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Defining international terrorism: Historical reality and the African experience

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DEFINING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM:
HISTORICAL REALITY AND THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

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Violence is terror and terror is violence. Liberators, freedom fighters, revolutionaries and terrorists have all become labels of convenience. Terrorism, historically, has been institutionalized by some governments to their advantage. Academicians and politicians fail to agree on the issues surrounding terrorism hence defining terrorism has become an academic puzzle. The ambiguity in its definition has also contributed to lack of any universal comprehensive acceptable theory. The literature on terrorism by and large accused weaker nations of supporting terrorism. This paper argues otherwise by using the African experience, slavery and colonization, to question the literature on terrorism. Nations throughout history have used terrorism as a pretext to expand their military atrocities when they cannot achieve their political goals diplomatically. This article concludes that the developed countries use terrorism as a tool for economic development as they occupy and control the resources of the less developed countries. In short, when it comes to terrorism all nations are guilty and the need for global solution must be paramount.

1 INTRODUCTION

When we talk about terrorism, what exactly are we talking about? Is politically motivated violence terrorism? Can governments also be terrorists?[2] Many define terrorism in ways suggesting that "state terrorism" is something that needs to be distinguished from terrorism proper[3]. Others disagree as to whether terrorism necessarily produces extreme fear or anxiety among some audience[4]. So, under what conditions, if any, may we ascribe legitimacy to terrorist acts?

And of what might this legitimacy consist of?

Many political commentators, including scholars and politicians, seek to answer these questions through definitions. The use of "terrorism," they opine, should be restricted to non-state agents who violently threaten the civic order, most often by visiting carnage upon the innocent, by which is meant children and others who, on a day-to-day basis either give little thought to politics or have no significant individual impact on policy. To those of this persuasion, to suggest that states may be terrorists is to speak oxymoronically.

While academic freedom might offer the opportunity to freely discuss terrorism, politicians, states, and groups are not comfortable when any of the aforementioned is referred to as sponsors of terrorism or terrorist group. Caution must therefore be taken where and when honest discussions are held on who is a terrorist. This assertion is based on critical theory analysis of the subjective nature of social reality. As Abel and Sementelli noted, individuals have categorical distinctions among social and world issues. The authors posit that institutions, which are socially and historically constructed, are the result of "oppression and social injustices…of history."[5]. The authors' work suggests that terrorism, which is used in labelling others, is subjectively shared by humans. Though terrorism is not a new phenomenon, there is still ambiguity surrounding the term. For example, Shughart II[6],, summarizing the history of terrorism, argues that international terrorism elevated during the 1960s. This makes it difficult to know exactly the climax of international terrorism since different states, countries, groups or societies from one time or the other experience terrorism at different times. Probably an attempt to define the term is appropriate to start the argument that for centuries African and other third world nations under the mercy of developed nations have endured institutionalized terrorism.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines terrorism as "a policy intended to strike with terror those against whom it is adopted; the employment of methods of intimidation; the fact of terrorizing or condition of being terrorized." Other dictionaries provide similar but diverging definitions. The academic literature has been crawling in formulating or providing a comprehensive and a globally agreed upon, and legally binding definition of terrorism. The resultant effect of this difficulty evolves from the fact that terrorism, as argued elsewhere, is politically and emotionally charged. It is, therefore, not surprising that the United Nations (UN) has no accepted definition for terrorism. According to Shughart II, Title 22 of the United States Code, 2656f (d) defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatants targets by

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[5] Frederick Charles Abel and Arthur J. Sementelli, E*volutionary critical theory and its role in public affairs* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 19.

[6] William F. Shughart II, "An analytical history of terrorism 1945–2000," Public Choice, 128 (2006), 7–39.

subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."[7] The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) of the USA sees terror as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives[8]"

But the reality is that one alternative definition that labels a nation that claims to fight terrorism, as a terrorist itself is likely to be rejected by politicians and, arguably, some academicians from that country. Though labelling Libya, Palestine, North Korea, Syria, Somalia, Iraq, and Iran as among countries that support terrorism is not uncommon in the literature, very little is said about strong nations including Israel, the United States, and Great Britain for committing the same crime based on the very definitions provided above. Kegley Jr., and Gibbs[9], ask several questions regarding the definition of terrorism. For example, Kegley Jr. states "when we talk about terrorism, what exactly are we talking about? Is politically motivated violence terrorism? …Can governments also be terrorists?"[10]. Do countries like the United States of America, Great Britain, Israel, France and others also support terrorism?

Any attempt to answer these questions prompts controversy for reasons other than conceptual issues and problems. Rubenstein argues that labelling actions as terrorism simply promotes condemnation of the actors, a position that may reflect one's ideological or political stance[11]. What are some of the root causes of Western civilization and economic development? It should be noted here that slavery and colonization were among the major precursors for Western civilization and economic development. As Niall Ferguson noted "the bottom line was, of course, the economy."[12] To develop the home states, they used "violence against individuals in its most extreme form,"[13], injected fear of terror, appropriated victim's lands, and shipped the stronger ones as slaves to the West.

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[7] Ibid., 9.

[8] See FBI website or visit: http://terrorism.about.com/od/whatisterroris1/ss/DefineTerrorism_6.htm (June 6 2010).

[9] See David N. Gibbs, "Pretests and US foreign policy: The war on terrorism in historical perspective," New Political Science, 26, 3 (2004), 293–321; also see Charles W. Kegley Jr., *The new global terrorism: characteristics, causes, controls* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003).

[10] Charles W. Kegley Jr., *The new global terrorism: characteristics, causes, controls* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 6.

[11] Richard E. Rubenstein, *Alchemists of Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1987).

[12] Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The rise and demise of the British world order and the lessons for global power* (London: Basic Books, 2002), 325.

[13] Konrad Kellen, "Ideology and rebellion: Terrorism in West Germany," in *Origins of Terrorism, psychologies, ideologies, theologies, states of mind,* ed. Walter Reich (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998), 43.

This paper attempts to lay the implication of terrorism by the developed nations for economic development. The article uses historical terrorism- slavery and colonization-and covert government actions by strong nations to argue that these acts of terrorism were institutionalized by the developed nations to economically develop their respective countries. This paper focuses specifically on slavery and colonization as terrorist activities sponsored by strong nations, which benefited them economically. Terrorism has always usurped the seat of law, and the fate of individuals and nations depends upon the power of superior armaments to impose their will upon defeated peoples, but not upon reason and justice. For example, as Shughart II admits any "unlawful use of violence" could make one a terrorist since "one man's terrorist will always be another man's freedom fighter."[14] But under whose terms does violence become lawful?

There are several documented historical events on slavery and colonization that are beyond the scope of this paper. However, a few are cited here to illustrate how diabolic strategic crimes (terrorism) are officially supported by a powerful nation.[15] Such covert plans by the governments, unfortunately, are not described as terrorist activities in the literature. In fact, the powerful governments do not publicly or officially accept their atrocities as acts of terrorism. As Brigitte Nacos puts it, "the ambiguity about what constitutes terrorism - and what does not - deserves attention because the choice of language determines, or at least influences, how politically motivated violence is perceived inside and outside a targeted society."[16] When weaker individuals, groups, societies, nations hold on to their tradition, ideological, and political beliefs they are describe as extremists but when such viewpoints are held by the strong is seen as conservatism.

2 Terrorism: The Ambiguity of Language Use

Extremism- political, ideological, religious, and cultural- by any definition prevents individuals or societies from been logical to reasoning with their opponents on issues that may benefit both camps. Regrettably, individuals, groups, societies, and nations tend to focus or pay more attention to what separates than unites them. This attribution is the result of manipulation of language and choice of words used to described the *other*. Language is a powerful tool, which is intentionally utilized by the strong to dehumanize the weak. This is the type of game (language manipulation) individuals, societies and nations play to justify their violence acts of barbarism on the *other*.

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[14] William F. Shughart II, "An analytical history of terrorism 1945–2000," Public Choice, 128 (2006), 10.

[15] Brian M. Jenkins, "International terrorism: the other world war," in *The new global terrorism: characteristics, causes, controls*, ed. Charles W. Kegley, Jr. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003); and Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black cargoes: A history of the Atlantic slave trade 1500–1865* (New York: Viking, 1996).

[16] Brigitte L. Nacos, *Terrorism and counterterrorism: Understanding threats and responses in the post-9/11 World* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2006), 16.

Unfortunately, in most cases, political leaders who manipulate language to depict the *evil* nature of their opponents "enemies" do not themselves face the 'enemy' on battlegrounds. In his book, *The language of oppression,* Bosmajian affirms that language is a tool for the strong to falsify the reality and atrocities. He argues that the strong "turn[ed] [*it-language*] upside down to say "light" where there [*is*] blackness and "victory" where there [*is*] disaster"[17] *emphasis added*. In the mist of the Vietnam War for example, where nearly 60,000 Americans and over one million Vietnamese were slaughtered, language was corruptly used as a tool of deception by the American government officials to "mask the cruelty and inhumanity" of their criminal atrocities in "attempt to justify the unjustifiable"[18]. Jacques Derrida also noted that written work can be manipulated to triumph one's ideological, cultural, political, and social beliefs. The author maintains that language, in a written form, can be used where "it supports ethico-political accusation: man's exploitation by man is the fact of writing cultures of the Western type."[19] Though it has been agued elsewhere that it is the victor that writes history, linguistically, the victor records history from the victor's perceptive leaving the looser as an entity without substance or culture.

Bosmajian in his introductory chapter discusses the effectiveness of names and labels that can be used to dehumanize the weak or opponents. In terrorism language, undeniably, has been utilized by strong groups, tribes, and nations to sadly justify their atrocities. A name can be used to curse or belittle individuals, groups, societies, and nations. There is power in a name or label as it is used in defining the *other*. Determining the authenticity of a group or a nation is greatly affected by the words use to label that society. To Bosmajian, "the names, labels, and phrases employed to identify a people [*society, group, or nation*] may in the end determine their survival."[20] If the strong adopts the original meaning of *definire* (Latin word meaning define), then it sets limitation or boundaries through which the defined should operate. For instance, during the Vietnam War students and those who protested against the war in the United States were labelled traitors, saboteurs or queers to separate them from real Americans. Blacks in America were seen as properties and as chattels and as slaves they were to be separated from the human beings (Whites). Using language to dehumanize the weak was seen, for example, in Apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany as the Nazis redefined the Jews as parasites and demons. Oppressors are quick to redefine their enemies with such labels "so they will be looked upon as creatures warranting separation, suppression, and

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[17] Haig A. Bosmajian, *The language of oppression* (New York: University Press of America, 1983), 125.

[18] Ibid., 121.

[19] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 121.

[20] Haig A. Bosmajian, *The language of oppression* (New York: University Press of America, 1983), 5.

even eradication."[21] The language of oppression should be understood as an instrument of subjugating groups and nations and therefore words must not be "used to justify the inhumanities and atrocities of the past and present, [*as is possible*] to consider appropriate remedies"[22] *emphasis added*.

Since terrorism studies are ideologically driven it has been argued elsewhere that it is a weapon of the weak therefore it's the weaker (smaller) groups and individuals that clinch to terrorism[23]. But stronger nations are quick to use terror to achieve their political and economic goals too. For example, since 9/11 NATO nations have used the threat of terrorism as a mechanism for promoting neo-colonialism, imperialism and occupation of other countries. Contrary to the realities of the number of people from weaker nations, the Coalition of the Nations of the Willing is more likely to admit that their assault constitute acts of terrorism.

In his study of Russia, Robert Saunder also concluded that President Vladimir Putin "has consistently used the threat of terrorism as a mechanism for promoting a neo-authoritarian public agenda."[24] Gofas, reviewing a number of terrorism books, noted that terrorism has become a political ball for politicians, academics, and publishers. He argues that there are mushroom "experts" and proper experts studying terrorism but they both fail to identify which group is providing solution to terrorism. Critical theory asserts that nations "do not always abjure acts of terror whether to advance their foreign policy objectives… or to buttress order at home."[25] Booth is confused here as he questions both Zulaika and Douglass, and Burke's assertion of terrorism. He inquires that "if terror can be part of the menu of choice for the relatively strong, it is hardly surprising it [*has*] now become a weapon of the relatively weak."[26]. This confirms the pragmatic reality that both strong and weak states small groups, and individuals engage in terrorism. In fact, state terrorism is more harmful, destructive, dangerous, and prolong than non-state terrorism for example, slavery and colonization went on for centuries and these crimes have created an inerasable scare on the continent of Africa and arguably have contributed to the underdevelopment of Africa.

The striking difference between the oppressed and oppressor is that the two evaluate similar activity from one prism with different interpretations. Each

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[21] Ibid., 6.

[22] Ibid., 133.

[23] Joseba Zulaika and Douglass A. William, "The terrorist subject: Terrorism studies and the absent subjectivity," *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 1, 1 (2008), xx.

[24] Andreas Gofas, "Book reviews," *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 1, 1 (2008), 125–144.

[25] Anthony Burke, "The end of terrorism studies," *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 1, 1 (2008), 73.

[26] Ken Booth, "The human faces of terror: Reflections in a cracked looking-glass," *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 1, 1 (2008), 73.

is glued to its own colours where those colours become the only authentic variables through which their opposing world views are defined. Such a constructionist ideological world view by each camp has, in part, resulted in perennial barbarism of the human race. Terrorism has become an instrument of choice for the oppressor to trumpet the barbarism of the oppressed. The oppressed who sees itself as defenceless and militarily weak with no acceptable voice in world politics,[27] out of frustration fights back violently through any means possible to either attain its freedom or react to the oppressor in its own currency of violence. So terrorism wears different faces depending on who the interpreter of an act of violence is. To the oppressor the oppressed violent reactions are considered acts of terrorism, while the latter also sees the consistent authoritative brutalities of the former as acts of terrorism.[28]

Other terrorist activities on the part of the strong nations, which could be described as terrorist acts, include slavery, colonization, and covert activities, (financing military coups) on the continent of Africa. States have different ways of sponsoring terrorism. For instance, the Belgian-US joint assassination of Patrice Lumumba of the Republic of Congo and the removal of Osagyefo dr. Kwame Nkrumah as president of Ghana on February 24, 1966, through a military coup are among the numerous barbaric covert terrorist acts strong nations carried out in Africa. On the other side of state sponsored terrorism, these strong nations through their territorial expansion, forcefully colonized the African continent and enslaved its people, which contributed, in part, to the economic development of Europe and America. These historical events are not chronicled in the literature as acts of terrorists.

The fear that gripped weaker countries makes one wonder if these nations really have sovereignty, since the powerful nations can covertly or openly attack less powerful nations without any legal consequences. For example, in the 1780s, Europeans and the US had a fleet of ships that forcefully exported Africans to the Caribbean, the Americas, and Europe, but no African country had the power to question those terrorist acts. So what is terrorism? To answer this question lets first make an attempt to develop a theoretical base, which might help us to

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[27] See Charles W. Kegley Jr., *The new global terrorism: characteristics, causes, controls* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003).

[28] The British soldiers brutally slaughtered the Mau Mau's who resisted the British occupation and the indirect rule from Britain. Unfortunately, official historical documents from the British colonial achieve show that the Kenyans were put in concentrations camps to be taught civilization and "incidents of brutality against the detainees…were isolated occurrences" (x). The problem with official documentation on historical events is that it is only the strong that had the capabilities and resources in documenting events while the weak relied on oral tradition. Official documentation of historical events present only one face of a story hence the exact atrocities of the strong is solemnly known in their entirety as depicted in Britain's gulag: The brutal end of British domination on the continent is the story of the oppressed not the oppressor. See Caroline Elkins, *Imperial reckoning: The untold story of Britain's gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 31–61.

understand terrorism from different perspectives. Babbie argues that a theory may help to explain an action but it is not an end in itself. He states "theories are systematic sets of interrelated statements intended to explain some aspect of social life."[29] It is therefore a chronological explanation for the observations, which relate to a particular aspect of life.

3 Terrorism: Searching for A Theoretical Framework

According to Schmid and Jongman many studies have dealt with the etiology theories of terrorism. However, different thinking and interpretations have superseded formal propositions. They argue that there is not enough data to rewrite a theory of terrorism; and question "why there has been so little progress in (*terrorism*) theory formulation?"[30] The fact is those who commit terrorism do not accept their actions as such hence one finds capitalists and anti-communists writing about communist regimes whiles "leftist authors write on terrorism in capitalist societies."[31] Oxymoronically, this approach provides distortions in data collection, interpretation, analysis, and theory formulation. There is a need for collaborative effort on the part of those interested in the subject to find common variables, which might help "to begin on theory constructions"[32] but researchers do not agree on the exact definition of terrorism hence the problem with formulation of theory and what must be used. For example, while "pro- and anti-Western terrorism *data* might be useful for operational purpose[d]"[33] the amalgamation of the two is so contradictory that it blurs a possible unified theory formulation for terrorism.

Lawrence Hamilton made a rare effort to test models he labelled as theories A, B, C, D, and E of terrorism[34]. In models A, B, and C, Hamilton theorizes that terrorism is the resultant effect of misery and oppression. Theories D and E contemplate that terrorism is the work of idles elites and frustration in combinations with utilitarian justification for violence respectively. This paper shares the frustration of other authors' inability to identify a universal theory for terrorism because of the controversy over the word-terrorism. For example, some studies have used psychological foundations to develop a theory but Ted Gurr[35] argues that the premise for theorizing terrorism is a relative deprivation.

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[29] Earl Babbie, *The practice of social research (9th ed.)* (Wadsworth: Thomson Learning Inc., 2001), 51.

[30] Axel P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, *Political terrorism* (New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 61.

[31] Ibid., 75.

[32] Ibid., 129.

[33] Ibid., 39.

[34] Lawrence C. Hamilton, *Ecology of Terrorism: A Historical and Statistical Study (unpublished Ph.D dissertation)* (Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado, 1978), 65–91.

[35] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why men rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

His model, based on Freudian psychoanalysis, is derived from a conceptual framework developed in the 1930s. The conceptualized theoretical deduction made from Hamilton's five models by this study could be interpreted as violence is a means to achieve a goal. This paper specifically rejects Hamilton's first three theories; using slavery and colonization to argue that rich and developed societies like France, Great Britain and the United States of America used terrorism to achieve their intended goal though they were neither oppressed nor politically idle prior to the colonial and slavery eras. While, I do not claim any superiority in the search for a theory for terrorism, I share the frustrations of others since this crime of terrorism is unfortunately becoming a norm for radicals, groups, societies, and nations as such it has lost its meaning. The theory here is that societies use violence to accomplish their objectives where diplomacy is likely to fail. Now we go back to the question posed earlier: What is terrorism?

4 DEFINING TERRORISM AND PRIOR STUDIES

This paper defines terrorism as any forceful act, physical or latent, clandestine or open, where the victim is hurt and is forced to obey the rules of the oppressor. It is a strategic political, religious, and social manoeuvre to ensure supremacy as it relates to slavery and colonization. Other studies have, admittedly, vaguely discussed the difficulty involved in defining terrorism.[36] Academics have very little agreement on it, hence no explanation on causes and processes can be universally acceptable. It could therefore be argued that all states, especially the strong ones, are guilty of what they claim to be fighting against: Terrorism[37].

Defining terrorism is "not insuperable, but it must be handled with causation in order for subsequent use of the term to have meaning."[38] Terrorism is not something committed by individuals and groups but a political term "derived from state terror. So analysis of ways in which states use terrorism as an instrument of foreign and domestic policy offers interesting insights."[39] There is no one study that can cover all aspects of terrorism; in fact, the definition is constantly undergoing changes as states and individuals have used the term for convenience. In their book, *Political Terrorism*, Schmid and Jongman provided thirty-five different definitions and each seems to contradict the other definitions. As Nacos also noted, "this latest shift in the definitional evolvement worked in favour of governments in that officials were quite successful in rejecting the

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[36] Joseph N. Weatherby et al, *The other world: Issues and politics of the developing world. (6 ed.)* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005).

[37] Ken Booth, "The human faces of terror: Reflections in a cracked looking-glass," *Critical Studies on Terrorism,* 1, 1 (2008), 65–79.

[38] Cindy Combs, *Terrorism in the twenty-first century (3rd ed.)* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), 3.

[39] Ibid., 9.

terrorist label for their government's or friendly countries violent actions."[40] The term has become a useful tool for some nations to justify their state-sponsored acts of terrorism.

For example, D'Souz[41] and Walton do not even define terrorism but condemn anyone who criticizes developed nations for sponsoring terrorism. They see every act of terrorism by strong nations, the West in particular, as holy, legal, and righteous, which must be accepted by the weak. Walton writes:

Collaboration with non-free governments admittedly is in conflict with Western ideals, but the United States, for example, might reasonably act in concert with tyrannical governments when such cooperation is a practical necessity. In keeping with the notion of citizenship, Washington's primary duty is to ensure the well-being of its citizens, and this requires vigorous protection of their lives, property, prosperity, homeland, and constiwell beings, in turn, requires that the United States government strive to craft an international system in which American interest-and, ultimately, Western ideals-can thrive. Cooperation with, or even support of, tyrannical governments is acceptable so long as it serves American interests.[42]

Walton's argument provides that American or European interest should be held superior to any other country's interests and values. His prescription may not be considered as an extremist position in the literature. Terrorism is a vague word used for political, religious and ideological convenience; therefore all nations are part of the axis of evil or guilty of terrorism.

The definition of terrorism varies from study to study. Laqueur struggled to come up with any definitive definition. Accordingly, he concluded that no comprehensive definition of terrorism exists. He went on to admit that the definition "will [*not*] be found in the foreseeable future [*neither*]." Laqueur abandoned his search for a definition, being unable to conceptualize any universally acceptable definition that included disparate political ideologies, cultures and/or religious beliefs.[43]

Gibbs[44] provides a more precise definition that derives a basis in legalities. To

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[40] Brigitte L. Nacos, *Terrorism and counterterrorism: Understanding threats and responses in the post-9/11 World* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2006).

[41] D'Souz argues that Africans should rather thank Europeans for colonization for it brought God closer the indigenous Africans. See Dines D'Souza, "Two cheers for colonialism," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 10 2002.

[42] Dale C. Walton, "The West and its antagonists: culture, globalization, and the war on terrorism," *Comparative Strategy*, 23 (2004), 308.

[43] Walter Laqueur, *The age of terrorism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987).

[44] Jack P. Gibbs, "Conceptualization of terrorism," *American Sociological Review,* 54 (1989), 329–340.

him, terrorism is illegal violence or threatened violence directed against humans or non-human objects. His definition is condensed into five broad conditions, which must be part of defining terrorism; the word *illegal* presents not only a controversy but provides an interesting interpretation: Who decides what is legal and illegal? If violence is terror and a crime, at what point does it become legal and by whose definition? For example, Article 1 Section 2 Clause 3 of the US Constitution confirms the legalities of slavery[45] for only Americans (Whites) and not Africans (slaves) or the nations the enslaved people were kidnapped. Matthews and Combs in a historical analysis of domestic terrorism, illustrated that the US was conceived and born in violence but it does not consider its violent activities as acts of terrorism. Combs maintain that terrorism certainly occurred during the early years of colonial settlement in North America.[46] The efforts of the British, and then the young American leaders, to eliminate the threat from the indigenous populations certainly became, by definitions, genocide, because it evolved into efforts to reduce in size (to facilitate control of) or to destroy ethnic groups.

Weatherby et al. present two views-traditional and new- in their attempt to define terrorism. In the traditional view the authors admit that terrorism is a confusing term as they pose questions like: Were the French, Dutch, Danish, and Norwegian resistance fighters who sought to end the World War II Nazi occupation of their countries terrorists? Were the Russian, Yugoslav, and Greek partisan movements also terrorists? What about the members of the Irish Republican Army and their opponents, the various protestant paramilitaries: Are they also terrorists?

Using the above questions as a premise to formulate acceptable definition Weatherby et al. view terrorism as a strategy and not a movement. To them "Terrorism involves the use or threat of violence against innocent people to influence political behaviour. It is a strategy of conflict that involves a low risk to the perpetrators… *which* rely on the intimidating effects of assassinations, *and* random bombings." [47]Their definitions, like others, present characteristics that the strong nations used to either enslave or colonize African countries. The Africans taken as slaves were innocent people. The nations that were colonized by Europeans did not offend the colonizers but the slave masters and colonizers

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[45] Slavery is mentioned in two places in the Constitution; see Article 1, Section 2 Clause 3 and the 13 Amendment, which was proposed on 1/31/1865 and ratified on 12/6/1865. This amendment officially prohibited slavery in the United States but the practice of owning slaves continued for a period of time after the 13th Amendment.

[46] See Cindy Combs, *Terrorism in the twenty-first century (3rd ed.)* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003); also Gerald E. Matthews, *E pluribus Unum: justice, liberty, and terror: an analysis of western terrorism on people of African decent in the Diaspora* (Mason, Ohio: Thomson Custom Publishing, 2002).

[47] Joseph N. Weatherby et al, *The other world: Issues and politics of the developing world. (6 ed.)* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), 41.

terrorized the Africans by all account.

According to Weatherby et al. traditional terrorism should not be compared to unconventional, counterinsurgency or clandestine warfare but he did admit, however, that terrorism is used by non-Western states. They argue that the West has every reason to fear the use of terrorism since "on many occasions fierce warriors have ridden out of Asia to crush kingdoms, sack cities, and take slaves."[48] By this submission from Weatherby et al., the writers are more likely to argue that the West never crushed kingdoms and took slaves. Here, the importance of Mile's Law regarding how researchers attempt to define terrorism comes to play. The Mile's law simply interprets that what one says depends on where ones stands. For example, in 1939, the Italian military slaughtered thousands of Ethiopians who resisted the Italian oppressive rule but this is also not discussed in the literature as acts of terrorism sponsored by the Italian government.

In their new definition of terrorism- a strategy that involves the use of violence against innocent people to influence political behaviour. Ira Reed describes the atrocities of European nations toward Africa but failed to admit that those acts were forms of terrorism. He, however, acknowledged that the colonization and enslavements of Africans were for the economic benefit of Europeans. He noted, "Africa was artificially divided to suit the objectives of the colonial governments."[49]. Owen did not specifically discuss terrorism but he argues that colonization of Africa by the West was for the economic development of Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, the United States and others.[50]

The literature is silent on whether or not colonization and slavery fits the definition of terrorism even though there is no universal acceptability of what constitutes terrorism. Citing Timothy Garton Ash, Nacos argues that we need to look beyond the nature of violence to identify good and bad terrorist actions. She maintains that there is a paradigm shift in the definition of terrorism as the ambiguity about what constitutes terrorism *is a* choice of language. The West therefore does not see its actions as acts of terrorism based on what it may perceive as bringing peace to the world but accuses those who resist Western oppression as terrorists.

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[48] Joshua Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse, *International relations (7th ed.)* (Boston: Longman, 2003), 196.

[49] Ira Reed, "Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The other world: Issues and politics of the developing world (6th ed.)*, Joseph N. Weatherby et al. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), 163.

[50] Roger Owen, "Settler colonization in the Middle East and North Africa: Its economic rationale," in *Settler Colonialism in the twentieth century*, ed. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (New York: T&Finforma, 2005).

5 Philosophical Disagreements of Terrorism

Utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) would argue "every action is to be evaluated solely by its consequences, as compared with the consequences of alternative possible courses of action."[51]. Specifically, Bentham may argue that an action is right if it conforms to a principle in the interest of greater number of society. But I reject "the greatest good for the greatest number" philosophical concept, which is abusive and leads to the tyranny of the powerful or majority. For example, should we accept Nazi Germany's mistreatment of the Jews, the US mistreatment of African Americans during the slavery era, the partition of the African continent by Europeans, and slavery under the concept of greater good?

Again, such assertion begs the question of the righteousness of a group, societal or national principle. However, Utilitarians such as James Mill (1773–1836) and others are more likely to argue that an action should seek to maximize the welfare or the happiness of all individuals.[52] If actions should seek the happiness all individual can the Utilitarians argue that slavery and colonization maximize the welfare and happiness of Africans? Kantians may argue that terrorism is violence (wrong), which tends to only favour a segment of the whole, but Utilitarians will maintain that once such an action benefits a greater good it should be considered right.

Political philosophy is an ambiguous enterprise connected with the changing nature of historical actuality. The relationship between terrorism and slavery/colonization in political philosophy is a matter of individual interpretation. For instance, religious thinking about political philosophy occurs within an eschatological view of history in which concrete actions can be judged in terms of the end of time. In fact, its interpretation depends on the interest of an individual's belief.

While Kantian and Utilitarian schools may explain a little of what constitutes terrorism, Rawls is likely to admit that hybrids of these schools are both realistic and utopian. Rawls says that we "connect such a conception with a view of our relation to the world...by reference to which the value and significance of our ends and attachments are understood"[53] Such a philosophy of historical analysis is a metaphysical supplement to the ideals for the politically and economically powerful nations, which threaten to disrupt the possibility of overlapping consensus. Slavery and colonization, I argue, are forms of institutionalized

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[51] AlasDair MacIntyre, *After virtue (2nd ed.)* (South Bend, Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1984), 15.

[52] See Utilitarianism, available at http://www.utilitarianism.com/jsmill.htm (31 July 2010).

[53] See "Justice by Rawls under Utilitarianism," available at http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~piccard/entropy/rawls.html (July 31 2010).

terrorism sponsored by the strong nations for their economic prosperity. Berman never minced words when he posits that "European domination established largely by force"[54] in Africa and other parts of the world involved specific interest: improving European economy at home.

6 Slavery/Colonization for Economic Gains

The effects of slavery and colonization on people of African descent are minimized in modern Western literature. In fact, it does not relate these European crimes to terrorism. However, as the Durban Declaration of the World Conference against Racism, Racial discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance declared in 2001 slavery and "colonialism led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and …Africans and people of African descent and *other* indigenous peoples were victims of colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences."

Ancient Rome is known to have been more dependent upon its slave labour than any society in history. Some studies place the slave population in Rome in the 1st century to be about a third of its population. Other studies indicate the existence of slavery for thousands of years before it became a prominent part of American history, where this crime against humanity was later conspicuously perfected as an institution. Owusu-Ansah and McFarland date African slave trade to the 15th century Portuguese. To craftily justify the institutionalization of the trade by people of European descent, some studies have argued that slavery among Africans was common. Using empirical evidence including the French massacre of the Algerians in North Africa, and the British assault on the Ugandans-Mau Mau- as basis for historical analysis, one could reject the argument that slave trade was a common practice among the African nations. For example, Mannix and Cowley insist, "many of the Negroes transported to America had been slaves in Africa, born to captivity. Slavery in Africa was an ancient and widespread institution…"[55] But Foster admits that the argument that Africans been enslaved before sent to the Americas is more controversial than is discussed in the literature. To Foster, "the argument that Africans practiced slavery, and that the institution was widespread among them, is refutable on quantitative and definitional grounds." The confusion is a matter of individuals' perspective. To Europeans, the captured Africans were chattel used for agricultural purpose whereas Africans saw the captive Africans as cherished individuals and not as "an agricultural or industrial labourer but a personal servant who…enjoyed great advantages and social status." These two diverging views

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[54] Bruce J. Berman, "The ordeal of modernity in an age of terror," *African Studies Review*, 49, 1 (2006), 8.

[55] Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black cargoes: A history of the Atlantic slave trade 1500-1865* (New York: Viking, 1996), 43.

persist despite contemporary accounts.[56] Why? The answer could be deduced from how Americans who violently killed the Native Americans and took their land did not see their actions as consisting acts of terrorism, Europeans also did not consider their brutalities of slavery as crimes against humanity. However, slavery and colonization by all accounts constitute acts of terrorism that was institutionalized by Europeans and Americans for centuries. Yes, the Africans were sold into slavery but that could have happened as a result of fear,[57] therefore the argument that Africans practiced slavery, as a justification for the slave trade is refutable. The enslaved Africans worked on plantations in the West Indies, the Americas, and Europe though the Arabs also engaged in the slave trade. The labour of the slaves benefited their masters economically. While those shipped from the continent of Africa toiled for the welfare of their masters, the Europeans also controlled the natural resources in the colonized countries in Africa.

As Flynn and Bamfo noted,[58] it took the Europeans over two decades after the Berlin Conference of 1844- a scramble for Africa- to occupy West Africa because of the fearless resistance[59] of some of the Africans. This feat, Bamfo argues, was due to the careful and successful planning to resist the occupiers (Europeans) who terrorized the Africans. But, to the Europeans, the resisters were considered terrorists. Similar accounts are credited to the Mau Maus of Kenya, Zulus, and Boers in Southern Africa. For example, the chiefs of the Ashantis in West Africa were even more defiant to foreign oppression as "the Ashantis defiantly stood up to the British in a confrontation…King Prempeh was treacherously arrested in 1896 after years of being so UNCOOPERATIVE."[60] Adu Boahen also states that other chiefs and Ashanti ministers who were uncooperative were captured and taken away to foreign lands (Seychelles).[61]

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[56] See Ending the Slavery Blame-Game by Henry Louis Ghates Jr. in NY Times (April 22, 2010).

[57] Consider what happened to the Algerian homes that the French saw as a safe heaven for the Algerian resisters (terrorists). This argument is also true for the raiding of homes by US-led coalitions in Afghanistan and Iraq during the invasion of this two countries by the Coalition of the Willing. In an event a where a house is considered to be a hiding place for "suspected terrorists"- those resisting US occupation in that house are either killed or captured and sent to foreign lands: Guantanamo Bay, Cuba or US secret camps around the world to be tortured. This practice is similar to what the Europeans did to the Africans during colonization and slavery.

[58] See J.K. Flynn, "Ghana-Asante," in *West Africa resistance*, ed. Michael Crowder (New York: Africana, 1971): 9–52; and Napoleon Bamfo, "The hidden elements of democracy among Akyem chieftaincy: Enstoolment, Destoolment, and other limitations of power," *Journal of Black Studies,* 31, 2 (2000), 149–173.

[59] Those Africans who resisted were considered enemies by the Europeans for example, Queen Mother Yaa Asantewaah and Asantehene Nana Agyemang Prempeh were captured and sent to a foreign land: Seychelles. It today's term they could be referred to as pockets of terrorists fighting a superior power.

[60] Napoleon Bamfo, "The hidden elements of democracy among Akyem chieftaincy: Enstoolment, Destoolment, and other limitations of power," *Journal of Black Studies*, 31, 2 (2000), 155.

[61] Adu A. Boahen, *African perspective on colonialism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987).

7 THE KENYAN EXPERIENCE OF BRITISH TERRORISM

The Kikuyus of Kenya who resisted the British occupation faced similar atrocities from the British military. In fact, the Mau Mau, who openly confronted the British, were identified as a terrorist group and its leaders, including Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arab Moi, were imprisoned in Lodwar in the late 1950s. The two would later become presidents of Kenya. Based on these historical and current events on how occupiers treat natives who resist oppression, I reject the premise that African chiefs willingly sold their own people to Europeans and Americans who invaded the African continent for their own economic benefit. The evidence of colonial brutalities to benefit colonizers is well documented in the literature. Britain, Spain and other European nations benefited from the people they captured. Randall also noted that the Africans "slaves" sent to the US were used as properties who worked on cotton plantations to benefit the slave masters who never up till this day see their terrorist activities as crimes against humanity.

Owusu-Ansah and McFarland[62] chronologically present the European struggle for a greater economic share in the colonization of African countries and how the British and the US later outlawed all dealings and trading in slaves in Africa and their transportation after 1808 for economic purposes. Fortunately or unfortunately, Western supporters of slavery have used religious beliefs to justify the terrorist acts of Europe and America. Their argument uses the Bible as a source for justification. For example, the Puritans saw slavery as something authorized by the Bible (God), and a natural part of society.

8 STATE SPONSORED AGENCIES[63] AND AFRICA[64]

For centuries the West, through colonization, has terrorized nations, but any individual or ethnicity that attempts to resist those barbaric, inhumane, and systematic state sponsored terror is crushed by the West's military power, accusing the helpless natives as terrorists. Mario Marcel Salas argues that historical Western acts of terrorism still haunt its societies. He noted that numerous examples exist throughout modern history, as Anglo-Saxon European has forcefully dominated other cultures. In countries and cultures that it has terrorized, the West forced its will and style of Christianity on the natives. Using the US as an example of Western atrocities, Salas wrote "This so-called Christian country was founded on the genocide of the Native American population and the slavery of Africans." He also looked at the French, British,

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[62] David Owusu-Ansah and Daniel Miles McFarland, *Historical dictionary of Ghana (2nded)* (Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press, 1995).

[63] See CIA on Campus, available at http://www.cia-on-campus.org (July 31 2010).

[64] See CIA on Campus, available at http://www.cia-on-campus.org/internat/sinews.html (August 1 2010).

Portuguese, and other historical activities of these countries and concluded, "the history of domination by one country over another has always had an economic component."[65]

Robert Edgerton[66] and Caroline Elkins[67] documented the terrorist acts of the British government in Kenya and for years after World War II, the colonizer suppressed and even destroyed evidence of its atrocities. Colonialism, like terrorism, has different meaning to different people and nations. The British described those who resisted its strategy of oppression as evil, but studies have shown that it was rather the British who were the evil doers. It is not uncommon for the West to isolate anyone who openly disagrees with its oppressive acts as a terrorist. For example, Nelson Mandela of South Africa was imprisoned for over two decades for leading a resistance group, the African National Congress (ANC), to confront the oppressive white supremacists of the defunct apartheid system. He was considered a terrorist by the oppressors not only in his home country of South Africa but the conservative members of the British parliamentarians voted to keep him behind bars for the rest of his life because they also labelled Mandela as a dangerous terrorist[68]. To former Prime Minister of Britain, anyone who thought the ANC was a credible movement capable of forming a government was "living in cloud-cuckoo land."[69] Some lawmakers in the United States, including former Republican Vice President, Dick Cheney, echoing the British parliamentarians view in 1986, also saw Nelson Mandela and the ANC as a terrorist organization, which must be crushed[70]. Similarly, the Kikuyu's of Kenya had their spokesman, Jomo Kenyatta, jailed in 1952 because the British considered him as the "evil behind the Mau Mau insurgency"[71] that were fighting the well-equipped British to regain control over their African homeland.

Elkins has a more gruesome description of state sponsored terrorism by the British. The British used its well-established and equipped institutions like the military and other government agencies as channels to commit terrorist acts during colonial period. For example, when the Kenyans confronted the occupiers, the British military acted decisively to crush the Mau Mau. According to Elkins, a special operation called Jack Scott was "directed at *Jomo* Kenyatta and 180

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[65] Mario Marcel Salas, "A system that still hunts us," *News and Issues: African –American,* 25 (2006), 2.

[66] Robert B. Edgerton, *Mau Mau: An African crucible* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).

[67] Caroline Elkins, *Imperial reckoning: The untold story of Britain's gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005).

[68] Anthony Sampson, *Mandela: The authorized biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

[69] Ibid., xxi.

[70] See "Cheney and Mandela: Reconciling The Truth about Cheney's Vote," available at http://www.commondreams.org/views/080300-102.htm (July 30 2010).

[71] Caroline Elkins, *Imperial reckoning: The untold story of Britain's gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 176.

others identified leaders [sic] *and* zealously carried out their arrest orders, rousing suspected protagonists."[72] The operation did not achieve its primary goal but rather turned more violent as the movement's leadership passed into the hands of younger men. Anderson[73] noted that the British monitored the activities of the Mau Mau throughout Kenya, but to the locals the so-called terrorist group (Mau Mau) was just fighting back to reclaim its sovereignty from the oppressors and occupiers.

9 CONCLUSION

Stronger nations judge others on their actions but judge themselves based on their intentions. As a result of colonization and slavery the West succeeded in forcing fear in African governments nevertheless the West cannot escape its violent historical, social, and racial injustices meted out to the developing world. The West has terrorized African countries for both economical and political gains but does not see itself as a sponsor of terrorism.

Slavery and colonization, these terrorist acts, have brought a life sentence of poverty and misery to the developing world, Africa in particular. The colonizers and those that engaged in commercial slavery are still in denial that their actions constituted acts of terrorism. Both academicians and philosophers are at a crossroads when it comes to what constitutes terrorism. Lack of a precise definition of terrorism has affected the dynamics of international politics and relations. Several attempts to formulate a theory to explain terrorism have also failed because there are conflicting opinions on the composition of data for terrorism analysis. Developed societies do not accept their atrocities as acts of terrorism.

By every definition of the word, terrorism, the African continent has been the unfortunate recipient of centuries of the West's barbaric and inhumane terrorist activities, which has benefited it, in part, for its economic growth. Terrorism, whether state sponsored or not, has numerous channels of operating. However, a collective effort to curb terrorism by all nations legally respecting each other's territorial sovereignty must be reemphasized. Any effort by some countries to manipulate others through religious, ideological motives, and the use of military force as threat to establish peace in itself stands to disrupt global peace by promoting or brewing terrorists.

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[72] Ibid., 35.

[73] David Anderson, *Histories of the hanged: The dirty war in Kenya and the end of empire* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005).

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