IJARSCT
ISSN (Online) 2581-9429
International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology (IJARSCT)
International Open-Access, Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Multidisciplinary Online Journal
Impact Factor: 4.819
Volume 2, Issue 4, February 2021

Review Paper on Social Media, Racial Intolerance, and Peace Journalism

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Abstract: *The following questions serve as the basis for this article's discussion on social media, racial prejudice, and peace journalism: (1) What Facebook and Twitter posts are to blame for the racial tensions in Kenya? (2) Does ethnic animosity "kill" peace journalism on Facebook and Twitter? And (3) how can we use Facebook and Twitter to promote peace journalism? BojanaBlagojevic's (2009) model to comprehend the complexity of ethnic conflict and its causes served as the basis for the study.*

Keywords:. article, racial, ethnic, journalism

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social Media

Digital media that is interactive, includes two-way communication, and uses some sort of computer are referred to as social media (Michaelsen, 2011). In addition, it emphasizes engaging, creative, and interactive user input as well as on-demand access to material whenever and wherever it is provided on any digital device. The instantaneous generation of brand-new, uncontrolled information on social media is another feature. Examples of social media include YouTube, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and more. Twitter and Facebook are primarily the most egalitarian social media platforms in Kenya, thus I choose to concentrate on those two in my research. Today, social media is utilised to transmit news faster than the old mainstream media. Social media has revolutionised how news is disseminated.

Due to their micro-blogging capacities, Twitter and Facebook have stood out as the most dominant media (Anamika, 2009). Twitter and Facebook have become crucial medium for news and information about significant events in Kenya and elsewhere due to their popularity, versatility, and instantaneous dissemination and sharing of information. Recently, the two have played a significant mediating role in various local disputes around the nation. They are utilised for political messaging, marketing, advertising, and advocacy because of their appeal. They have been used effectively to rally Kenyans for causes that required massive devotion, such as in the instances of the Kenyans for Kenya programme from 2011; the Westgate Mall catastrophe from 2013; and, most significantly, the 2013 election process. Social media has, however, not just been used for good, but also for ethnic hatred; this usage has heightened ethnic tensions and occasionally throw Kenya in danger of an ethnic conflict.

The debate on social media is widespread and appears to be catching up with institutions like the government and the media. In the case of the media, ethnic alignment poses a challenge to peace journalism, which upholds the principles of impartiality and balance in reporting on events, particularly during election campaigns. In this research, I evaluate how social media, specifically Twitter and Facebook, promote to ethnic enmity in Kenya and how this might impede peace journalism. The study aims to respond to the following three inquiries in terms of determining this predicament:

1. What Facebook and Twitter occurrences are to accountable for the racial tensions in Kenya?
2. Does ethnic hostility on Facebook and Twitter "kill" peace journalism?
3. How can we use Facebook and Twitter to promote peace journalism?

The urge to comprehend our current dilemma, how it affects us, and how to escape it led to the deduction of the aforementioned questions. In this study, Kenyans on Twitter and Facebook are referred to as #KOT and KOF, respectively. The phrases "ethnic hate" and "ethnic intolerance" will be used interchangeably. When referring to ethnic conflict or violence, the phrases "ethnic war" and "ethnic conflict" may occasionally be used interchangeably. It is accepted that the words "peace journalism" and "war journalism" are mutually exclusive.

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1.2 Ethnic Hatred and Peace Journalism:

Ethnic tensions, often known as ethnic animosity, are sentiments that are manifested in varying degrees and are followed by actions of prejudice and antagonism toward an ethnic group. Ethnic conflict that results from ethnic prejudice has multiple sources as well. In some civilizations, tribalism is the cause, in others, a history of uneasy cohabitation, and in Kenya's case, political competition and past injustices are to blame (Kriegler report, 2008). These are some of the few factors that lead to genuine ethnic conflicts, wars, or acts of violence. Most often, patriotism and a sense of national superiority among a particular ethnic group are the underlying causes of ethnic violence. It may also result from the perception or experience of prejudice by an ethnic group other than one's own called reverse ethnicity. In Kenya, nationalist and regional leaders that wish to advance their agenda as they try to unite the country or electorates against a legitimate adversary have fostered and exploited ethnic animosity. In whatever code the leaders choose to refer to one another, the hypothetical adversary is also understood.

According to Jake Lynch (2008), peace journalism is when editors and reporters make decisions about what to publish and how to present it that provide society as a whole the chance to think about and value non-violent answers to conflict. Peace journalism seeks to bring consciousness focuses on structural and cultural causes of violence and how they affect people living in war zones as an element of the justification for violence. Instead of viewing disputes as a straightforward dichotomy, it seeks to portray them as including several participants and multiple agendas. Advancing peace initiatives from all sides and enabling readers to discern between stated viewpoints and actual aspirations are two specific purposes of peace journalism.

II. THE TRIUMPHS AND TRAVAILS OF TWITTER AND FACEBOOK IN KENYA

2.1 Kenyans for Kenya initiative

In response to media reports of hunger and malnutrition in several Turkana areas, corporate leaders in Kenya and the Red Cross launched the Kenyans for Kenya campaign on July 27, 2011. Safaricom Foundation, Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), Media Owners Association (MOA), and Kenya Red Cross Society led the effort (KRCS). The group wanted to get the public and business organisations to donate Ksh 500 million in a month to help 3 million Kenyans who were starving in the country's north. The administrators launched a Facebook group called Kenyans for Kenya and a Twitter account called @Kenyans4Kenya during this project. A significant amount of lobbying and support for the proposal was done through these two social media.

The important information on how Kenyans and well-wishers could donate, such as the MPESA PAY BILL 111111, Account No. 111111 or KCB Account No. 1133333338, was mostly distributed through social media.Kenyans recorded their requests, and as a result, the project was more than a success. The administrators exceeded their goals and set new ones that they almost surpassed. This is an example of how people may be galvanized via social media.

We are one initiative:

We are One, a September 2013 campaign in which Ksh 102,331,349 was raised for emergency rescue efforts to aid victims of the Westgate mall terrorist assault, was another project in which social media was successfully used to rally Kenyans. Red Cross issued the call on September 22, 2013. The primary mobilizers and disseminators of appeals from Kenya and the Diaspora during the project were FaceBook and Twitter. The Safaricom Foundation was also involved and offered the numbers 0702 848484 for Kenyans living abroad to send donations, as well as 848484 for M-Pesa Pay Bill, which got reports of 34000 payments every minute. We Are One was a popular topic on Facebook and Twitter at the height of the campaign. For a while, Kenyans put aside their differences and banded together for a common goal; at the time, advocacy posts on social media urged people to stick together.

The predominant traditions in journalism are known as "war journalism," and it refers to the framing of public debates concerning conflict problems that are often in favour of aggressive actions (Howard, 2009). Johan Galtung (1965), who developed the ideas of peace journalism, popularised this idea. Other names for this wide notion of peace journalism include reporting the world, constructive conflict coverage, conflict solution journalism, and conflict sensitive journalism (Lynch, 2008; Howard, 2009). (Tapio, 2010).

Peace journalism tries to avoid and combat the pervasive bias of valuing violence and violent parties in reaction to war journalism's value bias in favour of violence. This has two major advantages for individuals concerned with objectivity

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in journalism. Second, it offers a useful tool for individuals who prioritise the promotion of peace and social justice over violence, as all journalism must in some way appeal to its viewers' ideals.

III. METHODOLOGY

A few instances of social media confrontations that entail assaults from one side, counterattacks, and the hurling of hurtful remarks towards a specific target considered rival or offender can be found in Kenya. Prior to giving illustrations, it is crucial to consider the root reasons of conflict, according to the model developed by BojanaBlagojevic in 2009.

Every dispute in this approach has a context. Conflict contexts are complicated phenomena that vary from conflict to conflict. This is the setting in which a group or groups that do not belong or have hobbies and interests engage in dividing behaviours. Historical injustices, racial exclusion, social and economic inequality, and other elements are present in the case of Kenya. When people live in a competitive and disagreeable culture, these variables are typically suppressed and held for a long period. When the conditions are favorable, ethnic conflict can break out spontaneously, as they did in Kenya in 2007, Rwanda in 1994, and Germany before and during World War II. Similar to this, and the main difference being that instead of physical violence and bloody assaults, social media dispute entails the use of angry words. polarising updates.

IV. SOCIAL MEDIA CONFLICTS WITNESSED IN KENYA

Yieke (2008) argues that ethnicity is not a bad idea and should not be viewed as a source of human suffering. As such, Yieke analyses ethnicity as a positive phenomenon that should strengthen national unity rather than be viewed as a catalyst for violence. He writes: "[E]thnicity reinforces our very beings as persons and nations in charting our destinies in this world in regard to national unity and progress." Therefore, ethnicity shouldn't stand in the way of national growth or be the cause of ongoing bloodshed and instability in African governments unless Africans exploited ethnicity for bad purposes such as corruption, poor management, and power-seeking motivated by misguided individual egos.

Similar opinions are expressed in the Kenya Human Rights Commission study that investigated the reasons behind the post-election violence in 2007/2008, which absolved ethnicity of responsibility as a factor in the violence in finding number 69. They came to the following conclusion: While Kenya's voting patterns, particularly since 1992, have shown that ethnicity is a significant predictor of electoral outcomes, ethnicity is rarely the root cause of conflict. Rather, it is a means by which those involved in conflict label their complaints, target the perceived "enemy," mobilise the points of difference, and support or even attack one another.

According to the paper, ethnicity is frequently exploited as a smokescreen for more fundamental reasons of political unrest in Kenya. In Kenyan politics, references to ethnicity obscure the real causes of the country's issues, including historical injustices in land distribution, impunity, exclusion, economic and social inequality, weak and underperforming public institutions, corruption, wars between political elites, and an electoral system that accentuates rather than lessens the negative effects that negative ethnicity can be used for.

As a result, it may be claimed that ethnicity in Kenya fuels conflict and that, absent ethnicity, Kenyans would likely pursue alternative methods of resolving their issues and disparities. However, there are a few factors that contribute to ethnicity's continued dominance as a source of identity in Kenya. Politicians in Kenya often ascribe and take use of ethnicity. Given that ethnicity plays a significant role in Kenyan politics, politicians often utilise identity politics and other divisive tactics for their own personal profit, leading Kenyans to live in a perpetual state of intolerance. That explains why there has consistently been post-election violence in Kenya after every election.

The type of ethnicity that instils the culture of the "other" or rejects members of an ethnic group, leading to ethnic groupings viewing the resources as grounds for the survival of the fittest, is what Koigi refers to as negative ethnicity. Members of ethnic groups in Kenya have considered others as the source of their economic deficiencies, poverty, and misery, and the land issue has significantly contributed to this (Kriegler and Waki Reports, 2009). The 2008 post-election violence was a turning point in the way people may become split along ethnic lines and participate in significant violence while attempting to confront their long-standing, deeply ingrained tensions and historical injustices (KNCHR, 2008; The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group, 2013; Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission Report, 2013). Negative racial attitudes lead to putting the blame for social, economic, and political ills on

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other ethnic groups and working together to eliminate or purge them from a place is what is referred to as ethnic cleansing.

This negative ethnicity culture is present and active in the technology arena as well as in interactions in the actual world. Social media has given citizen journalists a platform for sharing news, information, and life experiences, but it has also given them a platform for dispute, accusations, and verbal abuse anytime the online community is furious with one another.

As the 2013 general elections drew close, a dispute of this nature was witnessed. On February 28, 2013, CNN broadcast a video captioned "armed as Kenyan vote nears." Four masked Kenyans were shown in the report by the foreign journalist Nema Elbagir carrying, in the words of the reporter, "weapons fashioned from iron pipe, home-made swords, and munitions purchased from the underground market" (Shiundu, 2013). The CNN article and accompanying video were widely believed to have been faked in order to incite unrest among Kenyans, and the media outlet as well as the journalist came under fierce criticism on Twitter and Facebook. Furious Kenyans launched the trending hashtag #SomeoneTellCNN, where they launched various accusations against CNN and the journalist @NimaCNN. This is an example of a social media assault, which is frequent in Kenya. It is yet unclear if these attacks may actually result in physical violence. This wasn't violence against an ethnic minority; rather, it was violence against a recognised enemy of Kenya as a whole. The effects of this violence persisted throughout the election campaign, when foreign journalists were avoided, mistreated, and accused of already having ready stories of violence when they arrived in Kenya.

Another instance of an online conflict occurred in Kenya after the results of the March 4th elections were announced by the country's independent electoral and boundaries commission on March 9, 2013. The conflict was then rekindled after the supreme court upheld Uhuru Kenyatta's victory on March 30, 2013 after ruling on a petition filed by the Cord Coalition challenging Kenyatta's victory. In contrast to the actual machete and fire used in 2007/2008, the 2013 violence was a battle of words fought online on Facebook and Twitter. Between the cord and jubilee coalition supporters, there were unheard-of and worthless status changes. Similar to the post-election violence in 2007–2008, there were strong ethnic and tribal undertones in the 2013 social media war. This new type of violence, which the concerned ministry of information and communication saw as a potential time bomb in Kenya if it wasn't handled, caused great anxiety.

Two days prior to the March 24 World Cup qualification march in Calabar, Kenya and Nigeria were entangled in a social media spat about how the Harambee Stars were handled in Lagoa. Kenyans and Nigerians engaged in a global trending topic using the hashtags #SomeoneTellNigeria and #SomeoneTellKenya, with over 100 tweets being generated per minute (Africanewspost.com, 2013). According to the sources, the Kenyan national team was staying at a boarding school and would be exercising on a primary school field, while the Nigerian squad was staying in a five-star hotel.

Media coverage inequality supposedly turned injustice:

Mainstream silence, or its reluctance to approach matters as they should be, has been a contributing factor to online violence on social media. The mainstream media in Kenya in 2007/2008 overdid the coverage of violence, became entangled in ethnic prejudices, and took sides in reporting and disseminating unedited news. It took sides rather than functioning as an impartial spectator. As a result, the authorities decided to outlaw live broadcast of the post-election violence. Kenyans turned to social media as a substitute forum where the ethnic conflict could continue. This was allegedly the first time Kenya used social media on a larger scale, and from that point on, history was made.

Nevertheless, the citizen journalism made necessary by Facebook and Twitter has frequently resulted in ethnic and mainstream media virtual violence. The fundamental cause of the violence is the perception that current events are not receiving balanced coverage or attention. For instance, the way the 2013 Kenyan elections were covered by the mainstream media was mainly considered as an instance where it erred on the side of caution because of previous mistakes and omitted the truth out of concern about an outbreak of violence. In this way, Kenyans on social media made the decision to publish uncensored content as an alternative, some of which sparked virulent ethnic disputes and war of words between individuals belonging to distinct ethnic groupings.

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V. HOW ETHNIC HATRED CONTRIBUTES TO WAR JOURNALISM:

Through indoctrination and communication, people of society learn the behavioural pattern of ethnic hate. If journalists are not cautious enough, ethnic animosity will frequently be included into their reporting. Journalists were given a warning on how to use social media in 2013 by Kenyan experts. Journalists have been warned to exercise additional caution in their job since aggressive language used to convey opinions is on the rise. Violence in Kenya has a history dating back to 2007–2008, when it was partially linked to hate speech, thus this was not the beginning of it. An illustration of how susceptible journalists are in times of violence is the case of Joshua Arap Sang, a journalist who is being tried by the ICC. Because social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are so distinctive, journalists might occasionally be persuaded to disregard the fact that they work for media organisations and perceive their online interactions as personal. Judie Kaberia, Kenya Coordinator for ReportingKenya.net and Special Projects Reporter at Capital FM in Nairobi, quoted HaronMwangi, Chief Executive Officer of the Media Council of Kenya, which monitors the media, as saying the following in a report on the warning by media professionals to journalists:

We concluded that there is a tendency for a journalist working for a media outlet to be disconnected from a journalist working as an independent blogger. The bad situation that you have... a well-known journalist spreading hatred . On the day of the elections on March 4, a journalist admitted to posting a contentious comment on his social media profile, but he quickly took it down in response to criticism from fellow journalists, according to Judie Kaberia.

The journalist, who wished to remain anonymous, admitted: "When I wrote the post, I got swept away by politics; instead of seeing the journalist in me, I saw myself as a person and left out the professional side of me. I no longer share such statements on social media because I changed. Although I exercise caution, I observe that my peers continue to err

The journalist continued his confession, stating that it is difficult to be objective when covering or participating in a story that is heavily influenced by affiliations, particularly ethnic affiliations, as a journalist because you first belong to an ethnic group before you belong to a professional group. Judie Kaberia continues the same piece by quoting the conscience journalist as saying:

There is a massive responsibility since it is difficult to distinguish between your professional identity and your political or tribal allegiance. It's incredibly difficult for us journalists to cover this. We are battling to strike a balance between your identity as a person or professional journalist, your involvement with a certain group, and your political preferences.

If they don't understand their duty as journalists or can't tell what is personal from what is objective, journalists are quite likely to use social media in an undesirable way without even realising it. When a journalist is covering a conflict, war journalism predominates. This realisation gave rise to peace journalism. In war reporting, a journalist often positions the messages in the public discourse on the side of the violent reaction. Understanding Galtung, McGoldrick, and Lynch's 17 principles for peace journalism is the best method to comprehend war journalism (1995). The following regulations stipulate in brief what a journalist should do when approached with a conflict:

1. Avoid seeing a dispute as a matter between two parties
2. Avoid putting yourself above others
3. Make an effort to determine any potential sources of the disagreement.
4. When reporting, go beyond the obvious physical reasons of the violence.
5. Probe further to find regional solutions to the issue.
6. Find the convergence points as opposed to the locations of divergence.
7. Identify potential dispute resolution strategies.
8 Not assigning responsibility to any one party in Treating all parties equally in 9.
10. Find out how the parties may resolve their issues.
11. When reporting, avoid using emotional or negative language.
11. When reporting, avoid using emotional or negative language.
13 Avoiding any form of label demonization
14 Treating all serious claims equally .
15 Avoiding any form of label demonization.
16. Examine leftover sources of conflict once peace has been achieved
17. Examine the proposals for peace from all parties involved.

ISSN 2581-9429 IJARSCT

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These guidelines can serve as a roadmap to some objective goal, even if they may not be all-inclusive and take into account journalists' varied conflict management approaches and the complexity of a conflict situation. Given the nature of social media technologies, journalists who don't dress professionally and utilise social media to broadcast what they believe would benefit them may find themselves in a sticky situation. When they do, they typically turn to their own ideas that they are linked with, and the public respects these views since at that time, they see a journalist as a representative of a media outlet. Since the media is a widely respected and powerful organisation, its representatives' opinions should be as impartial as possible during times of conflict. Every time a journalist in Kenya is entangled in the web of war journalism, peace journalism is put at risk. Given that journalism focused on "we" and "our"; they and theirs may be harmful to an ethnic culture, journalists and media authorities must take additional caution and frequently remind journalists of their obligation to keep objectivity and impartiality in their social media participation.

VI. CONCLUSION

We can only address the underlying reasons of social media use since it takes place in a virtual realm and is difficult to regulate owing to its anonymity. Historical injustices, biassed media coverage, ethnic-based politics, and economic inequalities that exclude people from particular ethnic groups are the main drivers of racial animosity (KHRC REPORT, 2008). Secondary level strategies for control, particularly those that arise during crises, can also be used to gain some control. For instance, deleting all accounts spreading racial hatred through web hosting can save a lot of money. If social media aggression is not reined in, it might eventually escalate into actual conflict. If it is not controlled, it can also be used to feed violence that has already broken out.

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