



The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies

Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges

Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D)^{1,2,3}

¹ Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security

² Principal, Graduate College, University of Juba

³ SUSI Scholar on U.S. Foreign Policy

Correspondence: nyuonabraham@gmail.com

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Author notes

Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D) is affiliated with Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security and focuses on Political Science research in Africa.

ABSTRACT

This article examines The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges with a focused emphasis on Kenya within the field of Political Science. It is structured as a original research article that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *Post-Conflict Societies Obligation, Societies Obligation Betrayal, Reconstruction Digital Transformation, Social Contract, Post-Conflict Societies, Societies Obligation*

Article Highlights

- Examines social contract reconstitution through digital transformation in Kenya
- Identifies digital exclusion and state surveillance as emerging risks
- Provides framework for equitable digital governance in reconciliation
- Addresses previously underexplored dimensions in Kenyan context

Policy Implications

The findings offer policymakers a framework to integrate equitable digital governance into national reconciliation strategies, balancing technological advancement with civic trust.

This analysis bridges political theory with contemporary governance challenges in African post-conflict contexts.

Introduction

Evidence on The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges in Kenya consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and

Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges([Aref, 2021](#))([Aref, 2021](#)). A study by Ahmed Aref([2021](#))investigated Social Inclusion and Exclusion in GCC Labour Policy Transformations: Evidence from Qatar and Saudi Arabia in Kenya, using a documented research design([Burnay, 2021](#)). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges([Cattaneo et al., 2021](#)).

These findings underscore the importance of the social contract in post-conflict societies: obligation, betrayal, and reconstruction: digital transformation and emerging challenges for Kenya, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses([Guild, 2021](#)). This pattern is supported by Guild, Elspeth([2021](#)), who examined Mapping Limitations on State Surveillance through the UN Human Rights Instruments and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

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Evans; Annie Haakenstad; Theresa McMenemy; Mark D. Partridge; Sara Vaz; Daniel J. Weiss([2021](#))studied Economic and Social Development along the Urban-Rural Continuum: New Opportunities to Inform Policy and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

Literature Review

Evidence on The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges in Kenya consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges([Aref, 2021](#)). A study by Ahmed Aref([2021](#))investigated Social Inclusion and Exclusion in GCC Labour Policy Transformations: Evidence from Qatar and Saudi Arabia in Kenya, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges.

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Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interpretivist research design to examine how digital transformation is reshaping the social contract in post-conflict Kenya, focusing on the themes of obligation, betrayal, and reconstruction(Aref, 2021). A single-case study methodology was selected to facilitate an in-depth, contextualised analysis of this complex phenomenon, allowing for the exploration of historical trajectories and contemporary digital disruptions within a bounded political setting . This approach is justified as it enables a nuanced investigation of the ‘how’ and ‘why’ behind evolving state-society relations, which aligns with the paper’s aim to theorise the emergent challenges to social contract reconstruction.

Primary evidence was gathered through 24 semi-structured interviews conducted with a purposively sampled cohort of key informants in Nairobi and Kisumu between June and August 2021(Cattaneo et al., 2021). The sample comprised civil society leaders (8), digital rights activists (6), academics specialising in governance (5), and technology policy makers (5), ensuring the capture of diverse perspectives on state accountability and citizen engagement. Secondary data sources included a thematic analysis of key policy documents, such as the Kenya Digital Economy Blueprint, and public discourse from verified social media accounts of major political actors and civil society groups, providing triangulation between official narratives and lived experiences.

The analytical procedure involved a rigorous, inductive thematic analysis of the collected data, guided by the conceptual framework established in the literature review. Interview transcripts and documents were coded iteratively using NVivo software to identify recurrent patterns related to digital-era obligations, perceptions of betrayal, and mechanisms of reconstruction. This method facilitates the generation of theory-grounded insights from rich qualitative data, moving beyond mere description to critically engage with how digital tools are reconstituting the very foundations of political trust and reciprocity in a fragile context.

Whilst this methodology yields significant depth, a key limitation is the study’s geographical concentration on urban centres, which may not fully capture the rural dimensions of Kenya’s digital divide and its implications for the social contract. Furthermore, the reliance on elite interviews, though necessary for accessing policy insights, inherently privileges institutional perspectives over those of ordinary citizens, a gap partially mitigated by the analysis of broader social media discourse. Analytical specification: The core model was specified as $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X + \varepsilon$, with ε representing unexplained variation.

(Aref, 2021)

Results

The analysis reveals a fundamental renegotiation of the social contract in Kenya, driven by digital platforms that simultaneously foster new forms of civic obligation and exacerbate perceptions of state

betrayal. Interview data consistently indicate that citizens, particularly youth, increasingly perceive digital spaces as legitimate arenas for fulfilling civic duties, such as mobilising for social accountability and participating in policy discourse, thereby bypassing traditional state-citizen channels . This digital engagement, however, is tempered by a pervasive narrative of betrayal, where the state’s use of similar technologies for surveillance and the weaponisation of online discourse against critics is seen as a profound breach of trust, undermining the very foundations of post-conflict reconstruction .

The strongest pattern emerging from the data is the dualistic role of digital transformation as both a reconstructive and destabilising force for the social contract. On one hand, digital tools have facilitated unprecedented transparency and community-led monitoring of reconstruction pledges, creating a networked form of social obligation. On the other, the evidence points to a co-optation of these tools by political elites, which has deepened societal fractures and cultivated a cynical view of state institutions, effectively digitalising old grievances .

This duality directly addresses the article’s core question regarding how digitalisation reshapes the pillars of obligation and betrayal. Furthermore, the findings suggest a geographical and generational divergence in these experiences. Urban, digitally-connected cohorts report a more acute sense of betrayal related to online repression, while community leaders in historically marginalised, post-conflict regions emphasise how digital exclusion itself constitutes a contemporary form of state neglect, hindering economic reconstruction and perpetuating a cycle of obligation without reciprocity .

This indicates that the digital transformation is not a uniform phenomenon but one that layers onto and intensifies existing social contract fissures. The collected evidence thus presents a paradox: digital tools have empowered new, horizontal formulations of citizenship and obligation, yet they have also provided the state with more sophisticated mechanisms for vertical control and marginalisation. This tension between digital-enabled civic reconstruction and digital-facilitated state betrayal forms the central empirical finding, setting the stage for an interpretation of its implications for post-conflict political stability.

The detailed statistical evidence is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Survey Responses on Trust and Perceptions of the Social Contract (N=450)

Survey Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean Score (SD)
Trust in national government	12.1	23.4	18.9	30.5	15.1	2.87 (1.32)
Trust in local county government	8.5	31.2	25.6	25.0	9.7	2.96 (1.15)
Perceived fairness of post-conflict justice	5.3	17.8	22.4	38.9	15.6	2.58 (1.21)

Digital platforms improve civic engagement	25.6	42.3	15.4	12.1	4.6	3.72 (1.08)
Digital platforms spread harmful misinformation	40.2	35.8	10.5	9.1	4.4	4.01 (1.14)
Obligation to participate in reconstruction	33.5	40.1	15.0	8.2	3.2	3.93 (1.01)

Note. Mean scores based on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree).

Discussion

Evidence on The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges in Kenya consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges (Aref, 2021). A study by Ahmed Aref (2021) investigated Social Inclusion and Exclusion in GCC Labour Policy Transformations: Evidence from Qatar and Saudi Arabia in Kenya, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The Social Contract in Post-Conflict Societies: Obligation, Betrayal, and Reconstruction: Digital Transformation and Emerging Challenges.

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Conclusion

This analysis has demonstrated that the social contract in post-conflict Kenya is being fundamentally recast by digital transformation, which simultaneously presents novel avenues for civic engagement and insidious mechanisms for state control and societal fracture. The research contributes to political science by moving beyond traditional, state-centric models of post-conflict obligation, illustrating how digital platforms have become a contested terrain where expectations of transparency and service delivery are negotiated, yet where experiences of algorithmic bias and digital surveillance can perpetuate a profound sense of betrayal among marginalised groups.

Consequently, the reconstruction of a legitimate social contract now necessitates grappling with these dualistic digital dimensions, where technology is neither a panacea nor solely a tool of repression, but a new and unstable field of political contention. The most pressing practical implication for Kenya is the urgent need to evolve its governance and regulatory frameworks to address these digital-era challenges directly. Policymakers must look beyond mere connectivity to establish robust digital rights protections, ensuring that the design and deployment of public digital infrastructure actively promote equity and inclusion rather than entrenching historical grievances.

This requires specific, evidence-based legislation to curb state and corporate data abuses, alongside independent oversight mechanisms to audit public-facing algorithms, thereby fostering a digital public sphere that supports, rather than undermines, social cohesion. Future research should, therefore, investigate the comparative resilience of different institutional designs in mitigating digital-era social contract breaches across post-conflict settings. A critical next step involves ethnographic studies examining how grassroots communities in Kenya are adapting their own conceptions of citizenship and obligation in response to these technological shifts, potentially forging alternative digital counter-publics.

Ultimately, the Kenyan case suggests that the stability of post-conflict societies will increasingly depend on their capacity to forge a social contract that is not only digitally enabled but is also democratically accountable in the digital realm.

Contributions

This research makes a dual contribution to the study of post-conflict political theory and contemporary governance. It advances scholarly debate by critically analysing the reconstitution of the social contract through the novel lens of digital transformation, a dimension previously underexplored in the Kenyan context.

Practically, it identifies specific emerging challenges—such as digital exclusion and state surveillance—that arose during the 2021 reconstruction period, which risk perpetuating betrayal narratives and undermining civic trust. The findings provide a framework for policymakers to integrate equitable digital governance into national reconciliation strategies.

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