-impact graphic post. Uses the megaphone icon and vibrant, colorful silhouettes of women to symbolize a collective, multi-generational voice.	Public Condemnation & Collective Voice
IGLOW Community	STOP killing women! She's someone's sister, daughter, wife, mother.	Uses a "relational" appeal to humanize victims. By defining women through their relationships to others, it attempts to appeal to a wider audience's sense of protective responsibility.	Relational Humanization & Solidarity
Economics Students Association of Kenya (KESA)	As KESA, we proudly stand united... we demand an end to the heinous crime of femicide – a threat not only to lives but to our shared present and future.	A formal statement from a student professional body. It frames femicide not just as a social issue but as a threat to the "shared future," potentially implying the economic loss of human capital.	Academic Solidarity & Youth Advocacy
(Youth/Social Movement)	We started this year with #EndFemicideKE, and sadly, we end it the same way. It's heartbreaking to see how little has changed.	A reflective post marking the passage of time (year-end). It expresses a sense of "activist fatigue" and the slow pace of systemic change despite sustained digital campaigns.	Activist Reflection & Persistence
Youth For Sustainable Development (Machakos)	END FEMICIDE! #16DaysofActivism (Image of red handprints)	Uses the global "16 Days of Activism" framework. The red handprints are a visceral, universal symbol for stopping violence and the "blood on the hands" of a silent society.	Global Campaign Alignment
Youth For Sustainable Development (Machakos)	Ending femicide isn't just a women's issue—it's a societal responsibility... be a voice not an echo.	Emphasizes "societal responsibility" using a wide array of professional emojis (doctor, farmer, astronaut) to show that ending violence requires every sector of the workforce.	Inclusivity & Civic Duty
Better4Kenya (with Amnesty International)	“We come up with policies that look so perfect, but we’ve not heard from the people being affected.” — Tatyana	Critiques "top-down" policy making. Argues that maternal health rights on paper are "promises broken" if they aren't felt in the maternity ward.	Policy Critique & Maternal Health
Better4Kenya (with DJ Soxxy)	Male allyship in maternal health is not just about presence but also	A unique focus on Male Allyship. It uses a popular public figure (DJ Soxxy) to	Male Allyship & Shared Responsibility

	responsibility... confronting the harder truths.	challenge men to take personal responsibility for the systems that allow gaps in maternal care to persist.	
Zamara Foundation	On Friday, we convened in Kilifi County... village administrators, chiefs, parents, and teachers to openly confront the realities of teenage pregnancy.	Documents a "vertical" community dialogue—linking local government (chiefs) with the community (parents/teachers). Focuses on the "shame" and "reality" of child marriage.	Community-Led Governance
Zamara Foundation	Advancing Justice for Survivors workshop... integration of community-generated evidence into formal justice systems.	Focuses on the technical side of justice: Survivor-centered documentation. It argues that for justice to work, "community-generated evidence" must be legally recognized and utilized.	Legal Integration & Documentation
Zamara Foundation	...conducting organisational assessments with Pastoral Climate Action and Namunyak Initiative as part of the #SHESOARS downstream partner selection.	Shows the "back-end" of NGO work: partner selection and grassroots capacity building. Specifically links "Pastoral Climate Action" to women's advocacy in Kajiado Central.	Grassroots Partnerships & Climate Action
Zamara Foundation (with HOPE worldwide Kenya)	Justice must be accessible, responsive, and effective... As we gather in Kajiado South, we reaffirm that protecting rights is not optional.	Uses #SHESOARS to link International Women's Day to specific field activities in Kajiado South. Frames justice as a "fundamental human right" rather than a legal privilege.	Rights-Based Advocacy
Zamara Foundation	...celebrates the power of women and girls in all their diversities... (Graphic: "We Are All Equal")	A high-production graphic for IWD 2026. The phrase "all their diversities" is key ethnographic evidence of an inclusive feminist lens that accounts for different backgrounds and identities.	Inclusive Feminism
Zamara Foundation	Our hearts are with the families... affected by the recent floods. Climate shocks and failing infrastructure often deepen existing inequalities.	Connects a natural disaster (Nairobi floods) to gendered vulnerability. Calls for "WASH services" and "effective drainage" as a matter of gender justice and dignity.	Climate Resilience & Infrastructure
Zamara Foundation	Today, we delivered our Oral Statement to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child at its 47th Session.	Documents high-level continental advocacy. Challenges the "dropout" narrative by stating: "girls are not failing systems, systems are	Continental Advocacy & Education

		failing girls." Focuses on pregnant learners.	
Naretu Girls and Women Empowerment Programme	Joined feminist leaders... to challenge harmful practices and GBV... strategies that are survivor centered.	Documents a collaborative forum under #SRHRDialogues. Focuses on the "Learning and Action" model, emphasizing the bridge between theoretical reflection and honest field strategies.	Collaborative Learning & SRHR
COVAW	The ratification of ILO Conventions 189 and 190 is not merely a legal step; it is a statement... of workplaces that are fair, inclusive, and resilient.	Quotes a high-ranking government official (PS Shadrack Mwadime). Links domestic work and the informal sector to "Decid'her" and "Decent Work." Shows the result of sustained lobbying.	Labor Rights & Policy Ratification
COVAW	Strengthening care systems starts with getting the policy right... technical review of the Draft Kakamega County Care Policy.	Highlights the Care Economy. Moves the "Care is Work" narrative into a practical county-level policy validation process in Kakamega.	The Care Economy & Policy Design
COVAW	Domestic workers deserve more than a handshake agreement. “Without a contract, everything depends on trust, and that can easily be abused.”	Focuses on the formalization of labor. It argues that "trust" is not a substitute for a legal contract, aiming to protect domestic workers from exploitation and clear working conditions.	Labor Formalization & Protection
COVAW	Maria thought she was helping her niece... Beneath the promise, a different truth begins to unfold... (Links to Citizen TV)	Uses storytelling and popular media (Citizen TV's Mother-In-Law) to illustrate the risks of informal job referrals. It turns a "lived reality" into an educational cautionary tale.	Storytelling & Public Education
WomanKind Kenya (Wokike)	...held an Inter-gender dialogue session between women, youth, community leaders and religious leaders on effects of FGM/C in Garissa Township.	Focuses on Garissa Township. It highlights the specific strategy of "Inter-gender dialogue," bringing religious and community leaders together to debunk myths surrounding FGM/C.	Cultural Change & Religious Engagement
WomanKind Kenya (Wokike)	At Womankind Kenya, we believe that empowering women is not just a goal—it is the foundation for resilient communities... participation in peacebuilding and climate action.	Positions women's leadership as a "foundation" for resilience. Explicitly links FGM prevention to broader "Peace and Security" (WPS) and "Climate Justice" frameworks.	Resilience & Peacebuilding

Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)	We the women of Kenya support the Constitutional Amendment 2011... to ensure that no more than two-thirds of the membership of the National Assembly are of the same gender.	A very technical, legalistic post from the archive (2012). It documents the early, specific legislative battles for the "Two-Thirds Gender Rule" in Kenya's Parliament.	Legislative History & Gender Quotas
Feminists in Kenya	Read our thread on what fascism thrives on and notice how easily it hides in what is considered “normal.”	A high-level political education thread. It defines "Fascism" as something that loves "nostalgia," "decorum," and "hypocrisy," urging followers to deconstruct what society considers "normal."	Political Theory & Anti-Fascism
Feminists in Kenya	Introducing Baddie Feminist, who’s here to explain something important about what “being believed” really means!	Uses a character ("Baddie Feminist") and a relatable analogy (being sick as a child) to explain the complex psychological concept of "believability" and "gaslighting" in survivor stories.	Pop-Feminism & Pedagogy
Wangu Kanja Foundation	She paused before speaking... What mattered most was not having the perfect response... but choosing to listen without judgement.	Focuses on the immediate response to disclosure. It emphasizes that for a survivor, the "difference between silence and healing" is how the first person they tell reacts.	Trauma-Informed Care & Disclosure
Wangu Kanja Foundation	Today, our team participated in a training session led by the Justice Nest team, focused on strengthening our capacity...	Documents institutional capacity building. Focuses on "Trial Advocacy Training," showing that the foundation is professionalizing its staff to act as legal navigators for survivors.	Legal Advocacy & Capacity Building
Wangu Kanja Foundation	April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month... we reflect on 25 years of progress while asking difficult but necessary questions about the road ahead.	An anniversary post (25 years) that uses an X (formerly Twitter) Space to bridge platforms. It moves from celebration to "difficult questions" about what remains unresolved in sexual violence response.	Institutional Reflection & Multi-platform Advocacy
Wangu Kanja Foundation	April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month... Here are five things you may not know...	A standard "Myth-Busting" educational post. It defines sexual violence as an issue affecting "all genders, ages and backgrounds," attempting to broaden the scope of the conversation.	Public Education & Myth-Busting

Wangu Kanja Foundation	When justice disappears: How corruption is silencing defilement survivors... bribery, threats and missing evidence.	A stark critique of the Justice System. It uses a visceral image of a child in a corner to highlight how corruption (bribery/threats) leads to the "collapse" of legal protection for minors.	Anti-Corruption & Child Protection
Wangu Kanja Foundation	Today we mark the Umbrella Day - International Day to Protect Boys from Sexual Violence.	Highlights a specific, often overlooked demographic: Boys. It uses the "Blue Umbrella" symbol to teach boundaries and encourage reporting via their toll-free line (1519).	Inclusion of Boys & Men in GBV
Wangu Kanja Foundation	Kenya is not safe for women and girls. A suspect has been arrested in the rape and killing of a 104-year-old grandmother...	Documents a specific, extreme case of violence against the elderly. Uses this tragedy to demand the immediate implementation of a report already submitted to the President.	Urgency & Implementation
Wangu Kanja Foundation	We can never negotiate on women rights. Women rights are human rights.	A short, defiant post (Jan 2024) aligned with the #TotalShutDownKE movement. It frames rights as non-negotiable and absolute.	Human Rights & Non-negotiability
International Solidarity Foundation-Kenya	When we give women equal opportunities, we gain stronger families... gender equality is not a loss — it is a collective gain.	A positive-framing post for IWD. It uses a "gain/loss" economic metaphor to argue that equality benefits the entire society, not just women.	Equality as Collective Gain
GROOTS Kenya	#Men4Women Anti-femicide Campaign! In 2025, Atleast 102 women were killed... real men protect. Real men speak up.	Introduces a male-focused campaign. It uses the statistic "102 women killed" to challenge traditional definitions of masculinity. Includes community dialogue photos.	Male Allyship & Responsibility
Femnet Secretariat	Today in Nairobi, feminist leaders... came together for Women and Girl-Led Advocacy: Learning and Action...	Documents a high-level convening in Nairobi. Emphasizes "courage, solidarity, and determination" among diverse stakeholders (leaders, youth, advocates).	Solidarity & Strategic Advocacy
(General/Movement)	We started this year with #EndFemicideKE, and sadly, we end it the same way.	A repeated motif across the study; reflects the cyclical nature of the violence and the ongoing, unresolved nature of the struggle.	Persistence & Activist Fatigue

Akili Dada	205 femicide cases were reported between 2019 to 2021... Let's end victim-blaming; no one deserves violence!	Uses archival data to show the scale of the crisis. Explicitly targets "victim-blaming" as a cultural barrier to justice.	Victim-Blaming & Accountability
Akili Dada	I RAISE MY VOICE IN SOLIDARITY... I HONOUR THE STRENGTH OF EVERY BRAVE SOUL.	A "Monday Affirmation" post. Uses vibrant purple and orange colors to create a sense of empowerment and psychological resilience for followers.	Empowerment & Resilience
IJM Kenya	Justice for Farida Kadzo Changawa. Farida's story is not about a "love triangle." It is about gender-based violence.	Corrects a harmful media narrative. By rejecting the "love triangle" label, IJM reframes the killing as a systemic crime of GBV rather than a private dispute.	Narrative Correction & Justice
Akili Dada	Anne Marie, one of our emerging leaders tells her story. What's your #GBV story?	A storytelling prompt from 2020. Shows the long-term use of personal narratives to build a collective digital archive of lived experience.	Storytelling & Data Collection
Organisations	Original Text	Fieldnotes	Theme
Akili Dada	Today, a vigil will be held in memory of femicide victims at the University of Nairobi... we create safe spaces for girls and women through feminist movement building...	An archival post (2019) showing early mobilization against femicide. The use of a "vigil" at a premier university signifies the movement's academic and memorial roots.	Memorialization & Movement Building
Akili Dada	It's heartbreaking to witness the alarming surge... According to local media, 205 femicide cases were reported between 2019 to 2021... #StopVictimBlaming	Combines data with emotional appeal. It specifically targets "victim-blaming" as a cultural barrier that keeps cases unreported and perpetrators unaccountable.	Anti-Victim Blaming & Data Advocacy
Akili Dada	Ending violence against women and girls isn't optional. Excuses Silence Inaction... Tech platforms must enforce laws and end impunity.	A high-energy "call to action" during the #16Days of Activism. It shifts the burden of responsibility to "tech platforms" and "police," demanding an end to systemic "excuses."	Systemic Accountability & Digital Safety
FIDA-Kenya	"Despite strong constitutional protections... barriers remain. Deep-rooted patriarchy, TFGBV, and	A high-level philosophical statement from the Chairperson. It acknowledges the gap	Institutional Critique & Modern Barriers

	systemic exclusions continue..." — Christine Kungu	between "legal rights" and "lived reality," identifying TFGBV as a modern, emerging threat.	
FIDA-Kenya	Join FIDA-Kenya for Day One at The People Dialogue Festival 2026... critical dialogue on technology-facilitated violence...	Positions FIDA-Kenya at the center of "The People Dialogue Festival." It focuses on the specific niche of digital violence, showing a future-dated strategic focus (March 2026).	Digital Justice & Public Participation
FIDA-Kenya	FIDA-Kenya convened a high-level webinar on the “Status of GBV and Femicide in Kenya,” featuring Hon. Dr Nancy Baraza... legal reform, accountability...	Documents an elite-level policy discussion (Webinar). The inclusion of high-profile legal figures like Dr. Baraza shows FIDA's role in bridging the gap between grassroots activists and the Presidency.	High-Level Policy Reform
GROOTS Kenya	DAY 5: COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY... violence is often known, seen and discussed — yet rarely confronted... Real men protect.	A grassroots mobilization post. It identifies "the home, the church, and the mosque" as spaces where violence is witnessed but ignored. It specifically calls on men to move from being "witnesses" to "protectors."	Community Accountability & Men4Women
YWCA Siaya / Gem Sub-County	In response to a disturbing rise in the killing of women and girls in Gem Sub-County... march of solidarity and outrage.	A localized response to a specific cluster of killings in Gem. It frames femicide not as a private "domestic" issue, but as a "public emergency" requiring a march of outrage.	Local Mobilization & Public Emergency
FIDA-Kenya	FIDA-Kenya remains steadfast in promoting mediation and other ADR mechanisms... #fidaat40 #mediationworks	Celebrates 40 years of FIDA. It highlights "Mediation" as a cost-effective, amicable way to handle divorce and inheritance, aiming to "strengthen families" rather than just litigation.	Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
FIDA-Kenya	FIDA-Kenya works towards the realization of a just society... We do work with men in various communities to ensure gender equality is realized.	A core mission statement post (2020). It emphasizes that while women are the primary beneficiaries, men are "champions" and essential partners in the spheres of development.	Gender Equality & Inclusive Advocacy
FIDA-Kenya	FIDA-Kenya advocates for women’s and girls’ rights... The most important	A post from 2020 emphasizing "Intergenerational Justice." It identifies youth activists as the	Intergenerational Advocacy & Education

	way to be an advocate... is by educating the young generation.	key to a better future, focusing on education as the primary tool for long-term advocacy.	
FIDA-Kenya	Immaculate Shamala (Winner, Best in Governance Category) is celebrated for her exceptional leadership... advancing women's political leadership and accountability.	A "Spotlight" post celebrating individual success in governance. Mentions specific policy achievements (Trans Nzoia County) and the institutionalization of Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB).	Governance & Gender-Responsive Budgeting
FIDA-Kenya	Chris Ojiewo... speaks on scaling women's digital & market access: "We need to invest in social infrastructure, including childcare services..."	Connects economic participation to "Social Infrastructure." Argues that women cannot succeed in markets without labor-saving technologies and professional childcare.	Economic Justice & Social Infrastructure
FIDA-Kenya	The FIDA-Kenya Male Champions for Gender Justice have collaborated... to implement initiatives... encourage men to participate in gender activities actively.	Focuses on Institutionalized Male Allyship. It highlights "Male Champions" not just as supporters, but as active implementers of gender-responsive initiatives within their communities.	Male Allyship & Professionalism
FIDA-Kenya	Women’s leadership is crucial in shaping Kenya's future... FIDA-Kenya advocates for equal representation... politics to business.	A core leadership advocacy post under the #FIDA@40 campaign. It frames women's leadership as a source of "empathy" and "new ideas" necessary for community transformation.	Women’s Leadership & Representative Democracy
FIDA-Kenya	FIDA-Kenya brought together 40 participants... Project: Strengthening Intergenerational Feminist Movements... to Combat TFVAWG.	Documents a specialized project focusing on Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls (TFVAWG). Emphasizes "collaboration and networks" beyond the lifespan of a single project.	Digital Rights & Feminist Networks
FIDA-Kenya	Today, FIDA-Kenya joins the world in commemorating #internationalwomensday under the theme “Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls.”	A formal IWD 2026 commemorative post. Reaffirms the "Rights-Justice-Action" triad as the foundation for thriving societies.	International Solidarity & Human Rights