

This must-read book—a product of sustained research by seasoned scholars—is not a ‘Terrorism Made Simple’ text. One wonders what type of text that would be like if such a text exists. This is because of the hydra-headed nature of terrorism and the equally daunting challenge of its reporting. The book details the fundamental principles and provides the framework for reporting conflict and its varied manifestations. It is both theoretical and practical. Its holistic approach to terrorism reporting, which also interrogates much of existing practice, makes the book a user-friendly text. It is a compendium of contemporary academic conversations on media and conflict reporting.

Terrorism reporting being a peculiar genre of journalism, it is not enough to be mentally equipped; the terrorism reporter must also be psychologically prepared and even appropriately physically kitted against injuries arising from conventional and chemical weapons.

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ISBN 978-978-946-897-3



9 989785 261507

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JOURNALISM PRACTICE AND TERRORISM IN NIGERIA Origins, Trends and Techniques

"Terrorism, whatever its nomenclature, is an emerging phenomenon that presents to confront its Media reportage of terrorism can be a daunting professional venture. It demands extraordinary skill, imagination and a spirit of discernment."

— Dr Olusola Soola, University of Ibadan

Olusola O. Isola
Muyiwa Popoola
EDITORS

**Journalism Practice and
Terrorism in Nigeria**

Issues, Trends and Techniques

**Journalism Practice and
Terrorism in Nigeria**

Issues, Trends and Techniques

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JOHN ARCHERS
(PUBLISHERS) LIMITED
IBADAN

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Published by

JOHN ARCHERS (Publishers) Ltd.
40 Ojerinde Quarters
Jiboye, Apata
GPO Box 339, Dugbe, Ibadan, Nigeria

© 0803 4476 916, 0805 833 6156

johnarchers@yahoo.co.uk

www.johnarchers.org.ng

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First published 2015

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ISBN 978-978-946-897-3

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Foreword

Professor Oludayo Soola

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The endemic scourge of insurgency, militancy, terrorism, hostage taking, sea piracy, hijackings, abductions, massive street protests and the attendant terrifying trauma underscores the imperative and urgency of a multisectoral approach to its curtailment. Societies across the globe are becoming increasingly frighteningly fragmented into groups contending for scarce socio-political and economic resources, culminating in social upheavals, social discomfort and economic dislocation. So is religious extremism becoming a Frankenstein monster.

It has not always been so. Time was when terrorism and suicide adventures were seen in the films, read as fiction or existed only as figment of the imagination among the peace-loving peoples of Africa. It was thought to belong in far-flung, alien claims – the Middle East, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, etc. This was fuelled by the Arab Spring which spread like fire in the harmattan. Africans were known to cherish life and pleasurable communal living.

Being unusually patient and long-suffering, Nigerians, for example, have been described as ‘the happiest people on earth’. Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the world acclaimed Afro-beat maestro, satirically described Nigerians as ‘suffering and smiling’. Not any longer!

Before our very eyes, insurgency, militancy, suicide bombing and similar violent acts have crept in from Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Mali and are now common occurrences in Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria. So audacious have the terrorists become that major military

barracks and vital military installations have not been spared; in Nigeria, even the police headquarters has been targeted with devastating consequences. It is not unusual these days for religious extremists to have children, even ten-year olds – boys and girls – strapped with improvised electronic devices (IEDs) to blow up themselves and their targets, with a promised reward of gaining heaven. Adult males embark on similar missions with a promise of a heavenly reward of seventy free virgins in Paradise.

To peace-loving peoples around the world, terrorism is a common enemy. As a war strategy, it is non-conventional, so is a war designed to contain it. *Journalism Practice and Terrorism in Nigeria: Issues, Trends and Techniques* could not have come at a more opportune time than now that terrorism has bared its deadly and destructive fangs, threatening to consume communities and nations, while ruining their socio-economic lives.

Insurgency, militancy, terrorism, whatever its nomenclature, is an emerging phenomenon, so are attempts to confront it. Media reportage of terrorism can be a challenging and hazardous professional venture. It demands extraordinary skill, circumspection and a spirit of discernment.

Not being properly schooled and groomed in the art and science of terrorism reporting – since terrorism itself is a relatively novel phenomenon in this part, most journalism teachers will need to update their knowledge of reporting riots and violence to accommodate the emerging phenomenon of insurgency and terrorism reporting. Journalism schools will need to re-jig their curricular in tandem with the peculiar demands of terrorism reporting.

This rich resource material and companion, while not being oblivious of global best practices in this challenging and hazardous terrain of journalism, aptly contextualises the practice within Nigeria where Boko Haram relentlessly unleashes terror, leaving in its wake wanton destruction of lives and property, as well indeed, as a blighted landscape and hordes of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Designed and packaged to cater to the needs of seasoned professionals, budding journalists and academics, the book appropriately

opens with chapters on ethics, thus underscoring the critical importance of ethical underpinning for journalism practice in general, and terror/conflict reporting in particular. This is as it should be. While terrorism reporting may not be attractive to the reporter because of the threat it poses to personal safety and security, it is attractive to the media – print and television – because it is graphic. It is attractive to the audience by the same virtue. It is also attractive to the advertiser because it delivers the audience to the advertiser through ratings and circulation figures.

Terrorism reporting is an onerous task and an awesome responsibility. Terrorists enjoy the glitz of media coverage. There is thus the temptation to be sensational. Screaming headlines and content that seem to draw attention to the terrorist instead of the substance of the conflict will need to be subdued. Emphasis on the undercurrents of terrorism or conflict is usually more beneficial to society. To focus on the gruesomeness of terrorism is to glamorise the dastardly acts of terror; it is cheap publicity for terrorists.

This must-read book – a product of sustained research by seasoned scholars – is not a ‘Terrorism Made Simple’ text. I wonder what type of text that would be like if such a text exists. This is because of the hydra-headed nature of terrorism and the equally daunting challenge of its reporting. The book details the fundamental principles and provides the framework for reporting conflict and its varied manifestations. It is both theoretical and practical. Its holistic approach to terrorism reporting, which also interrogates much of existing practice, makes the book a user-friendly text. It is a compendium of contemporary academic conversations on media and conflict reporting.

Terrorism reporting being a peculiar genre of journalism, it is not enough to be mentally equipped; the terrorism reporter must also be psychologically prepared and even appropriately physically kitted against injuries arising from conventional and chemical weapons.

I am delighted to recommend this fascinating book to all stakeholders in the media and the conflict management project.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Media and Terrorism: An Exposition
of Relationship Drives

Muyiwa Popoola

INTRODUCTION

The literature in respect of media and terrorism has been interrogated by scholars to showcase why organisations, nations and political movements resort to the use of terrorism. Walsh (2010), inspired by the works of Fromkin, (1975), Crenshaw (1981) and Kydd and Walter, (2006), identifies lack of material resources, personnel, funds, territorial control as factors that prompt terrorism. In his words:

Terrorist attacks are part of an indirect strategy for achieving their political objectives by influencing an audience. These terrorist groups differ in the audiences that they seek to influence and in the messages they seek to communicate to their chosen audiences. Some use terrorism to convince opponents to concede to their demands. Other terrorist groups seek to provoke authorities into engaging in indiscriminate repression, which will undermine support for the government and justify the use of terrorist violence. Some use violence to demonstrate to current and potential supporters a capacity to deliver

powerful blows against their opponents.

It is a logical submission therefore, as distilled from the scholarly positions of Jenkins (1975), Nacos (2002), and Hoffman (2006), that, media attention is an important vehicle by which terrorists communicate with their audiences, and thus a central goal of many terrorist groups is to influence the scale and tone of media attention to their attacks. However, there have been intellectual arguments and counter-arguments with respect to popularity of terrorists and attention being given to terrorism through media coverage. This chapter, therefore, is an additional contribution to the debates by exposing works on media attention to terrorism and why both media coverage and terrorism are attracted to each other, with particular references to Nigeria as a nation with challenges of terrorism in recent years.

Without mincing words, understanding media attention to terrorism and how apparently symbiotic is the relationship between media coverage and terrorism is in four fundamental dimensions ways. First, the fact that most terrorist attacks receive no or little media attention suggests that terrorist groups vary substantially in their ability to design attacks to garner media attention. It is not easy for terrorists to manipulate the media coverage they receive. Knowledge of why some terrorist attacks succeed and others fail to attract media attention could provide important insights into the political goals, media savvy, and organisational capacity of the perpetrators.

Second, a better understanding of the motivations of and constraints facing news media establishments could inform the design of media relations and public diplomacy strategies of governments and agencies responsible for counterterrorism. According to Walsh (2010), some scholars have argued that media outlets have incentives to provide overly extensive coverage of terrorist attacks and that such coverage can provide terrorists with a vehicle for conveying their political messages to mass audiences, and it can also distract from public understanding of the difficulty of preventing terrorist attacks and the steps that the terrorised governments take to achieve this objective.

Research in this area has begun to explore, in a systematic manner, the conditions under which the media are more or less likely to devote considerable coverage to terrorist attacks rather than other topics or other aspects of counterterrorism.

Third, the ownership of media houses and competition in media industries appear to influence media attention to terrorism. As the media environment becomes more decentralised and competitive, media houses may likely try to sell and maintain market share by devoting more attention to terrorist attacks that employ novel tactics or that are particularly violent, in the name of “what the public likes to know”. In such a scenario, the media give the public a distorted picture of the threat from terrorism, thus reducing the ability of the government to explain its policies and to put the problem of terrorism in an appropriate context.

Fourth, existing research is beginning to explore how the tone and language with which the media cover terrorism influences the attitudes and behaviors of the mass public, as well as potential sympathisers with terrorist movements. There is considerable evidence that coverage of terrorism increases fear and anxiety and that these emotional changes influence the preference of some members of the public for counterterrorism policies that rely on force. This may make it more difficult for concerned governments to respond to terrorist attacks with other types of policies, even if these policies might produce superior results. It is sometimes claimed that terrorists are effective in manipulating media coverage to convey their message to a mass audience and to gain sympathisers and supporters (Hoffman, 2006). However, empirical studies on this area are in their infancy, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about how terrorists’ narratives influence their level of public support.

The aforementioned four ways and dimensions are discussed in details below as substantiated by insightful scholarly submissions that are based on empirical findings.

ATTACK CHARACTERISTICS

There is a longstanding literature on how attack characteristics influence media attention to terrorism. The unit of analysis is typically either the individual terrorist attack or the amount of coverage the media devotes to terrorism over a particular span of time. Characteristics of attacks are drawn from one of the many terrorism databases now available to researchers. According to Walsh (2010), Weimann and Winn (1994) use the RAND Corporation’s terrorism database; Delli Carpini and Williams (1987) draw on the International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) database of transnational terrorist attacks; and Chermak and Gruenewald (2006) use the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s list of domestic terrorist attacks as well as those reported in the Terrorism Knowledge Base of the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, which has since been merged with the Global Terrorism Database maintained at the University of Maryland (LaFree and Dugan, 2007). Researchers then search media outlets for reports that mention such attacks. Media attention is also measured by the number of newspaper stories, words in newspaper stories, or length of broadcast segments devoted to terrorism or by content analysis of the coverage these media provided (Chermak and Gruenewald, 2006; Delli Carpini and Williams, 1987; Weimann and Winn, 1994; Popoola, 2014; 2015). The most valuable studies to date have used carefully trained human coders to link large numbers of terrorist attacks to media attention. This process is time-consuming and expensive, limiting the variety of media sources included for analysis. Chermak and Gruenewald (2006), for example, measure media attention from only the *New York Times*; Hoffman, Jengelly, Duncan, Buehler, and Rees (2010) analyse terrorism coverage in *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*; and Delli Carpini and Williams (1987) include the evening news broadcasts of the three major U.S. broadcast television networks. Weimann and Winn (1994) include the broadest range of outlets but are still limited to three television networks and eight newspapers from the United States and other Western countries. Popoola, (2014, 2015)

used both quantitative (content analysis) and qualitative (dialectical hermeneutics) in two separate studies to investigate reportage of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria by selected national dailies.

Terrorist attacks vary substantially in the degree of media attention they attract. Most attacks receive no media attention from major Western news outlets. Weimann and Winn (1994: 68) estimate that the newspapers in their sample cover approximately one third of transnational terrorist attacks, whereas television news cover roughly one in six attacks. Chermak and Gruenewald (2006) found that an even smaller percentage of terrorist incidents in the United States are reported in the media. This literature is quite consistent about how the characteristics of attacks influence media attention. Attacks receive more coverage when they harm or kill victims, involve hijackings have known perpetrators, and select targets associated with Western countries. In their study of transnational terrorism, Weimann and Winn (1994) found that attacks that inflict injuries are twice as likely to attract media attention as those that do not; attacks in which the perpetrator can be identified are 4 times as likely to be reported in newspaper and 10 times as likely to be reported on television; attacks in the Middle East or Europe are twice as likely to receive media attention as attacks perpetrated in Latin America (Delli Carpini and Williams, 1987, reach similar conclusions). Very similar factors influence media coverage of attacks that take place within the United States (Chermak and Gruenewald, 2006).

However, these conclusions are based on a small number of studies; some of which were published over 10 years ago; that draw on a handful of (mostly English language) media sources in one or a few countries. It is not clear whether the patterns in these studies persist today. The studies also do not address systematically a number of other attack characteristics that might influence media attention. At first glance, one might conclude that this level of media attention is surprisingly low. Because many terrorist attacks are deliberately designed to be newsworthy, it might be expected that a higher percentage would attract at least some media attention.

There are a number of explanations, in addition to those analysed in these studies, of why most attacks receive no attention. In some countries, governments may prevent media outlets from reporting on terrorist attacks. Also, the studies summarised in this brief rely on media outlets based in countries with robust traditions of press freedom. Patterns of media attention differ in countries where the media have fewer resources or where the authorities actively suppress reporting on terrorism to minimise public fear and the political influence of opposition groups that resort to violence. Drakos and Gofas (2006) conclude that the underreporting of terrorist attacks is particularly prevalent in non-democratic countries that lack a free press (although their unit of analysis is reporting on the aggregate number of attacks in a given year rather than media attention to specific attacks).

In countries with a free press, terrorist organisations compete for media attention with a wide range of other actors such as opposition to government in power, politicians, entertainers, religious extremists and bigots and other terrorist groups. Compared to others seeking media attention, it is possible that terrorist organisations are quite successful, although no study has addressed this issue directly. Some theoretical postulations and research findings suggest that terrorism is heavily covered compared to other types of events because it (terrorism) meets many of the criteria that communication research on “news values” identifies as increasing media attention. In particular, that terrorism occurs suddenly and unexpectedly, and that it also involves conflict, and also that it often selects prominent or symbolically important targets, can often be attributed to specific terrorist groups, and provokes strong feelings of fear and dread in media audiences. All of these factors have been shown to increase media attention to issues other than terrorism (Breckenridge and Zimbardo, 2007; Brighton and Foy, 2007; Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Harcup and O’Neill, 2001 and Popoola 2014; 2015). Another reason why many attacks receive little or no media attention may concern the motives or goals of the terrorist organisations. This possibility has not been investigated empirically across many different types of terrorist groups.

In Nigeria for instance, maximising media attention is a very important objective that the Boko Haram terrorist group seeks to achieve through undue promotion and popularity being given to their activities by the media consciously and unconsciously. Through conflict insensitive approach and socially irresponsible way of handling terrorism reporting in Nigeria, media coverage of terrorism in the country has provided an attitudinal structure within which the operations of the Boko Haram group have been given undue recognition rather than condemnation. Popoola (2014, 2015).

MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

It is commonly claimed that terrorists and the media both benefit from high levels of media attention to terrorism (Hoffman, 2006). Terrorists gain from media attention that communicates their goals and grievances to a wider audience. The media gain larger audiences because, as previously discussed, terrorist attacks tap many of the characteristics that communications research identifies as important for media attention. This perspective holds that terrorists and media outlets have a symbiotic relationship in which both can benefit from media attention to terrorism.

Claiming that they do not “hype” terrorism, professional journalists argue that terrorism is an important public policy issue and deserves substantial coverage from the media. Norms of professional journalism, including objectivity and balance, limit media outlets’ willingness to exploit terrorism to increase their audience share and lead them to devote substantial attention to the views of governments when covering episodes of political violence (Bennett and Paletz, 1994; Zaller and Chiu, 1996).

Systematic empirical evidence on this question is mixed. Nelson and Scott (1992) compare incidences of transnational terrorism, as measured in the ITERATE database, with attention from the *New York Times* to investigate the hypothesis of a symbiotic relationship between terrorism and media attention. The researchers’ statistical results indicated that media attention does not increase terrorism.

Although terrorist attacks lead to more media attention to terrorism, as expected, such media attention does not in turn encourage more terrorism in the future. In another study, Rohner and Frey (2007) used data on both domestic and transnational terrorist attacks and media attention from the *New York Times* and a Swiss newspaper. In contrast to Nelson and Scott (1992), Rohner and Frey found strong confirmation for the symbiosis hypothesis; in their data analysis, terrorist attacks caused an increase in media attention, which in turn is associated with more terrorist attacks in the future.

Rohner and Frey (2007) suggested that this different finding was explained by the globalisation of the media landscape since Nelson and Scott (1992) published their paper 15 years earlier. However, they do not advance a detailed explanation of precisely how or why media globalisation could be expected to produce this change. Scott (2001) provides a more developed reason why the media’s effect on terrorism is difficult to determine. The symbiosis hypothesis concluded that media outlets would devote substantial attention to all or most terrorist attacks, but as previously discussed, this was not the case; only a small fraction of attacks receive any media coverage. Scott argued that the media are closely attuned to the preferences of the public, which experiences diminishing marginal utility from news about terrorism. Information about each additional terrorist attack should be of less interest and value to members of the public. If this is the case, media outlets motivated solely by an interest in increasing their audience share would moderate their coverage of terrorism so as not to “bore” readers and viewers. In his empirical analysis, Scott found that the media attention devoted to an attack decreases in periods when other attacks occur. This is consistent with the idea that the public does not have an unlimited appetite for information about terrorism.

Consequently, media houses in Nigeria do not have to rely solely on norms of professional journalism to avoid hyping terrorism; their interest: in sustaining the integrity of the nation, in ensuring the calmness of their audience, as socially responsible media, should lead them to limit additional attention to terrorism.

In Nigeria, "to compete successfully for media attention, the Boko Haram terrorist group sounds original enough to stage incidents that are a departure from past events. Hence, large media returns to terrorism come mostly from the perpetrators' imaginative abilities". Popoola (2014, 2015) Scott (2001) and others who focus on how terrorists stage their violence to attract attention include Rada (1985) and Nacos (2002).

It is often claimed that competition *among* media outlets for audience members has a strong influence on attention. A more competitive media environment, according to this line of thinking, should threaten the market share of even well-established "hard" news outlets and lead them to devote more attention to terrorism. Seemingly, little serious empirical attention has been devoted to this claim. Hoffman and his colleagues (2010) studied how coverage of terrorism has evolved in two United States newspapers, *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*. The researchers measured media attention to various topics in the coverage of terrorism, including coverage of violent attacks, of counterterrorism policy, of the consequences of terrorism, and so on. The researchers hypothesised that a more competitive media environment will lead to greater media attention to violent attacks and a reduction in coverage of other aspects of terrorism. Not surprisingly, the amount of coverage in these two media outlets devoted to all aspects of terrorism has increased hugely since 2001. In addition, greater competitive pressures, measured as declines in circulation and the introduction of new types of news competition on cable television and the Internet, increase coverage of terrorist attacks. The researchers also found a long-term trend in which articles specifically about terrorist attacks become longer and are placed closer to the front page of the newspaper, although the size of this effect is small. These conclusions are consistent with the idea that a more competitive news environment encourages greater attention to terrorist attacks.

However, Hoffman et al. (2010) also found that coverage of counterterrorism measures is consistently longer and more prominent than coverage of attacks. This means that these newspapers continue

to devote more resources to presenting information reflecting government positions and actions than information about the more sensationalistic details of specific attacks, although attention to these areas has increased over time. The researchers argued that this finding was consistent with the emphasis on news values, which has prevented the more sensationalistic aspects of terrorism, such as violent attacks, from crowding out policy analysis and discussion.

The performance of the media in Nigeria seems to be reinforcing this finding in some sense. It is evident in the media coverage of terrorism in the country that the media appears to be conscious of the need to condemn the insurgency. Evidently, as found out by Omoera(2010); and Popoola (2014, 2015), Nigerian media devote a very significant attention to condemnation of book haram terrorism in Nigeria. As expected of development enabling media, news media houses make conscious effort to set constructive and helpful agenda for discussion of the Nigerian public in respect of the need to see the activities of the Islamic group as a constraint to national integration and the nation's democracy. However, in this attempt, the media unconsciously churn out reports on scenarios that consistently give the activities of the terrorists an implicit and unconscious promotion through careless use of language. When examined from the perspective of the influence the mass media have on the attitude and perception of their audience, the undue emphasis on the somewhat perceived dreadfulness of the group by the media certainly provide an attitudinal and behavioral structure within which the group is being given undue recognition.

EFFECTS OF MEDIA ATTENTION TO TERRORISM ON THE PUBLIC

It will be recalled that one goal of terrorist violence is to influence an audience or audiences via media attention. What is known about the influence of terrorism on mass attitudes and policy preferences? A number of studies found that exposure to media coverage of terrorism increases fear and anxiety. In a survey of Israelis conducted shortly after a series of deadly terrorist attacks, Keinan, Sadeh, and Rosen

(2003) found that exposure to coverage, including “horrifying details” of attacks, was associated with the development of symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Schuster and others (2001) conducted a national survey in the United States. Their respondents reported substantial increases in indicators of stress. Increases in stress occurred throughout the country, suggesting that media coverage communicated the emotional impact of terrorism to distant audiences. Bleich, Gelkopf, and Solomon (2003) reported similar responses in a national survey conducted in Israel. Cho and others (2003) found that the emotional content of media coverage influences subjects’ responses. Other studies have used experimental research designs rather than surveys to address similar questions. Stone (2000), for example, found that subjects exposed to media coverage of terrorist attacks experienced greater increases in anxiety than did a control group exposed to media coverage unrelated to terrorism.

Other recent studies have investigated how the fear and anxiety created by terrorism influence policy beliefs and preferences. A consistent finding was that fear and anxiety increase support for the use of force in countering terrorism. In a carefully designed study, Berrebi and Klor (2008) found that terrorist attacks have a substantial influence on political attitudes of voters in Israel and tend to increase political polarisation. A series of papers by Huddy and others, based on a nationally representative survey conducted in late 2001 and early 2002, found that “individuals who appraised the risk of terrorism more highly were more supportive of overseas military action, approved of President Bush’s handling of events post-9/11, supported a curtailment of civil liberties, and wanted increased surveillance and tighter immigration restrictions placed on Arabs” (Huddy, Feldman, Taber, and Lahav, 2002, 2005). Gadarian (2010) showed that this reaction is influenced in important ways by the emotional tone of media coverage of terrorist attacks. Some terrorist groups engage in violence as a means of gaining popular support for their causes or organisations. The media are drawn to cover terrorism because terrorism evokes

important news values. In doing so, media houses may also be providing terrorists with outlets to air their grievances to a larger audience (Hoffman, 2006). A terrorist organisation may hope that attacks will convince potential supporters or sympathisers that the organisation is capable of inflicting substantial harm or demonstrate that the organisation is more effective than rival groups in challenging the authorities (Chenoweth, 2010; Kydd and Walter, 2006).

Studies are inadequate in literature about the conditions under which media attention to terrorist violence convinces individuals to sympathise with or to offer active support to the implicated terrorist groups. A number of studies suggested a range of conditions under which this might occur. For example, Paul (2009) surveyed the literature to list humiliation, hatred, repression of human rights, foreign occupation, lack of political freedom, self-defence, and specific grievances as possible factors motivating support for terrorism. This issue is very important for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency policies. Contemporary U.S. counterinsurgency policy emphasises the importance of winning the support of the population and denying such support to insurgent and terrorist groups (U.S. Department of the Army, 2007), but few studies have addressed this issue in a rigorous manner.

Weimann (1991) exposed subjects in an experimental study to varied media coverage of terrorist actions. He found that levels of support for terrorism were generally quite low, but increased if the press coverage presented the terrorist organisation as “brave,” “just,” “good,” or “kind.” A paper by Lemieux and Asal (2009) implemented a more sophisticated experimental design. Subjects were exposed to vignettes of fictional personal experiences and asked if they would respond by engaging in violence, by engaging in peaceful political activity, or by doing nothing. These vignettes varied in the degree of risk from each action and in the type of grievance the respondent held against the authorities. Controlling for other factors, the study found that participants exposed to stronger grievances are more likely to engage in both violence and peaceful protests and to believe that both

of these actions were justified.

These studies suggest that even groups that engage in violence against noncombatants can garner some mass support, but there are significant limitations to our understanding of how and when this can occur. Both papers use general descriptions such as "brave" or "grievance" to describe how terrorist violence may be justified by individuals. This approach is less useful for policy purposes because it does not identify the specific grievances that do and do not motivate support for terrorism and insurgency. The studies have the strength of using experimental designs, which allow for carefully controlled comparisons that might be difficult to execute in a field setting. The applicability of these experiments to settings where terrorism occurs regularly, however, is not clear. Weimann (1991) relied on a small sample of Israeli students for his study, and Lemieux and Asal (2009) used a large national sample of U.S. residents. Findings from these studies on the effects of media attention to terrorism on the public have become heuristically provocative in Nigeria where terrorists launch attacks regularly.

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