From war journalism to peace journalism: Re-inventing peace journalism through audience oppositional reading of terrorism news online

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Abstract

Coverage of terrorism can be categorized into either peace journalism or war journalism. Peace journalism highlights peace initiatives and tones down differences, while war journalism emphasizes differences, often legitimizing violence as the means to peace. This article analyses the war/peace journalism binaries by newspapers in reporting the 2015 terror attack on Kenya's Garissa University. The article considers an oppositional reading of mainstream media through social media comments. By allowing opposition reading, social media enables the audience to challenge the war journalism that is prominent in mainstream media reporting of terrorism. While war journalism legitimizes violence as the key counter-terrorism strategy, peace journalism seeks to reveal the root causes of conflict. Although the concept of peace journalism is well grounded, its application to oppositional readings of terrorism news remains under-theorized because terrorism is still outside the bounds of what is considered legitimate war. Reporting from a war journalism perspective, the mainstream media focused on coverage that delegitimized terrorism and paid scant attention to alternative understandings of the event. . Contrary, comments on social media discussed terrorism from a peace journalism perspective, focusing on the root cause as well as possible solutions. As part of peace promotion efforts, this study proposes that journalists should be critical of the dominant knowledge structure and report terrorism from a peace journalism perspective.

Key words: Al-Shabaab, Peace journalism, terrorism, war, violence, media, news, social media, oppositional reading.

1.0   Introduction

Since the 1998 twin bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania along with the attack on the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in 2002, East Africa has remained one of the continent's hotspots for terrorist organisations targeting Western interests. This vulnerability has made the region a site of global anti-terror wars. Despite all of this attention, both agency and the suffering of the common people, remain periphery concerns in the East African terrorism narrative. By continuously emphasizing how the terror attacks target Western interests, we have over time neglected the harm inflicted on local people. In particular, terrorists have increasingly targeted Kenyans in retaliation to the country's 2011 launch of a military operation against Al-Shabaab. There have been many attacks, the most pronounced being the 2013 Westgate Mall shooting (67 killed), the 2014 Mpeketoni attacks (more than 60 killed), the 2015 Garissa University attack (147 killed) and most recently, the 2019 Nairobi DusitD2 complex attack (21 killed). These examples emphasize the need for scholars to engage with terrorism as a local problem despite its entanglement with international security. This article is an analysis of local news reporting on one of the incidents that targeted locals: the Garissa University attack. The article aims to look at how local readers used Facebook to contest the framing of terrorism by the mainstream media.

Prior to social media increasing audience participation in news coverage, institutional news reporting through newspapers, radio, and television, was credited with advancing democracy and good governance. Yet these institutional news channels also stand accused of manufacturing consent by spreading propaganda on behalf of the powerful societal elites who control and finance their operations (see Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p xi). As a channel for war journalism, mainstream media institutions continue to support monolithic solutions such as military action and the delegitimization of alternative conflict transformation strategies, choosing to ratherengage in what Galtung (1990, 291) calls 'cultural violence'. The news media industry, in his view, amplifies differences, proposing violence as the best route to peace. Although the mainstream media has been used to inform and educate people about terrorism, it has also been used to prioritize a military solution, a process that worsens the cycle of violence. Additionally, because terror attacks suit the mainstream media's evaluation of 'newsworthiness', the media coverage enables terrorists to

achieve some of their aims, especially intimidating the public through horrific killings. Through the display of horrific violence, the news media is entrapped in both motivating military solutions to terrorism and acting as a voice for terrorists out to intimidate the public.

Peace journalism, the competing alternative, highlights peace initiatives and areas of convergence for the promotion of non-violent conflict resolution. Due to the changes introduced by social media, a transformation that has democratized news by allowing common people to produce, distribute and discover news, peace journalism has found a platform outside mainstream media. In particular social media has allowed people to moderate traditional news sources better than previous means of audience participation. Spring boarding off the above, this article uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to identify how social media is enabling the audience to advance peace journalism through oppositional readings of mainstream news. The article starts by providing a critical overview of terrorism in order to develop a background for CDA of peace journalism in news coverage of the Garissa University terror attack.

2.0. A case for critical terrorism studies

The application of peace journalism conventions during the coverage of terrorist activities requires a critical terrorism studies approach to media scholarship. This relatively new approach to terrorism studies was borne out of what Al-Kassimi (2019, 2) terms "a collective concern over the shortcomings of Orthodox Terrorism Studies (OTS)"; first highlighted by editors of *Critical Studies on Terrorism* journal who decried methodological weaknesses and proposed for the broadening of terrorism studies by adopting a critical approach of security so as to include the state in terrorism (Jackson, Toros, Jarvis, & Heath-Kelly, 2017). Despite these suggestions, dominant knowledge production on terrorism by both intellectuals and mainstream news media, remains captured in the positivist problem-solving theories (Blakeley, 2010, 2011, 2012; Gunning, 2007; Jackson et al., 2017) which renders peace journalism impracticable.

From an Orthodox Terrorism Studies perspective, terrorism is a metonym for illegitimate violence targeted at civilians, often resulting in the association of the term with violent acts by extremist individuals and groups. Despite this conventional stand, individuals acting on behalf of nation-states have engaged in terrorism as a military strategy not influenced by individual extremism (see Bassiouni & Nanda, 1973; Conquest, 1973). Furthermore, orthodox views encourage

securitization which in turn can lead to the militarization of policing in the counter-terrorism wars. With a militarized police, there is a risk of innocent citizens losing their rights to claims that these rights are a security threat. From this one can deduce that legitimate military action (violence) and terrorism are on the same spectrum with their positions being temporarily fixed by the prevailing international power/knowledge relations. Therefore without going into the legitimacy of terrorism, this category of violence can be defined by the metaphor of fear: it uses fear as a strategy. What is clear is the difference in the psychological impact of terrorism in comparison to other forms of violence. The fear generated by terrorism is more widespread than that of war whose impact is confined mainly to the war front.

From the above is can be argued that terrorism is more of a media-spectacle than acts of war. As stated by Bassiouni (1982, p128), this in part explains why terrorists choose given targets and how these given targets are attacked "to attract the media's attention and thus ensure the dissemination of the act, the message of the perpetrators, and hence the terror-inspiring effects." Therefore, the world's attention on terrorism is more about the dramatic nature of terror acts, than it is the fatalities resulting from these actions. Granted, terrorism does not cause more deaths than war, or even disease, however the relationship between acts of terror and perceived newsworthiness does raise some alarms bells. According to Bassiouni (1982, p129), while terrorism is not as harmful as other crimes "the general impression in the public's perception seems to be that individual terrorism is a serious and dangerous phenomenon affecting society in a manner warranting exceptional action."

Thus institutional news media are amongst the forces constructing terrorism as the most harmful crime deserving of an equally violent response. The process of supporting the war against terror falls into the category of news reporting which Galtung (2003, p177) calls 'war reporting', "akin to reporting of the ravages of diseases to the exclusion of medical practices to combat them"; an approach contrary to peace journalism which focuses on conflict transformation. When the mainstream media legitimizes war, in Galtung's views, it reports on violence as it reports on the effects of disease to the exclusion of corresponding medical successes. This war journalism perspective views conflict as being similar to sports, in which winning is not everything but the only thing (p177). To Galtung, war journalism is modelled along the practices of sports and court

journalism, while the peace journalism alternative focuses on conflict transformation thereby prioritising opportunities for resolution.

War journalism is caused by nationalistic tendencies through which journalists are involuntarily pushed to frame war from a friend/enemy perspective. In this framework, those classified as enemies by the state become journalists' enemies and through war reporting, state enemies become public enemies. Herman and Chomsky (1988, p 37) describe how the media frames victims abused by the enemy as "worthy" victims while those treated with equal severity by the USA and its client states are framed as "unworthy" victims. For example, victims murdered by the USA or client states do not generate sustained media coverage. Such coverage is to the convenience of American policymakers because by focusing on victims of enemy states the coverage shows that those enemy states deserve America's military hostility. As explained by Herman and Chomsky, by converting the government's agenda into the people's agenda, the mainstream media manufactures consent. Writing on a similar issue, Hall (1970, p150), argues that media messages "…do not produce new knowledge about the world. They produce recognitions of the world as we have already learned to appropriate it." Therefore war reporting is a strategy that supports military solutions to conflict. That is not to say that the news media instigates war, rather that, traditionally, war has always been accompanied by propaganda and various forms of disinformation. Nevertheless, the new media has given the public opportunities to reject war propaganda through oppositional readings of mainstream news.

3.0   Oppositional Reading of war news

As noted above, mainstream media institutions manufacture consent by unconsciously persuading masses to do what the dominant elites want. However oppositional reading is contrary to this taken-for-granted traditional news media models that conceptualize the process of circulating news as a loop (see Hall, 2006, p163). There are three ways to decode the meaning of news: first, the message can be left unquestioned through dominant reading. Secondly, the reader can accept and reject parts of the message through negotiated reading. Finally the reader can reject the message through oppositional reading strategies (Hall, 2006, p163). The consumption or reception of media texts, Hall (2006, p164) argues, is in itself a process of text production even though the task remains predominantly in the hands of media workers . Consequently, the meanings encoded by journalists

who report terrorism from a war perspective are not necessarily the exact meanings decoded by the audience, since "the codes of encoding and decoding may not be perfectly symmetrical" (p, 166). These differences between encoding and decoding of news should not be seen as distortions or misunderstandings, instead, they should be seen as "relative autonomy" of the audience that encourages understanding outside the "*dominant-hegemonic position*." Readers operating inside the *dominant code*, to use Halls (2006, p171) terminology, take the connoted meaning and decode the message in the same spirit in which it was encoded. Such transparent communication represents hegemony, thereby reproducing the dominant definitions of terrorism. Hall (2006, p171) argues that the hegemonic interpretations of conflict are generated by political and military elites:

> …the particular choice of presentational occasions and formats, the selection of personnel, the choice of images, the staging of debates are selected and combined through the operation of the professional code.

Outside the *dominant code*, the audience can operate from the *oppositional code*, (Hall, 2006, p173). From the oppositional perspective, the decoding by the audience is contrary to the news reporter's intended meaning. In this instance war journalism is read as peace journalism.meaning that peace journalism can be advanced by an audience that (re)constructs meanings by reacting negatively to the mass media's war reporting of conflict. Thus the audience becomes active creators of meaning, and not just passive victims of manipulation (see Durham & Kellner, 2006, p xxxii). Here the audience does not have the same subject position as media professionals, whom Althusser (1971, p150) accuses of acting as part of ideological state apparatus.

Social media applications have created an opportunity for audiences to participate in peace journalism through an oppositional reading of mainstream media's war reporting. Audience comments can illustrate oppositional readings promoting peace even when journalists report from a war journalism perspective. From this vantage point active online audiences are 'reporters' or to use Rosen's (2006) words, 'People Formerly Known as the Audience'. Today's audience, according to Rosen (2006), is like passengers who were on a ship — the legacy media — but got a boat of their own — the social media channels. By generating news through social media comments, it can be argued, that the passengers no longer depend on the ship, but instead compete with the ship. These days, audiences are not just readers, but 'writing readers'. Some online

audiences consistently adopt an oppositional view of the reports presented by traditional journalists.. In the selected case study for example, comments by online audiences illustrate attempts by Kenyans to deconstruct mainstream media's war reporting of terrorism by inserting peace journalism into the terrorism narrative. Nevertheless, not all online readers operate from an oppositional code, many comment as subjects who have been interpellated by the ideological state apparatus (see Althusser (1971, p150).

4.0   Media coverage of Garissa University Attack

On 2April, 2015 gunmen attacked Garissa University, killing 147 people and injuring several more. The gunmen were sympathizers of a Somalia based militant group, Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahidin (HSM), commonly known as Al-Shabaab, which means 'the youth' in Arabic (Sullivan, 2014). Al-Shabaab is a militant Islamist group that began as a movement pushing for the conversion of Somalia into an Islamic Salafi state (Al-Shabaab, 2013). As a Salafi movement, Al-Shabaab sought to create what it calls a state guided by strict interpretation and adherence to Islamic teaching modelled along Wahhabi ideology - a puritanical Muslim faction that rejects religious innovation (Wiktorowicz 2006, p207). Although the group has been linked to Al-Qaeda, it has a recent history of being a remnant of the militant wing of the Council of Islamic Courts, a coalition government that controlled Somalia from 2006 to 2007. Al-Shabaab was officially classified as a terrorist organization by the United Sate in 2008(Al-Shabaab 2009–2014).

The attack on Garissa University is just one of many sporadic attacks by Al-Shabaab. As noted earlier, the group has accepted responsibility for previous attacks on West Gate Mall, and several lower magnitude improvised explosive devices (IED) attacks, mainly in Nairobi and the North-Eastern parts of Kenya. The Garissa University attack was amongst the most severe, it left 147 people dead and several others injured. The attack lasted for more than 12 hours, with gunmen holding over 700 students hostage, initially freeing Muslims and killing non-Muslims. The siege ended when four of the attackers were killed by Kenyan police officers. Five other suspects were later arrested, and a month later, the Kenya Defence Forces, KDF, claimed it had killed the organizer.

Al-Shabaab claimed the attack on Garissa University was a retaliation for Kenya's military incursion into Somalia. Indeed, KDF has been in Somalia since October 2011, an invasion that started after several kidnappings of Western tourists by what the government suspected were Al-Shabaab fighters. But even before the incursion, there were several terror attacks, for example, the August 1998 bombing of United States embassy and the November 2002 Mombasa twin attacks on Paradise Hotel, an Israeli-owned hotel and Arkia Airline, a passenger jet owned by an Israeli airline. Therefore the Garissa University attack can be seen as part of a complex terrorist endeavor which should not only be limited to the KDF's movement into of Somalia.

4.2. Method and data

This article uses readers' comments on mainstream media news of the Garissa University attack to tests Galtung's model of peace journalism. Despite the death and gruesome violence, good conflict reporting of terrorism can still prioritize peace journalism over war journalism. The latter polarizes and escalate hatred, increasing violence, a strategy Galtung (2003, p179) calls "peace enforcement" by warlike means. Galtung (2003) proposes a type of journalism that focuses on non-violent outcomes, empathy with all parties and creativity (p, 178). Galtung's four-point proposal differentiates peace journalism from conflict journalism using the following orientations: (i) Peace/Conflict transformation vs. War/violence (ii) Truth vs. Propaganda (iii) People vs. elites, and (iv). Solution vs. Victory. As stated by Lynch and McGoldrick (2000, p5), peace journalism is at play when editors and reporters publish stories that create opportunities for the society to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict. Using Galtung's principles of peace journalism as stated above, the study compares peace journalism in newspaper coverage of Garissa University's attack with oppositional social media comments about the coverage.

The study utilised Facebook comments on the news covered by two legacy news media channels owned by the Standard Group, the *Standard* newspaper, and the sister television broadcaster, KTN. The *Standard* newspaper and KTN were selected, due to their integrated online and legacy news channels, and secondly, because they had the most active online audience compared to other mainstream media organizations in Kenya at the time of this study. As proposed by Flick (2007, p29), sampling in qualitative studies should be done to generate the most relevant case to make the sample the most representative of the issue being studied, not necessarily the most

representative of the population. Following Flick's (2007) proposal, the sampling was not based on the logic of statistical generalization derived from a selection of the most representative part of the population, rather it was a process for selecting the most relevant texts. Thus, the selected sample is not statistically representative of the population of social media users in Kenya, but it is the most relevant representation of comments by social media readers of legacy news. The second reason for the selection of the sample was the fact that the *Standard* newspaper is representative of the media that are part of the ideological state apparatus, which as alluded to earlier, covers conflict from a war journalism perspective. Based on this criteria, the *Standard* online breaking news stories "147 killed in terrorist attack on Garissa University in..." was selected as the most relevant story for this study. And the 197 Facebook comments on the news item became the most relevant representation of comments by 'People Formerly Known as Readers'.

The Facebook comments that supported the newspaper's war stories were categorized as war journalism and those that rejected the war narratives were categorized as peace journalism. Consequently, through oppositional reading, comments can be outside the mainstream media war narrative, which Herman and Chomsky (1988, p 37) accuse of being used by the ruling elites to manufacture consent. The only serious limitation to this analysis is the fact that some comments might have been removed by online editors since social media commentators have no control over the content that appears on the online pages of legacy newspapers. Nevertheless, the removal of tweets should be equated to editing in legacy media. After all not all information collected by legacy news reporters is included in the newspaper. An interesting feature of social media however is that, the legacy newspapers lose control of the comments the moment they are 'shared' on Facebook. Therefore the available comments are enough to describe peace/war reporting by the public, or 'People Formerly Known as the Audience'. Thus, the limitations presented by removed comments does not prevent an effective comparison between peace journalism reporting by legacy media journalists and peace reporting by People formerly Known as Journalists.

4.3.   Analytical Criteria

Galtung's quadripartite principles of peace/war journalism was utilised in evaluating the comments posted in reaction to newspaper reports, as well as in developing a specific analytical strategy. The

following research question guided the analysis: To what extent did Facebook comments show peace journalism frames through an oppositional reading of mainstream news media?

4.3.1   Peace/Conflict or war/Violence-oriented

As is the tradition of the legacy media coverage of conflict, it was found out that the *Standard* newspaper covered the attack on Garissa University from a war journalism perspective. From the headline, "*147 killed in a terrorist attack on Garissa University in Northern Kenya*", the *Standard* newspaper online edition covered the attack as war by emphasizing violence. What Galtung (2003) describes as war journalism can be seen in how the newspaper focused on the 'us-them' differences, the number of people killed, named the evildoer (terrorist) and equated peace to victory by government forces. The front-page photograph and caption accompanying the news took a war journalism frame. For instance, in the foreground of the photograph was a soldier, carrying what looks like a heavy caliber gun and wearing cartridge belts. The common people are in the background. The photo caption is victory oriented: it states how the president has *vowed to defeated terrorists* after gunmen attacked a university in *one of the worst* terror raids in the country.

> Standard Digital News: The Counties - 147 killed in terrorist attack on Garissa University in...
> President Uhuru Kenyatta vowed terrorists would be defeated after gunmen Thursday attacked a university in Garissa, killing 147 people in one of the worst terror raids in the country. (Source, KTN Kenya, 2017)

The peace journalism frame might have mentioned the conflict formation process that acted as the background of the violence. For instance, previous activities of Al-Shabaab's or Kenyan security agencies, the problem with the radicalization of neglected youths and how Kenyans in north-eastern parts of the country have been side-lined by the successive government since Kenya attained self-governance. These would have contextualized the attack. This is in contrast to the negativity focused approach favoured by mainstream media. However, through oppositional reading, some Facebook users resisted the mainstream media war journalism frame. For example, Gitiende (2015) suggests the president should take responsibility and resign. With 16 replies, this post was the most active of all the 197 posts. Geterude (2015) supports the comment, arguing that the problem is wider than the single attack. The author states that regardless of who the president is, the insecurity problem can be traced back to 2007's contested election and resultant post-election violence. The problem can only be solved by "a combination of forces" (Geterude, 2015). The comments propose a holistic view of terrorism, making conflict transparent, as Gultang (2003,

p178) would argue. Despite the majority of the replies to Gitiende's (2015) comments (10 out of 16) being framed from a war journalism perspective, the high number of replies show how many readers were attracted to the oppositional framing of legacy media news. It can, therefore, be argued that although the majority of society has been cultivated to view terrorism from a war journalism perspective, Facebook is amplifying peace journalism voices by opposing the dominant interpretation of terrorism.

4.3.2   Truth-orientated

When reporting on terrorism from a peace journalism model, news reporters are supposed to expose untruths and uncover cover-ups on both sides (see Galtung, 2003, 178). While from a war journalism perspective, news reporters expose terrorists' untruths and advance governmental agendas. An application of Galtung's principles, the *Standard* newspaper reported the terror attack from a war journalism perspective. The cover page headline labelled the gunmen as terrorists while Kenyan security forces were referred to as commandos. From a more moderate perspective Western media organizations, the BBC, CNN and New York times used the more neutral terms — militants/gunmen and identified their membership to a group, Al-Shabaab, a militant Somali group. Reporting by Western media did not emphasize the Al-Shabaab's illegitimate status as a terrorist organization (see BBC, 2015, April, 3; Levs & Yan, 2015, April 3; Gettleman, Kushkush, & Callimachi, 2015, April 2). Yet reporting the truth about terrorism remains an ethical dilemma because unlike war, terrorism has been delegitimized and any truthful reporting is seen as support for the illicit violence. Nevertheless reporting from a war journalism perspective raises no ethical issue because war has been constructed as legitimate violence.

Through oppositional reading, the Facebook audience was liberated from the above dominant war journalism model. For example, some anti-war commentators blamed the presence of KDF for the attack. Mwaniki (2015) suggested that

> Uhuru's government should withdraw KDF from Somalia immediately to save bloodshed of innocent citizens! That will not be cowardice but a tactical retreat [comment partially corrected for grammar].

The above comment is what Galtung (2003, p178) would have called uncovering our cover-ups and untruths. The comment attracted 12 replies, the second-highest number of replies with the majority of the comments agreeing that KDF should be withdrawn from Somalia. For example,

Kyulla (2015) supports the withdrawal of troops, writing: "I totally agree with you, we cannot be sacrificing young lives in the pride of winning war" [comment partially corrected for grammar].

The popularity of the comments exposing untruths being in equal measure to those exposing the untruths of Al-Shabaabpoints to an oppositional reading enabling Facebook users to read legacy media's war journalism news from a peace journalism perspective. Even though the *Standard* reported the university attack from a war journalism perspective, through oppositional comments, Facebook users inserted peace journalism in the newspaper's war journalism. It, therefore, means social media will empower readers to understand information from outside the dominant perspective.

4.3.3. People-oriented.

Peace journalism should be about all people, not only the suffering of elites. Showing how common people participate in conflict resolution instead of focusing on how elites and their government tools attempt to impose peace. Unlike war journalism which exaggerates government efforts to solve the problem of terrorism, peace journalism shows alternatives to the government's approach. The *Standard* newspaper, just like other legacy media, prioritize government action. As seen in the photograph above, the newspaper reports how President Uhuru Kenyatta vows to defeated terrorism. By highlighting the image of a soldier, the photograph also emphasizes the role of KDF in solving the problem, while normal citizens are depicted as having no role to play. Cherono (2015) and Katua (2015) are examples of commentators who disrupted this narrative by givingcredit to Recce Squad, a police unit, instead of the elitist KDF. Although the Kenya Police Service has been discredited for being corrupt, Cherono thinks the Recce Squad did better work than the well-armed KDF. She says

> Next time any of you are held hostage in a building please know we have RECCE SQUAD. We do not want the idea of KDF going to the scene with tankers and staying outside for more than 12 hours when people are being butchered. Thumbs up Recce Squad...nkt [comment partially corrected for grammar. Some parts translated from *sheng*] (Cherono, 2015).

> The army arrived immediately and surrounded the campus but had to wait for 17hrs? What in the world is an army? They are cowards coming with tanks and yet the terrorists were armed with guns only and then it would take the Recce Company from Nairobi to finish all (Katua, 2015).

Wangui (2015) suggests that unless people propose solutions, the problem of terrorism cannot be solved. The author argues:

> I think they will strike again and again if we keep forgetting as we do. Let us give solutions instead of blame games, Westgate was attacked and we forgot, teachers we killed and we forgot, quarry workers were killed and it was the same, now students. Let all people watch out now because you can be a victim. If you see people meeting, they don't work but just eat and sleep, watch out [comment corrected for grammar. Some parts translated from *sheng*[1]] (Wangui, 2015).

Edambo (2015) thinks that because the victims are common people, the media and corporate organizations did not react with as much compassion as they did when Westgate, a high-end shopping mall, was attacked. The author argues:

> The Westgate was for the rich, the coverage was immense, but for these poor students nobody is even concerned... paybill no's and sorts [The Westgate is an upscale shopping mall in Nairobi that was attacked by gunmen in September 2013, while 'paybill' is a popular mobile phone fundraising code provided by leading Telcos in Kenya].

The above comments show that Facebook has allowed readers to have oppositional views of elite-oriented peace initiatives. Many readers agree that all people should be involved in solving the problem of terrorism. This is contrary to conventional media that prioritizes regime views.

4.3.4. Solution-oriented.

While the news coverage by legacy media was victory oriented, many oppositional comments suggested a win-win solution to the problem of terrorism. *The Standard* newspaper emphasized the military solution, this is seen for example in the front cover photographs of soldiers and accompanying stories on military preparedness. Stories were run on how the tragedy could have been better managed if the 'Recce Squad', a special police unit famed for its sharpshooters, was quickly airlifted to the university after the attack was reported. To the writer, the Recce Squad would have contained the terrorists had it arrived on time. However online commenters emphasized peace initiatives as prevention of terrorism. Twenty out of 197 comments suggest KDF should be pulled out of Somalia and redeployed to protect Kenyans within Kenya. Many of

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[1] Sheng is a Swahili slang that originating from the urban underclass of eastern parts of Nairobi.

the commentators think the continued stay of KDF in Somalia is not a solution to the frequent terror attacks.

5.0   Conclusion

The study confirmed that although legacy media, both in the form of newspapers and television, report terrorism from a war journalism perspective. However, when their stories are interpreted online, the audience re-reads them from a peace journalism perspective. The oppositional peace journalism comments made by online audiences attracted more replies than passive war journalism comments. This shows that not all Facebook users are subjects of dominant knowledge structure about terrorism. Owing to the fact that opposing opinions generated more replies than conforming comments, it can be argued that oppositional reading of legacy media provides an opportunity for peace journalism to re-articulate terrorism and give chance to alternative peace approaches other than the conventional victory oriented binary approaches. As part of peace promotion efforts, this study proposes that journalists should be critical of the dominant knowledge and power structures, by reporting terrorism from a peace journalism perspective. A peace journalism approach widens strategies aimed at solving the terrorism problem.

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