

Social Media: A Protagonist for Terrorism

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism is ubiquitous. Most states around the world have experienced some form of terrorism. Terrorism has undermined the profile of Nigeria and has generated a tense and fragile political system. This paper underscores that the prevalence of grievance and the lack of an innovative economic base in Nigeria are amongst the key factors that stimulate terrorism in the state. In Nigeria, terrorist activities have become endemic. A cursory look on these activities has proven that social media has become a source for propagating terrorism. This has generated multifarious security challenges as well. This paper is aimed at analyzing terrorism and social media. It further proceeds to examine the main thrust of the paper submitting that social media is a viable tool for terrorists. From this standpoint, the paper explores a case study analysis to further explain and evaluate the symbiotic relationship between social media and terrorism in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS

E-Terrorism, Globalization, Internet and Nigeria, Social Media, Terrorism

INTRODUCTION

Terrorist from all over the world, in privacy have the opportunity to disseminate terrorist ideologies and propaganda through the Internet. This publicity is transmitted through the use of a gizmo on social media platforms, essentially given the fact that it can be transmitted to a wide pool of audience (Odunsi, 2017, p. 3). According to Anna (2013, p. 1), terrorism is a media phenomenon that enables terrorists to create awareness, instigate fear, interrupt daily living, and generally garner attention (Altheide, 2013).

With the ushering of globalization, an individual through the use of gadgets can use digital interface such as social media to connect with a vast majority of the world's population. The world indeed, has turned into a global village. Terrorist activities live and breathe on the wave of social media platforms with which it thrives (Opejobi, 2017, p. 1). Studies have found that “nearly 90% of the organized terrorism takes place online through the mode of social media” (Weimann, 2012). Terrorism has increasingly become a sophisticated and dangerous threat to world order with the aid of advanced information technology with the phenomenal growth in social media (Majekodunmi, 2015, p. 128).

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

This paper hinges on two significant discussions based on dependency model and the grievance model.

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First, the discourse of dependency which is interconnected with globalization is essential in exploring social media as a tool for terrorist activities in Nigeria, given that it is a sub-concept of the political economy theory or the theory of economic imperialism which are sacrosanct issues that aids and affects terrorism in Nigeria.

The dependency theory connects to neo-Marxist theory as an economic radical theory. The crucial progenitors of the theory are: Samir Amin (1973), Andre Gunder Frank (1969), Daniel A. Offiong (1980), Raul Prebisch (1950), Paul Baran (1967), Dos Santos (1970), and Scott Arighi (1992). According to Fukuyama, (1992, p.100): “This theory has been the most recent attempt to keep Marxism alive in the underdeveloped world.” This theory depicts that the world is alienated amongst the wealthy and the poor countries and operating in such a way that the less-developed countries are financially and administratively dependent on economically developed countries (Olaniyi, 2001, p. 16). The manipulation of less developed countries are propagated by colonialism and by their disadvantaged position in the world economy, which situates them as being connected to discounted principal merchandises such as agronomic produces and raw supplies (Odozibodo, 2014, p. 18).

Conversely, technologically advanced countries produces extortionate and highly-inflated imports for trade to the less industrialized countries such as Nigeria. This development further enriches the states that are at the top of the world’s financial table, whilst they exploit the less advanced countries on the marginal side of the world-system (Olney, 2001, p. 10). Implementing the procedures and practices of international financial and economic matters to best suit the economically advanced nation-states, thereby retaining the dependency pattern of the less-developed countries (Nwachukwu, et al, 2015, p. 276).

Okereke and Ekpe (2002) eulogized the dependency theory and agreed that the theory marks a vociferous exit from the other existing theories of colonialism, thereby giving an acumen on how to untangle various corollaries by which states in the periphery level are subjugated by those at the center level through dependency. Generally, the application of this theory lies in the strength of its practicality. For example, this theory delineates the connexion between the center and the periphery levels of the world system and has the propensity for hypothesis testing and pragmatic generalizations (Odozibodo, 2014, p. 19). It therefore suffices to assert that Nigeria is a disadvantaged country under the influence of globalisation. Nigeria is the sixth largest oil exporter with a daily yield of about two million barrels, per foreign exchange. Nigeria is vastly reliant on the trade of crude oil to the measure of over ninety per cent (90%) of our nationwide revenue (Majekodunmi and Adejumon, 2012, p. 201). Consequently, it goes without saying that globalization has generated the dependency of the Nigerian economy, since its basic export is convolutedly intertwined around raw materials (Majekodunmi and Adejumon, 2012, p. 201).

According to Udoette (2004, p. 34), globalisation is nothing but an enormous agenda of global politics, which is an imposing system of neo-colonialism. Boko Haram’s rejection of westernization and ideologies, the refusal to be dependent on the globalization, albeit westernization influence and penetration is a strong motivation and correlation for social media terrorism.

This discourse is apposite in this paper as Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country rich and unique with its diverse cultures, religions, values, and norms. Every individual belongs to a particular culture and way of life that is of utmost value, uniqueness and benefit to such individual. However, globalization undermines culture, cultural norms and values immensely. As such, an individual will not want his or her culture to be subsumed under another culture. Thus, culture can be identified as “social glue that unites individuals under an umbrella” (Olomogbo, 2015, p. 25).

It is conceivable that with the cultural penetration of globalization, the advent of a definite set of standards and principles that remains principal and being disseminated from place to place across the globe, there are bound to be conflict, which could further degenerate into violence and terrorism (Douglas, 1992).

It is crucial to note that Nigeria is a multi-cultural state, with cultural boundaries. It is communal, oriented as opposed to a total fusion of all cultures for all citizens. However, the theory of dependency

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