

**A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF TERRORISM  
IN KENYA**

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**DECLARATION**

This thesis is my own original work, and has never been presented for award of a degree in any other University.

Signed.....  ..... Date: 10/11/2016 .....


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**Declaration by the supervisor**

This project has been presented for examination with my approval as the appointed Supervisor.

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Signed.....  ..... Date 10/11/2016 .....

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## **DEDICATION**

This research study is dedicated to my dear wife and friend Evelyne, lovely daughter Amara and three-month-old bubbly son Bryce for their enormous support throughout the period. I also dedicate this project to my father Michael Abuga who continues to hold education very close to his heart. He has always ensured that education comes first in our family. My special dedication goes to the soul of my late mother Consolata Abuga who accorded me all the support she could through my schooling life. I wish she was around to see my accomplishments but destiny did not grant her this opportunity. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AIC</b>	: African Inland Church
<b>ATPU</b>	: Anti-Terrorism Police Unit
<b>KDF</b>	: Kenya Defence Forces
<b>Op/Ed</b>	: Opinion and Editorial
<b>TIPS</b>	: Terrorism Information and Prevention System
<b>UK</b>	: United Kingdom
<b>US</b>	: United States of America



## ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether the media coverage of terrorism has resulted in moral panics in Kenya. The study used content analysis and discourse analysis research methodologies and key informants' interviews. The target population for this research consisted of year 2015 articles in three top daily newspapers in Kenya: *The Daily Nation*, *The Standard* and *The Star*. The data was presented using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study also interviewed editors, journalists, security personnel, moral gatekeepers and members of the public. The study was done in a period of six months. The study findings as enumerated in the fourth chapter indicate that the Kenyan media has effectively fanned public indignation and perpetuated what the study refers to as 'a moral panic' about terrorism as a type of deviancy in the society. While one of the media's role in a heterogeneous society like Kenya is to help maintain stability, moral panics perpetrated through the media threatens the social order of a society. The study also found out that moral panics have already occurred in sections of our society as is manifested through panicky emergency reaction by students at one of the institutions of higher learning (the University of Nairobi's Kikuyu campus). The study also found out that moral panics can be created when audiences are filled with the sense that the enemy they are fighting is within and amongst them as often repeated by media. Furthermore, media coverage of the reaction that has been directed to a certain group or category of people and hostility they face increases their fear and anxiety and this heightens their experience of moral panics in society. The study therefore concludes that moral panics perpetrated through the media threaten the social order in Kenya. Moral panics caused by terrorism are problems characterised by reaction, through media representation and in political fora. Such reaction often dictates how the issue of terrorism has been dealt with in the Kenyan context. The study recommends that; first journalists should seek to continuously understand the desire of terrorists which is to promote fear in society and not to accord them any such opportunity. Secondly, the media and security forces should establish mechanisms of interaction where they define relevant terminologies to be used when reporting on terrorism, thus helping in limiting the use of words that have potential to cause moral panics.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

This chapter broadly explains the scope of the research of how the media contributes to moral panics. The chapter explores the various aspects that will be examined in the study. It looks at the background of the study, statement of the problem as well as objectives and significance of the study.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

Terrorism is a stark reality in today's contemporary society. It is indeed a global phenomenon because attacks have been witnessed not only in the Middle East and Africa but also in Europe and Asia. In their heinous operations terrorists seek attention. This makes them commit violent crimes to cause fear and terror as they disrupt normal life, in the hope of gaining attention for a cause. Considering the fact that the aim of terrorists is to seek attention and free publicity in order to create fear and dread to the public, the media role in reporting acts of terrorism becomes a delicate act. Recent security events in the world have put the media on the spotlight especially with the way they cover and/ or represent terrorism.

The most important question that emerges from this is whether the way the media cover terrorist acts by capturing in detail the drama involved encourage further violence or promote the terrorists' agenda. The way this data on psychological warfare is displayed may shape and form states of mind towards vital issues. This is on account of how media exhibit data is never completely impartial or free of qualities. Or maybe, news stories can be loaded with shrouded implications and imagery which are sometimes determined by the type of news sources.

Shafir & Schairer (2012) argue that in the ordinary sense of their heinous operations terrorists seek media publicity which they know gives them great advantage. The media according to the social responsibility theory has the noble responsibility of providing information about happenings and occurrences in the society. Providing information is not sufficient, the media should help define the problems that the society faces (Keinan, Sadeh & Rosen, 2003).

When terrorist activities are presented in the media the potential to create moral panics is dependent on the choice of words that journalists use. The danger of creating these moral panics related to terrorism is that they depend on narratives used. We sometimes form stereotypes and symbols concerning particular incidents related to terrorism as a result of media coverage (Shafir & Schairer, 2012).

Cohen (2002) argues that the term moral panic has been widely adopted by scholars of mass media to refer to the exaggerated media coverage of controversial issues and the consequent social response brought on by the exercises of specific gatherings as well as people.

Moral frenzies happen when the media turn an awful, over the top, calamitous and even customary occasion and present it as uncommon (Cohen, 1980). The media can create social problems; they can present issues of terrorism dramatically and devastatingly, mostly suddenly. The media can fan public anger and engineer what one might refer to 'a moral panic' in a society (Marsh & Melville, 2011). Critcher (2003) furthering the sentiments of Cohen, observes that to a great degree, moral panics take place in the media.

For a moral panic to occur, the media misrepresentation of crime or terrorism must begin to 'shape public sentiment' in highly emotive ways. This eventually leads to intense public fear in which concern about a condition dramatically outstrips its capacity to harm society (Critcher, 2003). Considering the fact that the aim of terrorists is to instill fear and inflict death on their victims, one of their most effective platforms of propagating fear is the media. This way they get attention and free publicity in order to create a psychological effect on the public. This considered, the media's role in reporting acts of terrorism becomes a delicate act. According to Goode & Ben-Yehuda (1994), moral panics are discrete and unpredictable. They are depicted as rapid eruptions of fear within the collective consciousness in response to a social problem that begins abruptly.

The way the media has presented Muslims with regards to terrorism has resulted in a lot of discussions and scholarly research. Goode & Ben-Yehuda (1994) argue that the representation of Muslims in the media relates to the lack of a clear understanding of religious and ideological

differences. Public panic around terrorism is created by the media and this mirrors how they have handled the religious differences especially when focusing on Muslims.

Kenya has witnessed a number of terrorist attacks in the recent past. In September 2013, unknown gunmen attacked the Westgate Shopping Mall in Westlands area of Kenya's capital Nairobi. The attack resulted in the deaths of at least 67 people, with more than 175 people wounded in the mass shooting. In June 2014, at least 48 people were killed when militants from neighbouring Somalia suspected to be Al-Shabaab raided a Kenyan coastal town and launched a major assault on government offices, a police station and hotels. In April 2015, four gunmen killed 148 students at Garissa University College. In effect, Kenya has witnessed numerous terrorists' attacks which often attract keen media interest.

While the media has done remarkably well – professionally and ethically – in covering various terrorists' attacks in the country, the effects of such coverage on the audience cannot be fully determined or even explicitly ascertained. The focus on Al-Shabaab as the main perpetrators of terrorism may have generated an exaggerated reaction from the media, the police and wider public. These terrorist activities have always been linked to Muslims and somewhat sensationalised in the media. Reporting and publicity of this nature has subsequently led to increased general anxiety and concern about similar terrorist activities.

Scholars like Cohen (2002) and Bonn (2010) argue that the media causes us to form stereotypes and symbols concerning particular people and as a result we start to associate certain social groups with specific activities such as terrorism and gang violence. When the media fails to carefully consider the meaning and implication of their words and headlines, stereotypes can easily be formed if the audience can misconstrue such. Bonn gives an example that in the US, when people walk past a young black American adult with his hood up, they immediately clutch their bags in fear of being mugged in certain neighbourhoods. This is because black American adults have been stereotyped to be the source of crime in the communities in some areas of the US. This happens because the media through their coverage generate discussions and build emphasis around a subject or issues and create a condition

where the subjects of the panic are viewed as a source of moral decay and social fragmentation.

The Kenyan media in some instances has succeeded in constructing sensational headlines with regards to terrorism. The sensational and unethical headlines in the media cause society to associate the Islamic religion with terrorism. When the media fails to construct its narratives professionally and ethically, there is a tendency that it may scare its audience into perception that our nation and lives are under assault by this religion. This has seen an uprising in discrimination and profiling of Muslims in Kenya.

Evidence from the United States has linked terrorism to increasing cases of stress, trauma and racial abuse. Schuster et al. (2001) conducted a national survey in the United States after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Their respondents reported substantial increases in indicators of stress. Stone (2000), for example, found that sampled respondents in the US who were exposed to media coverage of terrorist attacks experienced greater increases in anxiety than a control group that was exposed to media coverage of issues unrelated to terrorism. The media covers terrorist acts by writing sensation-seeking stories with the aim of capturing wide readership, listenership and viewership and good market and audience ratings. To achieve this, one of the strategies the media employs is to focus on who is to blame by repeating the same images over and over again in the headlines.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The Kenyan media, in their attempt to cover every last part of fear monger occasions, have in the past served as a platform for the terrorists; magnifying the impact of their horrifying brutality. Such coverage of terrorism may have created a moral panic within our society, especially the implication of Islam on terrorist attacks. The effects of moral panics are far reaching and include the fact that it creates a cultural and social conflict between various factions in the society.

Through the use of headlines, opinions and commentaries, media outlets have the potential to create moral panics. Through how they frame issues in news stories, media outlets have the

potential to create stereotypes around certain terrorist activities and link them with certain religions.

It should be remembered that the subtle objective of terrorism is to promote fear in a population. The coverage of terrorist activities in the media has indicated that the media have the potential to assist terrorists by helping them promote fear of terrorism. This happens if journalists fail to understand the motive of terrorists in seeking media attention. Brigitte Nacos in her study titled *Mass-mediated terrorism* (2002) agrees that the deeds of terrorists are planned and executed with the mass media in mind. Terrorists therefore understand how the media works and some have employed the services of propagandists to guide their actions in order to attain media attention (Keinan, Sadeh & Rosen (2003).

The frequency and consistency of Kenya's terrorist attacks has provided spicy content for media coverage. The desire to make scooping news and be the first to relay real time news coverage might have resulted in lapse in professional and ethical journalism. Although majority of media houses look for what constitutes news values in some of the occurrences that they consider worthy of being reported, the emphasis on the tragedy, violence, reactive and theatrical aspects of terrorists is a very tantalising aspect of news coverage. Such occurrences unfortunately have the potential to create moral panic among its media audience. The study sought to determine the modes of representation of those considered terrorists or supporters of terrorism.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to investigate whether media coverage of terrorism has caused moral panics in Kenya.

**The specific objectives of the study are:**

- i. To understand how the media covers terrorism and the areas of focus in the Kenyan society.
- ii. To understand whether the media perpetrates narratives in the Kenyan media that instigates and sustains moral panics.
- iii. To determine how the moral panics caused by the media has affected how society reacts to terrorism in Kenya.

**1.5 Research Questions**

- RQ 1: How has media coverage of terrorism contributed to moral panics in the Kenyan society?
- RQ 2: How do the media cover terrorism issues and what are the areas of focus?
- RQ 3: What is the nature of narratives in the Kenyan media that instigate and sustain moral panics?

**1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study was able to explore the effects of media coverage of terrorism in the Kenyan society. The study sought to establish an understanding of the connection between media framing and priming of stories and how such actions is laden with the potential to generate moral panic in the society. It explored the question of whether media coverage has created moral panics among Kenyan audience in its coverage of terrorist attacks in the past one year. The findings of this study will hopefully be the foundation for discussions on the ethical and professional principles when covering terrorism in the journalism profession. Responsible journalism in the coverage of critical issues like terrorism is premised on the notion that columnist's grasp that their activities influence everyone around them.

It will be a pioneer study linking media coverage and moral panic specifically in print media studies in Kenya. The recommendation of this study will help journalists to understand the critical issues related to effects of their media coverage of terrorism and the resulting consequences.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The study focused on three newspapers for a period of one year. It sampled stories related to terrorism especially on key variables like news headlines, commentaries and opinions. The limitation of the study was the constraints of funds.



## 1.8 Definitions of Operation Terms

- Al-Shabaab:** Al-Shabaab is a jihadi insurgent group active in Somalia and which has recently engaged in terrorism activities in Kenya.
- Deviance:** This term connotes odd or unacceptable behavior with regards to terrorism, but in the sociological sense of the word, deviance is simply any violation of society's norms.
- Moral Panics:** This is an exaggerated response to a type of behavior that is seen as a social problem. In this study it refers to the exaggerated media coverage of controversial issues and the consequent social reaction as a result of activities of particular groups and/ or individuals (*Adopted from Cohen, 1972*).
- Metaphors:** Metaphor is regarded as a tool through which something is regarded as a representative of another. The kind of metaphors regarded in this study is one where they are used as tools for understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (*Adopted from Lakoff & Johnson, 1980*).
- Nyumba Kumi:** A government initiative that has encouraged spy-like activities among Kenyans living in close proximity. The objective is to report any suspicious activities to the authorities. Started when terrorism activities began to increase in the year 2003.
- Terrorism:** The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of prohibited violence to instill fear with the intention to coerce governments or societies in the pursuit of political, religious, or ideological goals. (*Adopted from Pavlov, 2000*).
- Stereotypes:** Oversimplified attitude by people toward those outside their own experience. They are a result of incomplete or distorted information accepted as fact without question.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Overview**

The growing threat posed by terrorism around the world has engendered serious debates particularly about its representation in the media. While there are arguments that the media plays a critical role in the way society understands and relates with terrorism, it is critical to critically examine how the representation of terrorism in the media causes fear and anxiety in society. Moral panics (Cohen, 2002) have, for example, defined the kind of concern that society feels due to threats posed by the threatening behaviour of certain members of society often labeled dangerous, villains and terrorists. This chapter thus examines literature related to media representation of various phenomena, particularly the risks and threats associated with terrorism. The chapter places such arguments within the ambit of moral panics, arguing that moral entrepreneurs, particularly the media but also the clergy, the police and other 'right thinking' members of society (cf. Cohen, 2002; Young 1971) have amplified issues related to threats facing modern society. The chapter also examines issues of media framing (McCombs, 2005) because the media often focus on certain issues that may contribute to moral panics.

#### **2.2 Defining moral panic and its relation to media coverage**

The term moral panic has been used by different scholars in communications research on media effects. Cohen defines moral panic as an overstated rejoinder to conduct that is viewed as a social issue (Cohen, 2002). Obviously, the term alludes to a misrepresented response with respect to the media and additionally other social foundations. Moreover, this over-response intensifies the first concern. Such intensification of the issue is mostly sensationalised and exaggerated by media reports.

In his analysis, Courtauld (2014) states that the media plays an important role in agenda setting with regards to crime and deviance. McCombs refers to agenda setting as media's influence over issues thought about by people (McCombs, 2005). The media personnel are usually selective in the incidents that they choose to report on or ignore (Courtauld, 2014). Agenda setting and framing influence what people choose to perceive in relation to crime and deviance

in society. (Courtauld, 2014). The arguments of Courtauld may be very reflective of the situation in Kenyan media environment where feedback from opinion and commentaries section confirm that media representation influences what people believe about terrorism regardless of whether these impressions are true or not. According to a research study by the Media Council of Kenya titled 'Deconstructing Terror' (2014), one of such misrepresentations has been that the people of Somali origin have always been the major perpetrator of acts of terrorism. This has been proven otherwise by some people of Kenyan origin who have been implicated and charged on accounts of terrorist activities.

Cohen while studying the case of the Mods and Rockers realised that very often crime and terrorist activities are of a small magnitude and relatively trivial but have been reported in a somewhat sensationalised form in the media. He therefore observes that this is where moral panics set in. Cohen explains that at least five sets of social actors are involved in a moral panic which he names as; folk devils, rules or law enforcers, the media, politicians, and the public (Cohen, 1972).

He observes that for a moral panic to occur someone or something has to be defined as a threat to values or interests within a given society. The media is involved when such a threat is then depicted in an easily recognisable form and this is dependent on how it packages information about such a group (Cohen, 1980). Evidently, this has happened in Kenya with regards to terrorist attacks. Through media reporting and hype, there has been a rapid buildup of public concern on issues of terrorism. Consequently, there has been serious concerns and response from security authorities, political leaders, and government administrators and even opinion makers. As postulated by Cohen, the evidence has been clear in the Kenyan context. Terrorism has been defined as an attack on our territorial integrity with the assumption that such attacks are planned from Somalia and other neighbouring regions.

The media remains very influential in the way people construct realities. The media has used moral panics to define and distort societal challenges (Stuart, 1978). For instance, a few decades ago, the media in the United States presented mugging as a new and rising

phenomenon contrary to the fact that such crime was not new; only that the label was new (Krinsky, 2001).

While examining the work of Cohen Bonn (2010) concluded that overstated news coverage transforms what Cohen terms the folk devils into a much more threatening phenomenon to society than they really are. He argues that moral panics are caused by public concern and anxiety over the folk devils (Bonn, 2010). In extrapolating this, the impact of a moral panic can be magnified by the press, pressure groups, politicians, police and public opinion.

### **2.3 Identifying features of moral panics in media coverage**

Moral panics like any social phenomenon have significant identifying features. Jewkes (2004) agrees with Cohen (2002) that the recent past in Kenya's history has been marked by increased terrorist activities. This has consequently intensified media coverage around the issue. Jewkes' arguments seem indeed true in the context of terrorism in Kenya. With the kind of headlines and stories that the Kenyan media are framing and highlighting regarding terrorism, stereotypes are gradually formed.

The media rouses public fear over certain social challenges and also assist in constructing those problems. They create social problems like moral panics by making non-issues issues and consequently creating moral panics. They do this through presenting them dramatically and devastatingly, and mostly suddenly (Young, 2009). It is therefore comfortable to conclude based on the discussion of the above scholars that the media are often the site of moral panics because of the sensational way they present issues, particularly those concerning deviant cultures.

## **2.4 Construction of moral panics and factors informing moral panics**

Hall et al. (1978) and Critcher (2009) argue that the media obtain their information from those in powerful and authoritative positions. These are the main definers of social reality, including moral panics. The media does this by amplifying supposed dangers to the prevailing social order to eradicate those threats.

Volatility and disproportionality are the two important features in the construction of moral panics. Volatility offers that the agitation is short-lived, while disproportionality explains the perception that the threat is more than is actually realistic (Rowe (2009)).

Courtauld (2014) argues that the media has influence over what is published for public consumption. He says that they make news worthy of attention by dramatising occurrences. He says that editors and journalists utilise news values to determine stories worth publishing. The choice of stories and the angles in which they are published are crucial in determining sensationalism that defines moral panics especially around the issues of terrorism.

There are many ways in which the media can stimulate this. In Kenya, terrorist attacks do not happen very often, while attribution of terrorism has been known in specific areas of the country, international media reports have often labeled Kenya as an unsafe haven and tourist destination. This has been done without clearly pointing out the areas where such attacks have been identified. This amounts to exaggerated over-reaction. Very often folk devil can be identified as a threat to society's values. The media has sometimes been known to reflect a group in a very negative, exaggerated and stereotypical manner and such has often resulted in moral panics. With such media projections, some of the top leaders of the society have been known to rise through the same media platforms to condemn and criticise such wayward behaviors. The media has sometimes been known to reflect a group in a very negative, exaggerated and stereotypical manner and such has often resulted in deviant activities that the media has brought out create fear about them among the public. Journalists who covered the Mods and Rockers 1964 fight in the holiday resort of Clacton exaggerated the incident though the fight was neither serious nor noteworthy. The result was that 24 youths were arrested.

Journalists who covered the incident overstated and distorted the truth which was projected to the audience as a result (Cohen, 2002).

According to Rohloff (2011), moral panics often happen where moral boundaries are clear; where there are existing moral values. Hence, what may amount to moral panic in Kenya may not be similarly so in another country or context (Rohloff, 2008).

## **2. 5 Characteristics of moral panics**

Bonn (2010) argues that moral panics have three distinguishing characteristics. He notes the focus on the behavior of certain individuals or groups, whether real or imagined. Such behaviors are those negatively perceived by the society as unacceptable and inappropriate.

The media accomplishes moral panics when it strips the ‘folk devils’ of all form of positive attributes and applies negative ones instead. Such negative projections are taken up by the society. Secondly, Bonn highlights that there is a disconnect between the condition that raises the moral panics and the objectivity of the threats that are being fronted by the media. In most instances the threat is less perceived because of how it is presented in the media and also by the authorities. The media picks up the narrative of the authorities (Bonn, 2010). Positive policies have sometimes resulted in moral panics. Some of those policies are well meaning and have good intentions for the society. This happens even in advanced democracies like the Western countries (McRobbie & Thornton, 2010).

From the arguments of McRobbie & Thornton (2010), it is clear that those who hold power may pass legislations that are punitive and irresponsible and may cause moral panics. Many of such legislations are as a result of public outcry to remedy a specific societal ill and is raised as a matter of public concern. Such legislative reaction has been witnessed in Kenya in the form of the Security Laws (amendment) Act 2014. Very often some of the human rights principles have been breached following the formulation of some legislation targeting war on terrorism. Such legislations are also in breach of certain rights and freedoms that are guaranteed by the constitution as evidenced in the Kenyan case. This is evidenced by the fact

that such laws were contested in the Kenyan courts. The issue however is that the root cause of the initial panic is ignored, while media coverage focuses on the problem.

Moral frenzies, as Critcher (2009) states, have three measurements, the first being that they are identifiable to a specific process and action in the society. The moral standards are used to define whether an issues has the potential to create moral panics of not. The society has its definition of what it considered moral boundaries. Secondly, he argues that moral boundaries of the society affect any discourse on the issue of moral panics. Therefore, what is considered moral panics in the United States may not be moral panics in Kenya because of societal values and how people perceive behaviors and moral standards (Critcher, 2009).

## **2.6 Terrorism and resultant moral panics**

In his study, Hunt (1997) argues that there are two additional factors that can be said to characterise moral panic. The first is that folk devils are created through media and the second is that expectations of imminent disaster are always looming in people's minds. The media creates and projects the folk devils and they are not necessarily unique beings. The folk devils are people who are deviant and defy the moral establishments of the society. They are always found to be doing wrong and their actions are considered wrong by the society. Hunt argues that the wrongdoing is inevitably determined based on the moral standards prevalent in the society. The drama of moral panic emerges in the development of disaster mentality. Various elements characterise the disaster mentality as an element of moral panics and include the following; prediction of dooms and constant overreaction to institutional and societies diversities, threats and rumors. Most of them are often false, harmless and mass delusions that are projected through the media (Hunt, 1997).

Therefore, the propagation of the issues of terrorism as one of the principle cause of terrorism is nor developed, established or created by the media. But the media through its reporting and news value analysis amplifies it to the level that the society reacts to it. What is key with the issue of moral panics is the disproportionate degree of public concern over the issue and the behavior itself. There is often too much overreaction to the media coverage. The variance

between the problems it poses or the conditions it creates are different from the reality of the threat (Grattan, 2010).

As it relates to role of media in regards to terrorism, the greater the danger, harm and instability the incident causes, the greater the concerns and the greater the accompanying moral panic (Burns & Crawford, 1999). Sometimes the media uses phrases and terminologies that serve to increase moral panic. Often, such terms are conjured in the heat of newsroom reporting without careful thought of its implications.

Entman (2004) observes that in current society, what we term as moral panic has been identified with Islamic fundamentalists and a bunch of radicalised Muslim youth who are now christened 'home-grown' terrorists. Cohen asserts that in the context of global terrorism that we are witnessing today, moral panics have been seen and increased in our reaction to occurrences in the streets from those who are considered as folk devils (Entman, 2004).

Grattan (2010), commenting on moral panic in the British society, says the fact that some young Muslims have joined the ranks of terrorists is a cause of moral panics in itself. The thought that the enemy is now within them. It is not the rise of military group that brings about this moral panics. (Grattan, 2010). In Kenya, following persistent terrorist attacks, the government security machinery has come up with several initiatives to enhance security due to terrorists' threats. Similar to the Terrorism Information and Prevention System (TIPS), the *Nyumba Kumi* initiative has encouraged spy-like activities among Kenyans living in close proximity. The objective is to report any suspicious activities to the authorities.

There are two roles that the media play in creation of moral panics. The first is that it participates in the construction of moral panics around them through the amplification process. Various platforms and the power of agenda setting is enough to ensure that moral panics are in the realms of the society. Secondly is that the media then embark upon a 'moral crusade' against the identified 'folk devils' calling out for the society to watch out against those who have been identified as dangerous to the morals of the society. 'Examples abound especially with the tabloid newspapers in the UK when it considers gypsies and asylum-



seekers as people who are dangerous and who engage in negative unsociable behavior. In effect the media demonises those groups when they target them. Those tabloids produce a reaction by other groups that creates 'us' verses 'them' mentality or when other groups are viewed as 'not one of us' or 'other' groups. Young (200) notes that there may be an ideological dimension to moral panics through the role played by members of the society including key interest groups and elites. Considering that moral panics has been used positively in some societies, it indeed comes out as one of the ways in which media effects has been used to achieve an elitist role in the society. As per Miller and Reilly (1994), moral frenzies have been utilised to change general supposition on some instances even in mature democracies where other means have failed and thus act as a form of 'ideological social control' method.

### **2.7 Terrorism as a source of moral panic**

The terrorism scare that is witnessed globally is a classic example of what constitutes moral panic. This has been happening for several centuries now as considered in recent history. As Davies (2010) notes, moral panics concept is about people feeling threatened by an enemy they consider to be internal. Such an enemy is thought to be in the midst of the society but hidden and harboring incognito status. The enemy is often viewed to be hidden deep within their society. The secret groups of foreign terrorists who come from other countries and are said to be able to kill without mercy or guilt fit into this categorisation. (Davies, 2010). The same can be said of home-grown terror groups or individuals who have developed through radicalisation. The threat can even be entirely imaginary in some cases of moral panics and the role of the media in this space is evident and unfortunately present. It is true that some moral panics come about merely as a result of imagined threats or scares.

### **2.8 Moral entrepreneurs and control culture**

In looking at the works of Cohen, Critcher (2008) says that Cohen identifies four sets of agents as crucial to the development of a moral panic: These agents are the public, the media, moral entrepreneurs and the control culture. Most important are the mass media. In his study, Critcher (2008) argues that the media are particularly crucial in informing developmental stages and patterns as related to social reaction related to issues like terrorism. They do so by producing 'coded images' of deviance and the deviants and publishing them through their

platforms and eventually to their audience who may be vulnerable and unable to discern the extent and magnitude of such coverage. Three stages and procedures are included, the first is an embellishment and twisting through sensational mechanisms of news formulation. The second is prediction of doom and possibility of facing the dire consequences if there is failure to act; and the last one is the symbolisation where the folk devils are considered as dangerous people in the society.

Based on the arguments of Critcher, the second group of elements who are responsible for creating moral panics are the 'moral entrepreneurs'. These are individuals and groups who campaign to eradicate immoral or threatening behavior in the society. They consider themselves champions of morality in the society. He says that Cohen is exceptionally intrigued by their inspirations and strategies.

The third gathering is what is considered societal control culture. This groups includes, people who exercise institutional power like the police and the courts system including the local and national politicians. Concern is diffused from the local to the national level. This makes for the argument of Conrad and Schneider (1992) who consider moral entrepreneurs as crusaders for the formation of new rules. Those rules do not exist in a vacuum but must be accepted and considered by the public before they are enforced. Political, medical, legal, moral, or religious foundations are the foundation of moral crusades, which they use to advance their cause, but not all social systems are created equal. The success of moral campaigns depends very heavily on who is promoting it.

The above apply to this study in that terrorism or terrorists have been branded as dangerous people and who should be stopped from their heinous acts in all ways possible. Hence by highlighting activities of terrorists the media provide the moral entrepreneurs with information that they (the moral entrepreneurs) use as guides to counter terrorist activities.

## **2.9 Theoretical framework**

### **2.9.1 Framing**

According to McCombs (2005), surrounding alludes to the way an ‘issue is displayed to general society or edge it is given by the news media’. Bonn (2010) contends that encircling includes bringing audience attention to specific aspects of an issues while at the same time minimising and ignoring other elements in the articles. By so doing, the media give meaning to issues. This is the same context that this study will apply in assessing media coverage of terrorism in Kenya and its impact.

Cognitive psychology and anthropology are some of the fields that can be considered to have been the origin of framing. The framing ideology has since then been adopted in other fields (McCombs, 2005). News content is determined on the basis of news values. Consequently, some events are covered while others are ignored. According to Tuchman (1978), this can be compared to the case of a photographer who chooses which lens to take which photo and which affects a photograph. The journalists similarly choose news frame in a way that eventually affects the way reader’s views and understand a story angle and frame. Tuchman (1978) detects that routine procedures and the second is on organisational constraints.

### **2.9.2 Priming**

The concept of priming is borrowed from cognitive psychology. It means that a prior stimulus affects how a subsequent response is processed (Scheufele, 2000). Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder are the pioneers of the concept of priming and has been adopted by communication researchers. Priming holds that human beings act based on the ideas and conceptions that is prior stored in their memory. This happens courtesy of the media. Hence moral panics occur because of the basic perceptions that are created through the media.

According to (Perse, 2001) the significance of a story grows with constant repetition as the public begin to adopt belief in its importance. This is worsened when a piece of information is negatively repeated and is considered negative publicity. This gives the media power to set the agenda and very often to cause moral panics.

Agenda setting majorly highlights or shapes an issue as presented by the media. Priming and framing are very important concepts in media effects. Priming explains how information picked from the media and stored in the human mind affects people's decisions.

The relevance of priming theory is therefore very important in understanding moral panics. Media affect the judgment or associated thoughts caused by the mental relationships created inside the memory (McNamara, 1992).

### **2.9.3 Agenda setting**

According to McCombs & Shaw (1972) agenda setting is the influence that the media has when it shapes not what people think but what they think about. Based on the deliberations of McCombs & Shaw (1972), there are two basic assumptions that have been used by many media and communications scholars in their study of media effects. The first assumption is that the press and the media shape and filter reality rather than reflecting it. This means that the media does not have a reality of its own but relies on other components to shape and filter it. The second assumption is that the media focuses on a few actors, subjects and issues in a way that lead the public to think that those are the most prioritised and therefore important issues worth thinking about. This study will use agenda-setting in its arguments to attempt and discover the part of the media in instigating moral panics especially in terms of its ultimately pervasive and influential role.

### **Summary**

This chapter explicitly looks at the various works that have been done in the study of media and moral panics. In conducting the literature review, I have undertaken a critical analysis of published body of knowledge on the subject. I have done this through providing summaries and comparing previous research studies and theoretical pieces on the topic. I have also looked at the similarities and differences of the works in terms of claims, philosophies, methodologies, interpretation of evidence as well as their reliability. Through this, I have been able to identify gaps in the study of this subject, which I will endeavour to study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Overview**

This section gives a point by point methodology of the strategies utilised as a part of this study. It plots the plan, the target population, sampling procedure, type of instrument used, validation procedure, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques.

#### **3.2 The Study Design**

Research design is the plan, blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data in research (Labaree, 2009). According to Larry (2001), research design involves the definition of the research methodology, the data collection method, the data analysis method and data presentation methodology. The plan is the outline of the research scheme on which the researcher is to work. The research design used in this study was both qualitative and quantitative. This research used both content analysis and discourse analysis. Key informant interviews (see appendix II) were undertaken with sampled respondents who are experts in the field of media and also in security as well as moral entrepreneurs. Purposive sampling was used for both discourse analysis and content analysis methodologies. The study used mixed (qualitative and quantitative) approaches of data analysis. The data is presented in form of graphs and charts and elaborate descriptive analysis with various examples.

#### **3.3 Research Methodology**

The study used content analysis and discourse analysis. According to Larry (2001), content analysis denotes a general set of techniques useful for analysing and understanding collections of text. Basic talk investigation is marked with contemplating and examining composed and talked writings to uncover the rambling wellsprings of predominance, disparity predisposition and power. It looks at how these verbose sources are kept up and imitated inside particular social, political and authentic settings (Bednarek, 2006a).

This study examined discourse in the print media in Kenya over a period of one year. Analysis of media discourse refers to the examination of interactions that take place through a print

platform. Discourse analysis is often used for approaches concerned with examining participants' linguistic selections and how these are connected to different representations of the social world (Bednarek, 2006a). Texts, language and communication are always considered in discourse analysis because they both shape and are informed by wider processes within society.

The study used key persons' interviews to provide an understanding of the issues that may not have been reflected during the content and discourse analysis. The persons sampled for the interviews included editors, security personnel, senior reporters and anti-terrorism lobbyists.

### **3.4 Why Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis**

Content analysis and discourse analysis have much strength particularly for this study because they involve the abilities to use data that can be backdated. Content investigation strategies can be utilised to track messages after some time, to survey changes. The discourse analysis methodology is used to collect and analyse the set of selected media texts, to achieve the objectives set out in this study.

#### **3.4.1 Discourse Analysis**

As indicated by Terre Blache and Durrheim (1999), writers regularly look for, either unequivocally or verifiably, to do various things at the same time: spur the peruser to act especially or even propel a specific belief system. It is normal that discussion or examination of such messages can give fitting prompts to the objectives of the makers and their ideological proclamation. Appropriately, talk examination is utilised in this study to uncover how the dialect is utilised to achieve different intentional effects by the authors of media texts with regards to moral panics.

#### **3.4.2 Discourse Analytical Techniques – Six Stages**

Discourse analysis involves a heavenly body of various methodologies. There are hence no standard ways to deal with analysing writings, but rather an assortment of methods for how to continue. As van Dijk (2001) argues, there is no clear consensus as to how to analyse discourses (texts) as different texts portray distinct meanings. This study adopted a talk

examination approach that fuses divergent scientific devices in light of not at all like perspectives with the point of conveying new bits of knowledge to investigation; illustration on various creators added field of talk investigation writings.

The six stages of the discourse analysis shall be:

- i. Articles descriptive analysis
- ii. Thematic analysis
- iii. Social actors
- iv. Language and rhetoric
- v. Framing, and
- vi. Ideological standpoints

First, the study looked at the article descriptive analysis. This stage took a gander at some surface components of the content including: the name of production, date of distribution and the prominence of article among other variables. Secondly, thematic analysis was done and involved the identification of the various sub-topics in the context of the study, the courses in which they are built in the content in relation to terrorism and moral panics. This stage was followed by one that involved distinguishing key performing artists, and additionally how they are spoken to in the content. As Fairclough (1995b) calls attention to, texts play an important role in signifying social actors and in describing their characteristics and relations. They normally work as “voices” or hotspots creator of the content. With regards to this theory, different performing artists have filled in as hotspots for the writer of the article. In media talk, some social on-screen characters may possess dominant perspectives over others regarding forming the significance in the content.

The analysis of language and rhetoric was done as the fourth stage and touched upon particular parts of dialect. It included taking a look at the composition style (i.e. casual, conversational) and the phrasing utilised for speaking to a specific reality which for this situation is terrorism. Rhetoric denotes the effective use of language. It is concerned with persuasive moves through such devices as metaphors, hyperbolic enhancements, quoting credible sources, and other rhetorical figures employed in the text by journalists. In this section of the examination, both writers' and other social operators' developments are secured.

The fifth stage of analysis looked at confining as a verbose technique. Rambling systems are, as indicated by Carvalho (2000), types of wide control of realism, in the feeling of the creator or writer mediating on such an assurance purposeful impacts, pretty much cognizant.

Confining involves sorting out talk as indicated by a specific point of view, which is typically explained in the creator's endeavor to pick a specific edge of the perplexing reality (Carvalho 2000). Encircling is one of the principle attributes of talk. It is natural to the development of writings. In the creation of writings, confining includes organisation – the game plan of realities, feelings, and esteem judgments with a specific end goal to deliver a specific importance - and determination - a practice of consideration and rejection of these components (Carvalho 2000).

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) recognise different 'confining gadgets', which 'propose how to consider the issue', and diverse 'thinking gadgets' which 'legitimise what ought to be done about it'. The encircling gadgets incorporate allegories, catchphrases and portrayals, and the thinking gadgets include outcomes and engages moral guideline. The frames that were considered in this study will include: Responsibility frame, consequence frame, cause frame and conflict frame. Lastly, the ideology is an inherent part of texts and defines how information is packaged in terms of the ideological viewpoints. Ideological standpoints significantly influence the designs; the basic the route in which the content is figured and its importance is built in a large portion of its measurements. The choice and representation of articles, on-screen characters, the dialect, and the rambling techniques utilised in a content regarding terrorism are considered in this analysis.

### **3.5 Target Population**

The target population for this research consisted of one year (2015) articles in three top daily newspapers (*The Daily Nation*, *The Standard* and *The Star*). The top newspapers were selected based on the annual Ipsos audience research findings (2015). The one year formed the sampling frame where the study derived a representative sample for both content analysis and



discourse analysis. The target population was 1,080. The study also interviewed 10 key informants.

### **3.6 Sample Design and Procedure**

According to Premi (1998), inspecting is the way toward selecting units (individuals, associations) from a populace so that by examining the example, we may decently sum up results back to the populace from which they were picked. Purposive sampling was used for both content and discourse analysis. The purposive sample was based on the terrorism incidents and subsequent media coverage of those events.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods, Instruments and Procedure**

#### **3.7.1 Data Collection**

This study evaluated and coded the information from the three newspapers. The code sheet was mainly used for the content analysis. The same formed the basis of comparison between the various parameters in the news articles where issues of terrorism have been covered. Some of the variables coded and analysed in the code sheet included:

- i. **Tonality analysis:** Tonality utilises a subjective valuation to define if the content of an article is either favourable or unfavourable towards the subjects and whether such tonality has potential to cause moral panics.
- ii. **Source:** Identifying if the story was solicited- the report was compiled using the subject as part of the story by either direct reference, quotes (direct and indirect) or the story was compiled using a report or other form of reference that is directly linked to the subject e.g. a statement, report, piece of research etc. that is directly linked to the subject. Unsolicited- the report was compiled purely using third party references and did not provide any direct link to the subject for instance reference to an event.
- iii. **Focus on issues:** Is the article issue oriented? Does it focus on terrorism as a major issue?
- iv. **Prominence analysis:** This takes into account six factors: the publication where the article appears, date of appearance, the overall size of the article, the size of headlines, where in the publication it appears and the presence of photography or other artwork. In conducting a classic prominence analysis, each element is allocated a weight that is

factored into an overall score per article. This is the score that determines the prominence of the article.

- v. **Segment / section:** This will determine where the article appears or which section of the publication the story was published; News, Business and Op/Ed (Opinion and Editorials) etc.

### **3.7.2 Data Analysis**

Analysing the data collected involved the use of statistical techniques including frequency analysis and cross tabulations for content analysis. Discourse analysis is a method of analysis in itself and does not require the use of any statistical analysis. The study utilised mixed approaches of data analysis in content analysis; qualitative and quantitative. This provided me with ideal method needed for descriptive explanation. The method assisted me to establish the status of the problem under investigation. I utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse and generate information; this helped in making comparison while qualitative data, statistical summaries will be used to communicate the nature of the information.

### **3.7.3 Data Presentation**

The data is presented in form of diagrams, pie outlines, and reference diagrams and elaborate descriptive analysis with various examples. Some of the data is presented using tables and figures. The study looked at the verbatim comments and statements from the sampled persons who were interviewed during the key informant interviews.

### **3.8 Reliability and Validity of Data**

In research, it is important to check legitimacy and dependability of the apparatuses. The meaning and suitability of the particular implication through the examination scores encompasses cogency (Larry, 2001). Instrument validity is ascertained in a number of ways. Expert validity views of the supervisor was incorporated in the key informant's questionnaire as a pre-test for reliability and validity of the research instruments. This was followed by a pilot study that was conducted among 10 respondents purposively chosen. This comprised journalists (reporters and editors), media regulators and other experts including religious leaders and moral entrepreneurs (anti-terrorism lobby groups).

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

In conducting this study, the researcher interacted with people and institutions in collecting data for the study. Ethical considerations were prioritised in all instances with concerned staff and the materials they provided for the study. I ensured that the respondents who provided the information and materials for the study were adequately informed about the objectives of the study and gave 'knowledgeable consent' for the use of their feedback and expertise in the field of media and security. Upon successful presentation of the project proposal a Field Work Certificate (appendix I) was issued to the researcher from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi. An introductory email with the Questionnaire for Key informants' interviews (appendix II) was sent to the respondents who provided materials for the study. A Certificate of Corrections (appendix III) was issued to the researcher from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi upon effecting suggestions proposed by the university's Board of Examiners following the study defense. A Declaration of Originality Form (appendix IV) and plagiarism results (appendix V) confirm the authenticity and uniqueness of the study and indicate that the researcher duly acknowledged source materials used in the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

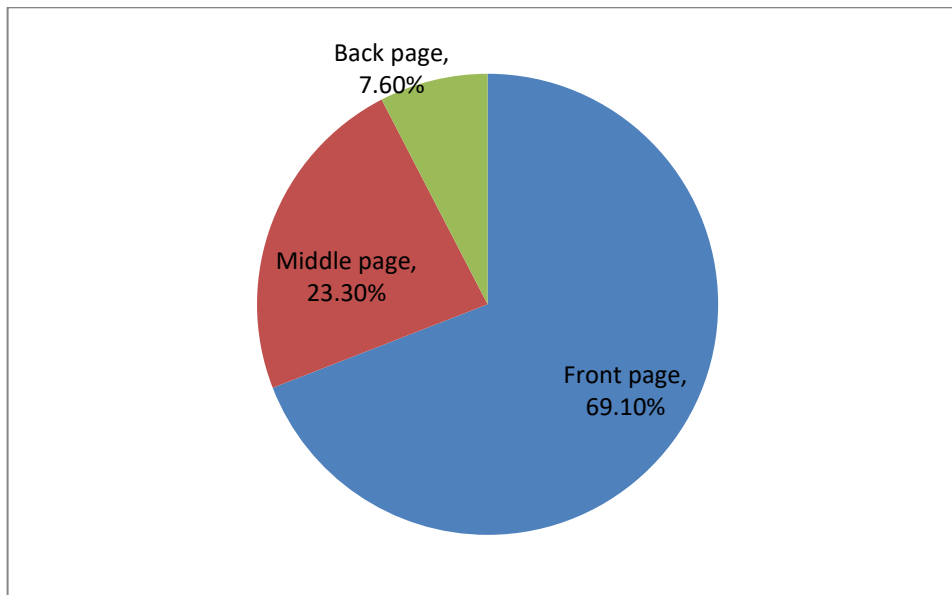
#### 4.1 Overview

The chapter will first look at the nature of articles published on terrorism in the three daily newspapers analysed for the period of one year. It looks at the prominence, space, actors and news sources among other variables analysed through content analysis. It then looks at the use of language, metaphors, phrases and rhetoric in articles on terrorism in print media and their potential to cause moral panics. Finally, the chapter will look at how media coverage of terrorism has contributed to moral panics in Kenya. It will bring out the verbatim comments from respondents on the topic of study.

#### 4.2 Prominence of articles covering terrorism in print media

For this study 45 percent of the articles analysed were from *Daily Nation*, 28 percent were in *The Standard* while 27 percent were from *The Star* newspaper. Prominence was one key area that the study examined and the findings are as below.

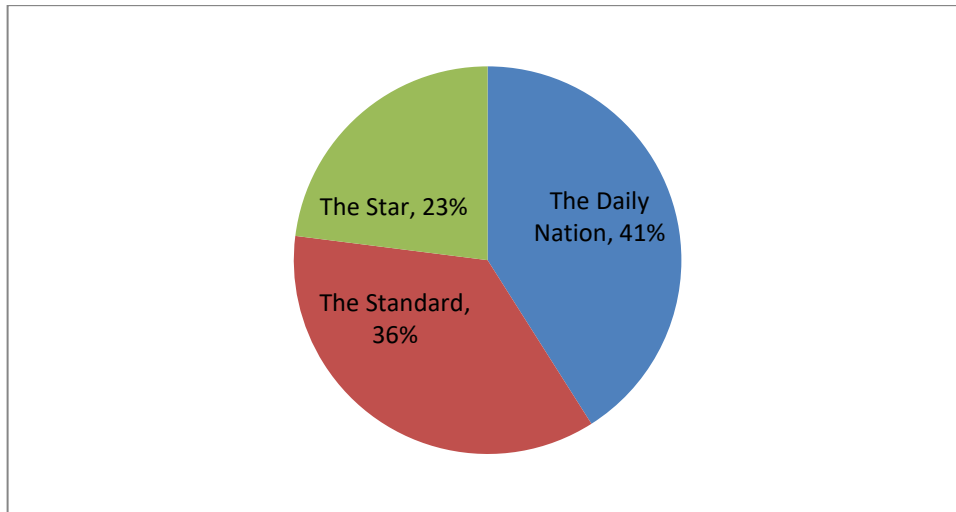
**Figure 4. 1: Prominence accorded to terrorism stories in print media**



(Source: Field survey, 2016)

As shown in **Figure 4.1** above, 69 percent of the stories on terrorism in 2015 were in the front pages, 23 percent in the middle pages while only seven percent were in the back pages. This demonstrates the fact that terrorism stories are given greater prominence; which refers to the page positioning of a story in terms of importance.

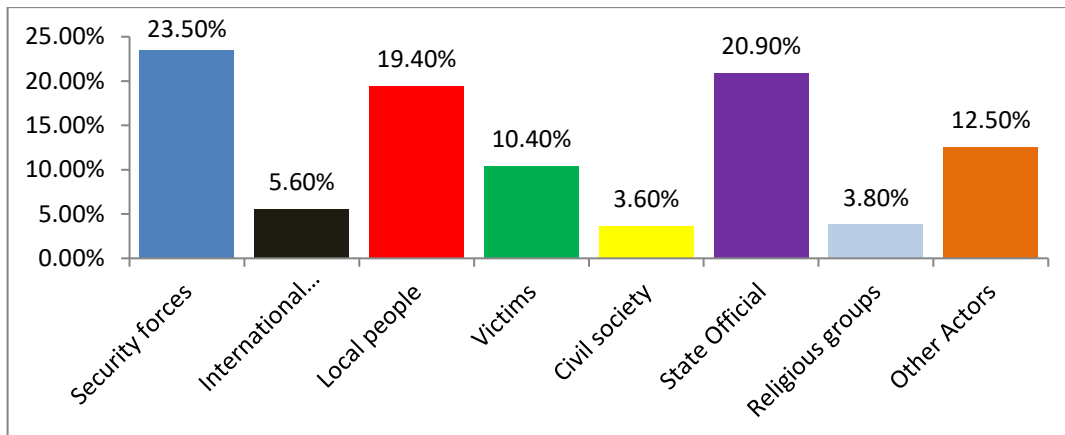
**Figure 4. 2: Space allocation on coverage of terrorism in three print newspaper**



(Source: Field survey, 2016)

**Figure 4.2** shows that *The Standard* and *The Daily Nation* allocated the largest space to discussions on terrorism during the one year period at 5,962 cm<sup>2</sup> and 5,124 cm<sup>2</sup> respectively. The percentage of space allocation by the *Daily Nation* was 41 percent, *The Standard* 37 percent and *The Star* newspaper at 22 percent.

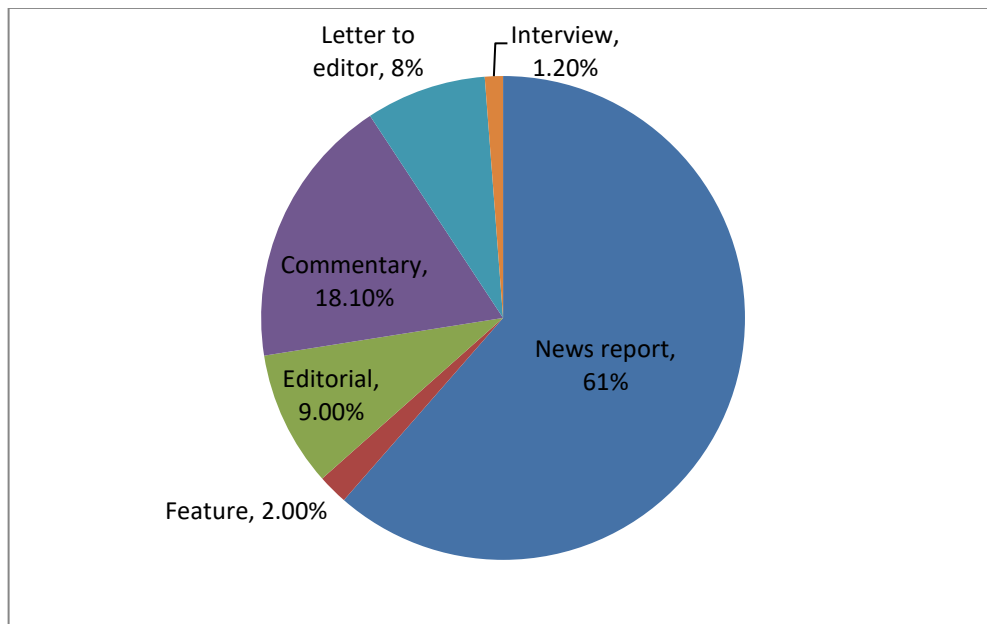
**Figure 4. 3: Actors covered in print media on issues regarding terrorism**



(Source: Field survey, 2016)

The security forces were covered in 23 percent of the articles analysed while State officials were covered in 20 percent as indicated in **Figure 4.3** above. Victims were covered in 10 percent of articles analysed. This indicates that the government (through the coverage of security forces and other State officials) continues to dominate the narratives about terrorism in news media in Kenya. The elite news sources were considered more in the articles on terrorism as compared to local people as shown in the diagram above. The political and social hierarchy of news sources is very critical in defining the weight of issues and the impact of terrorism discussions and newsworthiness in the media.

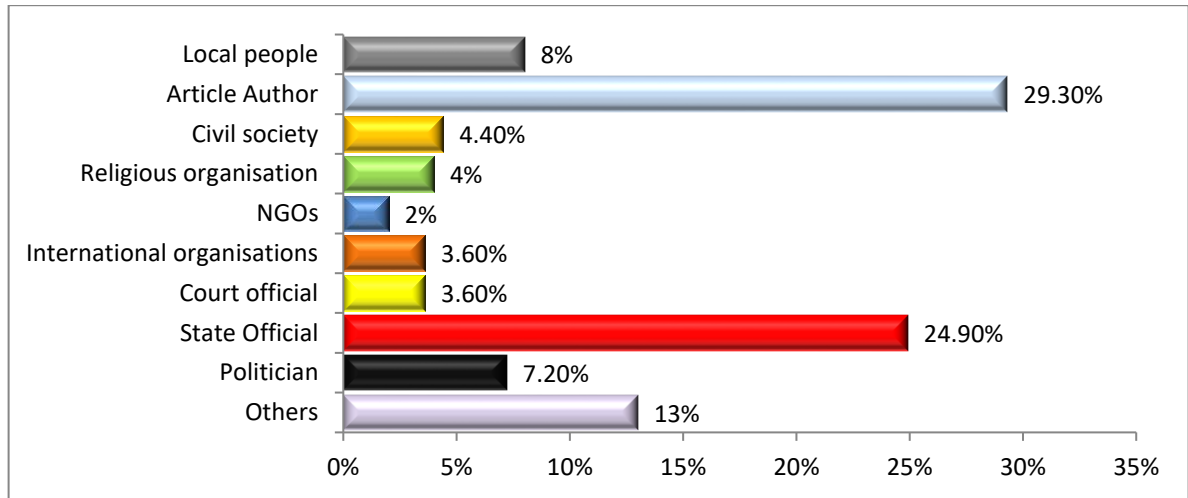
**Figure 4. 4: Sections in print media where terrorism was covered**



*(Source: Field survey, 2016)*

News reports covered issues of terrorism in many of the articles analysed with 61 percent of the stories in the three newspapers analysed as indicated in **Figure 4.4** above. Commentaries formed 18 percent, Editorials nine percent and Letters to the Editor eight percent.

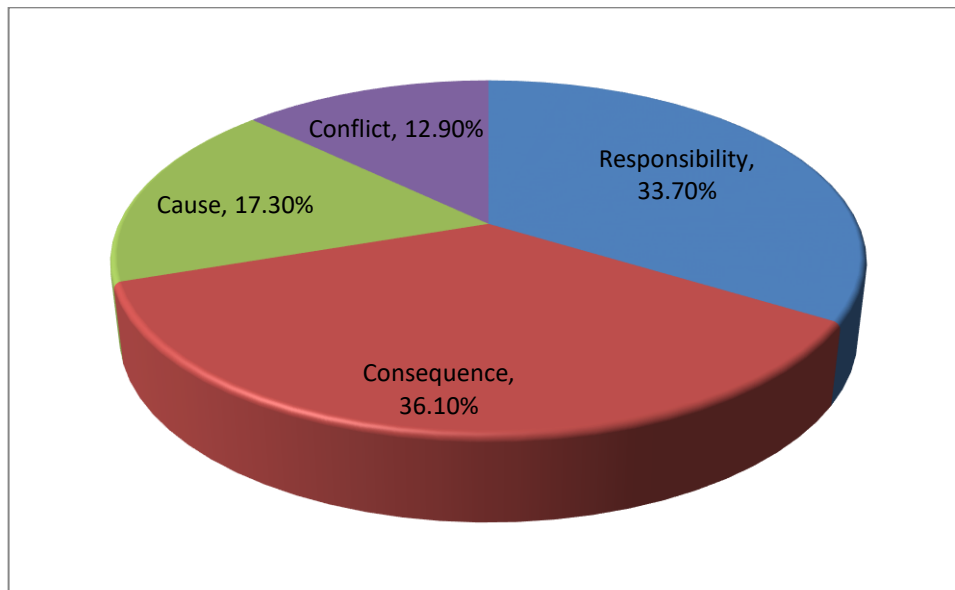
**Figure 4. 5: News sources on stories about terrorism in print media in last one year**



(Source: Field survey, 2016)

**Figure 4.5** above indicates that 29 percent of the articles had the authors as the news sources, either through reporters’ initiatives or opinions and commentaries. This means that the bylines were attributed to reporters and correspondents of the articles. The second news sources were State officials at 24 percent.

**Figure 4. 6: Type of Frame used in the coverage of terrorism in print media**



(Source: Field survey, 2016)

The articles analysed used different types of frames. The consequence frames focused on the effects of terror activities particularly on the victims of terrorism, notably the suffering and damage caused by the actions of terrorists. A good example of a consequence frame story is seen in the *Daily Nation* of 11 November 2015 (p.9) titled *Terrorism wave now threatens to derail Africa's hard-won stability and growth.* The story argued that:

“In Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, the extremist group Boko Haram” has inflicted thousands of casualties with suicide bombings and assaults on civilians. In Kenya, the Somali group Al-Shabaab, has carried out two major attacks as well as many other smaller acts of terrorism. The damage to the sector and, more broadly, to investor confidence will trickle across Kenya’s economy, pushing down output, fiscal revenue, and foreign reserves.

This article outlines some of the consequences that have been witnessed in the Kenyan economy and cites declined output, reduced revenues and dwindling foreign reserves as some of the examples of the effects of terrorism.

The responsibility frame is considered a way of attributing responsibility for cause or solution to either the government or to an individual and group to a particular action related to terrorism (cf. Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). An example of responsibility frame was published in *The Star* newspaper of 6 April 2015 (p. 13) in the story headlined *Muslim leaders slam Garissa varsity attack.* The article provided details of the people responsible for the Garissa University attack. The Garissa University attack happened on 2 April 2015 when heavily armed attackers stormed the institution in the north-eastern Kenyan town of Garissa killing 148 people, mostly students. The attack left another 80 students injured. The attack was attributed to the Somali militant group Al- Shabaab. Four of the attackers were killed during the siege that took anti-terrorism forces 16 hours to end.

A cause frame, according to this study, refers to stories which focused on the triggers and instigators of terror. An example of a story considered as a cause frame was published in *The Standard* newspaper of 9 April 2015 (p. 4). The article was about some of the non-governmental organisations whose accounts were frozen following differences with the State over allegations of sponsoring terrorism. The writer’s argument is that legitimate institutions



cannot be instigators of terrorism especially if they are championing for human rights. According to the story, Randu is reported to have said that “we have been using legal means to champion the rights and concerns of Coast people. We do not keep weapons or kill anybody. How can a group that is not armed be associated with terror?”

The study adopted the definition of Neuman (1992) who indicated that stories categorised under conflict frame are those which reflected acrimony and disagreement among individuals, groups, or organisations. One commentary in the *Daily Nation* of 15 May 2015 (p. 12) considers that terrorism has brought in a new fundamental dimension in the realm of conflict management and community safety not only in Kenya but also in the world.

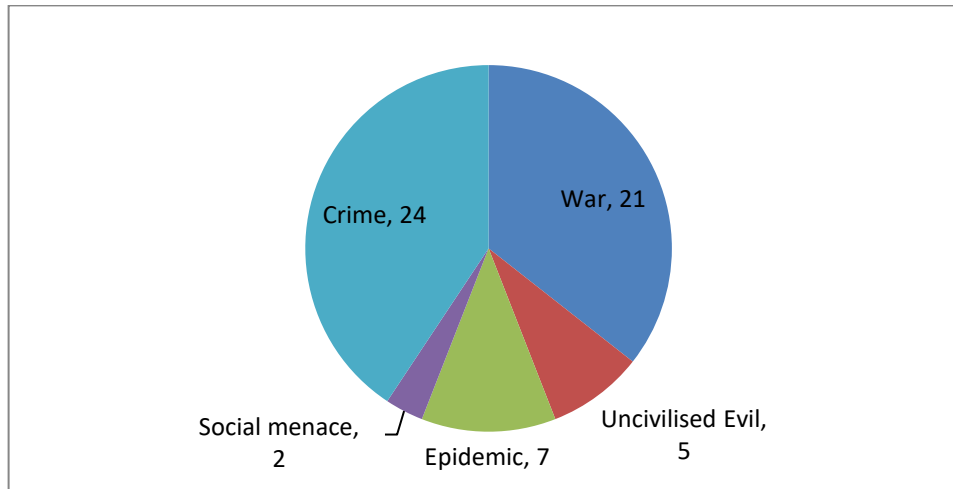
#### **4.3 Moral panics narratives in Kenya**

The second objective of the study was to understand the nature of narratives in the Kenyan media that instigate and sustain moral panics. An article in *The Standard* newspaper on 18 April 2016 (p. 10) argues that “the fear of terrorism is gradually destroying our way of life. For instance, if anything gives a loud bang, there would be pandemonium as people scamper for safety.” The article gives an example of an incident at the University of Nairobi’s Kikuyu campus where a power transformer blew up and the resultant stampede needlessly caused the death of a student and a dozen injuries. The report demonstrates the fact that moral panics have already occurred in sections of our society as is manifested through panicky emergency reaction by the students at the institution.

#### ***Metaphors used to describe terrorism in the Kenyan media***

A metaphor is characterised and regarded as a tool through which something is regarded as a representative of another. The kind of metaphors regarded in this study is one where they are used as tools for understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The study takes note of the arguments of Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 12-15) who explain that ‘metaphors structure the way people think and act, and that the human conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical.’

**Figure 4. 7: Metaphors used by various writers in their articles referring to terrorism**



(Source: Field survey, 2016)

Several metaphors were used by various writers and commentators in their articles to refer to terrorism in a way that makes the interpretation of the same different. Terrorism in some of the articles was regarded as a ‘crime’ and this happened in 24 articles as indicated in **Figure 4.7** above. Some of the labels and words referring to terrorism as a crime include: ‘murderers’, ‘terrorist gang’ ‘crime’ who commit ‘murderous crimes’. In some articles, the aftermath of an attack is likened to a ‘crime scene’, and the casualties of terrorists considered ‘victims’ which is a common terminology to refer to people who survived criminal attacks. Such examples were found in *The Standard* of 4 May 2015 (p. 9) in a report which contended that “the question of whether democratic institutions facilitate or hinder the fight against transnational crimes such as drug trafficking and terrorism has elicited much debate.”

Some articles used ‘war’ as a metaphor for terrorism. This happened in 21 articles. Terrorism as war involved the use of phrases like ‘sieges’ and ‘hideouts’, ‘tactics’, ‘strategy’, ‘win’. The readers can easily associate a large number of things with war and these associations have a potential to cause moral panics especially given the fact that war is not a pleasant occurrence. The response of sending thousands of troops and military personnel to fight terrorism in their strongholds in Somalia exemplifies the consideration of terrorism as war. Some examples

include articles in the *Daily Nation* of 13 July 2015 (p.10) which argued that “we shouldn’t negotiate with terrorism, **[emphasis in original article]** their strategic objectives.”

Seven articles analysed considered terrorism as an epidemic, with comparison to the deadly disease Ebola. The terrorism as disease metaphors was represented in two fronts and included the connotations that either a State is a person and terrorism is a disease that affects the State, or terrorism is a disease that the people committing terrorist attacks themselves have. Terrorism is also referred to as a disease in some articles. An article in *The Star* newspaper of 4 March 2015 (p.3) considered it ‘*wicked plague spreading across Africa (Nigeria, Mali, Kenya)*’. Terrorists are also called, in *The Standard* Newspaper of 16 June 2015 (p. 12), ‘*lunatics*’ hell bent on raining havoc in our neighborhoods. Terrorists are considered ‘*maniacs*’ in an article published in *The Star* newspaper of 3 April 2015 (p. 10) insinuating that they should be killed and quarantined as they do not deserve any form of justice.

Other articles considered terrorism as something uncivilised and evil. Some of the terms used in reference to this included: ‘*wicked*’, ‘*evil*’, ‘*barbaric and uncivilized acts*’, ‘*bigots*’ and ‘*heinous*’. Terrorists are also described as capable of ‘*butchering*’ and ‘*slaying*’ in some articles which connotes uncivilized and evil acts. A good example is the article below that appeared in the *Daily Nation* of 4 June 2015 (p. 7).

The human cost of the **vice and evil [emphasis in original article]** that is terrorism has been felt in virtually every corner of the globe. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy recognises that the promotion and protection of human rights for all and the rule of law is essential to all components of the strategy.

Metaphors like the ones cited from this analysis are important in understanding terrorism and thereby contribute to how to react to it.

#### **4.4 Phrases and clauses used in reporting terrorism**

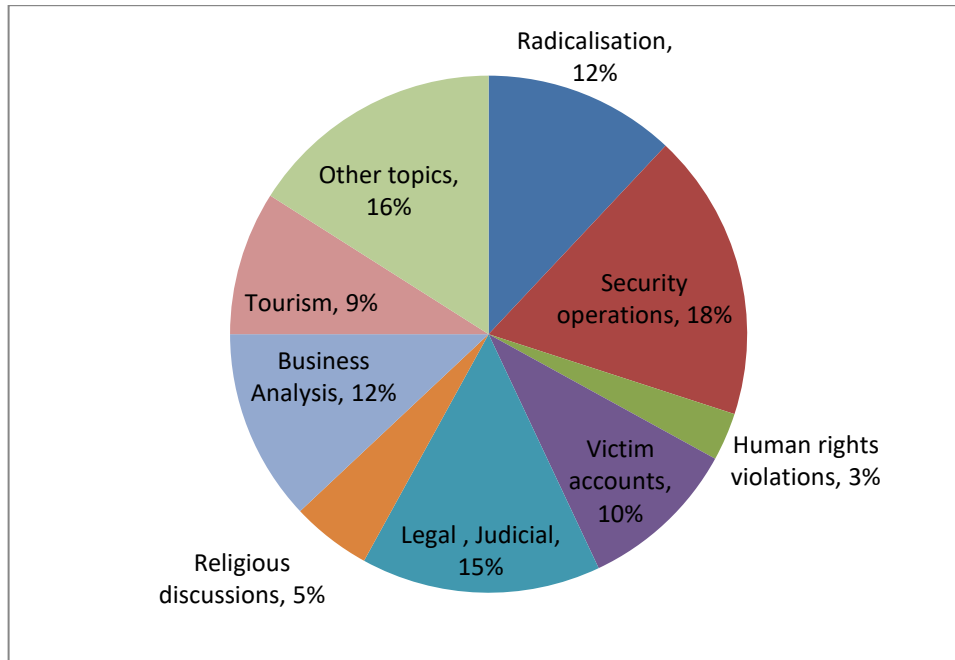
The *Daily Nation* of 21 June 2015 (p. 4) used former US President George Bush words ‘To plot evil and destruction’ when describing terror suspects arrested after the 9/11 attacks. Bush indicated that they were recruited from their own countries and neighborhoods and brought to camps in places like Afghanistan where they were trained on terror tactics. They were then ostensibly sent back to their homes or asked to hide in countries around the world to ‘plot evil and destruction’.

The choice of this phrase by this author to refer to the actions of Al- Shabaab in Kenya creates fear and anxiety given notions that there could be people in society plotting destruction of life and property. This has a potential to create moral panics in our society.

A news report in *The Star* on 12 May 2015 (p.7) newspaper reported that: “Police in Kenya say they foiled a potentially “large-scale” terrorist plot to kill innocent civilians using the biological agent anthrax that was planned by an Islamic State cell of Jihadi medics seeking to recruit university students.” This was said by the police spokesman after the alleged incident happened. *The Star* of 9 November 2015 (p. 6) quoted the Inspector General of Police who indicated that: “The suspects were planning large scale attacks ... with the intention of killing innocent Kenyans.” This emphasis on the killing of innocent Kenyans is very common and may create the potential feeling of fear and anxiety.

The security personnel who were interviewed by *The Standard* (6 April 2015, p. 2.), the *Nation* (5 April 2015, p. 4) and *The Star* (5 April 2015, p. 3.) following the Garissa University attack used common phrases when describing their counter-strategies against terrorism. They described their actions to counter terrorism with the words ‘fight’, ‘dismantling’ and ‘defeating’. Clearly, therefore, the activities of the terrorists were portrayed by the speakers as evil and calculated to create antagonism. The phrase ‘the slaughter of innocents’ created the perception that terrorists are cruel, brutal, heartless, callous and unjust. Such phrases have the potential to create moral panics.

**Figure 4. 8: Thematic areas where terrorism is covered in the media**



(Source: Field survey, 2016)

Coverage of terror was done under various thematic areas during the period of study. **Figure 4.8** above shows that security operations was 18 percent, victims accounted for 10 percent while religious discussions took five percent of the total coverage. Coverage on radicalisation was 12 percent while business analysis in relation to the impact of terrorism took 12 percent.

From the analysis of various articles, the players in the tourism sector experience anxiety and fear when terrorist attacks happen. The report argued that:

A glimpse of Kenya’s encounter with terrorism before and after the Westgate attack depicts a country that has steadily moved from the fringes of terrorism to its epicenter, nothing has been done to remedy the possible loopholes that terrorist may have used in the attacks.

#### **4.5 Other general arguments on terrorism that have potential to cause moral panics**

An article in the *Daily Nation* of 3 January 2015 (p.1) posited that: “As 2015 kicks off, Kenya is facing the unpleasant challenge of containing the threat of terrorism”. The article indicates that Kenya might be in a precarious situation like other African countries threatened by terrorism. There are various groups operating in different African countries. For example,

Boko Haram in Nigeria and Salafist (sometimes called Ansar al-Dine) in Mali. Egypt is being confronted by a growing mutation of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) that is wreaking havoc in Syria and Iraq. This article notes that just like it is in those Western countries, we are living with the possibility of death at any moment. The article in the *Daily Nation* of 3 January 2015 (p.1) notes that “our safety as a country has been greatly compromised with homegrown terrorists and the possibility of surprise attacks by such terrorists presents all with the possibility of death at any moment, we are living in constant fear”.

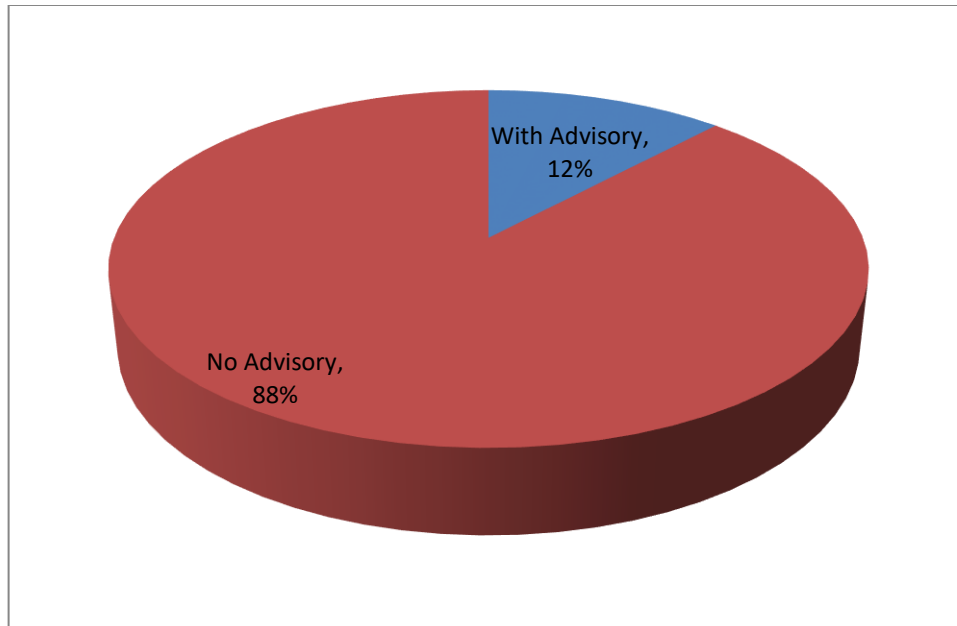
Travel advisories and warnings are potential sources of moral panics in Kenya. Following terror attacks, some Western countries issue warnings to citizens travelling to Kenya. They often advise them to avoid most coastal resorts including the region’s main airport in Mombasa, shopping malls in Nairobi and some sections of the coastal town.

The former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr David Cameron who met President Uhuru Kenyatta on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on 28 September 2015, acknowledged that travel advisories had failed to defeat extremism but had only served to heighten fear and anxiety and had consequently hurt the economy of the Coast region. An article in the *Daily Nation* of 29 September 2015 (p. 4) indicated that:

British Prime Minister David Cameron acknowledged that his government’s travel advisories against Kenya did not do enough to stop terrorism but ended up hurting the economy more and creating unnecessary fear and anxiety. “We as a whole concur that the impact of the advisories are what the fear mongers really need since it overcomes the endeavors to prevent radicals from enticing individuals into their exercises,” Mr Cameron said amid the talks on Monday.

#### **Figure 4. 9: Articles with ethical advisories in three newspapers analysed**

Various Western nations have once in a while issued travel advisories on their citizens who intend to travel to Kenya. Some of the travel advisories are published in the Kenyan media and have sometimes generated fear and anxiety even among the Kenyan public. This can be considered as one of causes of moral panics.



(Source: Field survey, 2016)

Out of the articles analysed in the one-year period 12 percent quoted the effects of advisories by Western countries following terrorist attacks. Very often, such advisories in media articles carried statements which had the potential to create moral panics. One of the articles published by *The Star* newspaper on 29 July 2015 (p.9) quoted a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official Karanja Kibicho saying that travel advisories issued by Western countries have negatively affected Kenyan economy and the fight against terrorism as well. It stated that:

Hostile advisories, likewise issued by France, Australia and America, propelled psychological warfare's cause since they had the impact of making individuals apprehensive', said Karanja Kibicho, from Kenya's outside service. "The difficulties emerging from demonstrations of psychological warfare require coordinated endeavors to battle it and not carrying on in a way that quickens it by bringing about dread and frenzy," he [Kibicho] said in an announcement.

Another article in the *Daily Nation* of 27 February 2015 (p. 3) argues that 'the point is that terrorists will always exploit the *systems in place to hurt us*' [emphasis in original article]. Giving the example of Boko Haram in Nigeria, the article argues that Kenyans are neither safe in churches nor schools in Kenya, citing the example of Garissa University attack. While comparing the situation in Kenya to that of Boko Haram in Nigeria, the author draws parallels between the threats in Kenya and Nigeria. An article in the *Daily Nation* of 27 February 2015

(p. 3) argues that “like Boko Haram in Nigeria, they are now attacking schools and churches, no place is safe anymore” argues the author. “The real issue is what we can do to stop them”.

*The Star* newspaper of 3 March 2015 (p. 6) carried a story where the police raided Camboni Catholic Hall in Gilgil and arrested 31 youths on suspicion of terrorism. One senior police officer indicated that they were not taking chances because an assembled group of people could plot evil especially because some of them were Muslim. The article indicated that:

... [Y]ouths were arrested because many of them were Muslims; a senior police officer said they are "not taking chances". “We received information from people around the areas about a group of suspicious youth meeting and we held them for interrogation.”

Following this article, a commentary in the following day’s newspaper of 4 March 2015 (p. 8) carried a reaction where the author argued that “any suspicious looking person or group of people should be reported to police and we should never shy away from bringing to justice such people who want to destroy our peace and internal security”.

Another article in *The Standard* newspaper on 5 April 2015 (p. 5) quoting the President’s address following the Garissa University attack indicated that radicalisation that breeds terrorism is commonplace and occurs in *madrassas* (Islamic classes), in homes and in mosques with rogue Imams. The article indicates that all the places where we visit and think are safe havens like mosques and homes are no longer safe because of radicalisation.

In some articles, the writers reminded audiences that our children, friends and brothers may be among those recruited into terrorism. In an article in the *Daily Nation* of 6 April 2015 (p.6), one of the Catholic Archbishops is quoted saying:

Al -Shabaab (terrorists) are amongst us. They recruit from us. They are our children, brothers and friends. We have to take responsibility of our security by alerting security agents. You are given something small and you stand watching evil eat into our people. You keep quiet as evil people among us or from outside plan and kill us.



*The Star* newspaper of 8 April 2015 (p.10) carried an article that argues that corruption at our entry points is to blame for the frequent terrorist attacks in Kenya. It states that most foreigners enter the country after getting national identity cards from the government. A story in *The Star* newspaper of 9 April 2016 (p. 5) quotes one Member of Parliament for Webuye West Dan Wanyama saying that “the Garissa University College assault has obviously demonstrated that our adversaries are living among us. It is the obligation of each Kenyan to guarantee their neighborhood is sheltered”.

An article in *The Standard* newspaper of 13 April 2015 (p.12) commented on the manner in which Muslims have been treated in the whole debate about radicalisation and terrorism. The article argues that even the Muslims who are often targets of security forces’ orchestrated machinery are not safe from anxiety. An article in *The Standard* of 13 April 2015 (p.12) indicated that “Muslims are not safe anymore and the fear of being branded radicals, jihadist of Muslim fundamentalist is real among certain religious groups in our country today.”

In *The Standard* of 26 April 2015 (p.8), the author argues that ‘since ‘<sup>1</sup>Operation Usalama Watch’, the terror attacks in Kenya have become chillingly vengeful and personalised. The report pointed out that: “...fear based oppressors have surrendered the utilisation of explosives and rather liked to methodically execute (in short proximity) those that they recognise as adversaries. This happens not only in public places like malls but even in public transport system like in buses as witnessed in the Mandera attacks last year.”

The media has covered incidents where people from specific religious and ethnic groups have been targeted during security operations relating to terrorism. In an article in the *Daily Nation* of 16 May 2016 (p.12), the reporter indicates that:

The ongoing crackdown continues to disproportionately target certain groups of people particularly ethnic Somalis and members of the Muslim faith in the coastal region,” ..... “Numerous people have been killed or disappeared after being arrested by the security agencies without due

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<sup>1</sup> Operation Usalama Watch began following grenade and gun attacks in Mombasa and Nairobi by unknown perpetrators on March 23 and March 31 that killed 12 and injured at least eight. The operation has particularly affected Somalis, ethnic Somali Kenyans, Ethiopians, South Sudanese, and Kenyan Muslim populations in Nairobi.

process in complete contravention of the law, this has caused fear of arrests at any time.

Such indiscriminate and blanket arrest and clampdown on people from specific religious and ethnic groups has the potential to create moral panics among them. They live in constant fear and anxiety. This is especially because fears of being rounded up, arrested and charged for crimes they may not be aware of or participated in are commonplace.

#### **4.6 Language and rhetoric used in articles on terrorism in print media**

An article in *The Star* newspaper of 11 November 2015 (p.7) quotes a Kenyan official in an international terrorism conference stating that the threat of terrorism has permeated every aspect of the global society. While decrying the impact of terrorism in the Kenyan economy like tourism, the officials indicates that terrorism has no other solution except a decisive action, be it military or otherwise. The official gives statistics indicating that roughly a quarter of Al-Shabaab's 7,000-9,000 forces are Kenyan. Many of them were attracted to Al-Shabaab's reportedly high salaries for new recruits compared to the average monthly wage in Kenya. An article that appeared in *The Star* of 11 November 2015 (p.7) argued that "Islamic terrorism is an enemy of the whole world and attacks are happening universally through its organisation, we should either fight them or they will end up causing more deaths in our midst". Moral panics can be created when audiences are filled with the sense that the enemy they are fighting is amongst them.

While giving a talk on terrorism to the students of the University of Nairobi, National Counter Terrorism Centre Director Isaac Ochieng' warned that understudies in foundations of higher learning are being selected into vicious fanatic associations at a disturbing rate. He further stated that there is increased recruitment, training and indoctrination of the youth into terrorism cells. These terror groups are now targeting youths. One of the terror suspects, Mohammed Abdirahim Abdullahi, nicknamed Ababmo by his classmates at the University of Nairobi's Law Faculty's Parklands Campus, was the son of Abdullahi Daqare, the chief of Bulla Jamhuri location in Mandera County. *The Star* of 30 April 2016 (p.4) had an article quoting Ochieng' stating that they have evidence that "some Nairobi University students here in this hall are on the payroll of ISIS in Syria and Iraq."

After the Garissa University attack, the *Daily Nation* of 6 April 2016 (p.4) published a feature which quoted an Africa Inland Church of Kenya (AIC) Presiding Bishop Silas Yego as saying that Christians were fleeing areas prone to terrorist attacks. There have been three attacks in the last two years in which Al-Shabaab has separated hostages according to religious identity and murdered them accordingly. These are the siege at Westgate Shopping Mall on 21 September 2013, the hijacking of a bus travelling from Mandera to Nairobi on 22 November 2014 and the attack on a quarry in Mandera on 2 December 2014. An article in the *Daily Nation* of 6 April 2016 (p.4) quoted Bishop Yego saying that “Christians are being targeted. Look at how many people were killed in Thursday attack, and who are they? We are really a worried lot”.

A commentary published in *The Star* of 8 April 2015 (p. 4) emphasised that terrorist attacks still occur even in Nairobi despite the largest concentration of security forces. The article insinuates that people are vulnerable despite the presence of security personnel.

#### **4.7 Media representation and moral panics**

The third objective of the study was to explore how media coverage of terrorism has contributed to moral panics in Kenya. Nine out of the ten key respondents interviewed for this study agree that media coverage of terrorism has contributed to general public anxiety and concern in Kenya. Many of the respondents cite sensationalisation and dramatisation of news related to terrorism as being culpable of exacerbating anxiety and fear in the country. Secondly, they indicated that the use of gruesome and horrific pictures and footage and the choice of words in describing terrorist activities had also aggravated the fears and anxiety among the public. Thirdly, some respondents argue that the blanket profiling of specific people in society as instigators of terror has created general anxiety that anybody from such community is a terrorist and profiled negatively. Lastly, some respondents felt that since some of the perpetrators of terrorism arrested in the past are Kenyans, the media has focused on this element by making it clear that anyone we encounter (including our neighbours) are potential terrorists.

Consider the views of a number of respondents. One respondent argues that:

The media in Kenya has often dramatised and sensationalised news on terrorism attacks hence creating a 'worrying' situation among Kenyans. By sensationalising the news on terrorism, the media are able to create fear among the public. Many people I am sure still remember the movie-like coverage of the Westgate mall attack with dread and fear. *[Academic, Nairobi, 10 August 2016]*

Another respondent argues that:

The use of horrific pictures, video footage and words has created and heightened panic among Kenyans. A good example is the Westgate mall attack in September 2013 where media displayed bloody images thus causing fear. This happened in Garissa College attack in 2015 and Mpeketoni massacre where some media outlets repeated the same thing. *[Media regulator, Nairobi, 4 August 2016]*

Some respondents argued that it was evident that the media has succeeded in propagating the acts of fear and terror which terrorists aim to achieve in what they do.

A respondent argued that:

The media has sensationalised terrorist attacks and more often than not covered the events in a way that seems to glorify the terrorist and almost amazed by their ability to overpower the authorities; a case would be the Westgate terror attack where the media seemed amazed at the terrorist's ability to sustain the situation for days. The media also highlight terrorists' activities, terrorists and acts of terror which add fuel and play into the terrorists agenda of propagating their hateful acts and 'showing' their achievements off with the media as their tool of communicating. *[Embassy staff, Nairobi, 10 August 2016]*

Another respondent indicates that Kenyan and foreign media promote such publicity, the respondent argues, portrays terror attacks as signifying a widespread and deeper moral issue which makes Kenya to be viewed as generally insecure. According to respondents, the average reader considers terrorism a rampant occurrence in Kenya despite evidence indicating otherwise. One respondent said:

I feel the media, both local and foreign, have overblown the so-called 'terror alert' or terror scare. In the recent past, the media highlighted cases where alleged terrorists masterminded bomb explosions in an Eastleigh-bound public transport minibus, mosques, and even churches, as well as sporadic attacks in northern Kenya. Eastleigh and North Eastern Kenya are generally viewed as terrorist zones or hideouts. The

latter scenario is largely courtesy of the media, between a case of normal thuggery and a sophisticated, premeditated crime like ‘terrorism. [*School teacher, Nairobi, 4 August 2016*]

One respondent raised concerns over the reaction that has been directed to a certain category of people in society. Such groups face massive hostility in addition to the increased fear that they experience because of moral panics in society. The respondent argues that the target group of people like Somalis living in Kenya experience moral panics as well because they are labeled, ostracised and indiscriminately rounded up during security operations because of their identities. A respondent said that:

The local media has delivered news in a way that leads to the victimisation of the people from the Somali ethnicity. After the Westgate attack, the government cracked down on the Somali people and ended up detaining some at the Nyayo National Stadium on suspicion of being in Kenya illegally. This was after the media made the terrorists to be of Somali origin, and vilified the community for harboring the plotters in Eastleigh area. [*NGO worker, Nairobi, 14 July 2016*]

Eight of the ten key respondents indicated that the media has influenced how people view and respond to terrorism in Kenya. One respondent argues that the media in some instances has succeeded in making a certain group of people to be defined and regarded as a threat to societal peace when they engage in terrorism. While supporting the same idea, another respondent argues that:

Media influences, shapes and guides opinion. It is indeed factual to say that media does indeed influence individuals’ perceptions on who a terrorist is which in most cases a Muslim. This blanket coverage of Muslim terrorists makes them a target of hate by the public. [*Embassy staff, Nairobi, 10 August 2016*]

The respondents generally argued that some texts, phrases, pictures in the Kenyan media have the potential to instigate and sustain moral panics in society. They indicated that such narratives were created by the media. Some of the narratives that one respondent alluded to include:

The descriptions and displays of terrorist activities in the media such as killing randomly and reporting by glorifying terrorist actions can lead to moral panics. For instance the news media reposted several images of terrorists shooting people at Westgate mall in the 2013 attack. The media

tend to describe terrorists as smarter than the police hence making the public to panic because a police officer is responsible for protecting life and property. Some of the narratives are creation of media while others are a just reflection of general feeling of the society. [*Civil servant, Nairobi, 2 August 2016*]

Concerning the way, the media has covered the victims, perpetrators and security measures related to terrorism as relates to terrorist attacks, some respondents indicated that the majority of victims and perpetrators have been covered during court cases and arrests staged by security personnel. One respondent states that:

During any terrorist attacks, the media often attempt to get news first but unfortunately the speed at which they go affects the quality of news. However this does not mean they don't report well but I can say they fairly report these entire incidents. It is not easy for the journalists to enter into any terrorism scenes because of their security which is not guaranteed. [*Media Researcher, Nairobi, 13 August 2016*]

Another respondent argues that:

There's broad coverage of the three aspects above, however there is a prolonged coverage of the plight of victims and condemnation of use of brutal force by police in handling perpetrators by human rights institutions (HRIs). The position of the HRIs may not necessarily be shared by the public who are in support of all means by the government to deal with perpetrators of terrorism. [*Civil servant, Nairobi, 2 August 2016*]

Another respondent adds that:

Media does not consider this and instead forces victims to re-live their experiences without consideration to their mental health; media mistrusts any security measures and only focus on the negative and rarely offer solutions. [*Embassy staff, Nairobi, 10 August 2016*]

Respondents indicate that the way the media has framed stories on terrorism has affected their interpretation, perspective and context of understanding of terrorists activities in the last few years.

One of the respondents indicates that:

Absolutely, the news I always get through the media has influenced how I perceive or interpret it because the media besides providing me with news, they magnify the issue and this has changed how I operate in any environment whether in the *matatu*, office or walking in the streets. It has shaped the way I manage my security. [*Citizen, Nairobi, 3 August 2016*]

Another respondent indicates that terror is now part of the Kenyan society:

Yes, I feel that terror is now part of life where you must be aware that wherever you are you could be a victim and that really prevents individuals from being free. Media has given terrorists power to rule society and the constant threat of an attack is always looming instead of society being empowered by being educated on how to prevent an attack, survive an attack. [*Embassy staff, Nairobi, 10 August 2016*]

Many of the respondents – seven out of ten – indicate that images, pictures and videos are most likely to cause moral panics. One respondent argued that the media transmit images using pictures and language that have the potential to evoke moral panic.

One respondent indicates that:

There is a saying, in media parlance, that ‘pictures are worth a thousand words’ and that ‘pictures never lie!’ While it is true that pictures and other images speak volumes, they can be manipulated in this era of ‘Photoshop’ to tell a thousand lies. Here, the media, the police and the wider public are all culpable. You will find pictures of scenes of crime, whether terrorist in nature or mere robbery, finding their way in social media in record time-sometimes even before the next of kin are contacted. [*School teacher, Nairobi, 4 August 2016*]

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the above findings show that the media has clearly contributed to panics in Kenya, given the way it presents stories on terrorism. From the prominence given to stories of terror to space allocation and use of dreadful description of terror activities, it is indeed true that people’s perceptions and reaction towards terrorism have been heavily shaped by the media.

It is also clear that the media reportage of terrorism activities in Kenya has immensely influenced the issuance of travel advisories by Western countries to their nationals; a situation that has had serious repercussions on the economy, especially with dwindling tourist numbers. These findings show that sampled respondents were all in agreement that how media portrays terrorist acts have had an influence of people’s behavior, including making many feel insecure out of the believe that the terrorists live within the society and can strike any time.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Overview**

This chapter presents a summary of findings from the study, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research based on the results of the study. The findings were thematically based on the objectives of the study.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The main objective of this study was to investigate media role and contribution to moral panics in their coverage of terrorism in Kenya. The study found out that the terrorists' use of violence in the Kenyan context has been psychologically traumatic, and socially disruptive as indicated by some of the respondents. Such acts of terror by terrorists have often attracted extensive media coverage; which has been done in a sensational way. The study also found out that media outlets act as informational gatekeepers that magnify acts of deviance, focus and publicise outrage which has eventually promoted moral panics in Kenyan society. Terrorists also exploit media outlets' appetite for dramatised coverage and how it distorts perceptions of risk and danger. Based on these findings, it was evident that the Kenyan media has been used by terrorists to publicise their deeds thus creating anxiety and fear because they facilitate deviancy amplification, a factor that results in moral panics. Thus it was further clear from the findings of the study that without media, terrorism's impact would only affect those in the attack's immediate vicinity.

The study also found out that moral panics have already occurred in sections of our society as is manifested through panicky emergency reaction by students at one of the institutions of higher learning. Such reactions were covered by the media. One such article gave an example of an incident at the University of Nairobi's Kikuyu campus where a power transformer blew up and the resultant stampede needlessly caused the death of a student and several injuries.

The use of metaphors by various authors in print platform was evident when writing on terrorism. It was understood from the study findings that by selecting and organising content



in ways that shape audience assumptions about terrorism, the media has somehow succeeded in propagating the 'fear narrative' characterised by expectation that danger and risk is in our midst every time.

The study also found out that moral panics can be created when audiences are filled with the sense that the enemy they are fighting is within and among them. Destruction among movement authorities, poor coordination with insight organisations and moderate reactions from the security powers are some of the factors that have left Kenya not able to stem the assaults, and which have created the enemy within.

The study also found that media coverage of the reaction that has been exhibited by the public increases people's fear and anxiety and this heightens their experience of moral panics in society. The respondents argued that the target group of people (those thought to be the major perpetrators of terrorism) experienced moral panics as well because they are labeled, ostracised and indiscriminately rounded up during security operations because of their ethnic identities.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Moral panics come about as a result of exaggerated public concern, anger, fear or anxiety over a perceived threat to social order. The media can create social problems; they can present issues of terrorism dramatically and overwhelmingly suddenly. The media can effectively fan public indignation and create panic about a specific deviation from the norms in a society. While one of the media's role in a heterogeneous society like Kenya is to keep up soundness in a general public, moral frenzies executed through the media debilitates the social request of a general public.

Such reaction often dictates how the issue of terrorism has been dealt with in Kenyan context. When the media fails to carefully consider the meaning and implication of their words and headlines, stereotypes can easily be formed if the audience can misconstrue such. While terrorist episodes are typically quantitatively small in frequency and injury, the volume and

tenor or media coverage makes otherwise obscure organisations appear more dangerous thus causing more fear and anxiety.

Moral panics due to excessive media focus has had several impacts including the mobilisation of the police, courts and other agencies of social control. This has resulted in the stigmatisation of some people of Somali decent, which intensifies over time resulting in a process of deviance amplification. The war in Somalia waged by Kenya and other likeminded nations may actually be a result of extensive moral panics that has characterised our contemporary society. Some have been indiscriminately rounded up without reason and accused of perpetrating acts of terror due to media pressure related to moral panics.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

- i. The Media Council of Kenya ought to train journalists and ensure adherence to professional and ethical conduct especially when reporting on issues of terrorism. The findings of this study should hopefully be the foundation for discussions on the ethical and professional principles when covering terrorism. Responsible journalism, in the coverage of critical issues like terrorism, is premised on the presumption that journalists grasp that their activities influence everyone around them.
- ii. Journalists should seek to continuously understand the desire of terrorists which is to promote fear in society. The study has indicated that the media have the potential to assist terrorists by helping them promote fear of terrorism. This happens if journalists fail to understand the motive of terrorists in seeking media attention. This therefore calls for the need for media workers to strive to understand more through such avenues as trainings, exchange programmes and exposure to terrorism as well as safety and security issues.
- iii. Media and security forces should establish mechanisms of interaction where they define relevant terminologies to be used when reporting on terrorism. This will ensure that news sources especially from security forces understand the meaning and impact of what they say during press briefings. The two should constantly engage in regular interactions such as trainings, security and media roundtables and other formal communications exchange programmes.

- iv. A media policy should be put in place to guide on the media and security nexus during terrorist activities. The Media Council of Kenya should then ensure that such policies are reflected in the code of journalism ethics in Kenya. The law making arms of the executive; the National Assembly and Senate should work together with media practitioners and media houses to enact sound legal directions to guide reportage of terrorism.
- v. The security systems should deal with the root causes of conflict with regards to radicalisation. Such efforts will help prevent terrorism and also deal with issues of stereotypes which are often associated with moral panics. Journalists should also consider their language so that they do not perpetrate stereotypes in their articles.

### **5.5 Areas for Further Research**

Further studies need to be undertaken to understand whether specific words used to label some people as ‘folk devils’ has any particular impact on the power relation or potential imbalance between two groups of people in similar ethnic groups in Kenyan context. Another area that needs to be studied is the relationship between media houses and perpetration of moral panics. This would be very interesting especially when looking at Muslim- owned media platforms vis-à-vis other media houses.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Field Work Certificate

  
**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION**

Telegram: Journalism Varsity Nairobi  
Telephone: 254-02-3318262, Ext. 28080, 28061  
Director's Office: 254-02-2314201 (Direct Line)  
Telex: 22095 Fax: 254-02-245566  
Email: [director-soj@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:director-soj@uonbi.ac.ke)

P.O. Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi, GPO  
Kenya

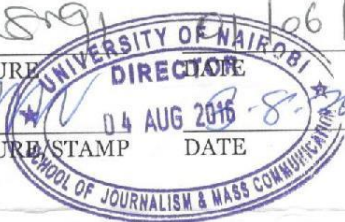
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**REF: CERTIFICATE OF FIELDWORK**

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on 20.06.2016 in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can be allowed to proceed for fieldwork.

Reg. No: K50/74090/2014  
Name: JERRY ABUGA  
Title: TERRORISING THE MASSES: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF MEDIA'S CONSTRUCTION OF FEAR

<u>DR GEORGE NYABUGA</u> SUPERVISOR	<u>W. Nyabuga</u> SIGNATURE	<u>27/6/2016</u> DATE
<u>Dr Samuel Sinigi</u> ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR	<u>S Sinigi</u> SIGNATURE	<u>10/6/2016</u> DATE
<u>Dr. Neate Neate</u> DIRECTOR	<u>[Signature]</u> SIGNATURE	<u>04 AUG 2016</u> DATE



## **Appendix II: Questionnaire for Key informants interviews**

Introduction:

My name is Abuga Jerry Adhoch, a Masters in Communication (Development Communication) studies student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting research into the topic: **A Critical Examination of Media Representation of Terrorism in Kenya.**

I will immensely appreciate your time in responding to the attached questions in the best way you can. Kindly be assured of utmost anonymity and you may not have to provide your name unless you would like to. Please let me know if you need any additional information. Feel free to send me your responses to [jabuga82@gmail.com](mailto:jabuga82@gmail.com) .

Thank you in advance for your generous assistance.

### **Key informants interviews**

*The respondents will be asked questions related to the term “moral panics”. It is important that they understand the word clearly in context of the research. The researcher will help the respondents understand the definition of the term in context of the study so as to gain better perspective and responses from the respondents.*

### **Definition of moral panics:**

*(Read to the respondents)*

A moral panic refers to an exaggerated reaction, from the media, the police or wider public, to the activities of terrorists in a way that leads to an increase in general anxiety and concern about those activities from the public and consumers of such information (Cohen, 2002). It stereotypes people, and creates folk devils, or villains of people that may not even be involved in terror or terrorist activities.

### **Questions:**

1. Do you think the media has covered terrorism in a way that has contributed to general public anxiety and concern in Kenya? If yes, cite some of the recent examples of terrorist attacks that contributed to this.
2. Do you think the media has influenced how we view terrorism and how we respond to it? What are some of the opinions that you personally hold on terrorism that are a result of media consumption?

3. What are some of the narratives in the Kenyan media that you have read watched or heard that have a potential to instigate and sustain moral panics in the society? Do you think such narratives are a creation of the media or just a reflection of general feeling of the society?
4. How has the media covered the victims, perpetrators and security measures related to terrorism as relates to terrorist attacks?
5. Do you think that the way the media has framed stories on terrorism has affected your interpretation, perspective and context of understanding of terrorists activities in the last few years?
6. Which of the following in your opinion has the greatest impact in causing moral panics related to terrorism among the Kenyan public?
  - Images, pictures and videos
  - Words used, descriptions and narratives
  - Reactive measures by security forces covered in the media
  - Focus on attacks only

**Appendix III: Certificate of Corrections**



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES  
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION**

Telegram: Journalism Varsity Nairobi  
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Director's Office: 254-02-2314201 (Direct Line)  
Telex: 22095 Fax: 254-02-245566  
Email: [director-soj@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:director-soj@uonbi.ac.ke)

P.O. Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi, GPO  
Kenya

**REF: CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTIONS**

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on 31/04/2016 in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can now be prepared for binding.

Reg. No: KSO/74090/2014

Name: ABUGA JERRY ADHOU

Title: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF MEDIA REPRESENTATION  
OF TERRORISM IN KENYA

DR GEORGE NYABUGA  
SUPERVISOR

Dr Samuel Siringi  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Dr. Naliti Naliti  
DIRECTOR

Cnyabuga 10/11/2016  
SIGNATURE DATE

Siringi 11/12/2016  
SIGNATURE DATE

[Signature] 11. 2016  
SIGNATURE/STAMP DATE

# Appendix IV: Declaration of Originality Form

## Appendix I Declaration Form for Students

### UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

#### Declaration of Originality Form

This form must be completed and signed for all works submitted to the University for examination.

Name of Student	<u>ABUGA JERRY ADHOCH</u>
Registration Number	<u>1250/740901/2014</u>
College	<u>HUMANITIES SOCIAL SCIENCES</u>
Faculty/School/Institute	<u>JOURNALISM &amp; MASS COMMUNICATION</u>
Department	<u>SOJ</u>
Course Name	<u>MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES</u>
Title of the work	<u>A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF TERRORISM IN KENYA</u>

#### DECLARATION

1. I understand what Plagiarism is and I am aware of the University's policy in this regard
2. I declare that this MASTERS (Thesis, project, essay, assignment, paper, report, etc) is my original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for examination, award of a degree or publication. Where other people's work, or my own work has been used, this has properly been acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the University of Nairobi's requirements.
3. I have not sought or used the services of any professional agencies to produce this work
4. I have not allowed, and shall not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his/her own work
5. I understand that any false claim in respect of this work shall result in disciplinary action, in accordance with University Plagiarism Policy.

Signature Jerry

Date 09/11/2016



## Appendix V: Plagiarism results

Turnitin Originality Report  
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF TERRORISM IN KENYAA by  
Jerry Abuga Adhoch K50/74090/2014  
From Project Final & Corrections (MA Communication theory)

- Processed on 05-Nov-2016 10:01 EAT
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[http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2015/Dec/103184/what\\_is\\_terrorism\\_costing\\_africa.aspx](http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2015/Dec/103184/what_is_terrorism_costing_africa.aspx)

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<http://permanentsocialism.wordpress.com/2011/11/21/moral-panics-benefits-and-limitations/>

