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## MEDIA ORDERING OF GLOBAL PEACE AMIDST DIVERSITY - MIDWIVING OR UMPIRING?

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### **Abstract**

*Insurgency has become a global phenomenon that all regions of the globe now grapple with more than ever before. In fact, the multiplication of insurgent groups in the world has become a major threat to ordering global peace. Do media actually perform their traditional roles of information and education? This work attempts to assess people's awareness about insurgent groups around the globe. It further tests public perception of popular global insurgent groups (GIGs) in relation to their effect on global peace. Respondents' source of information about the GIGs is also part of the focus of the study. The study adopted survey method with questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The analysis which was done using SPSS was discussed in a narrative form. Our findings cover the roles of the media and individual in providing necessary information to the audience about the GIG's. They also revealed the causes of violence and terrorism in the society. It was then recommended that the media should be more responsive and sensitive in performing their traditional functions of informing and educating so as not to play up an "us-vs-them" scenario thereby polarizing and pitching different segments of the public against one another.*

**Keywords:** *Global Insurgent Groups (GIGs), Insurgency, Terrorism, Media Ordering, Global Peace, Public Perception*

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### **1.0 Introduction**

That insurgency has become a global phenomenon since the 9/11 attack of the United States has never been in doubt (Adhami, 2007). In fact, American soldiers and their allies have continued to struggle to win the war against global terrorism in countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan and the Phillipines (Eikmer, 2005). These groups which range from Al Qaeda, ISIL, Al Shabab to Boko Haram employ different strategies and means to achieve their goals. Mainly, terrorism is their biggest weapon as they attack to have maximum impacts on their perceived enemies. Through this, they seek media attention which in turn gives them recognition and some level of legitimacy and respectability in their audience (Nacos 2002 as cited by Bielgen, 2012). The main question to be answered here is whether the insurgent groups through the media are gaining the attention of their target audience or not (Bielgen, 2012).

The media are identified with some traditional functions in the society. They serve the society by providing surveillance, correlation, cultural transmission and entertainment services (Wright 1976 as cited by Ojebode, 2010). Added to these functions are the education and information traditional functions that the media perform. How well do the media fare in the performance of these functions in the coverage of insurgent activities in the world? How much of the information do the media give to the people on global insurgent groups? Media

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scholars and security experts have accused western media (and we supposed non-western ones too) of focusing more on acts of terrorism (Eilkener, 2005; Bielgen, 2012). They argue that the media are serving the much needed media-related goals of insurgent groups by getting attention and recognition for them (insurgent groups). It is even posited that though the media and terrorist groups pursue “parallel paths” they seem posed to achieve the same end (Fang, 1997). Both the media and the violent groups compete for audience attention.

Global insurgency and insurgent groups received little policy and scholarly attentions before the 9/11 event of 2001. Since then, different dynamics of global insurgency have been studied (Kilcullen, 2004). These studies to date are of varied scopes. While some scholars look at it from local point of view (Sampson, 2015; Olojo, 2014; Onuoha, 2014; Okoro & Odoemelum, 2013; Ajayi, 2012; Adebayo, 2010), others give their study of insurgency global perspectives (Thorne, 2006; Eikmeier, 2005; Lai & Larsen, Bob, n.d). Beyond the scope concept, the studies on insurgency and insurgent groups have also brought into lime light the study of a number of constructs within this study area. Significant in this area are studies that distinguish between the controversial terms and use of “labeling” such as “terrorist”, “guerilla” and ‘insurgent’ groups (Moghadam, Berger and Beliakova, 2014). There are those who find out the causes of insurgency, thereby proffering solutions to it (Sampson, 2015; Muzan, 2014; Olojo, 2014; Onuoha, 2014; Awoniyi, 2013; Adebayo, 2010; Thorne, 2006; Lai & Larsen, Bob, undated; Kilcullen, 2004). There are also studies on the ideological, systemic and operational nature of global insurgent groups (Moghadam, Berger, and Beliakova, 2014; Adhami, 2007). Surely, many media scholars have also added their voices to the global conversation in this area of enquiry in diverse directions ranging from framing (Okoro & Odoemelum, 2013; Khan, 2011), effects of media coverage of insurgent groups (Bilgen, 2012, Cocks & Heavens, 2014; Bob, undated) to media role in combating the menace (Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2013; Orebiyi & Orebiyi, 2012).

But after wading through the flood of existing literature on the subject matter, there appears to be an untrodden path- assessing public knowledge and awareness of global insurgent groups vis-à-vis their perception and source(s) of information on the groups. This work therefore, attempts to assess people’s awareness and perception of popular global insurgent groups (GIGs) in relation to their effect on global peace. It also tries to look at the perceived causes of this global menace.

## 2.0 Dynamics and Nature of Global Insurgent Groups

There is a level of yet unresolved controversy concerning what constitutes insurgency, guerrilla acts and terrorism. This is so because all share some common features. Prime among these feature are ideological motivation, interest in power and, or policy change and violent attacks on both of government and the civilians or either of them to gain recognition for their perceived goal(s) (Moghadam, Berger, and Beliakova, 2014). Our focus here is not to dabble into this area of controversy by trying to create that distinction that hardly exists in literature. *Nigeria Watch* (2011) puts it right by saying:

The problem is that we often don’t have enough information to determine whether individuals fit such criteria... the lines are blurred. Freedom fighters and guerrillas are often disqualified by governments as terrorists or bandits, and politicians are

frequently accused of criminal wrong-doing. Nigeria is no exception in this regard...

To circumvent this divergently digressing conceptual debate, we regard all violent and blood shedding group as insurgents. This is, firstly because the term terrorism is very difficult to define acceptably. Some scholars even have reason to disagree with the U.S definition of the term, saying it is more of serving her international policy interests than making the concept clear to all. Smith (2012), for instance, writes:

The Bush Administration has conflated and confused the meanings of terrorism and insurgency...but in dealing with these phenomena definitions are crucial, because definitions dictate the strategy and tactics that are used to defeat them, and measures that may be effective against one are likely to be futile or worse against the other. Specifically, the author believes, military action is rarely successful against terrorism, which is best dealt with through law enforcement methods.

The foregoing implies that the U.S tactically and practically defines terrorism to justify her global anti-terror policies which the author observes hardly works. Having commented that Bush administration failed to differentiate between the meanings of terrorism and insurgency confusing the former to the later due to its post 9/11 policy orientation and that “Bush spokespeople and the president himself consistently have used the terms insurrection and terrorism interchangeably, indiscriminately, and inaccurately, Smith (2012) concludes that:

This has not simply been a case of intellectual carelessness. It has been a conscious effort to label any group that threatened any status quo of which they approved as a “terrorist organization,” without any thought to the origins of or reasons for the struggle being waged.... How would we label indigenous dissidents trying to overthrow any “friendly,” but not necessarily democratic governments? Saudi Arabia and Morocco come to mind. It’s not a stretch to say that they would immediately be labeled terrorists. How would we label a group of Iranians who committed terrorist acts? Of course, given how we feel about the Mullahs, they would be freedom fighters, never terrorists! The moral here is that it has not been advantageous to become involved in any insurrection or national liberation movement against any country that is friendly to the United States. In doing so, you will be branded a terrorist, and that brings with it certain moral, emotional, and legal consequences.

Treading this line of argument is Merari (1993) who posits that the three commonly agreed characteristics of terrorism: “the use of violence, political objectives and, the intention of sowing fear in a target population... reflects, by and large, the perceptions and attitude of Western academics and officials” said they are not only deficient in providing enough

grounds to differentiate between other forms of violent conflicts such as guerrilla and conventional war, many non-western countries and scholars also disagree.

Not only Syrian, Libyan and Iranian opinions of what constitutes terrorism are quite different, but, most likely, those of the many other Third World countries. The evolving Western consensus about the essence of terrorism is probably not shared by the majority of people on earth (Merari (1993)).

This shows that the controversy over what constitutes terrorism has even existed long before the 9/11 attack of the twin tower and that the newer version of meaning of terrorism remains mainly western and can be termed Americas weapon against the so called unfriendly countries as cited above. Based on this, we align our opinion with those scholars who identify terrorism as one of the strategies of insurgent groups (Merari, 1993; usiraq.procon.org, 2015). They in fact believe that insurgencies are more terrible than terrorism which is short termed and will vanish within the maximum of 12 years whether countered or left to operate.

It is however unfortunate that the Nigerian Terrorism Act 2011 as amended is silent on the meaning of terrorism or terrorist per se. It only details all acts executed for terrorist objectives to the extent that kidnapping, hijacking of ship by pirates and mere threatening to act of terrorism are enough offence of terrorism (Terrorism Act, 2011). Whereas literature (Bourne, 2010; Bourne, 2011a; Bourne, 2011b; Nigeria Watch, 2011; Home Office, 2015) confirms that terrorist bodies may be political in nature and agenda and can subsequently be banned or proscribed, it is surprising that the Nigerian Terrorist Act 2011 excludes political parties from its definition of organisations that can be proscribed for terrorist acts. It states, categorically and without any limiting clause, in Section 2(3)(ii) that “for the avoidance of doubts political parties should not be regarded as proscribed organizations and nobody should be treated as such because of his/her political beliefs.” Perhaps this is why political killings, threat and intimidation go unbridled in Nigeria such that number of people massacred by political actors is either equal or more than that of terrorist acts (Nigeria Watch, 2011).

How can Nigeria where a single political party (Peoples Democratic Party) in five years committed 75% of all political violence (Nigeria Watch, 2011) killing people in multiple of thousands be an exception when political party proscription is a practice all over the world (Bourne, 2011). Once a party seems to be seeking power through illegal (not necessarily undemocratic) means, even if not violent, the party stands the risk of proscription. A protest against the Saudi Monarch is an anti-state and punishable crime most likely to be supported by the U.S, the global sponsor of democracy (Merari, 1993). United Kingdom, for instance, in a list of 81 “Proscribed Terrorist Organisations”, included organizations of varying interests, ranging from religion (Christian and Islamic) to politics, once they adopt terrorism (violence) as their main strategy. The latter part of its (U.K) definition of terrorism states:

The use or threat of such action must be designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public and be undertaken for the purpose of advancing a

political, religious, racial or ideological cause (Home Office, 2015:2).

There is, therefore, a definitional deficiency in the “acts of terrorism” as contained in the Nigerian Terrorism Act 2011, be it deliberate or oversight. This also validates Merari’s (1993) opinion that official definitions usually reflect the colouration of the defining state’s policy or the bias of the defining authority. It is from this understanding, therefore, that we carve out the construct of global insurgent groups (GIG’s) as a generic term for the purpose of this study. Hence, any resistance group adopting violence as strategy in any region of the world is accommodated in this construct- global insurgent groups (GIG’s).

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Causes of Insurgency in the World

Apart from the fact that common sense calls to the fact that causes are helpful in finding solutions to problems, both classical science and arts are built on laws and principles of causality or cause and effect; hence “there are no events that happen by chance” and “Every body continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a right line, unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed upon it” (Bergman and Collins, 2004; Zinkernagel, 2009). Today, no one needs an empirical evidence to agree that the world is not at peace. From the East to the West, North to South and of course Middle East, absolute peace is rare to find. The law of survival of the fittest becomes more operational ever than before. Each day hyper-dangerous groups emerge from different regions of the globe, venting their angers on innocent civilians, the military and even governments. If our children turn angry at home, we do not allow our patience to wean until we know the cause of the anger; we then affectionately address it accordingly. The same way, it is wrong to assume that the multiplicity of dangerous insurgent groups in our society today do not have original grievances against the authority that be locally and globally. Again, it is not correct to think that even if they are aggrieved, they have no genuine case to present. May be the notion we hold about these groups complicate the case rather than resolving it.

Of course, a right thinking individual needs no persuasion to condemn any form of violence (terrorism and its siblings) against all living beings not only human. But if today’s world has up to 220 terrorist and, or insurgent groups to grapple with, while the number also has the potential to increase geometrically, there is then the need to identify the reason(s) behind this venomous phenomenon. Imagine that the number of people who died from terrorist activities has increased in fivefold since 2000 with the total number of global deaths estimated at more than 16,000 in 2012 alone (Global Terrorism Index, 2014). How many could have occurred ever since then till now, for instance.

Tracing the cause(s) of insurgencies globally, there is consensus in literature that the first and prime goal of all insurgent groups in the globe is to achieve certain “political, economic, religious, or social goal” (Home Office, 2015) for which the insurgent group may adopt violent (terrorist) method to achieve. Favouring this position are Lai and Larsen (undated) who argue that grievance is the major cause of terrorist acts by insurgent groups. Borrowing from deprivation theory, they identify “sources of grievances” as mainly “political, social, and economic inequality” and “deprivation” adding that when the

deprivation and inequality gaps are experienced in the society, some people team up as social groups to seek redress. It is only when the felt gaps are not adjusted that the so called social group gradually turn violent against the perceived aggressor (the government usually). In the words of Lai and Larsen (undated):

...deprivation leads to frustration, which can precipitate aggression against those in power (i.e. those perceived to be the aggressors) when some stimulus releases the pent-up frustration. The deprivation that drives particular groups to violence may be absolute or relative ...the gap between expectations and actual achievements, would contribute to the increased likelihood that rebellions would occur. ...other sources of grievance ... are political, social, and economic inequality...(which) leads some segment of the population to be dissatisfied with the current status quo, increasing the likelihood that they will rebel....Deprivation initially leads to the development of a social movement, which seeks to address the gap between the group's desired state and current state. The formation of terrorist organizations and the use of violence often follow from the inability of the social movement to achieve the desired changes... the greater the degree of discrimination and inequality faced by groups in a state, the more likely these groups will resort to acts of terrorism and violence against the state.

This widely held position among scholars (Seger, 2001; Adebayo, 2010; Sampson, undated) can be summarised as imbalances at the various levels of our society, locally and globally. One other thing deduced from the above is that most groups turn violent as a result of obvious and deliberate marginalization. Hence, the best counter-terrorism strategy is removal or drastic reduction of imbalances and deliberate marginalization of a segment of local and global society. Otherwise, the menace will continue troubling the world. Presently, it is difficult to say the exact number of terrorist or insurgent groups there is in the world. This is because different countries and institutions use different criteria to conceptualise what constitutes terrorism. While the U.K, in 2006 enlisted 54 (but 81 in 2015) proscribed terrorist organisations (ranging from religious, racial, social to political) , the EU autonomous list contained names of 45 individuals and 48 groups or entities and American governmental sources also maintain different watch-lists containing up to 200,000 names. But the U.N list compiled in 2006 contains names of 250 individuals and 123 entities associated with Al-Qaida and the Taliban (Thorne, 2006). Out of these muddled up numbers, five are identified to be deadliest amongst all. They are listed here in their ranking order: (1.)The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ISIS); (2.) Boko Haram; (3.) Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force; (4.) Haqqani Network; (5.) Kataib Hezbollah (Centre for National Interest, 2014). However, in the official list of the U.K, none of the above five but Al-Qaeda ranking tenth appears in the first ten, viz:

- i. 17 November Revolutionary Organisation (N17)
- ii. Abdallah Azzam Brigades, including the Ziyad al-Jarrah Battalions (AAB)
- iii. Abu Nidal Organisation (ANO)
- iv. Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)
- v. Ajnad Misr (Soldiers of Egypt)

- vi. Al-Gama'at al-Islamiya (GI)
- vii. Al Ghurabaa
- viii. Al Ittihad Al Islamia (AIAI)
- ix. Al Murabitun
- x. Al Qa'ida (AQ) (Home Office, 2015)

This shows that the issue of in global insurgent groups and global peace is more of “othering” than “ordering” masterminded by the super-powers of the world.

### **2.1.2 Media as Instrument of Education and Information**

The media, in any modern society, play very crucial roles to satisfy information and education needs of the people. Media scholars are agreed on different roles that time and development in a society has put on the door step of an organ widely referred to as the fourth estate of the realm. In fact, and in truth, Dominick's (2013:31) assertion that “for any society to exist, certain communication needs must be met” is not an overstatement. In highlighting these important roles of the media, Akinfeleye (2011) posits that the basic philosophical standings of the media are anchored on the tripartite legs of information, education and entertainment. The first two hold very crucial position in the operations of any media organization in a society. Looking at the media from the same binocular, McQuail (2005:52) also describes the media as a “potent force for public enlightenment... and popular education”. He (McQuail, 2005) recognizing further the role of informing by the media argues they make “contribution to the progress of the society by spreading information and ideas...”.

Even though there are other functions which time and changes in the society have conferred on the media, it is observed that these roles fall within the precinct of the traditional roles of educating and informing the public. Such other functions as typified by Dominick (2013:32-39) include surveillance, interpretation, transmission of values and socialization have elements of the traditional role of information and education imbibed in them. While surveillance encapsulates news and information, interpretation, transmission of values and socialization all point to educating and enlightening media audience. Thus, the mass media can be safely referred to as mass educator (McQuail, 2005).

### **2.1.3 Media Coverage of Global Insurgent Groups (Gig's) and their Activities**

As established in the preceding paragraphs, the media play very crucial roles of satisfying the information and education needs of the public. Through their role of surveillance (which also embeds news gathering and information role), the media are able to warn the public on impending dangers such as natural disasters, depressing economic situation or even terrorism (Dominick, 2013). Not only that, the media has also helped, in no small measure, to create public awareness about issues affecting the peaceful co-existence and social well-being of the global community. One of such, and a raging one at that, is the menace of global insurgency. How have the media been able to shed light on global terrorism without unnecessarily serving as the mouthpiece of such groups has been an issue of scholarly concerns. The media appear to be at a cross road. The need to scoop breaking news and put such in the front burner of issues (especially when there are terrorist attacks) has made scholars accuse them of helping to further the cause of insurgent groups. Bilgen (2012)

sees the media attention to terrorists' acts as serving as a willing tool for these groups. He (Bilgen, 2012) citing Nacos (2006) says further:

As some remarkable terrorist attacks in history indicate, whether it is in the United States (US), Europe, or the Middle East, it is by and large the case that the architects of terrorism exploit the media for the benefit of their operational efficiency, information gathering, recruitment, fund raising, and propaganda schemes (Bilgen, 2012)

However, Bilgen (2012) seems to understand the kind of dilemma the media have found themselves. The media must give coverage to terrorists' acts so as to gain the much needed public attention which would, in turn, bring in revenues. He argues further that it is safe to say that the media and terrorism enjoys a mutually beneficial relationship. In what ways and manner does this relationship occur? What are the goals of terrorism that the media inadvertently promote? In what ways can this negative effect of the media be mitigated? These are questions that are worth exploring.

Hoffman (2008) as cited by Bilgen (2012) provides an explanation of the kind of romance between terrorism and the media. He posits that no terrorists' act is effective without media coverage. Such acts will be limited only to the area affected. But with the attention of the media, the act becomes publicized beyond the area of attack. This, in a way, is helping the terrorists achieve their aim of reaching a "wider audience" which is their goal in the first place. In illustrating this, Bilgen (2012) pointed to the 9/11 2001 attacks on the twin tower of the World Trade Centre. He writes that the choice of the place of the attack and the eventual media attention were some of the reasons that gave the attacks global publicity. The Australian café siege, the France Hebdo killing as well as Garissa University massacre are some of the recent examples of insurgent groups' global media attention seeking strategies. A look back at these heinous crimes would reveal that terrorism indeed had the "ears" and the "eyes" of the entire global media. The argument here is that terrorism seek media attention and they get it.

However, media attention is not the only goal of terror groups. They seek to publicise their ideas and ideals, spread their message of fear and suspicion with the aim of creating a larger-than-life image Bilgen (2012). They appear succeeding in doing this through the media. The media focus and attention has ensured terrorists are given the status of legitimate world leaders through their constant coverage and continuous repetition of their messages and images. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS/ISIL) like its predecessors understand the power and influence of the media in serving as a conduit for their messages. When they release video of hostages being on the beheading "row", they are fully aware the media would give such the global reach they had intended. Indeed, there is hardly any video released by the group that has not attracted global attention through the media. James Foley, an American freelance journalist, was beheaded on August 19, 2014. A video of this condemnable act was posted online; got on to mainstream media and was watched by millions worldwide.

The media must perform their surveillance function of bringing news and information to their mass audience. Their lifeblood is inherent in their ability to break news

as they happen, especially now, that the industry has become more competitive more than ever before. However, the attention being given to terrorism and their perpetrators must be re-examined. We believe that a caution should be drawn from Nacos (2000) as cited by Asogwa, Iyere and Attah (2012:177) that “with massive news coverage the terrorist act would resemble the proverbial tree falling in the forest: if no one learned of an incident, it would be as if it had not occurred”. We also align with Bilgen’s (2102) position that the media, must as a matter of fact, in their coverage of terrorism and terror acts, differentiate between different global insurgent groups so as not to create an “otherization” or “us vs. them” scenario.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study is built on Social Responsibility Theory of the media. This theory, which originated from Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press in the US, is an off-shoot of the Libertarian or Free Press Theory Folarin (2008:27). It postulates that self-regulation is key to socially acceptable press behaviour (Folarin, 2008). The postulations of the theory, according to Folarin (2008) citing Siebert *et al* (1956:74); Kunczick (1988:48) and McQuail (1987:116ff), basically boil down to the traditional functions of information and education expected of the press in part and the entertainment cum watchdog role in addition. This theory applies to media practice in every democratic society where stringent government regulations are absent in relation to news reporting calling for a sort of self-censorship (Daramola, 2013; Eke, 2014). With this in mind, it is expected that the press, within the construct of self-regulation as mentioned above and milder external censorship, should be responsible for how well it plays its traditional responsibilities of education, information and entertainment of good taste proposed by this theory.

Since the focus of the study is to assess the awareness and perception of the public about global insurgent groups, it is therefore, woven around the first two tenets of the theory. We seek to find out how the media have fared in their role of making insurgency related information and education accessible to the public. Furtherance upon this, we enquire if the depth of information made available by the media is robust enough for people to take informed and self-protection action.

## 3.0 Methodology

The study adopted survey research design using questionnaire as data collection instrument. The samples were selected based on convenient sampling technique in three campuses of tertiary institution in Osogbo, Osun State and Ibadan in Oyo State, South western Nigeria. the campuses included Fountain University, Osogbo; University of Ibadan and the Polytechnic, Ibadan. Three hundred (300) copies of questionnaire were distributed across the three institutions but only two hundred and seventy five (275) were returned. The study was driven by the following key questions: How informed are people about global insurgent groups (GIG’s) and their activities? Which medium ranks highest as people’s source of information on global insurgent groups? What are the perceived causes of global insurgency?

Keeping these questions in mind, data were gleaned from respondents constituting the educated class of the society selected through convenient sampling technique in Ibadan and

Osogbo, the capital cities of Oyo and Osun States South-Western Nigeria. The study is purely quantitative in nature using questionnaire as instrument of data collection.

## **4.0 Results, Discussion And Findings**

### **4.1 Socio Demographic Data of the Respondents**

The aim of this article is to gauge public perception of global insurgent groups (GIG's) among educated people in Osun and Oyo States respectively. The respondents that were drawn from across three campuses of Fountain University, Osogbo; University of Ibadan, Ibadan and The Polytechnic, Ibadan respectively fall into the following demographics. The age bracket of 21-25 has the highest percentage (44.7%, n=123) followed by 15-20 (40%, n=110) while 26-30; 31-35 and 40-and above follow with 7.3 % (n=20), 2.9% (n=8) and 2.9% (n=8) respectively. 36-40 has the lowest percentage of 2.2 % (n=6). On educational attainment, undergraduate has the highest percentage (58.9%, n=162) followed by holders of first degree (10.9%, n=30). Respondents with Master's Degree; Higher National Diploma and National Diploma account for 6.9 % (n=19); 6.2% (n=17) and 8.4% (n=23) respectively. SSCE and NCE holders come from the rear with 5.8% (n=16) and 2.9% (n=8) each. On religion of the respondents, Christianity has the largest percentage 49.8% (n=137) trailed by Islam 40.7% (n=112) while atheism and indigenous/traditional religion have 2.5% (n=7) and 6.9% (n=19) each.

### **4.2 Sources of Information on Insurgents**

On source(s) of information about global insurgent groups (GIG's), television ranked the highest (53.1%; n=146) followed by the internet (48.7%; n=134) and newspapers (35.6%; n=98) respectively while radio (32.4%; n=89) is the least patronized of the media. The urban nature of the setting in which the questionnaire was administered may have accounted for this strong dependence on television. But when probed further about their programme preference, larger percentage (57.5%; n=158) of our respondents said they preferred entertainment to other television programmes. This shows that their dependence on television gratifies more of entertainment needs than information. This is further supported by the inability of most of the respondents to mention at least five global insurgent groups (GIG's).

### **4.3 Knowledge of Global Insurgent Groups (GIG's) by the Respondents**

When asked if insurgents are the same as terrorists, a larger percentage of the respondents (62%) supported the fact that insurgents and terrorists are the same. However, 21.8% of the respondents were of the opinion that terrorists and insurgents are not the same. The implication here is that a large chunk of the respondents were unable to differentiate between insurgents and terrorists. This validates the opinion of Merari (1993) who believes that terrorism does not exist for its own sake but as an insurgent strategy. The large number of those who disagreed and those who were indifferent (38%; n=132) suggests that the confusion in literature could have been extended to the media through which the public consume information on global insurgent groups (GIG's).

Many respondents believed that terrorists or global insurgent groups (GIG's) were violent. For instance, 46.9% (n=129) attested to this fact. It can then be deduced that any

group adopting violent strategy for whatever motive can be tagged terrorist. Asked whether terrorists seek political power in their struggles, 54.9% of the respondents attested to this fact. This rate of agreement reflects the opinion of Lai and Larsen (undated) who theorized that groups deprived of an interest may adopt terrorist strategy to achieve it and the more difficult the achievement, the more violent they are likely to become. Besides, it also alludes Merari's (1993) opinion that terrorism is an insurgent strategy.

#### **4.4 Perception of Terrorists/Global Insurgent Groups (GIG's) by Respondents**

On how respondents perceived Global Insurgent Groups (GIG's) or terrorist organizations and their activities, a larger majority (93%) opined that terrorists create fear in the society. However, there is a mix-up from respondents' responses on whether insurgency is a terrorist strategy or terrorism is an insurgent tactic. For instance, (83%) viewed insurgency as a terrorist strategy while 78.1% saw it in the reverse. This is a reflection of the loop-hole that exists in literature. These data reveal that people are confused on the two terms (insurgency and terrorism) to the extent of not being able to say which one adopts the other to achieve an end. Going by literature however, this puzzle is also a challenge to Merari's (1993) assertion that terrorism is an insurgent strategy.

Examining the perceived causes of terrorism, respondents put a lot of blames at the doorstep of politics. This is supported by the opinion of 68% of our respondents that politics causes more terrorism than religion. This is in tandem with the findings of Nigeria Watch (2011) that 75% of political violence for the period of five years in Nigeria was perpetrated by the Peoples' Democratic Party. Based on this, we have reason to disagree with a clause (Section 2(3)(ii)) of the Nigerian Terrorism Act 2011 that political parties and politicians cannot be proscribed even when there are evidences of proscription of political parties in other countries around the world (Bourne,2010; Bourne,2011;Bourne,Home Office,2015). On whether or not religious beliefs are causes of terrorism or insurgency, above average of the respondents (52.7%) objected that terrorism is caused by religious beliefs. In fact, contrary to general belief and media portrayal, 66.2% were of the view that Muslims were not terrorists while 48% posited that Christians did not engage in terrorist acts. This shows that there is a sense of religious understanding and tolerance in Nigeria. Going by the religious demographics of our respondents, Christians (49.8%) are a bit more than Muslims (40.7%), the percentage of those who acquitted each religion of not causing terrorism is more than the percentage of respondents from the respective religion.

#### **4.5 Perception about Media Coverage of Terrorist/Insurgent Activities**

Respondents differ with literature on whether the media give undue attention to terrorist act and activities or not. Results show that 48% refuted the notion that media were giving terrorism undue prominence in their news coverage and placement. On information provided by the media about insurgency or terrorism, respondents said that media were providing enough information on acts of terrorism. For example, 48% believed that the media were doing enough on providing information about terrorism/insurgency. Coupled with this, 60.4% of the respondents saw media messages on terrorism/insurgency as being helpful. Also, 52.4% of the respondents confessed that they relied on information from friends to interpret media messages. However, slightly below average (48%) of the respondents acknowledged the fact that the media are being used by insurgent groups to get cheap

publicity. Journalists therefore need training on the coverage of conflicts and terrorist acts so that the coverage does not serve the clandestine motive of the perpetrators of violent acts who strike to attract media attention for wider publicity.

## 5.0 Conclusion

There is hardly a nation in the world that does not feel the effect of terrorism or insurgency. The media as the fourth estate of the realm have always been rotating the roles of a midwife and an umpire tug of war between the global insurgent groups, governments and the people at large. This article tried to see through the public eyes how well the media have been able to mirror the society in relation to the activities and effects of the insurgent groups. This was done with the consideration of the roles of the media in providing information and education to the public on the insurgent groups in order to achieve safe society globally.

## 5.1 Recommendations

The media play a crucial role in creating public awareness about terrorists and global insurgent groups' activities. They may help to magnify or minimize the extent to which prominence is given to these groups. We, therefore, recommend that the media should hold on to the tenets of the social responsibility theory of the media which place on the shoulders of the media the responsibility of educating and informing the public without magnifying their fears and endangering their lives. Regulatory bodies should be up and doing in their duties of safeguarding the media without jeopardizing the safety of the public. They should encourage, and sometimes enforce, responsible coverage of global insurgent groups' activities so that the narrative of "us vs them" as presently portrayed be brought to an end. Further researches should be conducted to determine in specific terms how the coverage of terrorism and insurgency has affected the public.

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