

## CHAPTER 2

# VICTIMS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING AND AFTER THE UTØYA TERROR ATTACK: FEAR, RESILIENCE, SORROW AND SOLIDARITY

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter examines how those directly affected by the terror attack on Utøya in Norway on 22 July 2011 used social media to cope with the trauma. Through interviews with eight survivors and a study of their Facebook walls during the first month after the shooting, the chapter sets out to answer how they tell and re-tell the trauma on Facebook. In what way does their re-telling of the terror event give it meaning? With Narrative Therapy as its inspiration, this chapter studies different themes and stories on the Facebook walls, what is told about the event, its effects and responses to it. The*



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*meaning derived from the trauma is a story of national unity, democratic values and the redefining of Norway as a multicultural society. As for the perpetrator, he is written out of the story.*

**Keywords:** Social media; terror; resilience; sorrow; unity; re-narration

## INTRODUCTION

‘Love, openness and democracy’ were the core words in Norway after the terror attacks on 22 July 2011, when 77 people were killed, 8 in Oslo and 69 on the island of Utøya. Standing up to the terrorist, dealing with sorrow and anger, showing unity and building resilience were expressed in many ways, both in real life and virtually. The use of social media connected public and private grief. For the victims it was a shocking, personal catastrophe, a hell that they survived. Through qualitative interviews with survivors from Utøya and an analysis of their Facebook accounts, this chapter looks into how they dealt with the trauma on social media. The aim of the chapter is to examine how those directly affected reacted in their updates and comments in dialogue with others publishing on their Facebook walls. How did they narrate their trauma on Facebook?

## BACKGROUND

On Friday 22 July 2011, a man blew up a bomb in the government quarter in Oslo. Then, he drove to the island of Utøya, 38 kilometres from the capital. On the island, AUF – the youth organisation of the Labour Party in Norway – was holding its summer camp. Dressed as a policeman, the perpetrator started shooting and carried on for 65 minutes, killing 69 people and injuring many others; 56 were admitted to hospital with severe injuries (Dyb et al., 2014). The terror attacks were a shock for the Norwegian people, who were used to living in a peaceful part of the world and in ‘one of the highest-ranking countries in every cross-national survey measuring trust and/or civic engagement in the past 30 years’ (Wollebæk, Enjolras, Steen-Johansen, & Ødegård, 2012, pp. 32–33).

On that Friday, people gathered around the television for hours, listened to the radio and searched websites and social media to find out what

was happening after the bomb exploded in Oslo. Then, two hours later, the authorities and the Norwegians began to realise there was an on-going attack against the AUF. When the surviving youngsters on the island were rescued, they were taken to Sundvolden hotel nearby. Yet, nobody knew how many had been killed. The first two confirmed names of deceased victims were announced by the prime minister in his speech in Oslo Cathedral on Sunday, 24 July. It took a week before the names of all the dead were confirmed (Kaur, 2011). A total of 69 people were killed on the island, the youngest 14 years old (Stormark, 2011).

### SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE NARRATIVE OF TRAUMA

When a crisis occurs, there is a need for information. Scherp et al. (2009) state that during emergencies web traffic spikes, and social media are commonly used. The attack on Utøya in 2011, the Mumbai attacks in 2008 and the Jakarta bombing in 2009 all broke on Twitter (Cheong & Lee, 2010; Frey, 2018). However, Johnsen (2012) and Frey (2018) found that the survivors on Utøya preferred using Facebook over Twitter. In 2011, the year of the Utøya terror attack, Facebook was the biggest social network in the world with more than 500 million registered users (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012). Besides information, the direct and real-time nature of social media offers connection to others in a network, providing a sense of gaining control. Liu, Jin, and Austin (2013) point out that social media are ideal for incorporating and responding to emotional needs. A concern about privacy is one of the reasons for choosing Facebook; another is social norms, meaning that people use the same type of social media as their friends (Liu et al., 2013). Furthermore, the public needs to feel they are contributing and thereby coping more effectively with the crisis (Sutton, Palen, & Shklovski, 2008). All the aforementioned reasons for using social media during an emergency are, I would argue, relevant to those who are directly involved. For victims, it is even more pivotal, as information and human interaction might make the difference between life and death. Social media can help victims of terror give warnings, monitor the evolving crisis situation, receive and give information and maintain resilience (Frey, 2018).

When people experience trauma, their perspectives alter as 'defence "mechanisms" that disrupt the memory of the traumatic event by means

of repression or the displacement of feelings' (Modell, 2005, p. 560). Narrative therapy (NT) 'is based around the narrative of stories' (Bacon, 2007, p. 71) and provides a framework for how such a narrative functions as a tool for treating traumatised individuals, groups and communities (Denborough, 2008). Narration is vital to human beings; stories help people sort out their experiences, emotions, actions and the lives of others and themselves. The narrative helps people in their search for new meaning and it 'helps put the "shattered" puzzle pieces of meaning back together' (Whitney, 2012, p. 2), although, post-trauma, the puzzle looks different as a new meaning is found (Whitney, 2012). People's ability to survive after a trauma is closely tied to their ability to derive meaning from the effects of trauma, Frankl writes (1992). According to Denborough (2005), three key elements are important for the trauma story: *the event*, *the effects of it* on a person, identity and relationships and the person's *responses to the trauma* which is connected to hopes, values and wishes. Dual testimony is a rich re-narration that includes responses, which means the practices of resistance and survival (Denborough, 2005).

Resilience is found within other frameworks as well as NT. Kaufmann, for instance, looks at it in the context of networking: coordination and control in real-life and on social media are understood through 'protocol, common values and goals' (Kaufmann, 2013, p. 60). Kaufman (2013, p. 58) finds that 'the net-structure enables self-organisation and provides space to switch to in case of disruption'. The capacity to re-establish normality and to adapt to new circumstances lies in resilience strategies (Kaufmann, 2013). Spontaneous manifestations such as the huge collection of flowers outside Oslo Cathedral or the rose marches in Norway after 22 July are expressions of common values and unity in order to regain control. They are also responses to the terror event, expressions of the convergence of memory culture by different agents – individuals on Facebook or in the streets of Oslo as well as the police, the church and the government. In addition, they are examples of digital and real-life memorials of grief and support that converge (Kverndokk, 2013). Acts of remembering reclaimed the places the terrorist had threatened (Aagedal, Botvar, & Høeg, 2013) and, along with speeches, songs and funerals, were expressions against the terrorist, reclaiming values that he had attacked, and, thereby, provided a way of moving forward (Aagedal et al., 2013). The attacks targeted both the Labour Party in government and

their youth organisation; they were directed at a multi-cultural society, democracy and Norway as a country. Solidarity, national sentiment and democratic values were strongly supported by the population, as people reclaimed Norway and, at the same time, re-defined the country as a multi-cultural society (Ommundsen, 2013). These examples are expressions of resilience in society, for resilience means 'bouncing back' and 'reflects the ability to maintain a stable equilibrium' (Bonanno, 2004, p. 20). However, as Vettenranta (2015, p. 61) argues, 'a feeling of community cannot be created in a time of mourning if the premises for such feelings are not already in place'. The date 22 July became a national symbol with ideological and emotional facets (Døving, 2013, p. 167), although not everyone shared this view. A survey conducted in autumn 2011 shows that voices expressed the opinion that the mass grief had become excessive and some were mourning without reason, as they did not know anyone who had been killed in the attacks (Grønstad, 2013). Norway, however, is a small country with, at the time, 4.9 million inhabitants (Ssb, 2011). As the young people on Utøya came from all over the country, there were many Norwegians who knew the victims of the attack on the island. It was even argued in court that: 'the terror directly affected everyone in Norway' (Frey, 2013, p. 79).

## METHODOLOGY AND THE DATA

Inspired by NT in analysing the two datasets, I am looking for the main elements which are vital in the narrative of trauma: the event, its effects and responses to it. These three elements are interlinked: the event leads to effects – such as rose marches and other memorials – which, in turn, show responses with their values. My analysis is based on what the survivors said in their re-telling to me during the interviews. I also examine different stories and themes on their Facebook walls, as expressed by survivors and their friends. This Facebook discourse is an externalised conversation where victims and their Facebook friends 'play a part in strengthening the preferred stories that are emerging' (Morgan, 2000, p. 73).

Dataset 1 consists of in-depth interviews with eight survivors from Utøya. There were indications that potential interviewees were tired of researchers by the time our project started. To conduct a careful recruitment process, I went through the National Support Organisation following the

22 July Incidents to find survivors. In addition, I excluded everyone under 18 years and survivors with major health problems. The recruiting process was extended through having to exclude any contact with survivors on anniversaries. At the time the interviews were conducted, from autumn 2015 to spring 2016, the interviewees were between 22 and 32 years old; all were active in the AUF and/or the Labour Party. The two female and six male interviewees were asked two pre-crisis questions about their use of social media, and several questions about the terror attack itself and the post-crisis period. All interviews were conducted with informed consent. The interviewees were promised anonymity and are here referred to by a number (for an extended discussion see [Frey, 2018](#)).

I chose to analyse the interviewees' Facebook accounts for a range of reasons, some of which were mentioned in the discussion on theory above. All of the interviewees were present on Facebook and gave me access to their Facebook accounts. It was also on Facebook that, as early as 22 July, some AUF members formed a closed group inviting anyone who was on Utøya to account for survivors and, subsequently, to organise funerals and commemorations. Facebook was an important platform, though not the only one, for the externalisation of the survivors' trauma stories; externalisation 'provides room for empowering conversation' ([Bacon, 2007](#), p. 72).

Dataset 2 is the virtual interpersonal communication during the attack and four weeks after, as seen on the interviewees' Facebook walls. I decided to look at Facebook from 22 July until 22 August, since within a month it is possible to discover who has developed PTSD ([American Psychiatric Association, 2013](#)). The terror victims' postings on Facebook will be referred to as 'Facebook and date'. In order to prevent identification of the interviewees, their Facebook posts do not show their interviewee number. As for comments posted by others on their wall, they will be referred to as 'Comment and date'. All translations of interviews and posts on the Facebook walls are my own.

## RESULTS

About two hours after the bomb exploded in Oslo, Norwegians learned that someone was shooting young people at the AUF camp. A friend wrote on the Facebook wall of one interviewee: 'Could not take my eyes off the

television yesterday, and never let go of my cell phone while waiting for information about you' (Comment 23 July). While this person, and most of the country on 22 July were terror-struck, the campers on Utøya were trying to survive, trapped on a small island with the perpetrator.

### What Is Happening?

Among the interviewees, three were active on social media *during* the attack, two very briefly accessed Facebook, and three did not use social media (Frey, 2018). The Facebook walls of those directly targeted were filled with questions such as: 'What is happening at Utøya? Are you all right?' and instructions such as: 'Hide!' or 'Stay together!' (Comments 22 July). There were many expressions of concern and love. During the attack, some of the victims updated their wall. For instance, one wrote: 'I know what it feels like to be scared to death. Now, fear has a new meaning. Still hiding. Hearing gun shots' (Facebook, 22 July). On other walls, friends or family gave information about the targeted campers, saying that they were safe for now, or that people should not call them. A stream of posts dominated by heart symbols, warm thoughts and compassion, combined with expressions of fear and statements of solidarity followed. Expressions of disbelief and a feeling of the surreal were not very evident on 22 July, as people on Facebook were directing their thoughts and emotions towards the survival of the victims. The walls described the event and its effects, for instance, survival strategies. In this respect, Facebook came across as a platform for direct and personal statements. This significant interaction provided support for the victims; at the same time, it allowed bystanders to contribute and cope (Sutton et al., 2008).

### Saved

Once rescued, all interviewees posted on Facebook that they were safe (Interviewees 1–8), some as a commentary on questions posted by others during the attack, answering that they were alive, off the island and/or safe. Others updated their status; several of these were remarkably matter-of-fact, for instance: 'Am at Sundvolden hotel. Came off the island just now' (Facebook, 22 July) and 'Alright despite the circumstances, because

I had a swim the cell phone died' (Facebook, 22 July). Comments on the walls were more emotional; they were expressions of relief, joy and love. During the night up to 23 July, expressions of incomprehensibility became more apparent, for example: 'Cannot imagine what you have been through, the worst is over. Thinking about you all!' (Comment 23 July). Posts and comments on surviving the massacre continued during the night and the following days. This, for instance, was written as an answer to a question: 'Yes, I swam and was picked up by a volunteer to whom I owe my life' (Facebook, 22 July). Another one of the survivors wrote after midnight: 'I am alive, and that is not obvious' (Facebook, 23 July).

### Inconceivable

Slowly, Facebook's narrative developed into being more about the effects than the event itself. One of my eight interviewees expressed raw emotions to Facebook-friends and was open about the state of shock she/he was in: 'Am in a state of severe shock right now' and '[...] not capable of functioning properly right now' (Facebook, 22 July). After the tunnel vision of simply trying to survive, and for bystanders the fear of losing close ones on the island, survivors and their friends opened up to a wider spectrum of feelings. Besides the many expressions of love and relief, comments about the inconceivable nature of the event became more frequent. One interviewee says she/he was confused about what had happened: 'It does not get into your head right away how many were killed, and how many of those you actually know, and how much it affects you' (Interviewee 6). Another one wrote:

*Still having problems with trying to comprehend the pure evil that ravaged Utoya less than a day and night ago. And how so many of us were able to escape. It feels inconceivably difficult to think about all these fantastic people I will never meet again (Facebook, 23 July).*

Emotions of shock and grief, and a sense of the unreal continued for weeks. Strong emotions of loss and despair surfaced in the context of the funerals of camper-friends. The young survivors went to several funerals. One of them wrote on Facebook: 'As a nineteen-year-old one should not have to choose which friend's funeral one will attend. For the second time



dressing in black again [...]’ (Facebook, 5 August). Facebook pages of deceased turned into memorial sites, and the survivors paid their tribute to the dead on these Facebook walls and on their own walls. Most of the interviewees have continued to visit memorial walls, especially on birthdays and anniversaries. They point out the sadness, but also the positive feeling that this particular human being meant something to people and that: ‘[...] I am not the only one missing this person – that means a lot’ (Interviewee 2). One interviewee talks about Facebook as a tool for honouring the dead: ‘It is a good way of honouring, remembering what they stood for and what they meant, and the kind of friendship you had with them’ (Interviewee 6). Facebook displays the effect on individual persons and their relationships. In addition, as a response to the event, it conveys strengthened values (Denborough, 2005).

### The Missing Youth

Following the attack, there was simultaneously good news about survivors and worries about the missing. Among the many hospitalised were unidentified campers from Utøya. Survivors, families and friends of those missing used Facebook to get information that could feed the hope that their children or peers were alive. Some of this interaction is visible on Facebook, for instance, one survivor wrote: ‘Many good friends are still missing [...]’ (Facebook, 23 July), and another survivor pointed out: ‘At Ullevål,<sup>1</sup> there are several in shock and unconscious who are not identified’ (Facebook, 24 July). A few days later, another survivor had visited a hospitalised friend, and told on Facebook that he was doing better (Facebook, 24 July). As the search for survivors and the identification process went on, there were statements on the walls saying people were thinking of the young in the AUF, expressing their solidarity with them and hoping they would be found alive or recover from severe injuries.

### The Closed Facebook Group

Even before all the rescued people came off the island on 22 July, some members of the AUF who had not attended that year’s summer camp, made a closed Facebook group. Some interviewees fed information into

this group after the police arrived, whilst waiting to get off Utøya. Even if they had seen people die, they did not at this time report them as deceased – that was treated as unverified information. In the Facebook group, the bereaved parents and siblings of missing campers came into contact with survivors. The rescued helped family members of missing young people with information as to the whereabouts of their loved ones – and later on tried to give them closure by telling them about their children's last day(s) or minutes.

The Facebook group was an effect of the trauma. It served as a tool for organising meetings, commemorations and arranging transportation to funerals. Several of my interviewees say it gave meaning to work on these arrangements. In addition, survivors found each other in the closed group. Since the young people had come from all over Norway, during the attack many of them hid, ran or swam with peers they did not know, and so they wanted to find, for instance, 'the boy with red T-shirt and blond hair who was together with me' (Interviewee 5). Some comments on the interviewees' walls give indications that they had re-connected with peers by thanking each other for help in surviving, and sending warm thoughts or just a heart symbol. The closed group also gave survivors an opportunity to share their experience when they were anxious and could not sleep, helping each other to cope with the trauma.

### Grief and Togetherness

The young people had a strong sense of unity. One interviewee says that since the AUF had been attacked as a group:

*[...] there was – for want of better words – an advantage since we had already formed a unity [...] We had that in common. It was the motif for killing us, for the attack, and it did make a community. [...] And then, social media were very useful.*  
(Interviewee 3)

There were many ways of showing unity and solidarity with each other inside the organisation, and for non-members to express sympathy with the victims. The first Facebook comments on 22 July were mainly addressed to individuals, but then the conversation widened to include all the campers and the AUF as an organisation: 'Best organisation in the

world', 'Thinking about you all' and 'You are strong people' (Facebook, 23 July). There were also uploaded pictures from Utøya before the massacre, showing young people having fun, or pictures of survivors with texts about strength and bravery. On one of the walls, the young people from Utøya were called heroes, an expression not normally used in Norway since World War II<sup>2</sup> (except for athletes). These are examples of the preferred story that emerged (Morgan, 2000), a way of reclaiming values in society and of healing.

Kverndokk (2013) writes that acts of solidarity and unity brought together virtual and real-life spaces. The rose marches were strong expressions of grief, support and unity, with the people, politicians, the royal family and survivors standing together. They were effects of the event, but also responses carrying values. Suddenly, Norwegians who did not know the lyrics by heart, learned to sing 'To the youth' – a poem by Nordahl Grieg<sup>3</sup> on how to make a stand and use your faith in mankind as a weapon. This poem was shared on Facebook walls as an expression of support for the AUF, as were lines from other poems by Grieg written when Norway was occupied by Germany,<sup>4</sup> for instance, that the best ones die, 'the strong ones, those pure at heart who wanted and dared the most [...]' (Facebook, 29 July). Grieg's lines from a third poem, 'We are so few in this country, every fallen is a brother and friend' (Facebook, 24 July) were also posted on Facebook; his lines captured emotions after 22 July, the feeling of a small country standing together mourning its dead. The same poem's most famous line was even used as a headline in the newspaper VG (Dvergedal, Langset, & Grøttum, 2011).<sup>5</sup> Lines from other poems and speeches were shared on Facebook, for instance, one young person quoted Martin Luther King Jr. about how only light and love can drive out hate (Facebook, 5 August). Public speakers expressed the values of togetherness and love: the mayor of Oslo, early on 22 July, spoke about multicultural unity; the crown prince stated at the rose gathering in Oslo that 'tonight, the streets are filled with love'; and the prime minister said, 'We are devastated, but we will not surrender. With torches and roses we send a message to the world. We will not let fear break us down' (Døving, 2013, p. 157). Agedal et al. (2013) write that these acts of remembering were about moving forward, in other words, the ceremonies 'were forms of social actions' (Denborough, 2008, p. 66), responses that contributed to resilience.

## Private and Public Grief

Døving states that, in every speech he gave, the prime minister Jens Stoltenberg addressed the grief of those affected and made a distinction between their sorrow and public grief. As such, he was defining 22 July as a national symbol while being mindful of the personal, closer and deeper grief (Døving, 2013). The survivors appreciated public support: '[...] public support in all channels, and social media were one of them' (Interviewee 1). One survivor says that Facebook was an anchor in a bewildering time (Interviewee 8); another admits it was self-therapy in being open about his/hers experiences (Interviewee 6). All remark that the comments on their walls made a huge impact. However, they needed time to realise what had actually happened. One points out that it took time before the feeling of grief set in: 'It started about the time when the official announcement of the dead came. I think I had a practical approach, that the experience was so overwhelming that to work and think about practical problems was necessary' (Interviewee 4). After surviving the attack and losing many friends, then, they found out that, 'something so personal belonged to everyone. That was positive and negative' (Interviewee 4). Intellectually, they grasped that the attacks had made an enormous impact on Norwegians, but at the same time, this was a deep personal grief and a private trauma.

Hence, the attention was double-edged. Some took time out from the public grief and debates. Many people contacted them in person, by phone, email or on social media; even people who were still struggling with tragedies that had happened decades before (Interviewee 6). Some of the interviewees also reached out on their walls and said that survivors who wanted to talk could phone them (Facebook, 23 July and 25 July). However, one interviewee underlines that the public attention was tough and at some point she/he felt there was almost a deluge of survivors' stories (Interviewee 6). The media were full of them. VG online newspaper staged a virtual place of mourning for holding hands (VG, 2011). On social media, people shared 'Oslove' and replaced their profile picture with a photo of a burning candle, to name but a few viral examples of the trauma's effect on Norwegians' identity as well as the response of unity against the values of the perpetrator.

### Hate and Evil

It is striking that on the Facebook walls of the eight interviewees, not once is the perpetrator mentioned by them or their friends. This is a statement of response to the event. It ties in with the fact that, in July and August 2011, young people would go into shops and flip over the newspapers so that the front pages with the terrorist's picture were not showing. This further accords with the ancient tradition of not mentioning the name of evil. The following slogan is quoted on one wall: 'If one man can show so much hate, think how much love we could show together'<sup>6</sup> – the only reference I can find to the terrorist. However, although the survivors ignored the perpetrator, those with similar ideas to his did not reciprocate. Several interviewees tell of receiving hate messages. One interviewee states: 'This is one of the downsides of social media' (Interviewee 3). Another recounts trying not to look at the hateful comments, but that it was hard to read people complaining '[...] why did you not die, the whole bunch of you?' (Interviewee 2). Despite this, I found no examples of this kind of hate speech on the walls.

### Slowly Moving on

The day after the attacks, the British singer Amy Winehouse died. One of the interviewees found it difficult that people on social media were so pre-occupied with her death: 'I was so self-centred that I could not understand how people could think about anything else' (Interviewee 2). This interviewee continues by saying it felt odd when people on social media complained about ordinary things, and it was strange to observe that '[...] life goes on. Then, the more people who did it, the more I saw signs of that, then there could be an acceptance for me to move on as well' (Interviewee 2). Slowly, survivors understood that life continues and that, someday, they would have normal lives. The walls show that one went fishing, another played a game with friends; one survivor posted a colourful picture and commented: 'Life!' (Facebook, 18 August). Some of them moved to start their education or for work. Between posts on adapting, there were updates about the terror, for instance: 'Miss our comrades so much!' (Facebook, 19 August). As one interviewee says, 'Sometime it is too hard, this life' (Interviewee 2). Trying to go back to an everyday life included

reclaiming Utøya, uploading pictures from the island and collecting money to rebuild it. One posted 'We shall take back Utøya. We will not be scared into silence' (Facebook, 21 August). Within a month after the terror attack on Utøya, several of my interviewees had been back there. On their walls, they geo-tagged their location and updated their status – with an enormous response from their Facebook friends. One survivor stated that, 'Utøya still is the best place in the world!' (Facebook, 21 August). Then, they started campaigning for the Labour Party for the local elections on 12 September, as most of them were candidates. Exactly one month after the attack, one of them wrote on the wall: '[...] That day. The day Norway stood up, and showed itself from its best side. Instead of showing hatred, we expressed love. Instead of being divided, we were united. We showed strength and love that the world had never seen. Thanks' (Facebook, 22 August). These are all examples of responses to the terror attack, important responses that are interwoven with the event and its effects to create entire stories (Bacon, 2007).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Examining the Facebook walls, it is striking that the perpetrator is left out of the conversation. He is not a part of the immediate story or the re-narration: he is ignored in connection with the event, its effects and the responses to it. Furthermore, his extreme right-winged opinions are excluded from the externalisation of the survivors' trauma stories (Bacon, 2007). I consider this to be a clear statement that the perpetrator is *not important* in the narration of what happened on 22 July 2011. Indeed, the re-telling of the trauma excludes the one person that set the tragedy in motion. In contrast, the perpetrator and his political views were discussed in public life and in the news media. However, in the narrative of the trauma on Facebook, social-democratic values form an important nexus of political and humanist values; values held in esteem by those affected are rendered importance as they are ideals by which the killed victims are honoured. In the viral community, the lives and values of Norwegians are given meaning through the narrative of love, openness and democracy.

At the same time, the Facebook walls and interviews illustrate the personal re-narration of individuals' fear, shock, resilience and the will to fight back and support each other. The posts and comments do influence on the

care and self-care as well as 'allow for a redefinition of normality' (Kaufmann, 2013, p. 68). The Facebook conversation shows themes of fear, concern, love, shock and moves on to sorrow, support, solidarity and the search for a way to move on. As such, the narrative process on Facebook expresses rich dual testimonies (Denborough, 2005). Individual and collective voices are woven together, balancing trauma, resistance, survival and coping (Denborough, 2005). The network consists of people connecting, telling stories, expressing meaning and listening to each other; as Bacon states, a 'crucial facet of telling stories is to have someone listening and to reflect to the speaker what it is they are hearing' (Bacon, 2007, p. 79). The interviewees acknowledge the impact made by support found on social media. Their walls and interviews reveal how the young people tried to redefine their lives and move on. I do not claim that the conversations on Facebook include every emotion and feeling of the survivors or their friends: the posts and comments are reflections of what they wanted to share. Nevertheless, I find that the stories, reflections and statements 'contribute to redressing the effects of trauma in a person's life' (Denborough, 2005, p. 35) as well as ways of responding to the trauma and to heal again.

Since my sample is small and the interviewees are resilient people who managed to adapt, this may to a large extent contribute to my results. As shown, values have a dominant role in the Facebook discourse, as they point to important historical events and to the future. Previous values are reinforced as the terror showed what was at stake; they are strengthened in honour of the deceased. In this manner, different themes and values – that create meaning – are fed into the main story (Denborough, 2008). This story is the retelling of national unity, democratic values and, at the same time, a re-definition of Norway as a multicultural country (Ommundsen, 2013). On one wall in particular, strength and solidarity give meaning in the re-narrated story. First, Norway is given the capacity to act as a human being; Norway stands up and shows itself from its best side (Facebook, 22 August). Second, the Norwegians are portrayed as a united 'we', expressing love and strength 'as the world has never seen' (Facebook, 22 August). Third, the survivor expresses gratitude (Facebook, 22 August) – in my opinion, gratitude for these reactions as opposed to hatred and revenge. This is an individual voice of a survivor re-telling the trauma on social media converging with the collective voice as demonstrated in real-life and viral communities, and deriving meaning in bravery, uniqueness and love.

## NOTES

1. Hospital in Oslo.
2. The terror attacks in 2011 are the worst crimes in Norway since World War II.
3. Nordahl Grieg 1902–1943, Norwegian poet, author and war correspondent. The poem is from 1936. Otto Mortensen composed the music in 1952 (*Store norske leksikon*).
4. 1940–1945.
5. VG's Anders Giæver used this quote as a headline in connection with the tsunami in 2004, <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/meninger/flodboelgekatas-trofen/vi-er-saa-faa-her-i-landet/a/102098/>
6. Tweet about 22 July by Helle Gannestad, member of the AUF but not present on Utøya on 22. July.

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