

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and International Terrorism: Boko Haram and Al Shabaab in Perspective

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and international terrorism with regards to the activities of terrorist groups. This was premised on the fact that ICT has created a network with a truly global reach for advancement of terrorist activities. The internet technology makes it easy for an individual to communicate with relative ease and anonymity, quickly and effectively across borders to an almost limitless audience. This factor made ICT and their innovative tendencies of the social media like Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter etc to serve as veritable tool and motivation for terrorist groups and their activities. Historical and descriptive methods were employed in this study hence data were drawn from relevant primary and secondary sources which included published and unpublished materials. The findings of the study revealed that increased availability of ICT and other innovative tendencies has made it easier for terrorist organizations to communicate, recruit, radicalize as well as mobilize individuals to plan and coordinate terrorist attacks. Based on the above findings, it was recommended among others that understanding terrorist recruitment through the social media was vital to counter-terrorism. Hence, understanding how and why an individual is radicalize and recruited into a terrorist organization is therefore an important part of addressing the fight against terrorism. Accordingly, there should be investment in scientific research and industrial development that are more resistant for terrorist use.

Keywords: *Terrorism, ICT, Global, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab*

1. Background to the Study

The new technological developments that have occurred during the last three decades have shifted the conception of national security. Our transition into the information and communication age has been with a series of threats to the national security of many states. Today, nations face the danger of a physical damage but also having their information infrastructures destroyed, altered, or incapacitated by the new genre of offensive technologies. For instance, the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 carnage in the United States, it has been widely reported that the terrorists used high-tech tools to plan and consummate their reprehensible attacks. The irony of it all is that the high-tech tools they used are the very same tools

we use to enhance our lives. Yes, they used common tools such as mobile phones, e-mail, the Internet etc. The advances in technology means the ability to share ideas, videos, and other digital content to more people than ever before. The technology has also grown more user-friendly and cheaper. This has leveled the playing field, both for those who communicate information for good as well as those who have more sinister reasons to get their messages across (Metz, 2012).

Many terrorist organizations such as ISIS today use the Internet to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize individuals from all walks of life. The Internet also offers these terrorist groups a level of anonymity. In years past, jihadists would have to travel to different cities and towns trying to find

the few like-minded individuals who shared their 2 extremist views. Or they would be forced underground and would risk being found out (Metz, 2012). Today that lengthy process of locating other extremists and sharing ideas has been greatly reduced. The Internet, through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Chat rooms, Websites, and other social media platforms, enables terrorist organizations to recruit from across the globe (Von Behr, 2013).

As observed by Weimann (2014), today, 90 percent of terrorist groups' communication over the social media is accomplished through the internet. Younger people favour social media, which is free, as well as interactive. Social media enables anyone to share messages, contribute to the discussion, and even ask questions of terrorist group leaders. Weimann goes on to illustrate just how quickly technology and social media use is evolving. Facebook, which began in 2004, had 1.31 billion users a decade later. For instance, the YouTube, which began in 2005, as of 2016 counted 100 hours of video uploaded each minute. And Twitter, which started in 2006, had 555 million Twitter users tweeting about 58 million tweets a day last year.

2. Statement of Problem

Today, advances in technology mean the ability to share ideas, videos, and other digital content available to more people than ever before. The implication is that technology has also grown more user-friendly and cheaper. This has therefore leveled the playing field, both for those who communicate information for good as well as those who have more sinister reasons to get their messages across. To this end, violent extremists today use the Internet to "recruit, radicalize, and mobilize individuals, including Americans. The Internet has become the main tool used by terrorist organizations to communicate with like-minded peers, followers, and potential members.

It is worthy to note that the Internet also offers terrorist groups a level of anonymity. In years past, jihadists would have to travel to different mosques trying to find the few like-minded

individuals who shared their extremist views. Or they would be forced underground and would risk being found out. Today that lengthy process of locating other extremists and sharing ideas has been greatly reduced. The Internet, through chat rooms, websites, and now social media, enables terrorist groups to recruit from across the globe.

One terrorist group that has proven its skills in using social media, to expand its reach, increase its publicity and gain followers is the Islamic State of Syria and Iran (ISIS). In June 2014, the Islamic State declared that it had formed a caliphate. According to the literature, at that point, the group had upwards of 15,000 militants in its membership. Following mass desertions from the Iraqi army, the Islamic State, or ISIS, took control of a large swath of land in Syria and Iraq. Since then, foreign fighters from 80 countries have joined ISIS. Many come from Muslim-majority countries, but others have traveled to Syria from the United States, Australia, and Western European countries. Some 150 Americans are believed to have traveled or attempted to travel to Syria over the past three years to take part in jihadist activities. The organization offers young people instant gratification, including adventure, power, community, and sex.

For instance, a March 2015 Brookings Institution study found that last fall, ISIS supporters were using at least 46,000 Twitter accounts. Three quarters of the supporters listed Arabic as their first language, but nearly one in five chose English. These accounts also had a higher than average number of followers (1,000 each) and a higher than average number of tweets.

There is a significant amount of literature about terrorist groups using social media, the history, growth, and threat of ISIS and how it uses Twitter and YouTube. However, the strength of the literature weakens when discussing ways to limit ISIS's use of social media to recruit followers and what the government's role could and should be in doing so. Some literature discusses the possibility of the United States waging "covert information operations" similar to undercover military maneuvers.

It is against this background that this study intends to examine the relationship between ICT and the promotion of international terrorism activities and to make recommendations on how these anomalies can be mitigated or nipped in the bud.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the formulation of the objectives of the study:

- i. What is the impact of new media on international security and world peace?
- ii. What is the impact of the innovative tendencies of social media on the recruitment of young people for terrorism?
- iii. What measures should be adopted to amelioration the dangers posed by ISIS, in the efforts towards maintaining international security and world peace?

4. Objectives of the Study

- i. To ascertain the impact of new media on international security and world peace.
- ii. To examine the impact of the innovative tendencies of social media on the recruitment of young people for terrorism.
- iii. To suggest measures that should be adopted by the international community to ensure that the dangers posed by ISIS through globalization are grossly minimized.

5. Literature Review/ Conceptual Literature

5.1 The Concept of Security

According to Rudolph (2003) security has been the cornerstone in the study of international relations, essentially its *raison d'être*. However, like many other concepts in Political Science, it has been and continues to be notorious sly difficult to define/conceptualize. Security is a social construction; thus the term security has no meaning in itself; rather it is given a specific meaning by people within the emergence of an inter-subjective consensus. As a result, over the course of time the term comes to have a particular meaning, although it may change over time (Sheehan, 2005). In spite of the efforts by scholars

to conceptualize the notion of security in a coherent manner, no one generally acceptable definition of security has yet been produced. In addition to the term being highly contested, some scholars have argued that the term is underdeveloped, so much so that it is inadequate for use. One of the reasons for this situation is attributed to the fact that the term is simply too complex to garner attention and has thus been neglected in favour of other concepts (Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law, 2007). A further problem that Sheehan (2005) identifies is that the meaning of security has often been treated as being obvious and nonsensical.

The realist tradition has exercised an enormous amount of influence in the field of security studies, which in a sense has provided a baseline for other traditions (Elman, 2008). Realists harbour a narrow conception of security where security is defined in terms of states, militaries and the use of threat and force. The constructivist tradition argues that security is a social construction, in other words it means different things in different contexts. Two opposing actors will view security differently. It can also be seen as a site of negotiation and contestation, where actors will compete to portray the identity and values of a specific group in such way that it provides a foundation for political action. Constructivists view identity and norms as central to the study of security, as the two together provide “the limits for feasible and legitimate political action. Finally, agents and structures are mutually constituted, and because the world is one of our own making, even structural change is always possible even if difficult” (McDonald, 2008).

Even though security is an essentially contested and highly politicized concept, it is something that is desired by everyone (Williams, 2008; Eckersley, 2009). Security is said to imply an absence of threat (Robinson, 2008). Williams (2008) adds that security is also associated with the alleviation of threats to particular values, especially if those threats, if left unchecked, threaten the survival of a particular referent

object. Security also gives individuals/groups the ability to pursue their cherished political and social ambitions. It is stated that a threat can be seen as “a combination of the capability and intent to do harm or enact violence” (Anderson, 2012). He adds that both of these components are required to constitute a threat. Thus, security implies that an individual/group is safe from harm or violent actions.

Anderson (2012) further states that the scope of security is broadened when looking at security at an international level. The threats now have international, transnational and multinational implications. Thus, threats can constitute the harm of individuals across the globe, even if the threat is only “directly” present in one area. According to Anderson (2012), it is also important to determine the agent and target (the referent object) of the particular threat. The agent of terrorism, as a security issue, can be defined as the terrorist or terrorist organization and the target (referent object) as individuals/groups/property (whichever the group believes will accomplish their specific goal).

According to Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law (2007), global/international security is said to represent a programme of ‘collective security’ for the global populace. Thus, international security also relates to ensuring that when one state enhances its security, it does not threaten to reduce the security of a potential adversary; this ensures the maintenance of the overall stability of the international system (Sheehan, 2005).

5.2 The Concept of Globalisation

Furthermore, the exact definition of what globalization constitutes is also contested as scholars have very different conceptions of the term. Cha (2000) argues that one can best understand the phenomenon of globalization as a spatial one. Thus, globalization is not an event, but rather a steady and continuous expansion of processes of interaction and forms of organization, as well as forms of cooperation outside of the traditional boundaries defined by sovereignty (Cha, 2000). Some scholars liken globalization to

interdependence, others to liberalization, whilst others even liken it to universalization, Westernization and imperialism (Nassar, 200). Many scholars argue that globalization can be identified as the leader in the spread of Western culture and practices around the globe. Additionally, Nassar (2005) as the “modern” practices of the West are spreading, they are replacing the older and more traditional ways of doing things. Furthermore, it is argued that the process of modernization (Westernization) that is associated with globalization can be seen as equivalent to the Americanization of the world. Steger (2013) agrees with Nassar in stating that globalization encompasses the Westernization and therefore the Americanization of the world.

There are a number of different facets to globalization; Heine and Thakur (2011) state that the primary aspect of globalization is concerned with the expansion of economic activities across the boundaries of nation states. This expansion has led to an increasing level of interdependence amongst nations and its citizens, through the “widespread diffusion of technology,” as well as an increasing volume of cross-border flows of goods, services, investment and finance. Other aspects of the globalization process include the movement of information, ideas and people as well as cultural exchanges across international boundaries (Heine and Thakur, 2011).

According to Ervin and Smith (2008) globalization can be seen as the “shrinking” of the globe whilst there is an increasing amount of interaction between the different actors that are at play in the world. Another scholar adds that globalization can be defined as “an extension and intensification in the exchange of goods, persons, and ideas” (Zimmermann, 2011). Globalization is also said to refer to the diffusion of technology and culture (Li and Schaub, 2004). Nassar (2005) adds that globalization integrates markets, values, environmental concerns and politics across the globe. Furthermore, Cha (2000) argues that globalization can be seen as a spatial reorganization of industry, production, and finance amongst others, which causes local decisions to have a global impact. According to

Kay (2004), the phenomenon of globalization can be best described as the “creation of a variety of trans-boundary mechanisms for interaction that affect and reflect the acceleration of economic, political and security interdependence.” Thus, decisions made in one state affect the lives of citizens across the globe.

Some scholars are of the opinion that globalization improves security; whilst many others contend that it has created instances of declining international security. Many proponents of globalization view it as a facilitator of economic openness, global culture and political transparency. In addition, it channels common human standards and equality across the globe. This leads to an increasing sense of global proximity, which supposedly leads to cooperation, and increases security worldwide. In contrast, globalization is often viewed as a tool that large hegemonic states use to implement their economic “primacy” whilst other states lag behind. Thus, globalization is seen as threat (by those that lag behind and are disadvantaged), which must be fought against. States might seek to defend against the so-called threat that globalization poses, as groups or individuals organize to fight against the perceived dangers of globalization (Kay, 2004).

5.3 The Concept of Terrorism

Finding a definition for terrorism is not always considered easy, as there are a number of different definitions for the term. According to Schmid (2011) a legal definition for terrorism is still elusive even after being proposed by the League of Nations in 1937. No single definition of terrorism has received the international stamp of approval. Thus, it is not surprising that terrorism is a politically loaded and contested concept for which hundreds of often diverging definitions exist (Schmid, 2011b:694). Schmid (2011) and Easson and Schmid (2011:148) provide over 250 different academic, governmental and intergovernmental definitions of terrorism in *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, the definitions range from as early as 1794, where Robespierre defines terror to as recently as 2010. The extensive range of definitions provided

allows one to see how definitions of terrorism have evolved and developed over time.

Furthermore, it allows one to see that an agreed upon definition of terrorism has been elusive for some time and is not merely a contemporary problem. One of the major problems the United Nations has experienced in developing an internationally agreed upon conceptualization of terrorism, are the reservations of Arab and Muslim countries (Schmid, 2011). Hoffman (2006) attributes the difficulty in defining terrorism to the fact that the meaning of term has changed so frequently throughout history. The meaning and usage of the term have changed over the course of history in order to accommodate the political discourse of each successive era. Furthermore, the term has become increasingly elusive with the passage of time (Hoffman, 2006).

For Cilliers (2003), terrorism can be described as the illegitimate use or threat of violence against individuals or property to coerce governments or societies for the purposes of political objectives. Rogers (2008) adds that terrorism also makes use of this fear borne out of the threat of violence to gain public attention. According to Cilliers (2003) terrorism is different from other forms of organized criminal behaviour in that its proponents do not act to gain financially or economically. Thus, terrorists act to gain politically or to make a point. In addition, terrorism can be regarded as a premeditated act or actions. It is planned before the terrorist actions are carried out. It does not just occur randomly.

Even though the UN has thus far failed to develop a comprehensive agreed upon definition of terrorism, it has made some progress in combating terrorism. For example, the Security Council resolution 1566 (2004) includes several measures that will strengthen the role of the UN in its efforts to combat terrorism. The UN has emphasized that achieving a consensus definition within the General Assembly will hold enormous value given the General Assembly’s unique legitimacy in normative terms. It is thus important that the General Assembly complete negotiations on a comprehensive convention on terrorism, as

soon as possible (United Nations, 2015). This definition of terrorism should include a number of elements, namely: a “recognition, in the preamble, that State use of force against civilians is regulated by the Geneva Conventions and other instruments, and, if of sufficient scale, constitutes a war crime by the persons concerned or a crime against humanity”; a restatement that acts falling under the previous 12 anti-terrorism conventions are regarded as terrorism, and a declaration that these acts are deemed a crime under international law; furthermore there should be a restatement that terrorism in time of armed conflict is prohibited under Geneva Conventions and Protocols; and reference must also be made to the definitions contained in the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and Security Council resolution 1566 (2004) (United Nations, 2015).

Lastly, terrorism is described as: any action, in addition to actions already specified by the existing conventions on aspects of terrorism, the Geneva Conventions and Security Council resolution 1566 (2004), that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

In comparison to the UN, the African Union (AU) has developed a definition of terrorism that has been ratified by the majority of member states. According to the then Organization for African Unity (OAU, 1999), as set out in the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, a terrorist act can be defined as:

- (a) any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:

- (i) intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or
- (ii) Disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or
- (iii) Create general insurrection in a State.
- (b) any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organizing, or procurement of any person, with the intent to commit any act referred to in paragraph (a) (i) to (iii).

6. Case Studies

6.1 Boko Haram

The Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram, officially “Jama’atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda’wati wal Jihad” (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad), has unleashed a wave of terror upon the populace of Northern Nigeria in the last few years (Agbibo, 2013; Bamidele, 2012). This has become a nation-wide and even a global concern, especially with such events as the kidnapping of the Chibok girls. Bamidele (2012) mentions that on a daily basis websites, magazines and news channels run stories as well as pictures of the acts of violence perpetrated by the group. Bamidele (2012) argues that the group emerged in 2002, even though it only became prominent in 2009. On the other hand, Connell (2012:88) argues that the group was founded much earlier, in 1995, under the original name of “Ahlulsunna wal’jama’ah hijra.” It is thus not surprising that the majority of scholars agree that the precise date relating to the emergence of Boko Haram is unclear (Maiangwa, Uzodike, Whetho, and Onapajo, 2012; Onuoha, 2013). This lack of clarity is as a result of the fact that very few journalists/scholars have been granted the opportunity to interview the group, which in effect makes it necessary to rely on unverified accounts.

The majority of literature on Boko Haram is also somewhat inconclusive with regard to the real purpose behind its creation and existence (Bamidele, 2012). Some scholars argue that the group's roots lie in the "Maitatsine" doctrine (a brand of fundamentalist Islam introduced to northern Nigeria in 1945). On the other hand, others argue that Boko Haram emerged as a part of the resurgence of Islamic militant movements globally (Bamidele, 2012).

However, Onapajo and Uzodike (2012) dispute the claim that Boko Haram's roots can be found in the Maitatsine group and their uprisings of the 1980s. Hussein Solomon aptly describes the reasons behind the emergence of Boko Haram. He argues that the group emerged in response to local grievances in Nigeria, including: an increasing dissatisfaction with deteriorating living conditions, especially in the north, an unresponsive and corrupt political elite and a Nigerian state that has reinforced religious divisions and has been unable to transcend the many divisions of ethnicity, language and religion (Oyeniyi, 2014; Aghedo and Osumah, 2012; Cook, 2014).

One can arguably link the group's motivations to the meaning of their name. Boko Haram is a Hausa term that is loosely translated into "Western education is forbidden." This translation has however been rejected by the group which prefers "Western culture is forbidden," as it is broader and includes education (Agbibo, 2013). As the name suggests, the group is opposed to everything they believe to have been infiltrated by Western beliefs and values. Boko Haram believes that the infiltration of Western beliefs and values, including Western style education, poses a threat to the traditional beliefs, values and customs of the Muslim communities of northern Nigeria (Forest, 2012).

According to Oyeniyi (2017), the group's hatred of Western education stems partly from a longstanding negative attitude that Muslims of northern Nigeria have harboured against Western education. Thus, the group has vowed to rid the Nigerian state of the corrupt ruling elite (who

have been perverted by the decadence of Western culture) and institute what it believes to be religious purity (Agbibo, 2013). Connel (2012) adds that the principle objective of the group has been the toppling of the secular Nigerian government and the implementation of a government based on anti-Western Sharia law. In addition, Onapajo and Uzodike (2012) argue that the group wants to establish an entire socio-political system based on the Islamic model. In 2014, the group declared the establishment of an Islamic State in northern Nigeria (BBC, 2014).

The group further expanded their aims following the execution of their leader, Mohammed Yusuf in 2009. Boko Haram now aimed to violently engage with the state security structure as a means of retaliation. The group also stated that they were aiming to convert former President Goodluck Jonathan from Christianity to Islam and evict non-Muslims from northern Nigeria (Oyeniyi, 2014). The death of Yusuf arguably led to the further radicalization of the group (Onuoha, 2013). The Islamic militant group has been seen to target individuals/objects that it has perceived as being corrupted by Westernization. Although most of its targets are not overtly Western, many of their targets have embraced the "decadence" associated with globalization/Westernization and have turned away from true Islam (Walker, 2012). Their aim is thus to purify Islam in the Nigerian state.

Other areas that scholarship has examined relate to the structure, funding and membership of Boko Haram (Connell, 2012; Forest, 2012; Onuoha, 2013, Pate, 2015). Not much is known about the group's structure, but scholars have briefly discussed the changing leadership (Onuoha, 2013:136). They have argued that very little is publicly known about Boko Haram's sources of finance (Forest, 2012; Connell, 2012; Stewart and Wroughton, 2014). Connell (2012) and Onuoha (2012:137) mention that members had to pay a daily levy to their leaders and other funds came from donations. Forest (2012) agrees that much. According to the majority of accounts, the group draws its membership from the ranks of disaffected youths, unemployed graduates and

former street children (Almajaris) (Onuoha, 2013; Waldek and Jayasekara, 2011; Pate, 2015).

6.2 The Al Shabaab

The first aspect that scholars tend to focus on relates to the origin of the terrorist group. Marchal (2009) delves into the phenomenon of radical Islam within Somalia in order to develop an understanding of the dynamics that led to the creation of Al Shabaab. This sets the stage for the origin of the group. According to Roque (2009) there is no consensus regarding their exact date of origin. It is however known that the group sprouted as the militant remnant of al Itihaad al Islamiya (AIAI), a Somali Islamist Organization, in the early 2000s (Wise, 2011). Two different scholars trace Al Shabaab's origin to 2004 (Marchal, 2009; Mwangi, 2012). The group was formally incorporated at an AIAI conference in 2003, but the name "Al Shabaab" only came into use in 2007 (Shinn, 2011).

Wise (2011) links Al Shabaab's origin to Somalia's tumultuous past, whilst he relates their radicalization and rise to prominence to the Ethiopian invasion in December of 2006. He further states that the period between the Ethiopian invasion on 24 December 2006 and early 2008 can be marked as the true emergence of the group (Wise, 2011). Murphy (2011) agrees with Wise in stating that the Islamist group fed off the resentment that Somalis felt towards the presence of the Ethiopian military. In addition, Roque (2009) and Hansen (2013) support their argument. They argue that the presence of the Ethiopian military forces, in addition to that of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces prepared the ground in which organized radical responses could flourish (Roque, 2009:2; Hansen, 2013). The creation of Al Shabaab was thus a radical response to the presence of the Ethiopian military. Mwangi (2012) also shares the sentiments of these scholars. The occupation by Ethiopian troops created "a complex cocktail of nationalist, Islamist, anti-Ethiopian, anti-American, anti-Western and anti-foreigner sentiments" (Mwangi, 2012).

Al Shabaab originally emerged as an Islamist-nationalist guerrilla movement dedicated to combatting the insurgence of Ethiopian troops as well as the TFG forces (Wise, 2011:6). This was one of its principal goals/rallying points, but they would have to seek a new means of staying "relevant" with the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops in 2009 (Roque, 2009). The exact aims of the group are somewhat murky and unclearly expressed. However, Wise (2011), Mwangi (2012) and Ali (2008) argue that the group aims to establish a Somali Caliphate (Islamic State for Somalis of Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia). This would entail taking over Somalia and spreading their ideology throughout the Horn of Africa. In addition, they also wish to spread their ideological beliefs onwards to the areas of Central, South and Eastern Africa (Ali, 2008).

Wise (2011) and Ali (2008) add that the group aims to wage jihad (holy war) against the enemies of Islam; this includes the removal of Western influence (something one can link to globalization), not only in Somalia or even the Horn of Africa, but also throughout the whole of Africa. Furthermore, they also wish to eliminate all other forms of Islam that are not in line with their Salafi-Wahhabist strand (Wise, 2011; Ali, 2008). In order to achieve these goals and to win favour amongst the populace, the group has provided the citizenry with essential services and welfare. They have cleared roadblocks, repaired roads, organized markets and re-established order and a justice system through employing Sharia courts (Roque, 2009). By continuously expanding their local community infrastructure and support, Al Shabaab is able to sustain its goal of jihad.

6.3 Empirical Literature

Skillicorn (2015) of Queen's University has conducted an empirical assessment of propaganda, focusing on Al Qaeda, ISIS, and the Taliban. The author conducted a research on three magazines made by each terrorist organization in order to measure the level of propaganda intensity and found that ISIS ranked the highest out of the three. He also proposed a combined model of propaganda, in which imaginative language, deception, and gamification of language were

usual, and informative language and complexity were unusual (Skillicorn 2015). Though some of Skillicorn's findings are relevant to this study, the author mainly targeted the intensity of propaganda and attempted to measure it amongst competing organizations. Author and former US Special Operations Command advisor, James P. Farwell (2014) explored ISIS' power on the digital stage. He claimed that the group's appeal was as a fearsome warrior clan on a crusade against the west, a persona that quickly caught the attention of social media and spread like wildfire. Farwell (2014) claims that the only way to defeat ISIS is through systematic discretization and the destruction of this warrior persona they have built up around themselves. While this is also a very interesting point, and completely relevant to my research, Farwell overlooks the complexity of this warrior persona and does not delve deeper into how it was communicated and why it stuck with its audience.

Katagiri (2014) of the Department of International Security Studies, Air War College, has documented the threat of ISIS, including its well-known propaganda machine. Katagiri (2014) claims that this new wave of psychological and informational warfare has boosted ISIS' popularity and will continue to be the thorn in the side of western powers seeking to oust them from both the Middle East and the world at large. Katagiri (2014) concludes, however, that the power still lies with the western nations and not insurgent groups, though the former must be very careful that the balance does not tip out of their favor. Katagiri (2014) provides suggestions for the United States government, offering a deeper look at ISIS propaganda on both a communicative and psychological level, and suggesting ideas on how to counter and combat it.

7. Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Cybernetics Theory which poses as the science of interactions on which the communication theory is anchored on. As such, the explanations in this context will however be provided with emphasis on the theoretical explanations of the communication theory of Karl

Deutsch. The chief proponent of the cybernetics theory was Norbert Wiener (1948), who described the theory as a trans-disciplinary approach for exploring regulatory systems, their structures, constraints, and possibilities. According to Wiener, cybernetics poses as "the scientific study of control and communication in the animal and the machine. Cybernetics is thus applicable when a system being analyzed incorporates a closed signalling loop - originally referred to as a "circular causal" relationship - that is, where action by the system generates some change in its environment and that change is reflected in the system in some manner (feedback) that triggers a system change. Cybernetics is relevant for both, mechanical, physical, biological, cognitive, and social systems. The essential goal of the broad field of cybernetics is to understand and define the functions and processes of systems that have goals and that participate in circular, causal chains that move from action to sensing to comparison with desired goal, and again to action. Its focus is how anything (digital, mechanical or biological) processes information, reacts to information and changes or can be changed to better accomplish the tasks earlier mentioned. Cybernetics includes the study of feedback, black boxes and derived concepts such as communication and control in living organisms, machines and organizations including self-organization. In the 21st century, the term is often used in a rather loose way to imply "control of any system using technology.

In applying the theory to the study, it is clearly evident that international terrorism as evolved over the years is highly premised on a network of interactions and communication. As such, efforts have so far been made by this study in providing explanations on the role played by communication which is highly dependent on the level of flow of information, in aiding the activities of global terrorism with specific emphasis on ISIS. The emphasis of the theory on negative feedback mechanism however defines the revolution behind ICT, especially with reference to the utilization of the social media tools such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, Online gaming by newly emerged terrorism network like ISIS and

the attendant consequences it has generated in the society and the world at large. Specifically, the cybernetics theory is relevant to the study and can be effectively used to explain how the characteristics of communication channels as well as, social networks can be valuable for group activism like the ones perpetrated by ISIS, through the unfortunate establishment of ties between people from different background and diverse cultures across the world. It is worthy to note that, the anonymity provided by the internet, the egalitarian nature of Information and Communication Technology today have no doubt proven to be useful in providing information and opening of opportunities at a low cost.

8. Methodology

The research design that was adopted for this study is the descriptive and historical methods. In adopting this research method, the efforts were geared towards investigating the impact of globalization on terrorism. This design aided the researcher in gathering data from the relevant secondary sources so as to enable the conduct of a proper research, as well as, make inquiry into the various strategies employed by terrorist organizations to carry out their operations. Other relevant information that this design allowed the researcher to gain access to were those obtainable in other countries, as well as, radical Islamic sects that have the same modus operandi like the ISIS. This enabled the researcher in drawing a valid conclusion for the study.

Based on the structure of this study, the independent variables include information and communication technology and social media, while the various forms of terrorist activities were the dependent variables. The data collected for this study was analyzed qualitatively. Qualitative analysis is essentially normative oriented, which by its nature, is critical in perspective. It is also largely based on theory and logic. This is because it attempts to understand historical development and explain socio-political conditions in totality, and to address social problems not only objectively but also historical (Creswell, 2014).

9. Evaluation of Research Questions

9.1 Research questions 1

What is the impact of new media on international security and world peace?

Extremist terrorist groups like the Al Qaeda and ISIS have both incorporated a hybrid communication structure. This structure allows both groups to centrally control communication strategies and propaganda themes. By expanding into expansive social media networks, al Qaeda and ISIS distribute propaganda flatly and quickly to global audiences. Although both groups utilize hybrid communication structures, ISIS attempts to control each section of its structure through many control mechanisms. Both groups utilize several social media outlets to further distribute propaganda. By distributing and redistributing large quantities of propaganda throughout popular new media technologies, al Qaeda and ISIS expose large audiences to recruiting propaganda, maintain strong online presences, and thereby attract attention and potentially recruit new members. Both groups survey audiences to focus propaganda. Although al Qaeda collects information from social media users, most propaganda is tailored toward Muslims. ISIS, on the other hand, uses popular or trending topics to mask its propaganda or redirect social media users to other propaganda sites.

Additionally, unlike al Qaeda, ISIS uses social media to predict audience support prior to releasing major propaganda pieces. Since online games attract huge numbers of networked players, al Qaeda and ISIS have both developed video games to access these vast audiences. Al Qaeda's games maintained a focus on Muslims by centering on the defense of Islam. ISIS, on the other hand, mirrored its game after another widely popular online game. This way, ISIS, exploited the popularity of another new media technology or topic and thereby benefited through association or assimilation.

It must be noted here that a stark contrast exists between al Qaeda and ISIS messages. Al Qaeda attempts to recruit others to commit terrorism

against non-Muslims anywhere in the world. Alternatively, ISIS is focused on a violent revolution in Muslim majority countries rather than attacking their Western sponsors. Therefore, ISIS is concerned with gaining and maintaining control of its territory, and they would like nothing more than for the West to “leave it alone to establish the Utopia. By projecting a large and successful online image, ISIS also invites others to join them in their success.

From whatever perspective, the activities of both al Qaeda and ISIS are inimical to peaceful existence, hence considered a threat to international security and world peace. This is because, information and communication technology has bridged the information divide that hitherto existed thereby bringing about easy access to all sorts of news which has the potency of influencing character and forming habit, most of which does not promote peaceful living. On this note, it can be affirmed on grounds of the potency and efficacy with which information and communication technology provides a fertile ground for terrorism to thrive with ease.

9.2 Research Questions 2

What is the impact of the innovative tendencies of social media on the recruitment of young people for terrorism?

Blogs and social media are key components of violent extremist groups’ active recruiting strategies. Blogs inadvertently assist violent extremist groups in narrow-casting their propaganda, and they allow them to identify trending or popular online topics. Because they center on specific issues, blogs sort audiences by demographic, sex, religion, or a host of other factors. Once audiences are narrowed by blog topic, violent extremist groups can interact with audiences, gather preferences, and narrowcast propaganda toward these focused audiences.

Since blog sites identify trending or popular online topics, violent extremist groups can manipulate propaganda to align with these popular issues. By linking propaganda to popular topics or hiding propaganda behind related titles, violent

extremist groups benefit from the large amount of attention and activity that blogs generate. By hiding propaganda behind misleading titles, violent extremist groups can entice bloggers to follow links to propaganda or interact unknowingly with violent extremists. Facebook is the most popular social media venue online.

Within social media, users produce and consume an enormous number of videos, movies, audio clips, and several other types of media. Violent extremist groups also produce vast quantities of propaganda and utilize overt and surreptitious recruiting tactics when discussing or disseminating propaganda throughout social media networks. Some propaganda is obvious. It contains images of violence, logos from violent extremist groups, or is directly attributable to violent extremist groups. Other propaganda is less obvious. It portrays members as humanitarian aid workers or helping the poor.

Regardless of tactic, and like blogs, social media allows violent extremist groups to observe and interact with vast numbers of social media users, publicize propaganda, and project a huge online presence throughout globally distributed social media networks. Because social media is easy to use and involves expansive audiences, violent extremist groups have fully incorporated it into recruiting strategies. Since social media attracts enormous and networked audiences, violent extremist groups push their members to exploit social media to its fullest. In view of the above analysis, it can be affirmed that the innovative tendencies of social media tend to promote the recruitment of young people for terrorism purposes.

10. Discussion

The evaluation of question one revealed that the hybrid communication structure of extremist terrorist groups as facilitated by information and communication technology has the tendency to promote threat to international security and world peace. This is because of the user-friendly platform which makes it easy for sharing information like propaganda to be distributed

online. This finding agrees with the views of Goodman, Kirk and Kirk (2007) who stated that there are many characteristics of the Internet, or cyberspace as they refer to it, that creates an environment conducive to the promotion of the ideas and ideals of terrorist organizations. These include anonymity, confidentiality, accessibility, low costs, intelligent interfaces, ease of use and the “force multiplier”. The Internet provides users with an uncensored and essentially anonymous forum, which they can use as a means of conducting research, gathering intelligence and creating communication networks. Moreover, studies on terrorist communication have revealed a concern for the protection of anonymity, for example many posts on terrorist websites inform “users” of ways in which they can avoid spyware and surveillance. Furthermore, the free availability of encryption programmes has also provided terrorist organizations with the ability to communicate with one another via secure conduits without “detection.” In addition, it is also extremely difficult to effectively track terrorist communications when they are utilising emails, as account information is usually anonymous, or the email messages are encrypted.

The finding also agrees with the view of Cronin (2003) that the increased availability of and access to ICT, specifically the Internet, has made it much easier for terrorist organizations to communicate, plan and coordinate attacks. Thus, ICT has essentially aided terrorists in their aims and could be said to have facilitated international terrorism. Furthermore, the mere existence and evolution of cyberspace has created a new type of terrorism that could possibly be used in conjunction with traditional terrorist attacks. It is however important to note that technology has not encouraged international terrorism, but that it has only aided/facilitated it. It is argued that globalization has also allowed terrorist organizations to move and reach across international borders in the same way that business and commerce do. In addition, terrorist organizations often make use of the same channels as business and commerce. For example, the dropping of barriers has enabled terrorist

organizations such as Al Qaeda to move without prohibition across borders and establish terrorist cells in states around the globe.

The evaluation of question two revealed that the innovative tendencies of social media tend to promote a new trend of international terrorism and its expansion. This is because social media gives many people’s access to videos, movies, audio clips, and several other types of media that promotes the new trend of terrorism at the international level. This finding agrees with the view of Weimann (2014) that today, 90 percent of terrorist groups’ communications over the Internet are accomplished through social media. Younger people favour social media, which is free, as well as interactive. Social media enables anyone to share messaging, contribute to the discussion, and even ask questions of terrorist group leaders. Weimann (2014) goes on to illustrate just how quickly social media use and technology is evolving. Facebook, which began in 2004, had 1.31 billion users a decade later. YouTube, which began in 2005, as of last year counted 100 hours of video uploaded each minute. And Twitter, which started in 2006, had 555 million Twitter users tweeting about 58 million tweets a day last year.

11. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between ICT and international terrorism. It was observed that ICT which was supposed to be an innovative tool that should no doubt contribute to accelerate development of productive forces, scientific and technological progress, as well as a more intensive and productive communication among states and their people has become a self-interested, inexorable, corrupting market culture into traditional communities. This is because it has provided a motivation for terrorist activities, through facilitating methods for it such as: computerization, digitization, satellite communication, optic fibre and the internet. To address the above issues, this researcher was interested in examining how the new media pose any identifiable threat on international security

and world peace; the impact of the innovative tendencies of social media on international terrorism; and if modern communication technologies have aided ISIS in perpetrating terrorist activities.

12. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been reached:

- i. Understanding terrorist recruitment through information and communication technology is vital to counterterrorism. Terrorism does not start solely from macro-level root causes. Without members, terrorist organizations cannot exist. Understanding how and why an individual is radicalized and recruited into a terrorist organization is therefore an important part of addressing the macro level root causes via the micro-level radicalizing factors.
- ii. Cyberspace is an international domain without state borders so the issue of terrorists operating within cyberspace cannot be addressed by a single state. There needs to be discourse within the United Nations and other international bodies so that a clear understanding can be established among governments across the world. The current issue is that no major power really wants to address the issue of cyber security because they have become reliant on cyber espionage.
- iii. Creating laws to limit actions a legitimate actor can take in cyberspace would most likely limit, if not completely outlaw, mass surveillance programs that many states use. By publicly discussing the issue states may potentially weaken themselves by taking away one of their tools for self-defense: intelligence gathering. Because of the security dilemma states are unlikely to do this so international regulation on actions within cyberspace are unlikely to progress until a major power steps forward and really pushes a pro-cyber security agenda.
- iv. States need to step forward and take responsibility in establishing norms of good faith relationships in cyberspace. Until this happens there will be few international laws placed on the internet and few international restrictions placed on terrorists looking to operate within cyberspace. States need to make a choice between sacrificing their ability to operate freely in cyberspace and allowing terrorist free reign to engage in propaganda campaigns and cyber-attacks. As it is now, the internet is a very attractive option for terrorists because they do not need to fear international pressures. If a terrorist uses the internet to attack a state it is the responsibility of that state to respond and no one else. This limits the amount of resistance terrorists' face by using the internet as a tool for insurgency. It is much easier for the terrorist to then make a cost-benefit analysis on whether to use the internet due to a lack of external influence.
- v. States need to engage in multilateral discussions and agreements that will regulate cyberspace. The first step in this discussion is to establish norms of peaceful cohabitation in cyberspace. States need to stop covertly hacking each other for information and instead rely on other means to obtain intelligence. Private Citizens are so used to hearing about major hacks that they are becoming desensitized to cyber violence and norms established against these kinds of action would do a good job of reminding citizens of the dangers present on the internet. Cyberwar is at its heart information warfare and governments need to realize that they are not enemies in information warfare. The real enemies are terrorist and cybercriminals who will use tensions between different states in cyberspace to exploit the system and strengthen their own insurgency while delegitimizing real governments.

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