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Africa: 'Intractable' Conflicts and the Imperative of the Indigenous Idea of Peacebuilding

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Abstract: *The post-Cold War political situation, more than it did in the other parts of the world, aggravated the existing sectional interests and led to the proliferation of civil conflicts in Africa. The efforts of the international community towards the attainment of peace in the continent has not yielded much and hence the advocacies for the evolvement of alternative peacebuilding models. Moving beyond the prevalent suggestions for the active involvement of local actors, this research intends to identify the flaws inherent in the modern international peacebuilding mechanisms and to recommend the active involvement of the African Indigenous ideas of the concept. The rationale for such an advocacy is that societies differ in their cultural worldviews and, since each conflict tends to possess unique characteristics, it becomes expedient to identify those indigenous ideas of peacebuilding that could complement the existing formal structures in resolving the seemly intractable conflicts in Africa, especially within culturally homogenous entities.*

Keywords: *Peacebuilding, Africa, Intractable Conflicts, African Ideas, Conflict Resolution.*

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Introduction

The heightening complexities that go with the interaction among states in the international system, especially as a result of the increasing level of sophistication of modern means of communication, tends towards persistent conflict of interests and open confrontations. Fortunately, the early realization of the inevitability and necessity of conflict in human dealings led mankind to the idea of 'managing' the conflicts, as a way of reducing their destructive tendencies. This predisposition among nations towards collective responsibility in the at-

tainment of international peace and security greatly influenced the establishment of the United Nations. However, the incongruent ideological differences of the Cold War era hampered the actualization of the laudable idea and even "threatened to immobilize the UN", as it "constrained the organization's ability to respond to and seek to mitigate problems arising from conflict situations" (Adisa & Aminu, 1996, p. 85).

The end of the Cold War ushered in a kind of mixed blessings. On the one side, it brought renewed hope in the pursuit of international peace and security. The UN became invigorated to intervene and enforce the peace, even in internal and some hitherto 'intractable' conflicts, as the non-interference encumbrances associated with the concept of sovereignty began to give way (Zacarias, 1996). The then UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, extolled the potentials of the new phase with regard to the ability of the UN to meet the demands of the changing times, especially in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Among others, the situation facilitated the efforts of the UN in both the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the Gulf Wars (Amaechi, 2009). On the other side, however, the hope that most of the wars in Africa, especially the seemly ideological ones, would cease was dashed. Although the Cold War stifled wars within the domains of the major contenders in the ideological divide, the reverse was the case for Africa and other Third World countries. As Lederach (1997) wittily captured it, "the Cold War was, for the most part, cold only in Europe and North America while in many parts of the developing world it was in fact very hot" (p. 6). Regrettably, for various reasons, the trend spilled into the post-Cold War period. Between 1989 and 1996, "the majority of wars and protracted intermediate conflicts are still located in the developing countries of the South", especially Africa (Lederach, 1997, p. 9). Umukoro (2016) has observed that "almost half of the 51 UN peacekeeping missions have been deployed in the post-Cold War era" in Africa and that "several countries in Africa have been involved in internal armed conflicts resulting in human losses and suffering" (p. 18), as could be seen in the case of the Rwandan genocide which claimed the lives of over 800,000 people within the space of three months in 1994 and that of Burundi where over 200,000 people were killed in 1993.

As an indispensable aspect of the post-Cold War phase of the pursuit of international peace and security, peacebuilding is a bold step that was borne out of the need to recognize the peculiarities of particular conflicts and conflicting societies with a view to strengthening or setting up vital structures that could help to sustain the peace or restore peace between warring groups. As has been observed, "since societies differ in their cultures and worldview, and since each conflict or war tend to possess unique characteristics, especially in terms of causative factors, it became expedient to profoundly study each conflict situation and society, in order to design a suitable roadmap to long-lasting peace in the particular society" (Amaechi & Okoro, 2014, p. 118). Consistent with the idea of 'managing' conflicts or steering the naturally occurring competing values and clashing interests to peaceful ends, as opposed to the rather feeble and futile

endeavours towards the complete 'resolution' of conflicts (Nolan, 1995), peacebuilding involves the provision of favorable conditions that could sustain political, social and economic development, progress and stability and in such a way that would conform to the distinctive attributes of particular societies. By visualizing the provision of needed conducive atmosphere and solution to the spasmodic relapses and escalation of conflicts, especially during the post-ceasefire stage, peacebuilding was seen as harboring immense panacea for the then emergent intra-state conflicts which bedeviled Africa from the immediate post-Cold War period.

Considering the number, intensity and rate of proliferation of conflicts in Africa since the 'end' of the Cold War, one is wont to ask some pertinent questions. Is the nature of conflicts in Africa different from what obtains in the other regions of the world? Does the inability of the UN to manage or contain the conflicts support the ascription of 'intractability' to some of these conflicts or does it reveal the inadequacy of the mechanism being used? In view of suggestions for the adoption of alternative models of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa, and having perused the differences between the modern and an aspect of the indigenous idea of peacebuilding in an earlier paper, the author seeks to move beyond these prevalent suggestions to look at the nature of conflicts in Africa, identify some of the flaws inherent in the modern international peacebuilding mechanisms and to advocate the active involvement of the traditional ideologies of or approaches to peace and peacebuilding especially in Africa.

The Nature of Conflicts in Africa

It is reported that by mid-2014, the continent alone accounted for nine (Nigeria (Boko Haram and Christian-Muslim), Mali (Tuaregs), Central African Republic (Christian-Muslim), North Sudan (Darfur and SPLM-North), South Sudan (Murle and Nuer/Dinka), Democratic Republic of Congo (northeast and Katanga), Ethiopia (Ogaden), Somalia (al Shabab), and Egypt (Islamists)) of the twenty-three countries that were experiencing major armed conflicts within their territory (Marshall & Cole, 2014). In the same vein, reporting on the *2015 Report on Conflict, Human Rights and Peacebuilding*, the School for a Culture of Peace (ECP), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (2015), pointed out that "throughout 2014, 36 armed conflicts were identified, a similar figure to that observed in recent years," and that "most of them were concentrated in Africa (13) and Asia (12), followed by the Middle East (6), Europe (4) and America (1)" (p. 1). These are apart from the minor conflicts and countries that are recovering from various kinds of conflict, where only 'peace of the grave yard' exists. The more worrisome aspect of the situation is that some of these conflicts have become protracted and hence the 'intractable' tag. The most irritating aspect is that Africa is perpetually tied to the quagmire of socio-political and economic backwardness as a result of the effect of the conflicts. With regard to the seemly intractable posture of the conflicts, Africa is currently seen as a problem continent whose predicament has defied even the best peacebuilding

models. Some analysts only stopped short of arrogating the situation to genetic traits. However, a closer look at the nature or characteristics of these conflicts would reveal the existence of extra-ordinary motivating factors or root causes that may have led to such ostensible distinction, stigmatization, and rushed conclusions in favour of intractability of conflicts in Africa. As observed by Lederach (1997),

> The challenge for peacebuilding remains monumental. As a global community, we face forty-four wars in nearly as many countries. If we are to address such situations constructively, we must understand with more clarity the nature and characteristics of these conflicts and their settings (p. 10).

The Role of the Cold War

It is common for the influence of the Cold War to be felt in almost all the major conflicts that bedeviled the African continent, especially while the rivalry between the two ideological blocs raged. This was the case in countries like Congo DRC (Zaire) and Angola, among others. This led most writers and analysts to derive the eruption and proliferation of conflicts in Africa to the Cold War struggles between the superpowers, as such wars were seen as 'proxy wars'. Invariably, it was the popular view that the end of the ideological tussle would sound a death knell to the numerous wars or, at least, arrest the rate of proliferation (Mueller, 1989). At some places, especially within the domain of the superpowers where the Cold War tended to suppress popular agitations, it was conversely predicted that the end of the ideological rivalry would open bottled-up sentiments that could lead to more wars and the escalation of existing ones (Mearsheimer, 1990). However, the predictions were not confirmed by the post-Cold War conflict trends in Africa. In most of such places, there appears to be no substantial increase or reduction in the number of conflicts at any point in time, as Wallensteen (1993) and Lederach (1997) posit. In other words, the Cold War may not provide an adequate explanation for the numerous wars that plagued Africa during and after the Cold War. The reason for the arrogation of such enormous influence on the ideological rivalry has been traced to the fact that "the leaders involved in conflicts knew full well how to play the rhetoric of a particular superpower to their maximum benefit," as aptly explained by Lederach (1997). According to him,

> The fact that the post-Cold War era, which has seen the crumbling of animosities between former enemies, has witnessed neither a drastic reduction nor a dramatic increase in the numbers of wars suggests, however, that ideology was not an adequate explanation for the conflicts of the Cold War (pp. 7-8).

Whichever way one looks at it from, the influence of the Cold War and its end on conflicts in Africa cannot be entirely denied. But, as far as the present study is concerned, it is important to state that the impact of the Cold War on conflicts was not restricted to Africa as it was also evident in Eastern Europe, South and Central America, Asia and

other parts of the world where the interest of the superpowers needed to be protected. So, the Cold War and its influence cannot ultimately provide any tangible explanation and solution to the seemly intractability of conflicts in Africa.

The Role of Ethno-Religious and Nationalist Agitations

Another easily noticeable trend in conflicts in Africa is the prevalence of ethnic, religious, and nationalist sentiments. Appearing in various colorations and cloaked with different rationales (Nyuykonge & Ojigho, 2016), these conflicts are mainly intra-state in nature and manifest in the form of agitations for a separate state, redefinition of territory and the control of state power and resources (Regehr, 1996). This could easily be discerned from the experiences of such African countries as Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Somali, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Cote d'lvoire, Nigeria and Mali, among others. Today, it is common to see these conflicts as ethnic or religious wars because of the fact that they are mainly driven by group interests among which are existential needs for survival and recognition. It is not surprising, therefore, that some writers prefer to designate them as 'identity conflicts' (Lederach, 1997, p. 8). Besides, the problem of disguised ethno-religious and nationalist conflicts is not confined to Africa. It is evident in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, especially since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, as well as in the Middle East. Similar to the role of the Cold War, to hold ethnicity or religion responsible for the outbreak and 'intractability' of such conflicts may be deceptive and likely not lead to a sustainable solution to Africa's numerous conflicts. This is because of the reason that such conflicts usually result from the attempt by a group to fight against both perceived and real socio-economic and political deprivations which affects the well-being and security of members of the group. As has been confirmed,

> The process by which this happens has its roots in longstanding distrust, fear, and paranoia, which are reinforced by the immediate experience of violence, division, and atrocities. This experience, in turn, further exacerbates the hatred and fear that are fueling the conflict. Such a process is common to the sociological dynamics inherent in the progression of conflict at any level (Lederach, 1997, p. 13).

The Role of External Linkages

Like what obtains in the other parts of the world, but more so for most conflicts in Africa, the existence of external linkages is a common trend that contributes towards the perpetuation of the 'protracted' and 'intractable' nature of conflicts in the continent. As has been observed,

> Although most conflicts are intranational in primary composition, they *internationalize* to the degree that some conflictants, particularly opposition movements, inhabit neighboring countries; weapons and money for the con-

> flict flow in from the surrounding region and from more distant locations; and displaced refugee populations cross immediate and distant borders (Lederach, 1997, p. 11).

This remains the fate of most war-torn societies and states and regions in Africa, like the Congo DR, Sierra Leone and the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa regions, whose 'foreign' sponsors and appendages are mainly attracted by the political and economic potentials of such a mission, not necessarily for the interest of the beleaguered nations. This syndrome is widespread among states that are rich in natural resources. Ironically, most of the states that sponsor warring groups across their borders prop-up the 'Non-intervention' clause enshrined in the charter of most international organizations, in order to frustrate any genuine peaceful intervention by well-meaning actors.

Response to Arms Flow

Most of the conflicts in Africa maintain a steady response to the flow of arms and weapons from outside. Arms trade remains a very lucrative industry in the international system, especially since the Cold War era. Incidentally, these weapons of war are largely produced in the countries that make up the global North from where they are exported to countries of the global South and are sold to states and groups with sufficient funds, regardless of moral considerations, since the profit motive on the part of the producers and dealers alike is high and overrides every other consequence (Ives, 1987). The end of the Cold War slightly altered this trend. The monetary value of arms traded began to decline, not necessarily as a result of the decrease in the number of wars but as a result of the shift from the demand for heavy weapons to that of small arms and light weapons which is a booming business at present.

Going back to the issue of 'protracted' and 'intractable' wars in Africa, much as the volume of trade on weapons does not necessarily translate to the number and duration of wars, it is obvious that the ready availability of weapons increases the likelihood of a group to resort to violence, exacerbates existing wars, improves the capacity of a group to sustain wars for a longer duration and wreaks havoc on both the local population and the environment. This is apart from the socio-economic welfare implications of diverting a larger percentage of the resources of a group or state towards the purchase of weapons. It is true, according to Lederach (1997), that "the Cold War meant that weapons, the loans needed to finance the purchase of weapons, and ideologies came from the North; the South contributed its environments, peoples, and national economies" (p. 11).

Deductive Analysis of the Root Causes of Africa's 'Intractable' Conflicts

Judging from the above major conflict trends in Africa, it is interesting to note that there are no extra-ordinary features, different from what obtains in other parts of the world, which could be held responsible for the protracted and intractable nature of

most conflicts in Africa. The trends, including the fall-outs of the Cold War, ethnicity, religion, inflow of weapons, and the influence of external linkages are easily identifiable in conflicts around the world, not necessarily peculiar to Africa. However, in trying to identify the root causes and the solution or the appropriate peacebuilding mechanism for Africa's conflicts, it useful at this stage to point out that these features only play supportive role to the causal factors such as inadequate or breakdown of governmental structures, exclusive governance, inequity in the distribution of goods and services, insecurity, etc. Usually, these lead to fear (both real and imagined), distrust, hatred which, in turn, motivates and sustains sectional conflicts for as long as the motivating factors remain unresolved.

The emphasis here is that it is in the course of trying to redress the felt anomalies that ethnicity, religion, availability of weapons of war and other external influences are resorted to in a bid to protect group or sectional interests. In other words, that a conflict is cloaked in ethnicity, for instance, should not detract one from searching deeper for the root cause/s of the conflict. This stance tends to rationalize the preference of the tag 'identity conflicts' in the description and analyses of conflicts which manifest with 'ethnic' or other parochial colorations. To continue to blame ethnicity for the numerous conflicts in Africa may take us back to the endless and futile arrogation of Africa's woes to colonialism and the rationalization of the dismantling or re-delineation of the boundaries of the existing African countries along ethnic lines – a return to the *status quo ante*. No doubt, none of the sovereign entities would prefer this option. Much as one is not trying to absolve European colonialism of Africa from the blame of hammering hitherto autonomous ethnic groups together in an inconsiderate manner, it is also obvious that we have blamed colonialism and neo-colonialism for too long. If and when the right attitudes and structures as well as appropriate peacebuilding mechanisms and approaches are adopted, ethnicity and neo-colonial hindering influences as well as 'identity conflicts' would naturally wither away.

Inadequacy of the Existing Peacebuilding Mechanisms

It follows, therefore, that any peacebuilding mechanism or approach that seeks to arrest the number and the seemly intractable nature of conflicts in Africa must first understand the socio-cultural milieu of the people, the root causes of the particular conflict and must be ready to adapt the existing international mechanisms and approaches to the socio-cultural, political, and economic environment of the conflict. This conforms with the view of Thomas (1987) that conflicts that occur within the developing countries are usually driven by political disputes, economic imbalances and socio-cultural challenges that originate from both the enormity of inimical international settings or conditions and the interests of the various constituent groups within.

In Africa, it has not been easy for the UN and other international agencies to effectively actualize most peacebuilding programs and activities, especially in societies that are

torn apart and polarized by ethnic rivalries. In addition to faulty conceptual definition and theoretical basis, such peacebuilding activities are usually and excessively bugged by the imposition of actors and non-incorporation of local or indigenous imperatives. Besides, sometimes, their efforts are skewed in favour of a 'beautiful bride' between or among the conflictants. So, in most conflict situations in Africa, the UN-coordinated peacebuilding activities have not been able to considerably promote confidence, halt the conflict and create the necessary environment for reconciliation and good neighborliness. Ryan (2005) supported this view by saying that "despite the inherent problems in attempting ethnic conflict resolution, it may be that the lack of success may also be a consequence of the inadequacies of the methods used" (p. 15). This section seeks to briefly look at some identifiable shortcomings in the contemporary principle and practice of peacebuilding and how the African indigenous idea of the concept can assist in strengthening the weak areas.

The Problem of Definition

There is a saying that 'a problem properly defined is a problem half-solved'. In principle, it has not been easy to achieve a generally acceptable definition of peacebuilding as a concept and the situation has continued to pose inhibiting challenges, especially with regard to the formulation and execution of associated policies. Although the term 'peacebuilding was first used by Galtung (1976), it was popularized by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the former UN Secretary General, in 1992. The former used it in favour of the discovery and preservation of peace structures that could help in the prevention of wars and the deployment of peacekeeping and peacemaking forces through the removal of the root causes of violent conflicts. Unfortunately, this original idea has been gradually watered down. Boutros-Ghali (1992) supported the idea espoused by Galtung but his definition of peacebuilding as an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict tended to underplay the preventive aspect. Though he made effort to correct the parochial view in favour of the preventive aspect, the post-conflict bias of the concept has continued to dominate the definition of the concept in the available literature and among practitioners (Boutros-Ghali, 1995). This could be discerned from the Brahimi Report on UN's peace operations which sees peacebuilding as "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war" (United Nations, 2000, p. 3). Conversely, a later UN document explained that,

> Peacebuilding involves a range of measures aimed at reducing the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities for conflict management, and laying the foundation for sustainable peace. It is a complex, long-term process aimed at creating the necessary conditions for positive

> and sustainable peace by addressing the deep-rooted structural causes of violent conflict in a comprehensive manner... (United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations, 2008, p. 18).

So, while some see peacebuilding from a holistic view, in line with the earliest known usages of the concept, which sees the concept as an all-involving and on-going process that should be part of every society, both during minor disagreements and violent conflict situations, others equate it with UN's post-conflict peacemaking and peacekeeping operations. This tends to give the wrong impression that peacebuilding must wait until after the eruption of violent conflict and the attainment of ceasefire or the view that only the UN or governments could be involved in peacebuilding. Invariably, upon the fact that the UN Peacebuilding Commission was established in 2005 to play both preventive and post-conflict peacebuilding roles, the former was later whittled down because of the fears expressed by some countries concerning its inherent potential to interfere with their sovereignty and internal affairs (HPCR International, 2007-2008). Among others, this confusing situation has continued to make it difficult to decide the aim, process and organization of peacebuilding and when to start or end it as well as whether the actors should be insiders, outsiders or both.

In conformity with recent research findings which projects the view that peacebuilding should encompass a wide array of activities and processes aimed at both operational and structural prevention of violent conflicts (HPCR International, 2007-2008), the African indigenous conception of peacebuilding supports the holistic view. Traditionally, Africans see conflict of interests and friction among humans as natural and inevitable phenomena that need proper management in order to avoid the outbreak of violence. They also recognized early enough that the pursuits of life are better accomplished under a peaceful atmosphere. This led to the adoption of a very high level of peace consciousness which is ingrained in the people's individual and collective religious, socio-political and economic value systems and everyday living in order to ward off both natural and man-made calamities that tend to distort the peace cycle. Also, in order to maintain the much-needed social and religious stability, African traditional societies established durable socio-political and religious institutions and structures that are adequately imbued with peace consciousness and which help enormously towards the daily management of both the naturally occurring and the unavoidable violent conflicts. The African traditional or indigenous cosmology, therefore, sees the pursuit of peace as a thing of the mind that involves ongoing and all-involving process of resolving both violent and non-violent conflicts through carefully chosen institutions and approaches that constantly help to maintain social equity, fairness and stability. The inability of the UN coordinated activities to see peacebuilding from this holistic angle greatly accounts for the woes of peacebuilding programmes in Africa.

Inadequate Theoretical Framework

Probably drawing from the problem of narrow definition, there is no generally acceptable theory of peacebuilding and most of the existing theories that seek to explain the concept and practice of peacebuilding are inadequate and can hardly sustain the attainment of set goals in every conflict setting. The categorization of some conflicts in Africa among the 'protracted' and 'intractable' ones may not be unconnected with this theoretical gap. As observed by McCandless and Bangura (2007), "… in Africa the challenges are compounded when the concepts and tools used to theorize are detached from African realities" (p. 55). Fetherston (2000) attributed the situation in Africa to the fact that the existing frameworks and practices are largely influenced by a Western 'rationalist' viewpoint of the world which does not necessarily conform to what obtains in other cultures.

In peace research, Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) have identified four schools of thought with different terminologies, conceptual perceptions, approaches and actors, and whose evolution are closely tied to that of peacebuilding. These include the Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution, Complementary and Conflict Transformation schools of thought. Respectively, the first three are criticized for disregarding the root causes of conflicts, being too lengthy and rigorous, and for not considering the complex and diverse nature of the societies where peacebuilding operation is to take place or their worldviews. The Conflict Transformation School is preferred since, in the words of Fetherston (2000),

> The goal is to open space for transformation which significantly restructures institutions and social meanings, or which, to put it in another way, has the potential to shift societies from a culture of violence to a culture of peace, a long term project which must encompass, and perhaps be drawn primarily from, the specific localities in which the violence is produced or reproduced (p. 5).

Its major proponent, John P. Lederach (1997), envisaged a long-term 'bottom-up' approach that would see peacebuilding as an endeavor towards the systemic reconciliation of relationships because, "the immediacy of hatred and prejudice, of racism and xenophobia, as primary factors and motivation of the conflict means that its transformation must be rooted in social-psychological and spiritual dimensions that traditionally have been seen as either irrelevant or outside the competence of international diplomacy" (p. 29). Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) noted that "it has become the leading school of thought in the field" (p. 23). Unfortunately, the approach seems to be more concerned with the escalating, escalation and post-conflict phases of conflict and, by so doing, disregards the preventive aspect of peacebuilding. This could explain why international peacebuilding activities are yet to succeed in some places, especially in Africa, where conflicts become protracted and seemingly intractable because they are 'allowed' to reach the escalating or escalation phases before the commencement of peacebuilding intervention.

On the contrary, the indigenous idea of peacebuilding among African societies revolves around a systematic and continuous sustenance of peace and order even in the face of threatening conflict of interests (positive peace), as opposed to imposed peace or what is usually referred to as the peace of the graveyard (negative peace) which follows the end of violence or the attainment of ceasefire. Although Lederach's conflict transformation approach subscribes to the long-term 'bottom-up' approach to the management of ongoing conflicts, the African indigenous approach supports the idea that peace can be built even at pre-violence or incubation stages and continuously too. Besides, it involves the establishment of structures imbued with peace consciousness and which act systematically and continually towards the peaceful ordering of the societies. In order to operationalize this, the transformational approach needs to be supported with the Systems theory, or what may be referred to as Systems Survival theory of peacebuilding. The theory tries to explain how each part or sub-system strives to sustain it and interact with the other parts, according to natural procedures, in order to ensure the stability or adaptability of the whole in the face of internal and external pressure (Amaechi & Okoro, 2014). This also means that the failure of a sub-system to live up to its role could automatically destabilize the entire systemic network for as long as the disruption lasts.

Lisa Schirch's (2003) compilation on systems theory and peacebuilding aptly captures this. It identified seven attributes of a system and how each could assist towards a better understanding of the intricacies associated with peacebuilding programmes and their implementation. The first of the identified attributes is that 'each part of a system can only be understood in relationship with every other part'. The second is that 'in systems there are multiple causes that contribute to effects'. The third is that 'systems are processes'. The fourth is that 'each part of the system is involved in either sustaining or changing existing patterns of relationship'. The fifth is that **'**patterns are preferred ways of interacting in systems'. The sixth is that 'power is the ability of one part of a system to affect other parts of the system' while the seventh is that 'it is a complex issue to attempt to change systems'. These exactly describe the African indigenous arrangement and idea of peace and peacebuilding because while individuals, villages, communities and even socio-cultural structures or institutions try to maintain their separateness, they recognize the fact that their stability and existence are tied to happenings 'around'. This idea forms the bedrock of the African "humanistic and holistic conception of peace" and peacebuilding, as could also be seen in the notion of '*Ubuntu'* which is common around East, Central and Southern parts of Africa (Francis, 2006).

The Post-Conflict Bias of International Peace-building Activities

Inadequate definition and theoretical framework usually beget improper timing of peacebuilding activities. One of the major inadequacies of international peacebuilding activities is the issue of when to commence or at what stage of the conflict cycle to embark on such efforts. From available evidence, it is obvious that most contemporary

peacebuilding activities, either by the UN and its agencies or the non-governmental organizations, usually occur after the outbreak of violence or after the attainment of ceasefire to the utter disregard of the virtues of prevention. Even though the former UN Secretary-General modified his earlier statement in the form of *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace* which supported the preventive aspect of peacebuilding, the misconception is yet to be fully rectified (Boutros-Ghali, 1995). Sometimes, the way and manner some agencies and major powers stay aloof until the outbreak and escalation of violence lends credence to the suspicion that they instigate some conflicts and nurse it to the escalation stage to enable them invade for their ultimate political and economic gains. This post-conflict bias not only creates operational hitches, with regard to when peacebuilding activities should start or end, and increases the budget of peacebuilding but also the chance of rendering a conflict intractable as it obtains in Africa. Regardless of the opinion that this trend can be rationalized on the fact that about half of all terminated conflicts tend to resurge even in more violent manners within the space of five years, peacebuilding should be a long-term activity that needs to go beyond the instantaneous obligation to stop armed conflict or prevent its resurgence (Call & Cousens, 2007).

In the case of the African indigenous tradition, peacebuilding is an ongoing process that involves conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict activities. In other words, the root causes of friction and conflicts are usually attended to through inbuilt systemic mechanisms without waiting for them to turn violent first. It is important to note that an essential aspect of the indigenous approach to peacebuilding is that it considers the system of complex of causes and effects as well as the interaction among groups, the living, the dead ancestors, and the supernatural forces. When conflict, insurrections or natural disasters occur, the system searches itself and even the sub-systems in order to identify the root causes of the feelings of discontent and deprivation which are immediately resolved.

The Imposition of External Peacebuilding Actors

Most of the peacebuilding efforts in Africa fail as a result of the imposition of the major actors from outside the system. This is commonly referred to as 'top-down', as opposed to 'bottom-up', approach whereby most of the contemporary peacebuilding programmes in Africa are implemented from outside, by outsiders, and sometimes for the interest of outsiders. Haugerudbraaten (1998) has condemned the usual practice of paying little attention to the fact that peacebuilding should be an indigenous undertaking. No doubt, the use of neutral external actors confers a considerable level of trust and confidentiality among the parties to a conflict but most times the external actors do not maintain the level of neutrality needed to attract the confidence and trust from all the warring parties. It not also uncommon to hear of situations where the actors set out with preconceived biases, ideas, programmes, and instructions. Even when no such sentiments exist, the efforts of the external actors are jeopardized by their lack of the knowledge

of the root causes of the conflict and the conflict terrain. The ultimate result of this has been the dismal achievement of the peacebuilding efforts and which translates to the susceptibility of conflicts towards protraction and 'intractability'. According to Mohamoud (2006), "through top-down approach, twelve national reconciliation conferences were convened with the goal of restoring a central authority in Somalia, yet no success was achieved" (p. 158). This has been attributable to the fact that "Somali people are very alert and sensitive to any kind of authority that is imposed from outside their country or from above through a top-down approach to peacebuilding" since such fail to adequately address the root causes of the Somali civil war and the consequent deep-rooted animosity, suspicion and fear (Netabay, 2007).

This situation is different from what obtains in the African indigenous idea of peacebuilding which assigns important preventive and resolution roles to various in-built structures and mechanisms like the deities, title and secret societies, various women groups whose existence and decisions are regarded as sacrosanct and even neighbouring communities, especially those with filial affiliations, whose social, economic and religious needs are affected by the strife in the neighbouring community. On the important issue of neutrality, the fear of ostracism and nemesis from the gods, ancestors, and deities alike whose watchful eyes remain unflinching, is enough to deter any person with ulterior motives from participating in such a peace mission. Overtime, this consciousness has been inscribed in the minds of individuals and collectives. When wars become inevitable, the factions are usually guided by existing rules and taboos against extremist actions on even the enemies. To a very large extent, this helps in retrieving the peace at the post-conflict peacebuilding or reconciliation phase. In other words, in the African indigenous tradition of peacebuilding, the political, economic and religious ideologies and structures always combine to play important roles in ensuring that conflicts are managed or resolved in such ways that ensure positive changes in the society. Systemic powers are diffused among the sub-systems and even the subsets through the assignment of roles to each. The practice ensured healthy checks and balances of power within the system. This confirms with the view of Schirch (2003) that 'each part of the system is involved in either sustaining or changing existing patterns of relationship'. However, it is necessary to point out that much of this has been eroded by the influx of Western culture which, ironically, is yet to provide an adequate alternative. Even so, the idea of drawing a larger percentage of peacebuilding actors and structures from within the conflict environment and supporting same with those indigenous socio-religious traditions that harbor immense peace potentials may be advantageous.

Non-Recognition and Incorporation of Indigenous Ideas

Similar to the last issue, the present international peacebuilding programs tend to jettison the need to recognize and incorporate the culture and traditions that have been sustaining particular societies over the ages. It is common for peacebuilding programmes

and actors to try to impose western standards or ideologies, practices and structures on societies with different ideological backgrounds and in a way that disregards the need for the attainment of sustainable peace and security. The failure of most peacebuilding programmes has been attributed to the undue influence of socio-political policy impositions that are foreign to the conflict situation and environment (Paris, 2004) such as "the current peacebuilding paradigm of 'liberal internationalism' which assumes that the best way to consolidate peace is to transform states into stable market democracies as quickly as possible" (Paffenholz and Spurk, 2006, p. 19). Regardless of varying individual perceptions, it is safer and more peace-sustaining to build on the existing traditions and structures in a particular society than to seek to entirely 're-create' the society along different cultural lines and which, nevertheless, is not achievable within the short period usually mapped out for peacebuilding programs.

Unfortunately, for the imposition attempts and their perpetrators, genuine systemic changes usually emanate from within the system, mostly as a result of the need to suitably adapt and sustain itself in the face of pressure from within and outside. It is true that Africans and African societies have accommodated a lot of cultural influences from the different globalizing epochs, or so it seems, since the continent came into contact with the rest of the world, the continuing superficial nature of such cultural borrowings keep betraying not only their imposed nature but also the lopsided nature of such contacts. This could be discerned from the present religious, social, economic and political lives of the people. For instance, the two dominant religions in the continent at present, Christianity and Islam, were able to go this far because they later realized the exigency of the 'survival' strategy of accommodating some local imperatives, like the choice of liturgical languages, given names and some cultural festivals. Such an accommodating disposition can be applied to peacebuilding practice in Africa as way of supporting the inadequacies of the present western-oriented peacebuilding approaches. So, as recognized by Schirch (2003), "rather than focusing on how to change the other parts of a system, most of our efforts in peacebuilding should go into identifying the wisest and most emotionally intelligent ways for ourselves to behave in our systems" in order to maintain the existence, or continued 'survival' of the entire system (p. 2).

Conclusion

Though a well-conceived and auspicious concept, peacebuilding has not been able to achieve the dreams of the conceivers with regard to the attainment of peace and order due mainly to both structural and implementation defects. At present, the ugly trail is discernible from the handling of most conflict situations in various part of the world. However, the Third World generally and especially Africa, being at the receiving end of most international socio-political, economic, and even religious maneuvers, has been going through the most horrifying experiences. There exist more of the seemly 'intractable' violent conflicts in the continent than what obtains in other parts of the world.

The situation does not, and should not, render the concept obsolete. The half-length perception of peacebuilding which restricts its application to mainly post-conflict situations, a later contrivance, is rather prone to anarchy and does not conform with the African indigenous or traditional cosmology of peace and peacebuilding. Africans see the activities of life from an interconnected perspective and such applies to the pursuit of peace. Like in a system where mutual sustenance among the constituent sub-systems subsists and where defects, deprivations and even deceitful acts suffered by or meted on a section affect all, peacebuilding should not be restricted mainly to sectional views or ideologies and post-conflict situations and should not be entirely imposed from outside or seen as a one-off activity. Invariably, in support of an alternative approach that draws from African indigenous experiences, it should be a well-rounded, preventive, all-involving, and long-term process. It would not condone situations where, in the course of extreme pursuit of national, ethnic, or sectional interests which may likely be detrimental to others, some 'powerful' nations or groups deliberately decide to destabilize other nations or groups only to turn around later to initiate and impose obviously ostensible peacebuilding measures, as if injured feelings, injustices, deprivations, and destructions can be healed overnight. Like the Early Warning and Early Response models of conflict resolution, such an alternative approach would start from the peculiar historical, political, economic, socio-religious, and psychological foundations and policies to build the peace in particular societies.

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South Africa and Rwanda: Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, Peacebuilding, Religious and Local African Authorities in conflict situations

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Abstract: *This paper explores the character of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) in South Africa and the gacaca courts in Rwanda in a bid to understand how indigenous values emphasised within some of the different indigenous African cultures like Ubuntu (a quality that includes the essential human virtues - compassion and humanity) in South Africa accounted for the success of these institutions in these countries. What seems to be invariably missing in the other experiments of TRC across the continent is the lack of cultural considerations in their construct which this article argues that it accounted for their failure. While post conflict reconciliation remains relevant, as communities move from war to peace and from repression to democracy and vice versa by healing relationships and social structures, many of the experiences with TRC, especially in non-Western contexts have ended up not being able to promote peace through genuine social repairs. In cases like Liberia and Ivory Coast, among many others, these institutions have been criticised as sidelining indigenous cultural values to yield the desired transformative effect. While much has been documented about the relative strengths of tribunals and TRCs, one area that has received little attention is the religious and cultural relevance of these institutions. There seems to be inadequate space created for cultural and religious traditions within these liberal mechanisms of peace building. While relying solely on secondary data in the conduct of this research, we argue that the present peace approaches in Africa have not adequately considered the cultural factors of the continent in their formation. Even within the advent of mo-*

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dernity and globalisation, traditional systems and their values could still be negotiated within the new status quo ante without losing its value. Their strength resides in the fact that they are not created solely by laws, but are generated by the respective communities.

Keywords: *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Conflict, Peace Building, African Authorities.*

Introduction

Conflicts have been a daily occurrence in Africa since most countries gained their political independence. For instance, during the four decades between the 1960s and the 1990s, there have been about 80 violent changes of government in the 48 Sub-Saharan African countries (Adedeji, 1999). During the same period, many of these countries also experienced different types of civil strife, conflicts and wars. Causal statistics suggest that, at the beginning of the new millennium, there were 18 countries facing armed rebellion while 11 were facing severe political crises and 19 enjoying more or less various states of stable political conditions (Adedeji, 1999). Some of the countries in the last two categories have only recently moved from the first category. Zartman (2000) drawing from a United Nations Development report (UNDP) paints the picture in following words:

> A snapshot of explosive conflicts in today's Africa present a worrying picture of Eritrea and Ethiopia of the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Sudan, the last with the longest running civil war on the continent; of Sierra Leone with gruesome atrocities against civilians; of Somalia, Burundi, Guinea Bissau and Lesotho, the latter reeling from South Africa's recent intervention (p. 2).

As much as the conflicts have appeared, they have not been going on *ad infinitum.* There have always been attempts to resolve them and most of the time, when the scars left because the conflicts are so deep, truth and reconciliation commissions are set up for people implicated in conflict to confess and then reconcile. Amongst the conflicts, the ones that bedevilled the Republics of South Africa and Rwanda were too protracted and complex and, therefore, necessitate academic attention.

This paper begins with an analytical framework in understanding the meaning of *Reconciliation* and the concepts of individualism, universalism and retributive justice that overlaps between liberal and neo-liberal philosophies as the main foundation of this work. We also highlight on the gacaca traditional courts in Rwanda which drew inspirations from the local cultures in the trials of those who were implicated in the1994 genocide that consumed millions of people. This is followed by an analysis of the TRC in South Africa and the concept of *Ubuntu*. We argue that the success of the TRC was largely due to the use of the concept of *Ubuntu*. We also look at the religious element in the TRC in South Africa and how it impacted the outcome.

In this article, we further argue that though these new structures were built on the liberal and neo-liberal ideas, they have not really yielded the intended goal of peace

building. We cannot apportion all the blames to these liberal and neo-liberal ideas of individualism, universalism and the retributive justice approach to account for the failure of peace building in some of these African states, like Chad, Liberia and Ivory Coast, where the experiments have been unsuccessful.

Some custodians of African traditions have sacrificed their cultural heritages in exchange for political power. Most chiefs have lost their control over their subjects, since most chiefs are now often divided along party lines. Their inability to maintain political neutrality and to provide political tolerance for all political views has cost them the respect, dignity of the institution and the individual office holders. Chiefs have also undermined in this regard their strategic position as representatives of all people within their Chiefdoms.

For the past few decades, scholars have highlighted the relative importance of international tribunals and TRC in post-conflict societies. While both are focused on resolving crime and conflict, they differ in the character and formation, as transitional justice mechanisms. TRC views crime essentially as a violation of people and relationships between people. Its primary objective is to correct such violations and to restore relationships. As such, it necessarily involves victims and survivors, perpetrators and the community in the quest for a level of justice that promotes repair, trust-building and reconciliation. International tribunals, on the other hand, seek to apply the established law as a basis for reaffirming the legal basis for human decency. It is concerned with punishment for an infraction or abuse of law and largely focuses upon the treatment that should be given to the offender or perpetrator. It is a retroactive approach in which legal proceedings play a central role and is based upon the contention that mechanisms such as courts, national criminal laws and international criminal laws are essential for dismantling impunity and for putting in place measures for the non-repetition of rights abuses in the future.

However, very little attention has been paid to the cultural relevance of these institutions to the people they are out to serve, especially in post-conflict transitional peace building (Hancock & Zeren, 2010). The degree to which cultural and religious norms are considered in the role of these institutions in dispensing post-conflict transitional justice has come under severe criticism. The attention to cultural values within the framework of these institutions has remained elusive. The character of these institutions in promoting peace through retributive justice[1] is much more embedded in liberal and neo-liberal ideas of individualism and universalism (rooted in the Western cultures) and is perceived in that context as the appropriate road map to rebuilding peace in post-conflict zones. The post-World War II Nuremberg trials, for example, which

1 Retributive justice refers mostly to systems that rely solely on punishment as the best way of responding to crimes

were established to handle Nazi war crimes and criminals as well as the international criminal tribunals for former Yugoslavia, were in this liberal philosophy (Hancock & Zeren, 2010). While this is true in Western cultures, its applicability as a "one size fit all" universally acclaimed procedure in dispensing justice in post-conflict Africa becomes problematic and ineffective and grossly out of context. Consequently, it cannot yield any meaningful results.

The reasons for this ineffectiveness are that *universalism*, as a character of these institutions, become culturally alienating because it does not take into considerations other cultural specificities. Secondly, the individualist character in some of these institutions, like the TRCs, undermines the emphasis of communal wellbeing across African societies which concepts like *Ubuntu* in South Africa and gacaca in Rwanda incarnate. Lastly, in most of the experiments of TRCs in Africa, retributive justice approach has often been used as a means to foster peace, which does not resonate with the reparative or restorative justice systems[2] that is emphasised within some of the different indigenous African cultures, like *Ubuntu* in South Africa. These institutions, therefore, assume the ethical primacy of human beings against the pressure of communal harmony, grounded within different African cultures like the gacaca in Rwanda and Ubuntu in South Africa (Kyed, 2006).

This paper argues that the present peace approaches in Africa have not adequately considered the cultural factors of the continent in their formation. Even within the advent of modernity and globalisation, traditional systems and their values could still be negotiated within the new *status quo ante* without losing its value, in a bid to mitigate the spiral effects of conflicts in Africa (Humphrey, 2003). Their strength resides in the fact that they are not created solely bylaws, but are generated by the respective communities.

Analytical framework

Over the years, scholars have been trying to understand the concept of *Truth and Reconciliation* and how it functions within different cultures. It is the belief of some Africans scholars, like Boaduo (2010), that these new peacebuilding structures are grounded on liberal and neo-liberal concepts that originated outside the African context. This section looks at the meaning of reconciliation, the overlap in some liberal and neo-liberal ideas and how they are related with the former. In understanding reconciliation, we drew inspiration from the works of Kirmayer (2004), Staub, Pearlman and Miller (2003), Philpott (2006), Murphy (2010), Hayner (1999) and Hamber (2007).

2 Carver (2008) asserts that reparative justice focuses more on striking a balance between the offenders and victims. The goal is often to satisfy the needs of the conflicting parties to avoid future conflicts that could potentially destabilise the community

These authors collectively and individually examine the characteristics and features of reconciliation and what could be necessary in ensuring sincere and lasting reconciliation in post-conflict zones.

Enduring reconciliation is a negotiated process through many complex systems that require a plethora of approaches constructed through underlying cultural beliefs (Kirmayer, 2004; Juma, 2002). Realistic healing methods are grounded in a broader cultural system that specifically identify the ills and prescribes appropriate interventions. Staub *et al*. (2003) argue that sincere reconciliation from trauma of victimisation has the potential of averting retaliation, especially if perpetrators continue to cohabit with survivors within the same geographical space.

For reconciliation to be effective, all parties must be committed in building already damaged relationships in a bid to re-establish societal cohesion. Murphy (2010) considers political reconciliation as forgiveness and the overcoming of a wide spread negative emotions in order to rekindle destroyed political relationships. He also echoes the necessity to establish normalised relationships and legal trust within political communities and to put in place democratic political values on the plat form of free and equal citizenship. Hayner (1999, 2002) mirrors reconciliation as an evaluation of how the past is handled within a public sphere, in order to evaluate the influence of the past on political and other relationships.

Perpetrators must move from the blame politics and exclusion of victims as 'others' or enemies, to assume responsibilities and empathise with their victims to bring about true reconciliation (Kyed, 2006). Philpot (2006) sees reconciliation as comprising varying political processes, such as restorative and retributive justice systems of restoring right relationships within the society, which often must not go through very official procedures. It is in this light that Kriesberg (2007) argues that reconciliation as a process must develop mutual conciliatory accommodation between formerly disputing parties. He sustains that reconciliation should move towards a relatively cooperative relationship, established after a rupture in cordial relations between individuals or groups in a violent dispute.

Reconciliation should be able to heal long animosities between conflicting parties, as this helps in developing a shared feeling of a common history that can be accommodated by both sides and reduces feelings of blame, mistrust and antagonism (Staub *et al*., 2003). A reduce feeling of blame should also imply political tolerance, which should foster the commitment of leaders to coexist in peace with people whose ideas are different from theirs. Reconciliation should be more feasible if people are able to form working political relationships that cross divisions.

Some form of apology or public acknowledgement of wrong doing is necessary for healing the wounds of the past (Hamber, 2007; Kaminer, Stein, Mbanga, & Dirwayi, 2001).

Ibeanu (2003), like Kaminer *et al*. (2001), suggest that it is reciprocal recognition that is the bases of relieve and freedom in reconciliation, without which the victims continue to feel that they still exist in a relationship of bondage with their oppressors. In some cultures in Africa, like in Sierra Leone, Rwanda and South Africa, reconciliation is not limited to simplistic verbal utterances or binding agreements (Hamber, 2002, 2007).

The notion of reconciliation within African societies varies from one culture to the other and is often characterised by different cleansing rituals to reinstate the victims and the oppressors within different communities in line with their cultures (Quinn, 2006). Reconciliation is symbolised through various rituals like blood pact alliances, marriages, intimate friendships, eating and drinking and the exchange of gifts, negotiated by the custodians of these traditions (Hancock & Zeren, 2010; Quinn, 2006).

According to scholarly works, reconciliation can hardly be achieved within a win-lose frame work which is represented in liberal and neo-liberal ideas of retributive justice and often too Universalist, which tend to be limited to the individual wellbeing against communal harmony (Young, 2002). Gray (1995), a liberal philosopher, in his analysis of liberalism, describes the liberal ideas as being individualist, egalitarian and Universalist. He further asserts that, while the egalitarian component assigns the same moral worth and status to all individuals, the Universalist nature of liberalism underpins the moral unity of all humans, an idea which marginalises other cultural differences. Generally, liberalism has come to be represented by views such as believing in equality and individual human rights (Young, 2002).

Other scholars, like Adams (1998), challenge liberal views, which to him limit the well-being of society strictly on individual human rights perception. According to him, society is an embodiment of all, in which individuals are obliged to promote the common good of everybody (Adams, 1998). In line with Adams, Koerner (1985) also asserts that liberalism is nothing but a pursuit of progress and material gains by those who promote it, which undermines the traditional values rooted within communities to ensure continuity (Koerner 1985).

Drawing from the above, it is our opinion that liberalism and neo-liberalism have an overlap which directly determines the formation of peacebuilding institutions in Africa, like the TRCs. While the term neo-liberalism has come to represent different usages to different scholars depending from the angle from which the concept is approached, neo-liberalism is far more an economic idea which attempts to disentangle the state from the private enterprise in favour of free market economy.

To argue that TRC also take roots from neo-liberal ideologies, we do not imply that these institutions are largely developed within the framework of neo-liberalism, but rather they appropriate certain characteristics of liberal and neo-liberal philosophies. Even in the application of neo-liberalism within the free market economy, the emphasis on

the individual and universalism becomes apparent, as it considers the individual alone has the autonomy to ascertain a better choice in providing for his needs.

In addition, laws under neo-liberalism are seen as universal norms through which people could negotiate with each other (Gershon, 2011). This becomes culturally insensitive since culture within this framework is more of a trait that engenders alliances, which neglects the context specifics among different societies. Culture from a neo-liberal perspective, as Gershon puts it, serves not to explain context in which it operates, but rather to explain individual behaviours. It is within this framework that we argue that the structures of peacebuilding in Africa, like TRCs, appropriate certain characteristics of liberal and neo-liberal ideologies that do not resonate with the local culture of the people. To understand the TRC in South Africa and the gacaca courts in Rwanda, we try to high light how the inclusion of indigenous cultural elements in their formation promoted the healing of animosity, reduced feeling of blame, a sense of common history and ability of the perpetrators and victims to coexist. We use the aforementioned gacaca traditional system of Rwanda and the case of South Africa and the concept of *Ubuntu* to highlight how cultural consideration accounted specifically for the success of South African experiment of TRC, a component which has been lacking in similar experiences in other African countries like in Ivory Coast. After examining the analytical framework, it will be imperative at this juncture to focus our discussion on Rwanda and South Africa.

The Rwandan Case

Within the indigenous customs and values in Africa, there are diverse forms and approaches in keeping the societal bond, which include retributive, restorative or reparative justice as against the over reliance on the retributive model of the tribunals or some TRCs which do not resonate with the people in context (Quinn, 2006). The experiment of traditional courts in Rwanda in dispensing justice to the post 1994 genocide trials could be seen as an attempt to include cultural considerations in consolidating peace in post conflicts zones that resonates with the culture of the people.

Much ink has flown on the Rwandan fratricidal carnage but it is relevant to summarise its headlines here. The Rwandan genocide was the mass killing of Tutsi and moderate Hutu in Rwanda by members of the Hutu majority. During the approximately 100-day period from the 7 April to 15 July 1994, it is estimated that an estimated 500.000-1,000.000 Rwandans were killed in the conflagration, constituting as much as 20% of the country's total population and 70% of the Tutsi then living in Rwanda. It is suggested that the genocide was planned by members of the core political elite known as the akazu, many of whom occupied positions at top levels of the national government.

Perpetrators came from the ranks of the Rwandan Army, the National Police (gendarmerie) and government backed militias including the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi

and the Hutu civilian populations. The genocide took place in the context of the Rwandan Civil War, an ongoing conflict that began in 1990 between the Hutu led government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which was largely composed of Tutsi refugees whose families had fled to Uganda following the earlier waves of Hutu violence against the Tutsi. International pressure on the Hutu-led government Juvenal Habyarimana resulted in a cease fire in 1993 with a roadmap to implement the Arusha Accords that would create a power sharing government with RPF. This agreement displeased many conservative Hutu, including members of the akazu, who viewed it as conceding to enemy demands. Among the broader Hutu populace, the RPF military campaigns had also intensified support for the so called "Hutu power" ideology, which portrayed the RPF as an alien force intent on reinstating the Tutsi monarchy and enslaving the Hutus, a prospect that met with extreme opposition.

A few years after the genocide, the gacaca courts were used as a form of traditional conflict management, to seek restorative justice mediated by chiefs and tribal elders to handle crimes of the 1994 genocide. They dispensed justice according to traditional norms which include cleansing ceremonies which the subjects hold sacred (Quinn, 2006). To resolve the issue of long awaited trials in Rwanda, and also in a bid to achieve sincere reconciliation at the grass roots level, the Rwandan Government re-established the traditional community court systems called gacaca. Within this traditional court system, communities at the grass roots are empowered to elect local judges to try Rwandans who were accused of crimes during the genocide. The courts generally give low sentences in situations where the accused was sorry for his guilt and asked for forgiveness from the community and, in most cases, victims who apologised went home without further penalties (Quinn, 2006). Over 1.2million cases went through an estimated 12 000 gacaca courts that were established nationwide.

To realise the objective of reconciliation, different approaches were taken by the Rwandan government among which included *Ingando*, a programme for peace education that trained about 90.000 Rwandans, clarifying Rwandan history and the origin of conflicts that led to the genocide. There was also *Itorero*, established in 2007, which was aimed at promoting Rwandan values and build leaders who strive for community development. The government, to further consolidate peace, organised seminars which were aimed at educating community based leaders, political parties, youths and women in trauma counselling, conflict management and early signals of conflict. National summits and research works have been sponsored to investigate and sensitize the causes and prevention of conflict in Rwanda (Quinn, 2006).

Traditional approaches were case specific. Every region had their own values which guide the common interest of communal solidarity, which took precedence over individual human rights as emphasised by retributive justice mechanisms (Quinn, 2006). These indigenous approaches built relationships and a common sense of belonging.

As Hancock and Zeren (2010) noted, retributive justice has always been least popular among African systems and often came only when all other avenues of socializing the guilty had proven abortive. Even in cases where retributive methods were emphasised and pardon was feasible only if damages were paid, the general idea had always been to strike a balance of reconciliation (Quinn, 2006). Native African authorities are ostensibly believed to represent the whole communities beyond political differences, embodying the will of everybody without leaving out anyone. This was in contrast with views that their incorporation and legitimization could reinforce ethnic cleavages to the detriment of integration (Binsbergen, 1987; Mbiti, 2002). They exert an enormous control over their subject even beyond their geographical confinements. As Mbiti (2002) argues, for those Africans who live out of their local communities, modernity can only affect to a limited extent their material orientation and language, but their general perception is still informed by traditional and cultural values.

The South African TRC

Between 1948 and 1994, Dr. Malan institutionalised and legitimated the obnoxious Apartheid system in South Africa. During this period, the majority of South Africans, who were mostly blacks, went through all kind of torture and marginalisation. In 1998, there was the need to reconcile the different factions of the country that were still carrying the scars of the conflict. In this case study, we examine the institution of TRC in post-Apartheid South Africa, its formation and its underlying cultural concept of *Ubuntu* that is grounded within indigenous South African cultures. We also examine the religious character of the commission which accounted why its implementation was relatively a success story within the experiments of TRC in Africa.

Shortly after the collapse of the Apartheid regime and the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994, through a broad base consultation with the civil society and local leaders, the South African parliament passed the promotion of a National Unity Act (Hancock & Zeren, 2010). Under the leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the TRC was inaugurated in December 1995 to foster national unity and integration of survivors and perpetrators and also to seek accountability. TRC was guided by the new transitional constitution which also placed emphasis on cultural leaders and the customs they represent.

One of the provisions within the constitution stated: "past divisions can now be addressed on the bases that there is need for understanding but not vengeance, a need for reparation but not retaliation, a need for Ubuntu and not victimisation" (Vora & Vora, 2004, p. 4). Amongst other things, the act also maintained that "in order to advance such reconciliation and reconstruction, Amnesty shall be granted in respect to Acts, omissions and offenses associated with political objectives and committed in the course of conflict of the past" (Vora & Vora, 2004, p. 4). To achieve this goal, three commissions

were formed within the TRC: the Human Right violation committee (HRVC), the Amnesty Committee (AC) and the Committee of Reparation and Rehabilitation (Hancock & Zeren, 2010). Beyond this, the TRC used restorative justice in handling the issue of impunity and encouraged people to forgive rather than demand retribution.

The concept of *Ubuntu* within the South African society resonates with a communal spirit and asserts that society, not a transcendent being, gives human beings their humanity (Carver, 2008). *Ubuntu* creates an atmosphere of shared mutual caring for all. *Ubuntu* emphasises a kind of socialisation where individuals within a given community empathise and also seek to promote the collective prosperity of all. As a political concept, *Ubuntu* carries elements of socialism that upholds the redistribution of wealth, very much in line to redistributive policies of liberal and neo-liberal undertone. The overall sense of *Ubuntu* is a belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity.

By applying *Ubuntu*, amnesties for crimes committed by either side were granted in return for a full account of the violence on which such pleas were made. According to Vora and Vora (2004), this was fully in line with *Ubuntu* that was rooted in the culture of the people. In order to ascertain accountability in the construct of the TRC, efforts were made to investigate crimes committed by both parties from 1960-1994. This also eliminated the notion of victor's justice (using different set of rules to determine right from wrong depending on whether the individuals in question belong to the oppressor or the victim's side) that could have potentially ruined the exercise.

Hearings were made in public, areas within the reach of the general public (like churches and town halls), away from the court rooms. This not only give victims a sense of belonging, but also gave them a sense of active participation, which reduced immensely their feeling of animosity towards the perpetrators (Hancock & Zeren, 2010). As the TRC pursued national unity for all, sincere reconciliation and forgiveness became the ultimate goal, which was achieved through a careful blend of restorative and retributive justice models. As Carver (2008) asserts, forgiveness does not actually means in this case just forgiving the perpetrator, since it does not replace justice. Rather, it implies perpetrators accepting responsibility for the acts and in an apologetic manner.

In other words, forgiveness does not exclude the need for moral accountability, but rather attempt at genuinely healing the wounds of the past for effective societal social repairs, in the spirit of *Ubuntu* (Carver, 2008). Its non-legal style situates the process to the understanding of the local indigenous people who could see that the proceedings were inherent with their cultures. The open space narrative in the process, which often took place in town halls and churches led by the Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was also inherent in the long documented oral history of the continent. The role of religion was also instrumental in the South African TRC.

The Religious Factor in the South African TRC

Religion has always played an ambivalent role in conflict situations. At one end, it is at the very heart of the conflict and at the other end it is used for reconciliation. However, the role of religion in the reconciliation in South Africa cannot be underscored. As far as the religion and the urge for vengeance is concern, Jacoby (1983) argues that religion somehow plays a role as it directs people's minds towards the ideas of love and mercy. Thus, religion in a way impacts on the cultural interpretations of legal traditions as it encourages justice through restorative and distributive forms of justice emphasised by the redemptive character of religion, as they advocate for the forgiveness of transgressors in a bid to enhance societal harmony (Jacoby, 1983). The religious content of the TRC was negotiated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

While religion might not have been an initial consideration in the formation of the TRC, the appointment of Desmond Tutu as the chair of the commission gave him the space to negotiate a religious dimension and this relates to how he influenced the hearing sessions towards religious lines. In line with Jacoby's (1983) assertion on the redemptive role of religion, Tutu, from the opening prayers to the homilies, purposely created a scenario that bore resemblance to recognisable church ceremonial practices with a healing tone. The use of religious imagery in South Africa was comforting to many victims (Shore & Kline, 2006). The role of religion in South Africa has never been limited to the individual salvation and or spiritual life, but the general good of the community. Tutu was able to exploit these values in the search for peace within the TRC frame work, relying on the religious culture of the people (Hancock & Zeren, 2010).

It is estimated that over a thousand people were interviewed in the process and over 850 people were granted amnesties by the TRC through the various commissions which were given full and independent powers to decide every outcome (Carver, 2008). Religion and *Ubuntu* were ways to engender sincere societal repairs in an African perspective, not just an attempt to get the people to accept the hard truth that they had to live with their one time enemy of Apartheid. The use of amnesty was partly in line with the cultures of the people grounded in the concept of *Ubuntu* and not just a way to abandon retributive justice in in favour of it.

Limitations of the Traditional African Systems

Although we have argued so far that one possible way to improve the functioning of TRCs in Africa is by drawing on their rich cultural values, like the example of Ubuntu in South Africa, these systems are sometimes also flawed with lapses that can hinder any meaningful progress in peacebuilding and also need to be revamped. The relevance of traditional African institutions in peacebuilding is highly contested, especially in the post-colonial era (Osaghae, 1989). These institutions are often seen to be anachronistic, undemocratic, divided and unable to contribute to anything meaningful in the current

governance crisis within the continent (Beattie, 1967). Also, chieftaincy has been corrupted by colonial powers and the new post-colonial leaders in the continent. Most of these traditional heads have been co-opted into politics along party lines and thus, no longer subject of accountability to their communities (William, 1987).

Western Christianity, with all its trappings, has also contributed to the inherent weaknesses which the traditional African systems have been suffering. Mbiti (2002), while discussing about the search for new values, opines that things fared well with African communalism and religions up to a point in time which things changed. This was when Western religions and values, as well as colonialism, were introduced into the continent. These values have since then affected different African societies in multifarious ways. Traditional African ways of doing things and their understanding of their cosmos were corroded by the new values from without. This has helped greatly to limit the traditional ways of conflict management and reconciliation which up to date remain weak.

Conclusion

Throughout this work, we have argued that the failure of TRCs in Africa is largely because their implementation often does not take into consideration the cultural values of the indigenous people. As an analytical frame work, we looked at the concepts of *reconciliation*, liberal and neo-liberal ideas which seemingly have an overlap in the institutionalization of these structures of peace building in Africa. We highlighted how different scholars have seen and understood these concepts. The point of emphasis here is that most TRC emphasizes universalism, individualism and redistributive justice as opposed to indigenous approaches to peacebuilding based on the communal wellbeing for all. This universalized approach undermines cultural differences across different societies.

Using the example of the gacaca traditional courts in Rwanda and the *Ubuntu* in South Africa, we have argued that African customary laws contain elements of legal traditions in respect to criminal law. However, we see that within the African systems, these elements of legality places emphasis on reconciliation as against retributive justice, whose usage is always as a last resort. We used the South African concept of *Ubuntu* and the gacaca traditional courts in Rwanda to illustrate this position. In Ubuntu, acts of violence become the responsibility of the entire community; any harm to a part is seen as harm to the whole. The role of justice within this context in South Africa was not perceived as a punitive major, but rather an act of restoration for societal good (Quinn, 2006). We also looked at the religious character of the South African TRC which was very instrumental in healing the wounds of Apartheid. This was largely due the charismatic nature of Desmond Tutu.

On a final note, this paper does not try to present African systems as an ideal solution to African problems. They too are characterized by a series of short comings. These institutions are often very divisive, out of touch with new ideas and undemocratic to

produce any meaningful effect on peacebuilding. It is either these African systems are too decentralized, which slows down decision making process or too centralized, which concentrates power to just one individual. In such circumstances, the concept of communal good becomes a subject of doubt. In any case, no single approach will appear to be an absolute solution to the crisis in Africa.

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Nigeria: Volunteer Vigilantism and Counter-Insurgency in the North-East

Okoli Al CHUKWUMA

Abstract: *The ambience of unconventional violence orchestrated by Boko Haram insurgents in North-East Nigeria has occasioned precarious civil and humanitarian atmosphere in that area. The exigency of the situation has necessitated an equally unconventional civil security response, as exemplified in the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter-insurgency operations of the state. Relying on a synthesis of primary and secondary research, based respectively on field interviews/discussions and library/desk sources, the paper evaluates the role of volunteer vigilantes in the fight against Boko Haram insurgents in North-East Nigeria. The paper posits that the outcome of this emergency approach to security has been largely inconsistent and seemingly contradictory: while the vigilantes have been effective in degrading the strongholds of the insurgents through localized reconnaissance and counter-offensives in collaboration with the military, they have also contributed to intensifying the insurgency by engendering selective reprisals attacks by the insurgents on communities that are associated with the vigilante forces. Coupled with their manifest negative attitude to human rights, as well as their seeming potential for disintegration into amorphous armed militias in the aftermath of the counter-insurgency operations, the paper submits that the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter-insurgency is a dicey strategic option given the fragile security regime in Nigeria wherein the practice is liable to counter-productive and abusive outcomes.*

Keywords*: Boko Haram, counter-insurgency, North East Nigeria, volunteer, vigilante, vigilantism.*

1. Introduction

The atmosphere of unconventional violence orchestrated by Boko Haram insurgents in North-East Nigeria has occasioned precarious civil and humanitarian atmosphere in that area. The exigency of the situation has necessitated an equally unconventional civil security response, as exemplified in

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the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter-insurgency operations of the state. Available literature on the subject matter has yielded two dominant perspectives: while some analysts have maintained the cynical view that such an engagement is either symptomatic of the failure of the Nigerian state in terms of security provisioning, which has invariably necessitated the role of civil groups in filling the gap (Odomovo, 2014; HRC, 2015; Matfess, 2016), the rest hold the position that it is indicative of a functional civil-military synergy dictated by the imperative of anti-terrorism (Amnesty International, 2015; Stovenson, 2015).

This paper explores and evaluates the afore-mentioned analytical standpoints with a view to situating the rationale for the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter-insurgency operations in North-East Nigeria, as well as underscoring the strategic efficacy and implications of such approach to counter-insurgency vis-à-vis sustainable peace and stability in the region.

Essentially, the paper is concerned with providing answers to the following questions:

i. What is the rationale for the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter-insurgency operations in North-East Nigeria? Does that indicate a desperate resolve to community self-defence in the face of public security failure or a tactical civil-military synergy in response to the exigency of insurgency?
ii. What is the strategic efficacy and implication of this counter-insurgency approach vis-à-vis sustainable peace and stability in North-East Nigeria?

In tandem with the above, the paper seeks to achieve the following objectives:

i. To evaluate the rationale for the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter-insurgency operations in North-East Nigeria.
ii. To underscore the strategic efficacy and implication of such counter-insurgency approach vis-à-vis sustainable peace and stability in North-East Nigeria.

The paper is premised on the proposition to the effect that the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter-insurgency operations in North-East Nigeria is a circumstantial imperative, whose process tends to have been fraught with inconsistent and contradictory outcomes that negate sustainable peace and stability. This translates thus:

i. The exigency of community self-defence in the face of terrorism tends to have necessitated the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter-insurgency operations in North-East Nigeria.
ii. The involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter insurgency operations in North-East Nigeria tends to have yielded both productive and counter-productive outcomes with dicey implications for sustainable peace and stability.

The paper is a product of an incremental research that was conducted in the focal study area between March and May, 2016. The research explored both anecdotal and

empirical narratives through key informant interviews and field discussions. The outcome of the field study was complemented with relevant secondary data with a view to triangulating the analysis. The remainder of the paper is structured under the following themes: perspectives of civil volunteerism, vigilantism and volunteer vigilantism, setting the context of the study, overview of Boko Haram insurgency in North-East Nigeria, forms of vigilantes involved in counter-insurgency in North-East Nigeria, evaluation the strategic efficacy and implications of the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counter-insurgency and conclusion.

2. Volunteerism and Volunteer Vigilantism: Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis

A volunteer is a person who works for an organisation or a group without the motive of being remunerated. In this wise, Selbee (2004) has defined volunteerism as including "any activity where unpaid work is provided to a formal organisation or group" (p. 19). Generally, volunteerism/volunteering has been conceived of in the existing literature from three fundamental perspectives, (i) as a component of charitable behavior and (ii) as a component of productive work in society (Selbee, 2014).

As a charitable behavior, volunteerism is concerned with the activities of individuals involved in providing assistance to others in need of social goods and services; as a civic engagement, it involves the participation of citizens in the maintenance of communities and more generally in the governance of society; as a productive endeavor, it refers to the provision of unpaid work (goods and services) that otherwise would not be as readily available in society (Selbee, 2004; Wu, 2011; Nielsen, 2013).

There are two important types of volunteering, namely short-term and long-term volunteerism. Short-term volunteering is episodic and short-lived while long-term volunteering is more or less extensive and institutionalized (Graff, 2002). Volunteerism emerged as an institutionalized form of development work in the context of the post-second World War societal reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The notion of volunteer vigilantism presupposes volunteering in the context of civil vigilantism. Vigilantism, simply put, refers to the "assumption of responsibility for community safety and values by self-appointed custodians prepared to use lethal force" (Haefele, n.d., p. 1). The concept of vigilantism is derived from the Spanish word '*vigilante*', which literally translates to 'watchman' or 'guard' (Haefele, n.d; Newby, 2012). Vigilantism is characterized by 'lethality', 'autonomy' and extra-legality (Greenberg, 2005; Jarman, 2007). In effect, vigilante formations apply lethal force, operate without the explicit support or authority of the state and adopt extra-lethal methods (Jarman, 2007).

Vigilantes have been classified based on certain characteristics. Sederberg's (1978) typology identifies four modes of vigilantism, namely: (i) private spontaneous vigilantism, (ii) private organized vigilantism, (iii) official spontaneous vigilantism and (iv) official

organized vigilantes. Vigilantes have also been classified as ethnic, religious, communal, corporate, civil, etc. (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004). The notion of volunteer vigilantism interrogated herewith fits into the conceptual schema of civil vigilantism. This pattern of vigilantism is peculiar because, in addition to enjoying states' overt authorization, it has appreciably bolstered the endeavors of the state forces in the counterinsurgency campaign operations.

There exists an avalanche of literature on the nature, purpose, uses, abuses, as well as challenges and prospects of vigilantism as a mode of civil security provisioning in contemporary societies. One of the prominent perspectives in existing literature regarding the essence of vigilantism is that it signifies 'privatization of security' and, therefore, de-monopolization of force by the state (Berndtsson, 2009). According to Berndtsson (2009), privatization of security refers to the emergence of 'non-state actors specializing in protection, including armed protection in conflict zones and sometimes even active engagement in combat operations'. Understanding the emergence of vigilantism from the standpoint of 'privatization of security' implies that it marks a departure from the tradition of military monopoly to that of civil-military synergy in terms of control and use of force. This resonates with the 'civilianization of security' perspective of civil vigilantism. The notion of 'civilianization of security' has been aptly conceived as:

> … relating to non-military, voluntary organizations and the business/private sector engaged by government but acting in their own right to prevent, protect, and prepare in the context of counterterrorism. It is a phenomenon by which ordinary civilians act as providers of their own security in a specific new kind of war, that is, war against terrorism (Sliwinski, 2013, pp. 14-15).

Indeed, the exigencies of counter-terrorism in the contemporary world have mandated a new pattern of civil-military relations that reflects the logic of 'civilianization of security' (May, 1992; Azarbajiani-Moghaddam, Wardak, Zaman, & Taylor, 2008; Horton, 2014). This is instantiated in the increasing involvement of the civil society in counterterrorism operations and intelligence. The role of volunteer vigilantes in the context of counterinsurgency in North-East Nigeria depicts this trajectory, although the trend has been bolstered by the increasing helplessness of the Nigerian state in protecting communities from the onslaught of insurgency in the region, which has necessitated a resort to self-defence.

The bulk of contemporary literature on community policing in Africa recognizes vigilantism as a veritable approach (Baker, 2002, 2008; Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004; Kyed, 2009; Mbogo, Ndung'u, Campbell, & Rai, 2008; Onwudiwe, 2009; Okeke, 2013). In these literatures, the phenomenon of vigilantism has been variously described, or alluded to, as 'informal policing', 'voluntary policing', 'alternative policing', 'private policing', or 'multi-choice policing'. Scholarly views are, however, divided as regards the legitimacy and/or legality of such security arrangements. While some analysts believe that vigilan-

tism is tantamount to usurpation or erosion of the state's monopoly of violence, others contend that it is an indication of security sector reforms in the world characterized by volatile security dynamics (Berndtsson, 2009; Fourchard, 2011). There is, nonetheless, a seeming consensus to the effect that the rising currency and saliency of vigilantism as a mode of 'alternative policing' (Baker, 2008) stem essentially from the failure of the state in living up to its security functions (Kantor &Persson, 2010; Jarman, 2007; Newby, 2012). As Fourchard (2011) poignantly puts it, "people's discontents about inequality, corruption and injustice have fuelled throughout the 20th century alternative solutions to state policing" (p. 4).

Contemporary expressions of vigilantism in Africa represent, in varying dimensions, a reincarnation of the traditional systems of communal guardship (HRW/CLEEN Foundation, 2002; Fourchard, 2011; Okeke, 2013). In its modern state, vigilantism in the continent has evolved into a civic movement, representing either civil or primordial interests. In effect, there exists a variety of ethnic, religious, corporate, community-based and state-sponsored vigilantes in different parts of Africa (ACCORD/UNHCR, 2002; Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004; Okeke, 2013).

With reference to Nigeria, a number of vigilante types have been identified by scholars (HRW/CLEEN Foundation, 2002; Fourchard, 2011; Okeke, 2013). This is reflected in the typology shown in table 1.

Table 1: Typology of Vigilantism in Nigeria

Primordial Types	Civil Types
1. Ethnic vigilantes (e.g. the Odua People's Congress (OPC) in Western Nigeria. 2. Religious vigilantes (e.g. the HisbaShar'ia Force in some northern states of Nigeria. 3. Communal vigilantes (e.g. various traditional vigilantes groups in local communities.	1. Corporate vigilantes (e.g. registered private security custodians). 2. State-sponsored vigilantes (e.g. the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in North East Nigeria. 3. Mercantile/mercenary vigilantes (e.g. the Bakassi Boys (vigilante) hired by some South-eastern states in early 2000s to fight crime and social vices.

Source: Authors' compilation.

Operationally, vigilantism has been associated with some negative outcomes, which have questioned its efficacy as an alternative security framework. A case in point is the incessant friction or rift between the operatives of formal security agencies and members of vigilante groups (Barkindo, 2007; Enechojo, 2013). There have also been cases of gross human rights abuse occasioned by the operational excesses of the vigilantes (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004; McCall, 2004). This tendency has been observed in respect of the activities of the Bakassi Boys and the Hisba vigilante formations in Nigeria (HRW/CLEEN Foundation, 2004; International Crisis Group, 2010; Dogarawa,

2011). The involvement of vigilantes in extra-legal killings, extortion, rape, excessive use of force, and unprovoked brutality tends to have validated Brown's (1975) assertion that vigilantism is 'organized extra-legal movements, the members of which take laws into their own hands' (cited in Greenberg, 2005, p. 5).

3. Situating the Context of Analysis: Profile of North-East Nigeria

Although incidents of Boko Haram insurgency have been widely reported in North-Central and North-Western Nigeria, the focal flash-bed of the incidence has remained the North-East (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). This section presents a descriptive overview of North-East Nigeria as well as Boko Haram insurgency in that context, with a view to casting the general setting and contextual background of the paper. In addition, the section attempts a review of counterinsurgency endeavors in the region under reference and underscores the imperative and rationale for civilian involvement.

3.1. North-East Nigeria: Nigeria is a federation of thirty-six states. For political convenience, dictated by the logic of 'federalist structuring' (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2013), these states have been sub-divided into six geo-spatial extractions popularly known as 'six geo-political zones of Nigeria'. The six zones alongside their constituent states are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Six 'Geo-political' Zones of Nigeria

Zone	Constituent States
North-Central	1. Benue 2. Kogi 3. Niger 4. Kwara 5. Nasarawa 6. Plateau
North-East	1. Adamawa 2. Bauchi 3. Borno 4. Gombe 5. Taraba 6. Yobe
North-West	1. Jigawa 2. Katsina 3. Kaduna 4. Kano 5. Kebbi 6. Sokoto 7. Zamfara
South-East	1. Abia 2. Anambra 3. Ebonyi 4. Enugu 5. Imo
South-South	1. Bayelsa 2. Delta 3. Akwa-Ibom 4. Cross-River 5. Edo 6. Rivers
South-West	1. Ekiti 2. Lagos 3. Ogun 4. Ondo 5. Oyo

Source: Author's compilation.

North-East Nigeria comprises six states, namely Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe (Table 1 above). The region is a coalescence of a multiplicity of socio-cultural categories. Historically, three dominant civilizations festered in the region. They included the Kanem-Bornocivilization, the Hausa-Fulani civilization and, to a lesser extent, the Kwararafa civilization (Ngare, 2012).

North-East Nigeria is characterized by immense ethnic-cum-linguistic diversity and heterogeneity. Apart from hosting the dominant ethnic categories of Kanuri, Hausa-Fulani, Jukun, Bachama, Mumuye, etc. the region is also home to a multiplicity of other ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. In terms of religious identity and affiliations, the region has a strong expression of Islam, Christianity and African Traditional religions (ATR).

According to the official figures of the 2006 population census in Nigeria, close to twenty million people live in Northeastern Nigeria (NPC, 2006). This includes the population of both the native and migrant communities in the various parts of the region. Table 3 shows the population distribution across the states of the region based on the 2006 census.

Table 3: Population of the States of Northeastern Nigeria from 2006 Population Census

State	Population
Adamawa	3,178,950
Borno	4,171,104
Bauchi	4,653,066
Gombe	2,365,040
Taraba	2,294,800
Yobe	2,321,339

Source: National Population Commission (NPC, 2006), Abuja, Nigeria.

The topography of the North-East Nigeria is varied and versatile. It consists of a mix of high and low lands interspersed by rivers, floodplains valleys, cliffs, hills and mountains, forests and lakes. The dominant vegetation of the region is savannah with semi-arid conditions in the Sahel axis of Borno and Yobe. However, the southern axis of the region, particularly Taraba state, has peculiar 'woods-and-wilds' vegetation. Overall, the climatic conditions of the North-East are essentially hazardous. There is a high incidence of weather-related adversities, exemplified in the prevalence of desert-encroachment, drought and wind storm (Okoli, 2014).

3.2. Overview of Boko Haram Insurgency in Northeastern Nigeria: Boko Harma refers to an extremist Islamic sect formerly known as *Jama'aAhl as-Sunna Lida'wa-al Jihad.* It emerged in the early 2000s as a small *Sunni* Islamic sect advocating strict implementation and interpretation of the Islamic law in Nigeria (Congressional Research

Service, 2016). The group was originally led by Mohammed Yusuf, a radical Islamic cleric, who was killed in police custody in 2009.

Prior to Yusuf's murder, Boko Haram members had engaged in periodic skirmishes with the Nigerian police, particularly in the Northeastern States of Borno and Yobe. Following the killing of Yusuf in 2009, the group was further radicalized and, therefore, re-mobilized for violence (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). Subsequently, the group engaged in isolated hard-target attacks, hitting police stations, military formations, government institutions and public infrastructures. The group carried out jail breaks and series of attacks on police/military checkpoints in this era. In 2011-2013, Boko Haram fighters resorted to the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to attack both soft and hard targets. In this process, several churches and schools were attacked leading to multiple casualties (Amnesty International, 2014). Sequel to this, a state of emergency was declared on the Northeast States of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2013.

By 2014, Boko Haram attacks on civilians had escalated. Consequently, many worship places (churches and mosques alike), commercial motor vehicle parks, markets, recreational centers and other crowded places were attacked by the insurgents. By mid-2014, Boko Haram launched a tactical change from their regular asymmetric war to coordinated offensive geared towards seizing and holding territories. And only a couple of weeks after, the group declared an Islamic Caliphate in North-East Nigeria. Since the first quarter of 2015, there has been drastic reduction in the scale and frequency of Boko Haram violence in Nigeria owing, partly, to the involvement of neighboring countries and volunteer vigilantes in the re-strategized counterinsurgency campaign led by the Nigerian military (personal communication, Abuja, May 31, 2016).

The impact of Boko Haram insurgency on the people, economy and culture of North-East Nigeria has been dire. From the standpoint of its humanitarian consequences, it has been noted that Boko Haram insurgency has been a veritable threat to human security in the affected States (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). Recent records reveal that:

> More than 15,000 people are estimated to have been killed by Boko Haram, including more than 6,000 in 2015 alone. By UN estimates, roughly 2.8 million people have been displaced by Boko Haram related violence in the Lake Chad Basin region, where approximately 5.6 million are in need of emergency food aid (Congressional Research Service, 2016, p.i).

The implication of the above is that Boko Haram insurgency poses a critical threat to the national security and sustainability in Nigeria. The need to mitigate this threat has over the years informed the adoption of a variety of counterinsurgency mechanisms, including the resort to volunteer vigilantism.

Box 1: Timeline of Boko Haram Violence

Selective Chronology: 2003-2017

2003 – Boko Haram established in northern Nigeria under the leadership of Islamic cleric Mohammed Yusuf. Yusuf preached that the country's ruling was marred by corruption and advocated for the creation of an Islamic state.

July 2009 – Boko Haram members clashed with security forces in several northern states, resulting in at least 800 deaths. Mohammed Yusuf was arrested and killed in police custody.

2010 – Boko Haram regroups and starts its campaign of violent attacks against security forces, schools, churches and civilians.

September 2010 – Boko Haram attack a prison in Bauchi State, freeing 150 of its members and several hundred other prisoners.

12 June 2011 – The Nigerian government established a Joint Task Force (JTF) in Borno state, to 'restore law and order' to North-East Nigeria. It is comprised of personnel from the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Department of State Security (DSS), the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) and the Defence Intelligence Agencies (DIA).

16 June 2011 – Boko Haram bombs Nigeria's National Police Force Headquarters in Abuja.

26 August 2011 – Boko Haram bombs the UN offices in Abuja, killing 23.

26 April 2012 – Boko Haram bombs the offices of the Nigerian newspaper *Thisday* in Abuja and a building housing three news papers, including *This Day,* in Kaduna. At least seven people died.

November 2012 – The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court notes that serious human rights violations may have been committed by the JTF and that Boko Haram's attacks may constitute crimes against humanity.

May 2013 – President Jonathan declares a state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, which is rapidly approved by the National Assembly.

May 2013 – A vigilante group, known as 'civilian joint task force', is formed with government support in Maiduguri. They are given powers to arrest suspected Boko Haram members and hand them over to the security forces.

November 2013 – The National Assembly approves a 6-month extension to the state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states.

2014 – Attacks by Boko Haram against civilians intensify, becoming an almost daily occurrence. The JTF responded by increasing its campaign to flush Boko Haram out of its camps in the east of Borno state.

16 January 2014 – President Jonathan replaces the Chief of Defence Staff and other senior military figures.

14 March 2014 – Boko Haram attacks the Giwa military barracks in Maiduguri, allegedly freeing over one thousand inmates. The military re-captured the barracks, then rounded up and shot hundreds of escaped detainees.

April 2014 – Abduction of nearly 300 girls from a school dormitory in Chibok

July 2014 – Boko Haram shifts from asymmetric attacks to a conventional offensive dedicated to seizing and holding territory.

August 2014 – Boko Haram declares an Islamic state in Northeast

7 March, 2015 – Boko Haram pledged allegiance to ISIS
April 2015 – Boko Haram began to lose most of its territories, sliding into the Sambisa forest.
December 2016 – Nigerian military began intensive combat operations in Sambisa forest in an attempt to recapture the territory and dislodge the insurgents
May 2017 – Some girl-captors (Chibok girls) were released by the insurgents in exchange for some of their commanders

Source: Adapted from Amnesty International (2014, p. 5); additional information from Congressional Research Service (2016, p. 5); also, author's update.

3.3. The need for civilian intervention: Contemporary trajectories of terrorism/insurgency world over indicate that civil population has become the centerpiece of terrorist attacks. This underscores the fact that counterinsurgency in this era must recognize the imperative for "investment in civilian modes of warfare" (Bell, 2011, p. 309). Nigeria's counterinsurgency campaign started with heavy reliance on the military approach. The principal limitation of this approach was that the military was helpless at eradicating insurgents' cells and structures which were increasingly infiltrating the civil population in both urban and rural areas (personal communication, Abuja, May 31, 2016).

Following the declaration of the state of emergency in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States in 2013, there was a dramatic escalation of hostilities between the government forces and Boko Haram insurgents, with the civil population being at the receiving end (Amnesty International, 2014). Amidst this crisis, there was a compelling need for the involvement of the affected communities in prosecuting the counterinsurgency crusade. The military needed the assistance of the locals to defend their communities and communal heritage from the activities of the insurgents. Banking on their mutual goodwill, the military and various community vigilantes started collaborating in an attempt to defeat the common enemy-Boko Haram (AOAV, 2012).

Suffice to note, therefore, that the emergence and involvement of volunteer vigilantes in the fight against insurgency in North-East Nigeria was a child of necessity. As an observer succinctly opined, 'it is a case of civilian-military uprising against the insurgents' (personal communication, Maiduguri, May 23, 2016). Indeed, it is an existential struggle for survival in a hostile and volatile environment wherein the communities have resolved to rise up to the challenges of their time and collectively defend their destiny (Anyadike, 2014).

Available literature suggest that the rise of anti-Boko Haram vigilantes in North-East Nigeria was necessitated by the need for the civilians to protect themselves amidst the apparent inability or failure of the government forces to guarantee their security. In this regard, *Watch List* (2014) notes that "self-defense forces have become widespread in North East Nigeria as civilians have taken up arms against JAS (Boko Haram) to defend their communities, filling a security void left by the government security forces" (p. 27).

Similarly, the Human Rights Council (HRC) in its official report opines:

> The inability of security forces to protect civilians from Boko Haram attacks and the deterioration of the security situation have led to the emergence of local self-defense groups, known as vigilantes in North East Nigeria and Cameroun (2015, p. 13).

It can be thus submitted that the involvement of volunteer vigilantes in counterinsurgency endeavors in Nigeria's North-East is a consequence of "shortcomings in the Nigerian system of governance", whereby vigilantes forces have arisen to fill the obvious "legitimate security gaps" (Matfess, 2016, pp. 8-9).The prevalence of Boko Haram onslaught and the apparent inability of the government to contain the situation have driven the inhabitants into taking up arms in self-defence against their adversaries. The nature and strategic implications of this engagement are considered in the subsequent sections.

4. Vigilante Actors in Counterinsurgency Operations in North East Nigeria

Following the escalation of Boko Haram insurgency in North-East Nigeria, local communities in the affected areas resorted to forming informant networks and self-defence mechanisms in order to protect themselves from the machinations of the insurgents. Some of these initiatives were spontaneous and improvised while others were built upon extant local/customary vigilante frameworks. In all, three modes of such initiatives have emerged, namely (i) communal neighborhood guards, (ii) the local hunter's guild and (iii) the civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). These models of community-based anti-Boko Haram vigilantism are discussed in turn below.

4.1. Neighborhood guards: Neighborhood guards are customary community policing system in most parts of the North-East. In the context of Boko Haram crisis, various communities in the region repositioned the existing neighborhood guard structures in order to brace up to the rising threat. Some ad-hoc arrangements that were essentially spontaneous also emerged in that context.

The purpose of neighborhood guards is to protect their communities from possible Boko Haram infiltration and attacks. They conduct native espionage, community patrol, night-vigil and general community policing. They also operate community-wide informant networks, as well as threat-alert system. The structure of neighborhood guards varies from one community to another. They are characterized by lose command system and fluid membership. Their leadership and control is often tied to the community authorities. In some cases, however, leadership and control is personalized by a self-made local warrior at whose behest the structure exists. Membership is largely voluntary and part-time. Operators of neighborhood guard systems bear rudimentary arms and protective amulets. They are often believed to be bestowed with some supernatural powers that make them indestructible. In most cases, they observe some fetish practices by which they claim to renew their potency. Various patterns of communal neighborhood guard

systems have been in operation in the hinterlands of Borno, Yobe, Gombe, Adamawa, and Taraba states. Since 2013, following the emergence of the hunter's guild and the CJTF, some members of the neighborhood guard systems have been defecting to the new platforms (personal communication, Mubi, May 24, 2016).

The activities of the neighborhood guards in the context of counterinsurgency in North-East Nigeria have not been consciously documented. Local narratives and anecdotes, however, suggest that they have been instrumental in protecting local communities from the infiltration of the insurgents. A key informant in Adamawa opined that they have worked in close liaison "with the community leadership and the government forces in identifying and arresting suspected insurgents" (personal communication, Mubi, May 24, 2016).

It is not clear from available sources if the activities of this group have been arbitrary or extra-judicial. Suffice it to note that they have been accused of highhandedness in some cases.

4.2. Local hunters: Local hunters have been in the forefront of the campaign against Boko Haram insurgency. These groups have been replicated in many states, including Gombe, Bauchi, Adamawa and Yobe, to protect communities from further attacks and to apprehend suspected Boko Haram members (Dietrich, 2015).

The local hunters comprise able-bodied male and women who have volunteered to assist the government forces in the military campaign against the Boko Haram insurgents. The group emerged in Adamawa state in 2014 when a number of hunters came together with a resolve to donate their skills and expertise to the government's counterinsurgency operations. The hunters are armed with rudimentary weapons: Dane guns, bows and arrows, machetes and amulets. Unlike the communal neighborhood guards, the local hunters are involved in both defensive and offensive counterinsurgency.

Currently, the local hunters are found in varying degrees in all States of the North-East. They number over ten thousand in all but are mostly concentrated in Adamawa and Yobe States (*Today*, 2016). In Adamawa state, they are reputed to be the arrow-head of the operations that led to the rescue of Gombi, Mubi and Maiha area from the territorial occupation of Boko Haram insurgents (personal communication, Mubi, May 24, 2016). Hence, the hunters, otherwise known as *'Yan Baka'* in local Hausa parlance, have been quite effective in containing the invasion of insurgents in the country sides of the state.

In Yobe State, there exists a brand of local hunter's called the 'the Mahaba'. Membership of Mahaba consists of native hunters who inherited the trade of hunting from their ancestors (personal communication, Gashua, May 25, 2016). Commenting on the efficacy of the Mahaba, a key informant interviewed in Yobe State opined:

> Mahaba…. are more proactive because they possess the wizardry to tame their local environment and protect it from infiltrators. Thus, they have been

> helpful in the fight against the insurgents in the North east. Specifically, it was this group of hunters that drive (sic) away the Boko Haramists (sic) in Bade areas of Yobe State and rendered their activities null (personal communication, Gashua, May 25, 2016).

The local hunters in the North-East have evolved into a sort of local para-military association with a fairly defined and established leadership-cum-command structure. The leadership of the association liaises with CJTF and the military in ensuring that there is a united front against the insurgents. Their activities have paid off in States such as Yobe and Adamawa. Today, the activities of the local hunters are operationally coterminous with those of the CJTF. In effect, some of the members of the hunters' association are being co-opted in the mainstream of the CJTF.

4.3. The civilian JTF: Civilian JTF stands for Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). Otherwise known in local parlance as '*Kato Da Gora',* translating literally as 'Man with a stick', CJTF emerged in 2013 in Maiduguri, Northeastern Nigeria, as a self-help/self-defence interest group dedicated to counterinsurgency (Human Rights Council, 2015). Tracing the origin and emergence of CJTF, Hassan (n.d.) notes that:

> The ragtag civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) comprising Bornu Youth started in May 2013 in Maiduguri when Baba LawanJafar, the overall chairman of the 'Civilian JTF' in Borno State, fearlessly chased and captured a gunman with only a stick and handed him over to the men of the Joint Task Force (JTF), Operation Restore Order. This impressive act led one Modu Milo to join Jafar in the hunt and eventually led to the emergence of the Civilian Joint Task Force as actors in curbing the on-going insurgency in the North East Nigeria (p. 1).

The emergence of the CJTF was buoyed by the self-help resolve of the youths to identify with the military forces in redeeming their communities from the onslaught of Boko Haram insurgency in the aftermath of the declaration of the 'state of emergency' in the Northeast in 2013. Concerning this development, Odomovo (2014) avers:

> Since the declaration of a state of emergency in the North East states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe on 14 May, 2013, the violent conflict in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital has taken a different dimension. Bands of youths brandishing dangerous weapons such as cutlasses, knives, swords, sticks, axe, cudgels, bows and arrows, have appeared on the streets of Maiduguri… these are member of the Borno Youth Vigilante Group who have emerged to assist the official JTF deployed to curb the menace of Boko Haram insurgency in the state. The youth vigilante group is popularly known as Civilian JTF because the group has the implicit endorsement of the official JTF (p. 55).

Members of the CJTF consist of "boys and men aged between 14 and 30" (Amnesty International, 2015, p. 24). The CJTF assist the government forces with identifying and arresting Boko Haram suspects, controlling security checkpoints, providing information,

monitoring the movement of people, and the like (Amnesty International, 2014). It has "also used fire arms against Boko Haram in self-defence and to safeguard communities" (Human Rights Council, 2015, p. 14).

Recruitment into the CJTF is ostensibly voluntary, although there have claims of forced and child recruiting (Amnesty International, 2014; Human Rights Council, 2015). It is difficult to estimate the numerical strength of the CJTF; this is because some of its members are undocumented and/or unregistered. It is, nonetheless, suggested that the group number over 2000, with 1,400-1,500 of them registered and paid by the state authorities (Amnesty International, 2015, p. 25).

The registered members of CJTF are entitled to a monthly allowance facilitated by the State governments of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa (Burchard, 2014; *Watch List*, 2014). Although the activities of the CJTF remain largely unregulated, they have, by and large, operated under the military command (Amnesty International, 2015). The CJTF organizes itself into neighborhood 'sectors' superintended by the sector commands of the official JTF. In this sense, the CJTF is operationally subjected to the military oversight and command ship (International Crisis Group, 2014).

The CJTF has been trained and has often been equipped with arms by the military. They have collaborated with the military in a number of operations both as front-liners and support agents (International Crisis Group, 2014). Their activities have been associated with some operational exploits as well as abuses/excesses. Whereas they have been a dependable ally to the military in confronting and degrading the insurgents, they have often been accused of highhandedness and sundry abusive behaviors as highlighted in the next section. Box 2 provides additional insights on the nature and operations of the CJTF.

Box 2: Overview of the CJTF

The 'Civilian JTF', loosely organized vigilantes, was set up in 2013 in Maiduguri, Borno state to work with the Nigerian security forces to restore normalcy to the state. Their primary responsibility, according to security and government officials, is to identify and help arrest suspected Boko Haram members. There are consistent reports of human right abuses by the civilian JTF.

The name 'Civilian JTF' is being used to show the association between the JTF (comprising the Nigerian army, Police and State Security Services) and the civilians who have volunteered to serve as vigilantes in the fight against Boko Haram.

The group of vigilante emerged after President Goodluck Jonathan declared a State of Emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe state in May, 2013. Initially, it had no command structure. It was not established by law and has no known Code of Conduct. As the months progressed, however, selected individuals were made 'commanders' and 'area coordinators'. Members of the 'Civilian JTF" are supervised by Nigerian security forces. They give information and hand over Boko Haram suspects to the security forces (otherwise known as JTF). Several hundreds have been trained by the authorities. According to local sources, they receive allowances. There is known recruitment procedure.

Source: Amnesty International (2014, p. 12).

5. Vigilantes and Counterinsurgency: Evaluating the Strategic Efficacy and Implications

Volunteer vigilantes have proved effective in the fight against insurgency in Nigeria. In a paper related to the subject matter, Stovenson (2015, p. 18) surmises that:

i. vigilantes have been the most effective vehicle at disrupting the ability of Boko Haram to execute terrorist attacks;
ii. combined vigilante and military operations have reduced whatever increased risk that military operations cause concerning the probability of a (escalated) terrorist attack;
iii. joint police-vigilante operations holds the greatest prospect of containing Boko Haram insurgency.

In spite of the above positive observations, Stovenson reserves misgivings to the effect that mindless and unregulated deployment of vigilante groups in counterinsurgency could be counter-productive in the long run. He thus alarms (2015):

> While vigilantes groups may be important in the short term in disrupting Boko Haram activities and serving as local partners in a successful counter terrorism strategy, arming militias are likely not a long term policy especially if one wants to avoid unintended consequences (p. 19).

The unintended consequences referred to in the above citation can be varied. For instance, owing to the fluid and 'un-regimented' structure of the vigilantes, the problems of discipline, accountability and infiltration have often arisen (Gaffey, 2015). This has often resulted in operational abuses and excuses on the part of the members of the vigilantes. In this regard, it has been observed that:

> While the role of the vigilantes in counterinsurgency operations is appreciated among the military and civilian population, there is a growing concern about the excesses of some members of the CJTF and vigilante groups. During the month, there were reports of rising incidents of clashes between IDPs and CJTF in IDP camps in Borno State. One of such clashes in Shettima Ali Monguno village camp resulted in the death of a man. The clashed have been attributed to allegations of involvement of the vigilantes in extortion, sexual and gender based violence and human rights violations (NSRP, 2016, p. 3).

There have also been allegations of forced recruiting, child and woman soldiering, extra-judicial killings and suspected insurgents, and other human rights abuses (Congressional Research Service, 2016). This is in addition to the palpable fears that the vigilante groups may metamorphose into mercenary militias that may be used to advance the cause of ethno-communal, religious and political conflicts (Hassan, n.d.; Stovenson, 2015). Akin to this is the issue of armed proliferations, which can also result from possible eventual misapplication of weaponry by the combatant vigilantes.

Further to the issue of abuses, there has also been the unintended outcome of violent reprisals orchestrated by the insurgents in vengeance for the vigilante attacks on them. This form of retaliatory attacks has often been targeted on communities that identify with the volunteer vigilantes. As Odomovo (2014) succinctly puts it:

> On several occasions some of the youths (vigilantes) have been ambushed and killed by Boko Haram insurgents. For example, in July 2013, member of the civilian JTF invaded the villages of Mainok and Dawashi in Maiduguri in search of insurgents. Following the invasion, Boko Haram insurgents killed about 43 members of the vigilante in a fierce retaliatory attack (p. 55).

The retaliatory attacks have also been targeted against the structures of the vigilantes. For example, the insurgents struck the local vigilante office of Nangare, Gashua in Yobe State on 15th June, 2015, killing six people and injuring several others in a bomb attack (WANEP-Nigeria, 2015). Those interviewed in the course of this paper confirmed similar occurrences in parts of Borno, Gombe and Adamawa States.

There have equally been cases of infiltration by the insurgents into the rank and file of the vigilantes. Those interviewed during the research made reference to such infiltrations. There was a popular media report of a middle-aged man in Bama area of Borno Sate, who pretended to be working for the CJTF, but later sold out the operations of the group to the insurgents. It was gathered via local narratives and anecdotal sources that such mishap accounted for the bulk of the incidents where the vigilante forces were ambushed and massacred. Similar cases were reported in Damboa, Mainok and Dawashi in the hinterlands of Borno State where suspected vigilantes and their sympathizers were killed in cold blood by the insurgents in retaliatory ambushed attacks (Odomovo, 2014). The loose organizational structure and leadership of the vigilantes makes susceptible to infiltration and internal sabotage. The worst contradiction associated with the role of volunteer vigilantes in counterinsurgency operations in North East Nigeria is the tendency for the operators to indulge in 'jungle justice'. As observed by Odomovo (2014):

> The vigilante groups sometimes take law into their own hands by… arresting suspected insurgents including innocent civilians. As part of their efforts in fishing out Boko Haram insurgents, these youths often dispense justice to their victims in a jungle manner (p. 55).

Their excesses notwithstanding, volunteer vigilantes have proved to be a veritable and functional partner of the military in the fight against insurgency in North East Nigeria. With their proper understanding of the operational terrain of counterinsurgency, the vigilantes have assisted the military in identifying and overriding important structures of the insurgents through local intelligence and reconnaissance. They have also facilitated arrests of high-profile Boko Haram suspects, as well as the rescue of some of their

abductors. It is to their credit that the historic rescue of one of the abducted Chibok girls was made on May 18, 2016.

The relative success of the vigilantes in counterinsurgency in North-East Nigeria affirms the underlying thinking in 'societal/human security' literature that security is best provided by the people and not for the people (Hassan, n.d., p.1; Afeikhena, n.d.; ETTIS, 2012). As the experience in North-East Nigeria tends to justify:

> Charging locals with protecting their own communities becomes imperative, because they are well acquainted with the terrain under (sic) which they operate against the troops deployed who are often language-challenged; have little or no knowledge of the different arid terrain or territory… (Hassan, n.d., p. 2).

The apparent successes of volunteer vigilantes in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency has been acknowledged by many observers, including the government and the military (International Crisis Group, 2014). However, critics contend that these vigilantes operate illegally as ill-regulated armed groups. They also argue that, according to such groups, a front-line position in counterinsurgency operations portends that the state is abdicating her primary function to see to national security (International Crisis Group, 2014). In spite of these misgivings, the justification for vigilante approach in the fight against insurgency cannot be overemphasized. As observed by Burchard (2014):

> Vigilante groups are uniquely poised to contribute to local security because these groups form in response to specific issues and conditions; are staffed by local volunteers who have knowledge of the community; and often have trust of the local community(n.p.).

6. Conclusion

Contemporary terror-insurgency is an asymmetric warfare that requires an equally unconventional remediation. The civilian intervention in counterinsurgency in North-East Nigeria reflects this strategic imperative. Amidst the lethal onslaught of Boko Haram insurgents against the communities of North-East Nigeria and the apparent helplessness of the state (the government and its security forces) in mitigating the situation, the inhabitants were faced with three unpleasant and dicey options: to flee their communities; to join the insurgent groups; or to be killed. In effect, while some inhabitants succeeded in fleeing to safer places, others were stuck in the volatile area where they were compelled to, indeed, either join the insurgents or be killed. Overtime, the people thought of the fourth option- mobilizing for self-defense based on self-help. They thus mobilized themselves into community vanguards poised to confront the machinations of the rampaging Boko Haram insurgents. This resolve marked the genesis of what is today known as Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and its allied volunteer vigilantes.

The involvement of these vigilantes in counterinsurgency in North-East Nigeria marks a departure from the military-centric to civilian-oriented counterinsurgency opera-

tions. Apart from policing their local communities, these volunteer vigilantes have been assisting the military in identifying, arresting and spying suspected insurgents. They have largely facilitated the major breakthroughs made by the military in terms of high profile arrests of suspected insurgents as well as rescue of their hostages. However, the activities of the volunteer vigilantes have been unfortunately associated with some untoward occurrences, such as human rights abuses, extortions, oppression, gang violence, sexual harassment, child/woman recruiting, forced recruitment and other extra-judicial excesses. More unfortunately, the vigilantes have often provoked retaliatory violence whereby the insurgents capitalize on their counter-attacks to raid communities that are associated or sympathetic with the vigilantes. These occurrences have smeared the efficacy of the involvement of these vigilantes in counterinsurgency in the area under review.

There is, therefore, a need to ensure that the vigilantes operate in a manner that forecloses untoward and counterproductive outcomes. First, they must seek to operate within the confines of the law. In this regard, the activities of the vigilantes should be properly coordinated and regulated through established legal and institutional procedures to forestall operational impunity. In this direction, the Federal Government of Nigeria needs to evolve coherent policy-cum-institutional mechanisms for harnessing the vigilantes, so that they can operate as authentic community policing system. Alternatively, the government should consider absorbing some of the organized vigilante formations into the existing paramilitary structures or institutionalizing them into a national reserve force amenable to emergency mobilization. It is the conviction of this paper that the aforementioned measures would go a long way in optimizing the potentials of volunteer vigilantes and at the same time modulating their excesses in the overall interest of national security of Nigeria.

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Appendix I: Diary of Interviews/Discussions

Name	Designation	Interview/discussion Destination	Interview/discussions date
Anonymous	Military personnel	Abuja, Nigeria	May 31, 2016
Anonymous	Military personnel	Abuja, Nigeria	May 31, 2016
Anonymous	Ex-vigilante/resident	Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria	May 23, 2016
Johnson Tifiti	Postgraduate student/ lecturer	Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria	May 24, 2016
Shehu Gusau	Lecturer/researcher	Gashua, YobeState, Nigeria	May 25, 2016
Lenshie Edward	Lecturer/researcher	Jalingo, Taraba State Nigeria	My 29, 2016
Anonymous	Community resident	Kashare, Gombe State, Nigeria	May 31, 2016
Sundry others	Various	Various	May-June, 2016

Romania: From Institutional to Personal Political Conflict. Mainstream Political Discourse on the Eve of the Refugee Crisis

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Abstract. *The article sheds light on the political conflict triggered in Romania by the refugee crisis. In spite of Romania not being amongst the preferred destinations of the refugees, its voice within the European debate was by no means marginal. Nor was the topic peripheral in the discourse of Romanian mainstream political parties, which – surprisingly enough – sometimes had staggering opposite views on the issue. Our study taps into the communication patterns of both the media and the politicians representing mainstream political parties, as we aim to understand the political conflict on the issue. Our analysis suggests that political actors did not always respect their ideological views and that their attitudes on the quota system proposed by the European Commission were strategically linked to an agenda not directly related to the refugee crisis.*

Keywords: *Political communication, institutional conflict, refugee crisis, populism, immigration.*

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Introduction

The inevitability of conflict in politics has long been acknowledged, acting as an expression of the clashes between public or

– quite frequently – private interests (Lasswell, 1936). Such a reality is mostly visible in liberal democracies, the deliberative dimension of which allows space for disagreement either between various groups of citizens on the one side and the government on the other, or even between decision makers themselves. There is still important lack of consensus in the literature related to the effects on political behavior, with some authors arguing that such conflicting attitudes might actually discourage participation (McClurg, 2003). Even so, most scholars agree on the benefits of democratic political conflict, which approximates a competition for the best arguments and ideas. As history has shown, the European Union is nothing short of political conflict, which seems to have developed into a two-fold tension over its identity. On the one hand, there is the conflict between those who believe the EU is a historical success and those who think the European project is a political failure. And on the other hand, there are sometimes significant tensions between the views on how the EU should further its integration process, which is rather considered to be an extension of domestic politics (Laffan, 1996).

It was not long after its creation that the European Union became an openly contested arena for various political actors who expressed their dissatisfaction with its integration process. The debate about the political survival of the European construction is all but new, having had experienced periods of greater and lower intensity depending on the historical developments of the time. The recent economic depression has greatly affected yet again the political debate about the European Union, with parties embracing a *populist* rhetoric having emerged as important political actors both as a result of national elections and of European elections. The following chapter of our paper also taps into the development of this political movement. *Euroscepticism* has come to dominate the public agenda ever since, emerging from the fringes of the political spectrum and arriving as an unavoidable topic for mainstream political parties as well. This process of political contagion is very much related to issue ownership and topic saliency, with two fundamental effects: it aided the visibility (and eventual success) of various niche parties, and it simultaneously altered the discourse of mainstream parties (Meguid, 2005) forcing them to take public position on one side of the debate or the other. Another direction engraving the European debate was identified as coming from *Occidentalism*, a reaction to Western ideology, splendidly described by Ian Buruma and AvishaiMargalit in their book entitled *Occidentalism – A short History of Anti-Westernism* (2003). The book has become a reference text for scholars interested in understanding the origins and the development of the anti-Western stances.

It is in this context that migration has developed into being an important source of political ammunition feeding what we previously called the two-fold conflict on the European project. The political space picked up this rhetoric through the migration-development nexus, a theory that has seldom been questioned ever since it was initially formulated after World War II (Haruța, 2016). Moreover, the rising intensity of the intercultural communication that migration involves has prompted the need for a re-

negotiation of identities (Hosu, 2015), an act that quite a number of European citizens deem unacceptable.

The refugee crisis as a turning point in the European ideological conflict

The refugee crisis ranks high on the agenda of today's political debate, be it on a national or on a supranational level being directly related to the phenomenon of migration. Such a situation only counts as a typical effect if we acknowledge that throughout the post-war history of Europe, few other phenomena have managed to exert so much influence on the political debate as migration (Messina, 2007). Therefore, it is only natural that the refugee crisis has developed into an important source of political conflict. The second wave of immigration to Western Europe has disbanded altogether the idea that foreign workers recruited after the Second World War would not settle permanently. Multicultural and multiracial societies have therefore started to become an everyday reality, which in some cases has generated resentment against the newcomers, an attitude that became more visible than ever during the oil crisis of the 1970s and then flourished after the 90's, once Eastern Europe became an important source of immigration towards the West. Ethnicity and sociocultural differences arrived at the point of drawing even violent political cleavages, becoming hinge points for political movements that championed xenophobia and racism. Protecting national values and the so-called traditional way of life has progressively become a major topic, with some political actors embracing a new type of cultural nativism that proved to be unexpectedly popular amongst part of the electorate (Betz, 2003).

This new political rhetoric identified the state as the main culprit for tensions between part of the majority on the one side and the new minorities on the other, thus raising skepticism vis-à-vis the capacity of national institutions – and later on of the European ones – to deal with this new reality. Such an attitude has been an ideological trait primarily of the right side of the political spectrum than of the left. The electoral victories of right-wing populist parties, promoters of a strong nationalist appeal, have remained a clear expression that ethnic differences within the borders of one state are considered to be unbearable by part of its nationals. As such, once acknowledged, the unaccommodating cultural differences have been perceived as a managerial failure of state institutions. In the eyes of those who see their way of life threatened by this new reality, the manager that is to be blamed for the status quo is the state, an entity perceived to put democracy as a system in danger. And dissatisfaction with national policies immediately determines dissatisfaction with the European Union (McLaren, 2005), an attitude amongst the electorate that was politically capitalized especially by populist parties. The economic crisis of 2008 acted as a momentum for most of the populist far right parties, which saw their electoral support rejuvenate in many European countries. This, however, was not the case in Romania, where Greater Romania

Party (PRM), renowned for its populist and ultranationalist rhetoric, lost all of its seats in the Romanian Parliament and subsequently in the European Parliament during the elections of 2014. Even so, the recent EU parliamentary elections brought forward many new, or older but revitalized, populist parties in the European legislative based in Brussels, which currently hosts two populist far right political groups: the group entitled *Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy*, founded by Nigel Farage (former leader of the UKIP) and *Europe of Nations and Freedom*, lead by Marine Le Pen (of the French *Front National*) and Marcel de Graaf (of the Dutch *Partij Voor de Vrijheid*). The short-lived parliamentary group entitled *Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty* only proves that it is very difficult for such parties to cooperate, which makes one wonder how long the above-mentioned groups will be able to survive politically (Duerr, 2015). However, the great potential of political conflict – which one could call the pathology of "political diabetes" (given the lack of capacity to coagulate into a coherent political entity)does not influence the way the electorate perceives such parties.

Given the political developments that span well over two decades, the number of scholarly work dedicated to the evolution of the populist far right has grown considerably, tackling both their impact on the political system and their influence over the process of policy-making. The theory of the contagion from the right is credited with explaining why mainstream parties sometimes exhibit the tendency of adapting to the discourse of the far right and not vice-versa (Norris, 2005; Bale *et al.*, 2010). And reality has shown that far-right populists cast their influence not only on the right flank of the party spectrum, but also on the left. Contemporary populism puts to the forefront the new issues of identity, legitimacy and political order that are now a priority in the European public debate. The politics of identity is currently a salient topic, having been generated by the uncertainty in respect to the balance between national, local, regional and European identities (Laffan, 1996).

In the context of the current refugee crisis, the importance of understanding such political organizations resides in the fact that most of them are also known as one-issue parties, immigration being the preferred topic to win the sympathy of the electorate. These so-called "challenger parties" build their rhetoric against the issue of *immigration*, the effects of which have triggered insecurity and fear of the "otherness" in the minds of a significant part of the electorate. Some studies have shown that there is quite a strong correlation between the levels of immigration and support for populist parties (Knigge, 1998; Golder, 2003). Therefore, exclusion seems to be the major rhetorical element of the populist far right, which militates (sometimes violently) against the *status quo* on immigration. Such parties frequently use a strong nationalist rhetoric to manifest their opposition to multiculturalism and to denounce diversity under most of its forms (Betz, 2015). Moreover, fueled by the effects of the economic crisis, welfare chauvinism has become a defining aspect of the right-wing populist discourse, which claims that social welfare should be available only for those who share the same ethnic

background with the majority of the people (Taggart, 2000). Immigrants are portrayed as competitors over scarce resources, with populists arguing that their presence does nothing but to contribute to the high unemployment rates and accusing them of "stealing jobs" (Rydgren, 2013).

Studies so far have shown that important waves of immigration (such as the one in 2015) can generate messages with a certain degree of populism, sometimes visible even in the discourse of mainstream parties, usually through contagion from smaller, more radical political actors. Considered to be a strategy consolidated around the idea of *exclusion*, especially through *anti-elitism* and *scapegoating*, populism can easily fuel anti-immigrant sentiments. In explaining its success, many scholars (amongst which Knigge in 1998 and Golder in 2003), identified quite a strong correlation between high levels of immigration and support for the populist rhetoric. Jason Matthew Smith (2010) formulated the same hypothesis and added that increasing crime rates associated with immigration have benefited populism. The situation is especially sensible for Romania, where the party system remained in dire need of ideological clarifications especially after the 2014 presidential elections, the results of which have taken aback virtually all politicians. Ever since, Romania's two dominant parties appear to have been confronted mostly with logistical issues either at the top or at the bottom of the party structures, such activities taking precedence over ideology.

In Romania, the recent political developments (which culminated with the presidential elections of 2014 that were surprisingly won by the candidate of the liberal opposition) have transformed the political system into one approximating a two-party system, with the liberals (PNL) on the right and the social democrats (PSD) on the left of the political spectrum. The transformation is even more spectacular as the political environment was characterized by an inflation of political parties immediately after the fall of the communist regime in 1990. Ever since, and until 2008, far right populists scored very important electoral gains – amongst which in 2000, when their leader competed for president of the Republic (and eventually lost), but making it to the second round of the presidential elections. However, in Romania, the "usual suspects" – as populist far right parties are sometimes referred to, have succumbed due to their lack of credibility (Stoica, 2016). Our analysis seeks to understand whether the disappearance of far right political parties have also meant an absence of the anti-immigrant rhetoric.

The refugee crisis reflected in Romania

As was the case in all European states, the refugee crisis attracted much of the attention of the national press. In little less than 7 months, *Agerpres* (the major Romanian news agency) dedicated *2381* news entries to the topic of the refugee crisis, starting from the 9th of September 2015 until the 30th of March 2016.We considered the 9th of September as a starting point for our study given the fact that it was the day the European Commission

issued the proposal for the regulation that established the quotas for refugees that were to be distributed to each European state through the relocation mechanism. The national news agency dedicated quite an important space to the information, the quote of the day having been reserved for Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, who famously declared that day: "We are not in a good state. There is a lack of Europe in the EU and there is a lack of union in this EU". Despite the fact that the agency has clearly considered the news coming from Brussels as an important event, with major relevance for Romania, the article about the quotas ranked only 4th in the interests of the online readers (911 hits), most of which turned their attention to the news about the decision of the Government to rise the minimum salary in the state sector. The proximity of the economic issue in the interests of the readers constitutes the main explanation element. Table 1 (below) shows the ranking of the news entries and the differences in the number of viewers:

Table 1: Number of readers per news entry on the 9th of September 2015.

Rank	Number of readers
#1	4731
#2	1592
#3	1089
#4	**911**

In bold, the newson the quotas proposed by the European Commission.

The first official reaction to the document issued by the European Commission came the same day from the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who declared that the Government would closely analyze the proposal. "The position that both the Prime Minister and the President of Romania have expressed is that of preferring a system of voluntary, and not mandatory quotas. Any proposal of numbers from the Commission will be subject to a process of internal inter-institutional analysis and negotiations between Member States" was what Minister Bogdan Aurescu has declared the same day during a speech in the Chamber of Deputies. The statement of the Minister shows that there is a unitary view of the two highest state officials related to the position of Romania. This situation, however, quickly suffered radical changes. The next day, *Agerpres* quoted the President stating that Romania will not enroll in the system of mandatory quotas and the Minister of Foreign Affairs declaring that there are no sanctions if a state does not follow the quotas system.

The table below mirrors the shifting positions related to the refugee crisis of the two major political actors in Romania (President Klaus Iohannis and Prime Minister Victor Ponta), as reflected in the news articles of the national press agency. We have also

added an additional column representing important national third party actors that have positioned themselves one way or the other vis-à-vis the crisis. The period taken into consideration was between the 9th of September and the 4th of November, the latter date representing the day Prime Minister Ponta resigned due to street protests related to a severe accident in Bucharest that caused the death of tens of young people. Given the political tension between the two major institutional actors, we believe this time period reflects best the positions of the two.

Table 2: The positions of the President of Romania, the Prime Minister and relevant national third parties related to the EU solutions proposed to solving the refugee crisis (9th of September – 4th of November 2015)

Date	President	Prime Minister	Third party
10.09	-	-	
12.09		-	
14.09		+	- (TB)*
15.09		+	
16.09	-	+	
17.09	+		
23.09		-	
24.09	+	-	+ (BNR)
08.10	+		
13.10			- (TB)
24.10		-	
27.10	+		
30.10.			- (AB)

*TB = Traian Băsescu (former President of Romania: 2004-2014); BNR = Official of the National Bank of Romania; AB = Ana Blandiana (one of the major contemporary poets of Romania, renown public figure).

The attitude of the two major political actors in Romania have quite radically changed over the course of the two months, ending with the resignation of Prime Minister Victor Ponta – a political decision which put an end to the tensions that have been growing ever since the two competed in the presidential elections of 2014. An important date that marked the shift in their attitudes was the 23rd of September, when President Iohannis represented Romania at the European Council in Brussels. Prime Minister Ponta expressed his skepticism that President Iohannis would be able to negotiate anything in the benefit of Romania, having declared that Iohannis "came back [to Romania] with the position of Europe [on the refugee quotas], not that of ours". Moreover, the Prime Minister expressed his hope that "certain things could have still been negotiated" and that during the meeting in Brussels the President should have stressed the poor logis-

tical capacity of Romania to both host and integrate the refugees. On the other hand, coming back from Brussels, President Iohannis declared that Romania would allocate an extra 300.000 EUR for food programs for the refugees, in total contrast with his statement from a week before his visit, when he declared that "in the EU problems can only be solved through open dialogue and agreement", and "not in a bureaucratic manner". The table above reflects the fact that despite having expressed an identical point of view on the matter at the beginning – namely against the refugee quotas, the views of the President and of the Prime Minister significantly disengaged from one another, with Iohannis arriving at a positive attitude regarding the decision taken in Brussels and Ponta ending his mandate with a view that Romania should be more of a hardliner (alongside Bulgaria and Serbia) in imposing its point of view. In fact, Ponta praised Poland for its negotiating skills with the European Union on this issue. The attitudes of the two major actors leave doubts whether they have been strictly policy-related, or if their strained political relationship also had an influence.

We also included the most significant national third parties that had their opinions reflected in the news flow of the national agency. Considering they could have also contributed to shaping the public opinion on the issue, we have identified three such main third parties that had their say on the matter during the period we analyzed. The most vocal was former president Traian Băsescu, whose aim was to grow the visibility of his newly founded party; his attitude was totally against the refugees, having declared that Romania would commit a grave mistake if it would accept the quotas. Another interesting third party was the National Bank of Romania, the representatives of which declared that the refugees should be seen as a potential new labor force of the country. Lastly, there was the intervention of Ana Blandiana, a famous Romanian poet and a very active militant for democratic reforms, especially during the transition period that followed the fall of the communist regime; the poet was quoted by *Agerpres*, on the 30th of October: "Should Europe relinquish its culture, it will relinquish its identity as well".

Highly personalized political conflicts are anything but new for the Romanian political scene, a trait that has managed to hold a strong grip on the decision-making process over the last decades, in spite of the significant democratic developments. Moreover, such a situation seems to be rather common for post-communist European countries, where the expectation of achieving democratic changes would primarily rest on individuals with a certain degree of national notoriety, mostly renowned for their opposition to the former dictatorial regimes. Therefore, partisanship would chiefly hinge on faces rather than on specific ideologies, a reflex that keeps on marking policy-making ever since. The existence of a variety of centers of intensely personalized politics triggered the formation of adversarial elites that would systematically engage into time-consuming and counter-productive disputes. Slovakia represents yet another example of how "personalist politics" has marked democratic development and economic recovery after the collapse of the communist regime and the dissolution of the joint Czech-Slovak

state in 1992. Making and breaking governmental coalitions based on personal sympathies worked as a common denominator for many post-communist countries, a feature that weakened party systems and frequently lead to the failure of Prime Minister and President cohabitation(Leff, 1996).While in Western Europe cohabitation was designed as a means for ensuring the smooth functioning of the government amid political competition between those in power (Knapp&Wright, 2006), the same mechanism proved to be less efficient in Eastern Europe, where power-sharing lead to the exacerbation of political hostility.

The existence of long-standing social cleavages and at least a mild form of party identity are considered to represent prerequisites for avoiding situations in which personality politics dominates national political systems. However, communism has greatly contributed to leveling social and political identities, by changing political cultures alongside competition incentives, with rewards being given on an individual rather than on a collective level (Whitefield, 1993). Therefore, the articulation of interests in Eastern Europe does not follow the pattern of Western European political competition. The highly divisive issue of the path towards democracy also contributed to the emergence of deeply conflicting views that were assumed by individuals rather than by parties. Personal enmities were now shaping political negotiations, and commitment for democracy was strongly related to public figures that manifested their opposition against elites who either represented at one point or who at least had strong ties with the former communist party (Ewans& Whitefield, 1993).

Therefore, the development of party competition in Romania after the fall of the communist regime seemed to resemble more of a personal than an ideological conflict, with politicians looking at costs and benefits on the short term; the refugee crisis offered yet another conclusive example in this sense. The rapidly shifting points of view over the quotas, unsanctioned by the electorate, suggest that ideological orientations are still very thin and ill-defined, allowing ample space for politicians to develop a populist rhetoric that would appeal to the national sentiment of a larger segment of the population. An explanation might be related to how politicians react in cases of humanitarian crises – amongst which the refugee crisis – building their media discourse around the imaginings of national identity, feeding on the fear of the unknown "other" (Gale, 2004).

Conclusions

The conflicting governmental views on the refugee quotas were very much influenced by internal political disagreements between the President of the republic and the Prime Minister at the time, the latter having been the competitor of the President in the 2014 elections. The internal political competition has therefore influenced the mainstream political views on the position of Romania and has sometimes generated ambiguity. In studying the attitudes of the two political actors mentioned above, we have analyzed

the news articles available on the website of *Agerpres*, as it represents the main source of information for all other news websites or printed newspapers on many topics, amongst which politics.

Specifically on this issue, the media discourse in Romania reflected the existence of an unjustified form of islamophobia that tried to artificially grow intolerant attitudes by mobilizing nationalist passions in the absence of a background that would offer social or at least historical explanations (Pop, 2016).The study also sheds light upon the ideological characteristics of the political discourse, which at least in this case had very little to do with the traditional left-right cleavage or with the progressive-conservative one. We would have expected the Prime Minister to show more openness towards the relocation mechanism, given the fact that he represented a left-wing party. However, this was not the case. On the other hand, the expectation regarding the President would have been that of a rather conservative attitude, given the fact that he was – before taking up his mandate – the leader of the largest right-wing party in Romania. Despite all this, their attitudes were entirely counter-intuitive reported to their ideological affiliation. The study also confirms that when parties representing the "usual suspects" of populism disappear, one should not take for granted that the anti-immigration discourse fades away completely (Hayton, 2010).

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Terrorism: A Reflection on the Dynamics of Contemporary Suicide Terrorism

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Abstract: *Suicide terrorism has evaded understanding and the war on terror is failing in its attempt to counter and even control it. This article argues that suicide terrorism is largely caused by indoctrination and, therefore, the key to understand and defeat it is through weakening and even conquering indoctrination carried out by terror organizations. It further asserts that although other factors such as finance, weapons, religion, political environment, structured organization, infrastructure and sponsors contribute to suicide operations, they are not central. To this end, efforts to counter suicide terrorism should focus on ending radicalisation and/or indoctrination of individuals and communities.*

Keywords*: Suicide terrorism, indoctrination, terrorist, religion, Islamic State, Social media.*

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Introduction

The debates on terrorism have created controversial definitions. The most popular definition refers to terrorism as a deliberate and systematic use of random violence on the "innocent" carried out to create fear

on a targeted audience in order to realize political ends. This definition is controversial because the so called terrorists in one scenario are sometimes viewed as liberators in another and the so-called victims are also regarded as terrorists depending on the perspective of either the victim or perpetrator (Cronin, 2002; Wolfendale, 2007; Walzer, 1977; Legault, 1992; Levinson & Christensen, 1996; Kaarbo & Ray, 2011; Atran, 2003). Suicide terrorism is another branch of terrorism and can be defined as violent and politically motivated self-destructive violence committed by a "terrorist" by blowing himself or herself whilst killing others at the same time through the use of bomb loaded cars, planes or clothing (Bunker and Sullivan, 2004; Bloom, 2005, 113; Atran, 2003; Moghadam, 2005, 2008). The terror and fear generated by the act is the main reason for the suicide attack and is designed to force a targeted group to succumb to the demands of the perpetrators. Suicide terrorism, like ordinary terrorism, also contains controversies because the suicide terrorist is considered a martyr by the supporters of the act whilst the targeted victims of the attack usually refer to the perpetrators as psychopathic self-destructive murderers (Bunker & Sullivan, 2004; Levinson & Christensen, 1996).

This article focuses on suicide terrorism because it has been gradually increasing and spreading into new territories since the 1980s with limited signs of reduction. Added to this, the article clarifies several misunderstandings that are held by both experts and the general public in relation to the conduct, operation and responses to suicide terrorist activities. It also examines the extent to which these unfounded beliefs have undermined attempts to curb the spread of suicide terror operations. Prominent among these beliefs are the assertions that suicide terrorists are poor, uneducated, psychologically lacking and that giving in to the demands of suicide bombers will end hostilities. Furthermore, some scholars assert that the killing or detaining of terrorist leaders will lead to an end of suicide operations and the responsible organization and targeting the financial resources of a terrorist organization leads to its destruction. These beliefs explain why attempts to curb suicide terror attacks have always resulted in utter failure. This article advances the thesis that suicide terrorism, unlike any other form of terrorism, has its backbone and foundation in its capability to indoctrinate. Usually, terrorist organisations fuse religious and political indoctrination (Brym, 2007).

All the organisations responsible for suicide terrorism depend on a body, clique or department of propagandists responsible for conditioning and inducing the belief that the organisation's cause is much more valuable than one's life. Indoctrination is the most vital aspect of all suicide terrorist organisations both past and present, therefore, the existence of a suicide terrorist organisation does not necessarily require weaponry, financial or religious backing. It concludes that targeting the terrorist organisations' financial, political, leadership, religious, structural or infrastructural resources, without weakening their capability to indoctrinate, will not completely destroy the terrorist organisations. This explains why the war on terror has failed to curb suicide terrorism

in the past two decades. More so, non-military counter propaganda measures have recently proven to be successful in permanently crippling terrorist organizations. A case in point is Al-Qa'ida in Iraq, which generated such resentment among its subjects such that it laid the foundations for the Sunni Awakening that ultimately destroyed its hold (Quintana, 2015).

The article is divided into five sections. The first section provides a theoretical framework which is hinged on indoctrination. In the second section, we provide a brief history of suicide cases. Myths, misunderstandings and stereotypes surrounding suicide terrorism are explored in the third section whilst the fourth part examines indoctrination and counter propaganda campaigns applied by terrorist organisations. The recommendations and conclusion comprise the last section.

Theoretical framework

In this article, we engage the theory of indoctrination propounded by Frank Salter (2008) in his manuscript, *Ethnicity and Indoctrination for Violence: The Efficiency of Producing Terrorists*. He claims that suicide terrorism would be very low without the systematic education and deliberate removal of restraint and human values in order to create a dedicated suicide bomber. He further notes that indoctrination is merely a necessary condition for suicide terrorism but is highly inefficient as a sufficient cause for routine terrorism (Salter, 2008). Contrary to Salter, we assert that terrorism, in general, and suicide terrorism, in particular, is hinged on and perpetuated through indoctrination, be it religious or circular. This does not mean that all the other factors which contribute to terrorism, such as the organization, environment, finance, resources, among others, are not important. They are peripheral in terms of perpetuating suicide terrorism when compared to indoctrination. Indoctrination is not only carried out on the suicide terrorist, but is also induced on the communities which passively or actively support suicide terrorism.

Indoctrination, according to the Merriam Webster dictionary, is the practice of teaching a particular person in order for that person to totally accept and adopt the opinions, ideas and belief systems of a certain group so as to reject any other beliefs, opinions and ideas from any other group (Merriam-Webster, 2016). In suicide terrorism, the ability and skill required to transform a human being from a self-preserving social animal into a selfless, self-destructive walking bomb requires a high level of convincing, brain washing, conditioning and training that is rare and unique (Iqbal, 2010). Trainers adept at the art of deception, sophistry and propaganda which make the catholic indulgences of the past to appear like child's play are responsible for the indoctrination process. Communities and members of terrorist organisations are indoctrinated by these charismatic teachers who distort and blur the lines of religion, politics and society by instilling their own version of the world into the followers. Some of these former and modern

teachers of suicide terrorism include Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden's mentor, the late Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri leader of al-Jihad an Egyptian terrorist group, Abu Hamza al-Mazri and Omar Bakri Muhammed, the two great Salafi jihadist preachers, Abu Ayman al-Hilali, and Baitullah Mehsud among many others (Sela-Shayovitz, 2007; Iqbal, 2010; Moghadam, 2008). It is our submission that without the influence of these teachers, thousands would not have volunteered to become suicide bombers and thus without indoctrination the cases of contemporary suicide terrorism would be very low.

Propaganda, distortions and outright lies are delivered to the members in concealed places via a propaganda network of indoctrination (Martin & Weinberg, 2016) and claims which include but not limited to: assertions that dying through suicide terrorism is a holy and noble gesture which is painless, honourable and bestows martyrdom status and a ticket to paradise (Ganor, 2007). Heavenly rewards through the washing of sins with one's blood opening the doors to paradise where angels will usher the pure soul to await great riches accompanied by 72 virgins who will serve the martyr forever whilst 70 relatives of the volunteer suffering the torments of hell will also be accepted into paradise. More so, the teachers impart that a sit very close to the prophet Mohamed and almighty Allah will also be reserved for the martyr (Marone, 2013; Iqbal, 2010; Moghadam, 2008; Sela-Shayovitz, 2007). These are some of the promises that are indoctrinated into the members. Those who are suffering financial difficulties are given a large sum of money for their relatives whilst they will be broadcast in the local television stations before and after they commit suicide bombing (Iqbal, 2010; Brym 2007).

A reflection on suicide terror attacks

It is vital to note that terrorism, in general, and suicide operations, in particular, are not recent phenomena but can be traced as far back as three millenniums during the pre-Christian era (Kaarbo & Ray, 2011). The first ever recorded suicide assault took place around 1078 BCE in the Middle East, during the reign of Samson when he prayed to God after he had been captured by the Philistines to give him strength to destroy the Philistines and himself by collapsing the Philistine temple (Rudd, 2016). However, contemporary suicide terrorism is believed to have emerged in the early 1980s, during the Lebanese civil war. The first recorded modern suicide terrorist act was a suicide car bombing on the Iraqi embassy in Beirut which killed 61 people, including the former Ambassador Abdul Razzak Lafta, on 15 December 1981 (Bunker & Sullivan, 2004; Atran, 2003; Moghadam, 2005). Since then, about 1,857 suicide bombings were recorded between December 1981 and March 2008 and the suicide attacks increased year after year. Until the mid-1990s, suicide attacks did not exceed seven bombings each year. There was a rapid increase of suicide terrorism after the 9/11 attack in 2001. Accordingly, in 2001, there were 54 attacks followed by 71 in 2002, whilst 2003 had 81, which were lower than 104 in 2004, 2005 had 348, with 2006 having 353, which are far less compared to 535 attacks of 2007 (Lankford, 2011; Moghadam, 2005; 2008). More so, in

Nigeria and Somalia, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab have recently linked with al-Qaeda and intensified and expanded their operations in North Africa (Barton, 2016). In the Middle East, the 2003 US invasion of Iraq and the recent Syrian civil war led to the hegemony of al-Qaeda's spin-offs which assumed political power. This is true of the Islamic State (IS or ISIS) which was formed in June 2014 with a major objective of creating the former Islamic global caliphate which stretched from Morocco to Spain in the West and as far as India in the East (Quintana, 2015). In 2016, ISIS was controlling one third of north western Iraq and half of northern Syria (Hughes, 2016; Schmid, 2015; Barton, 2016) although it is "neither Islamic nor a state" because it attacks civilians, including women and children (Cusack, 2016). Moreover, it destroys property, murders other Muslims who hold different opinions and this is forbidden in the Islamic law (Daftary, 2016). ISIS attracted at least 20,000 foreign fighters from at least 100 states and these are operating inside Syria and Iraq (Schmid, 2015). It has been estimated that there was a 70% increase in foreign fighters who joined terrorist groups between mid-2014 to March 2015. As a result of this rapid growth in the cases of suicide terrorism, it is imperative to find out why they are continuously and gradually escalating despite the September 2014 counter-terrorism coalition created by the then US president, Barak Obama, comprising of sixty-three states (Quintana, 2015).

Since the beginning of 2015, the Middle East, Africa and Asia have seen nearly 50 times more deaths from terrorism than Europe and the Americas. The Middle East and Northern Africa account for over two-thirds of terrorism deaths since January 2015, with multiple attacks occurring daily, each claiming on average at least a dozen lives. More so, suicide attacks in 2015 were 4.6 times as lethal as compared to non-suicide attacks (Cordesman, 2016). Between January and September 2016, ISIS carried out deadly suicide terror attacks across the globe, including Syria, Belgium, France, Turkey, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Iraq and Yemen, among others, which left over a thousand fatalities, tens of thousands injured and psychologically affected although it had experienced terrible territorial loses and close to a third of its fighting force (Tomkiw, 2016).

Suicide terrorist incidences have recently increased and the largest increase for 2015 was in Africa which recorded 122 suicide attacks in 2015, as compared with 32 terror attacks in 2014. The responsible party is Wilayat Gharb Ifriqiyya, the Islamic State's West African group, formerly known as Boko Haram and Ansaru, which joined IS last March. In 2015, 96 suicide attacks took place in Nigeria, 13 in Cameroon, eight in Chad and five in Niger (Issacharoff, 2016). However, the 2015 total global suicide terror attacks were fewer than those in 2014, that is 207 terror attacks in the Middle East in 2015 as opposed to 370 in 2014, which is a 44 percent decline. However, the death count was close to the one recorded in 2014, that is 4,370 people killed in 2015 as compared with 4,400 people killed in 2014 (Issacharoff, 2016; Cordesman, 2016).

Suicide terrorism does not only take place on the ground but a number of in-flight suicide attacks were experienced inside civilian passenger planes and at airports. Classic examples include Air India Flight 182 on the 23 June 1985, which killed 329 and Sikh extremists were suspected of planting a bomb in the plane (Bronskill, 2015). In the case of the December 21st, 1988 Pan Am flight 103 disaster, also called the Lockerbie bombing, Abdelbaset Ali Mohmed al-Megrahi, a Libyan intelligence agent, was suspected of smuggling a suitcase bomb which exploded, killing all 259 passengers and crewmembers, along with 11 people on the ground in Lockerbie, Scotland (Greenspan, 2013). The UTA Flight 772, on 19 September 1989, exploded over the Sahara Desert in Southern Niger, killing all 170 passengers on board (Reynolds, 2003). The 9/11 attacks are at the pinnacle of aviation suicide terrorism and they demonstrated that not even the United States was safe from suicide terror attacks. Since 1931 to 2016, at least 586 civil aviation attacks by terrorist organizations have been recorded (Duchesneau, 2015) and recently, aviation suicide attacks have been on the rise. A case in point is the October 31st, 2015 Russian A321 Airbus attack by ISIS en route to Saint Petersburg, killing all the 224 people on board. On 3 February 2016, a bomb planted by Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahideen at Daallo Airlines, a Somali passenger plane, exploded after take-off, blowing a hole on the plane (Azani, Lvovsky, & Haberfeld, 2016). More so, on 22 March 2016, two Islamic State terrorists blew themselves up at the entrance to the Brussels international airport. On 28 June 2016, during a terror attack at Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul-Turkey, three terrorists opened fire and later detonated themselves with explosive vests, killing at least 40 and injuring over 150 civilians (Azani *et al.*, 2016). Terrorist organisations also made use of drones against the aviation industry and the first case of a crash between a drone and a civil aircraft was reported in London, in April 2016, when a drone hit a British Airways passenger plane as it was landing at Heathrow Airport (Azani *et al.*, 2016).

Myths and stereotypes of suicide terrorism

In this section, we explore contemporary counter-terrorism attempts and beliefs which are usually grounded in error and how they have perpetuated suicide terrorism despite the availability and application of counter-terrorism measures. However, these suggestions are open to debate and modification. They are put forward to promote a more open minded approach towards countering suicide terrorism. The first assumption that needs to be addressed in counter-terrorism operations is the belief that force or military containment in the form of torture, massacre, detention, air strikes and killing of supporters, leaders, communities and relatives of suspected suicide bombers is a necessary measure towards countering terrorism (Quintana, 2015; Brym, 2007). The use of force in countering suicide terrorism is largely unnecessary and counterproductive and assists in popularising suicide operations as retaliatory attacks (Hove & Ndawana, 2017; Kaplan, Mintz, & Mishal, 2006; Quintana, 2015; Bronk, 2015). These

violent repressive actions, if at all successful, are usually short-lived. They generally lead to the support of religious and community organizations and even create potential recruits and the desire to revenge due to the inflicted violence which gives more credibility to organizations that use suicide terrorism (Kaplan *et al.*, 2006; Brym, 2008; Iqbal, 2010). A case in point was the Israeli counter-terror which was surveyed in 2002 via a poll of 1179 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza of which 66% claimed that the military operations increased their support for suicide operations whilst 73% of the Lebanese Moslems viewed suicide as a justifiable form of martyrdom (Kimhi & Even, 2004; Brym, 2007; Atran, 2003). During the second intifada, Hamas claims to have altered its strategy by approving and encouraging suicide terrorism and rocket attacks on civilians in response to repression, coercion and extreme violence from the Israeli forces (Araj & Brym, 2010). More so, from August 2014 to August 2015, more than 10,600 separate Islamic State targets had been hit and 10,000–15,000 ISIS fighters killed by US air strikes alone but these tactical victories made little strategic impact on the overall military capacity of ISIS as it continues to recruit more forces from its sympathizers (Bronk, 2015).

However, there are instances where harsh state repression has not given rise to suicide terrorism or any form of terrorism (Brym, 2008). We believe that the reason for this phenomenon is the absence of indoctrination on the oppressed groups which can encourage them to adopt extreme retaliatory measures, including suicide terrorism against their oppressors. More so, other experts believe that brutal force and violent retaliatory measures against suicide terrorists and their communities is an effective counter-measure and this is also the same opinion held by most governments facing the threat of suicide terrorism (Ní Aoláin, 2016) but the major question which arises is "If this method really works, why is suicide terrorism increasing geographically and numerically with each passing year despite the brutality and violence meted against it?". A case in point is ISIS which has lost ground in Iraq and Syria and has been pushed back from North-East Syria, Shingal, Hasakah province, Raqqa and Sirte. More so, it has lost a third of its manpower from 30,000 in 2014 down to 22,000 in 2016 (Iddon, 2016). Despite these territorial and manpower setbacks, ISIS has recently increased suicide attacks on Western targets (Iddon, 2016).

There is also the belief that targeting the leaders of suicide terrorist organizations to remove the brains and initiative of the organization can effectively thwart and end the very organization itself. However, this assumption is also very controversial because the killing of Osama bin Laden by the United States forces, as a reaction after the 9/11 attacks, did not mean the end of Al Qaeda. Rather, Al Qaeda expanded into a global terrorist organization and has hatched many spin-offs and affiliate organizations such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, ISIS in Iraq and Syria, Djabhat an-Nusrah in Syria, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Lashkar-e-Jangvi in Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Taleban in Pakistan, al-Shabab

in Somalia, despite the killing of most of its leaders (Global Terrorism Index, 2014). Although al-Qaeda has been silent in the past five years, the presence of these affiliate organizations has compelled many experts to view them as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Qaeda in Iraq, al-Qaeda in South-East Asia and al-Qaeda in the North and Horn of Africa (Global Terrorism Index, 2014). This indicates that radical Islamic terrorist organisations are not built around their founders and leaders but on their doctrines, which means that the death of the leader is simply a martyr's death raising more leaders and organizations to take their place like the mythical ten headed hydra (Brown, 2016).

However, there are instances where violence and heavy-handed tactics can be used, especially when fighting an unpopular organisation that neglects indoctrinating its community so as to gain social acceptance and support for embarking on suicide operations. A case in point is Boko Haram which resorted to kidnapping young children below ten years which is said to have increased 11 times after a combined military force removed them from most parts of Nigeria. These young children were and still are forced to carryout suicide operations by being strapped with explosives on crowded areas. As a result, Boko Haram lost its legitimacy and support from the communities it operates (Searcey, 2016). This form of nefarious child suicide terrorism is being applied by Boko Haram in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad and cannot be thwarted by counter-ideological means but by outright force and violence. This is because children do not need ideological propaganda to convince them to become suicide terrorists. They can easily be intimidated into carrying lethal weapons without their knowledge which raises the question whether this is suicide terrorism or outright murder of the innocent and operations which does not include the mutual acceptance of the bomber are not categorised as suicide terrorism or suicide (Lankford, 2011).

It is imperative to also examine the belief that contemporary suicide terrorism is a by-product of religious groups (Sela-Shayovitz, 2007), since this is what the suicide terrorist organizations want the world to believe. These radical Islamic terrorist organisations are seeking to address political, economic and social grievances in order to establish political and economic power via religious means and this does not make them religious, but rather opportunistic, since radical Islam condones violent means in wagging a Jihad (holy war). Available evidence indicates that not all suicide terrorist activities have been carried out by religious groups since some suicide attacks have also been carried out by secular terrorist organizations. Around 60% of the world's suicide attacks from 1983 to 2000 were conducted by the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers who are basically a political organization which is non-religious and non-Muslim (Brym, 2012; Bloom, 2005). More so, from 1980 to 2003, suicide attacks which have a visible cultural and ideological background reveal that only 43% of the cases had a semblance of religious involvement (Brym, 2012; Araj, 2008). To this end, one can conclude that the majority of radical

religious suicide terrorist organisations are inherently politically driven and most of their grievances are political and economic rather than religious, although religion is used to ensnare and attract members of the same religious community to rally behind these terrorist organisations. Religion is also used to inspire the feelings of martyrdom from the supporters of the cause especially where political means to address grievances have failed (Bloom, 2005; Marone, 2013; Brym, 2007). This means that suicide terrorist organisations give a religious outlook to their operations in order to indoctrinate their targeted sympathisers. This is done so as to wage a conflict which transcends political and circular bindings giving a picture that the survival of their religion and very existence is at stake. Therefore, all tactics, including suicide operations, are permissible in the struggle to survive real and imagined threats. These extremes are highly unlikely to achieve the objectives devoid of the circular means which deal with a conflict that crosses the boundary of religion against a common enemy.

There also exists the belief that destroying all financial support (terror financing) from a suicide terrorist organisation will culminate in its destruction (Quintana, 2015; Troy, 2006; Lankford, 2011). Conversely, practical evidence has proven that some terrorist organisations had lost their financial resources and capacity but continued to wage suicide operations. Hamas, for example, when it started utilizing suicide bombing in 1993, lacked military weapons of any kind but survived through the ingenious attempts of Yahya Ayash, the famous bomb maker who used soap, sugar and other house hold products to make bombs, which he in turn taught others to do the same (Araj & Brym, 2010). More so, soon after the 9/11 attacks, the US launched a global war against terror by blocking Al Qaeda's known and possible terror financing systems but terror activities continue and the terrorists still boast about their financial capabilities (Troy, 2006). It is critical to also realize that some terrorist organisations have interests and investments in oil, opium and financial institutions in Western countries. This has hindered counter-terror financing endeavors. As a case in point, al-Qaeda was rumored to have investments in the Anglo-American cooperation and this undermined the efforts of the US's war on terror since attacking al-Qaeda's investments was tantamount to self-inflicted damage (Marshal, 2010).

Another contested belief declares that terrorists are poverty stricken, illiterate and psychologically unstable (Brym & Araj, 2012; Iqbal, 2010). These beliefs are based on the fact that recruits for suicide operations take part because they are promised material rewards for their "poor" families and that they are easily swayed into committing the suicide bombings due to their low educational levels and mental instability (Iqbal, 2010). Nevertheless, at least 47% of suicide terrorists have university education and an additional 29% have at least a high school education (RUSI, 2007). More so, there is the danger that hiring a mentally unstable person can jeopardies the organisation's operation and plans, thus, this is avoided at all costs.

It is widely accepted that granting some of the demands of terrorist organisations will lessen or even end extreme hostilities, such as suicide operations, by empathizing the feelings and grievances of the suicide terrorists and their communities (Brym, 2007). Such measures have encouraged, rather than lessen, future hostilities, especially where circumstances prove to be unfavourable to terrorist organisations, they simply resort to suicide terror as a trump card to turn the situation in their favour (Brym & Araj, 2008). Furthermore, the reason why suicide terrorism is currently a popular strategy is partly because it usually yields results because nations have been known to give in to the demands of terrorist organisations which apply suicide operations. A case in point is where the suicide operations greatly contributed to the American and French withdrawal from Lebanon in the 1980s (RUSI, 2007). Ever since, a greater majority of known terrorist organizations have resorted to suicide operations due to its effective impact (Bloom, 2005; Araj, 2008; Atran, 2003; Kimhi & Even, 2004; Marone, 2016; Brym & Hamlin, 2009). In addition, suicide terrorist operations are very cheap to conduct because there is no fear of capture or planning exit strategies, has minimum supervision, is precise, unpredictable, creates widespread panic and attracts a lot of attention (Bunker & Sullivan, 2004; Sela-Shayovitz, 2007; Moghadam, 2008; Atran, 2003).

Indoctrination and Counter-propaganda

Despite the superiority in weapons, soldiers, funding, logistics, technology and resources enjoyed by the organisations and countries seeking to annihilate the threat of suicide terrorism, such as the United Nations, United States and allies have weak propaganda and indoctrination systems compared to those used by suicide terrorist organizations (Lawson, 2015). Concerning terrorist superior indoctrination tactics, Lawson (2015) stated in relation to the failure of the coalition against ISIS that:

> *It is widely perceived in the West that the group has been running a successful public- relations campaign that has significantly contributed to recruitment, particularly of foreign fighters, as well as success on the battlefield. In contrast, it is less clear that coalition efforts have had the same coherence and effectiveness either strategically or tactically* (p. 29).

Added to this, indoctrination plays critical roles in recruiting, training, seeking funding, creating suicide terrorists, conditioning recruits and members, uniting and directing the terrorist organisation. Therefore, indoctrination is a key feature of suicide terrorism and attempts to analyse or counter it without a deeper scrutiny of its role are bound to fail. Furthermore, terrorist organizations that utilise suicide terrorism as part of their strategy mainly depend on indoctrinating their members and communities to sympathize and participate. This helps them to be able to recruit and prepare members for suicide operations. Thus, suicide terrorism unlike any other form of terrorism is hinged on the organization's ability to convince its followers to sacrifice their lives for the common

cause which is a very complicated task which requires time, patience and cunningness so as to convince a stranger to forfeit their life for the common good (Iqbal, 2010). It is highly likely that this indoctrination is carried out at several levels such as personal, communal, national and, at times, international and the more powerful the indoctrination, the more powerful the organization becomes. We thus believe that coming up with a counter-narrative which is contrary to the terrorist narrative or indoctrination agenda should take centre stage as we believe that a terrorist organization without a strong narrative or the ability to perpetuate its narrative will eventually die a natural death. Thus, the battle of the narratives should be won first before the real battle should be waged against terrorist organizations for a certain victory to be realized.

Indoctrination is a unique feature of suicide terrorism because no other organization, whether military or civilian, applies the levels of indoctrination to the extent of suicide terrorist organizations (Grimland, Apter, & Kerkhof, 2006). More so, indoctrination bridges the gap where suicide terrorism lacks in training, education, logistics and weaponry. This does not imply that all suicide terrorists are brainwashed because some volunteer for personal reasons without the need for indoctrination. The credit and interpretation of their suicide operation remains the preserve of a particular suicide terrorist organization. This implies that indoctrination is not only practiced on the members but on both victims and the wider community because it is usually used in the aftermath of an attack by a terrorist organisation to broadcast their views by twisting the reasons for the attack as if the victim volunteered for the sake of the cause of the organization (Grimland *et al.*, 2006).

A surplus of promises, rewards and benefits constitute part and parcel of the indoctrination agenda. Poor and suffering members who "volunteer" to be "martyrs" are often given monetary rewards as much as £ 17,000 (US$25,000) (RUSI, 2007), whilst those who are deeply religious are given promises and assurances of eternal glory, paradise, 72 virgins in the afterlife, posthumous glory, sainthood and a close seat beside their God (Iqbal, 2010; Atran, 2003; Sela-Shayovitz, 2007; Marone, 2016; Brym, 2007; Moghadam, 2005). Hence, suicide operations would be rare and very limited if indoctrination did not continue to recruit, guide and perpetuate suicide operations. There are circumstances whereby suicide bombers voluntarily choose to undergo suicide operations partly as a result of the desire to revenge, whilst others have personal problems such as the desire to restore family honour, remove foreign presence and others simply have suicidal tendencies (Iqbal, 2010; Brym, 2007; Atran, 2003; Marone, 2016; Sela-Shayovitz, 2007; Bunker & Sullivan, 2004). Nevertheless, these different reasons are cunningly twisted such that the victims appear to have committed the act for a common grievance since the explanation and credit for the act is interpreted by the organisation as part of the indoctrination process.

Indoctrination is used in a moral dimension, especially the belief that the targeted enemy is morally inferior in character, religion and code of the suicide terrorist and

is thus justified in attacking and eliminating them. This explains why suicide terrorist organizations adopt radical Islam, not because they are religious people, but because of its uncompromising nature towards morality and its strict code of conduct which is used in justifying the elimination of 'unbelievers'. This strict moral code is directly in contrast with the Western lifestyle where women wear what they want and have equal rights with men, whilst the Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals (LGBT) are constitutionally recognized and promiscuity is normal. All these are taboos gravely forbidden by adherents of radical Islam who believe that crusades against such morally inferior humans are justifiable and encouraged in an attempt to restore order and stability. This explains the recent attacks on gay clubs by Islamic State affiliates (Ellis, Fantz, Karimi, & McLaughlin, 2016).

Communities that condone and support suicide terrorism have undergone heavy indoctrination such that they find nothing wrong with this inhuman form of terrorism. Suicide terrorism in these areas is not due to the terrible human rights violations, foreign presence, political vacuums or any other concocted reasons proffered by organizations operating within these territories (Quintana, 2015). This is so because their grievances are not unique to those territories, the same grievances exist at a much intense level in Africa, for example. Although there are several terrorist organizations in Africa, they did not commit suicide operations "until recently" despite the fact that Africans have suffered more grievous situations which would justify undertaking suicide operations. This is the case largely because Africa lacks a body of propagandists to indoctrinate and condition the masses to accept and even take pride in suicide terrorism. As a result, suicide terrorism is a by-product of intense indoctrination and where there is no indoctrination there is no suicide terrorism to talk about but there is only suicide. This is also demonstrated in Islamic communities where conventional suicide is highly forbidden and is considered a short-cut to hell whilst suicide terrorism is socially condoned and at times celebrated. This explains why conventional suicide rates are below average whilst suicide terrorist acts are high due to social attitudes towards approval and disapproval of the acts (Lankford, 2011).

Indoctrination is made very easy by the electronic social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, billboards, posters and radio broadcasts, among others, which have been nicknamed by terrorist organizations as "electronic jihad" (Lawson, 2015). These have also been extensively used by the Islamic State currently operating in Iraq and Syria (Quintana, 2015). There are currently between 50,000 to 70,000 twitter accounts which support ISIS and each of these accounts has an average of 1,000 followers. The twitter accounts are highly active and they tweet intensively mainly focusing on propaganda, recruiting members, psychological warfare, bomb making techniques and weapons tutorials. Furthermore, around 90,000 tweets and other social media communications are broadcast daily in close to 24 languages

which explains why the Islamic State has managed to recruit and attract sympathizers in more than 100 countries (Schmid, 2015). These electronic media platforms are utilized in the form of video, audio, photographs and written messages. Lawson (2015) summarized ISIS's adroit use of 'electronic jihad' as:

> *... the group has brought a new level of professionalism to its output using modern production tools and combat-camera footage from GoPro cameras, as well as embracing the use of social media. It has also combined the centralised production of high-quality products with a willingness to see these dispersed by a network of sympathisers with little or no apparent formal direction. Efforts to control the circulation of material by shutting down social-media accounts have been akin to a game of 'whack-a-mole'* (p. 30).

More so, ISIS, in order to horn its propaganda and indoctrination campaign, uses a central media command 'Al-Hayat Media Center' which manages seven media branches in video, text, photo, radio and translation which collects information from 38 offices in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Caucasus, Algeria, Yemen, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, West Africa and Afghanistan (Schmid, 2015; Lawson, 2015).

In the United States alone, in 2014, 71% of the adult population used Facebook whilst 26% used Instagram and 23% used Twitter. Worldwide, one in every four people uses a social network, which is a total of 1.47 billion and by 2017 social network users will increase to 2.55 billion, making social media platforms the dominant form of communication worldwide (Wu, 2015). Some of these social networks provide instant and very cheap worldwide communication, for example a tweet on twitter can be instantly read and seen by millions of users from all parts of the globe whilst a public Facebook page is available for every Facebook user to see.

The power of social media can be understood due to the fact that social media users spent 88 billion minutes in July 2011 and by July 2012 the number of minutes had increased by 37% to 121 billion minutes within one year. More so, an eMaketer research institution observed that in the United States alone, average social network users spend 23 hours per week on the social media platforms either texting, emailing, sharing and other forms of online communication (Gabriel, 2014). The three major online social media platforms which terrorist organizations frequently use are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Facebook is currently the largest social media platform with at least 1.31 billion users in January 2014 and 54% of these users log in regularly whilst the remaining 46% log on to Facebook at any given date. The average age of the majority of Facebook users are aged around 30 years. Facebook has also reached a 67% penetration in the Middle East starting in 2010 and it has provided an easy way for terrorists to share tactical and operational information including, but not limited, to weapon maintenance, bomb recipes and shooting, to name but a few. Facebook has also become a gateway for terrorist organizations to provide links on Facebook web pages to other

sinister hardcore terrorist websites and it has been used as a platform for hateful terrorist propaganda and extreme ideological messages (Gabriel, 2014). Twitter, unlike Facebook, has been used by terrorist groups for momentary reasons, especially when conducting operations in real time since it is fully accessible on both computers and mobile devices. In mid 2013, Twitter users numbered up to 554,750 000 who tweeted at least 9,100 messages every second which amounts to 58 million messages daily. The majority of Twitter users are aged between 18 to 34 years (Gabriel, 2014). YouTube has more than a billion users who watch around 6 billion hours of videos each month whilst every minute results in hundreds of hours of videos being uploaded. In 2011, YouTube had reached 1 trillion watched videos. More so, it has localized cites in 61 states and in 61 languages. Younis Tsouli, a Morrocan convicted terrorist stated that, "A lot of the funding that the brothers are getting is coming because of the videos. Imagine how many have gone after seeing the videos. Imagine how many have become shahid [martyrs]" (Gabriel, 2014, 10-11). Moreover, Lawson (2015) claims that social-media has been used by ISIS by acting as a gateway to what he describes as the 'grooming' of potential volunteers, perhaps best evidenced by the recruitment of teenage girls as 'Jihadi brides'. ISIS also went a step further in their attempts to attract Western sympathizers by establishing an English-language news magazine, 'Dabiq', which uses enticing imagery and language to appeal to the Western youth (Lawson, 2015; Azani *et al.*, 2016). In addition, the Islamic State has further appealed directly to Western youth through what has been described as 'Jihadi-cool' imagery, even comparing its operations with video games such as Call of Duty (Lawson, 2015). Thus, social media has provided terrorist organizations with a new frontier for indoctrinating the masses without being hindered by nationality and geographical boundaries.

Suicide terrorism is not only based on religious foundations since it can be politically oriented, like is the case among the Tamil Tigers (Bunker & Sullivan, 2004; Atran, 2003; Marone, 2016). It appears that religion is the easiest way to condition and indoctrinate wide populations as long as they are followers of the same faith. It is widely known that the Koran itself does not condone or encourage followers to commit suicide which means that there is a hidden hand responsible for condoning suicide under the name of a religion which forbids such actions (Sela-Shayovitz, 2007). Indoctrination is also applied on the perpetrators of suicide terrorism by making them believe that they are martyrs and heroes rather than self-destructive cold blooded murderers. The Greek word martyr or witness was first widely used during the early Christian era. It was used in reference to the Christian Apostles, signifying their personal witness to the public life and teachings of Christ which was a risky and life threatening business. Many of these witnesses suffered, rather than inflicted harm on others, which is an opposite feature when considering contemporary suicide terrorists who claim to be martyrs whilst inflicting grievous and indiscriminate harm on others including those whom they claim to fight for (Salter, 2008). Hence, without the white-washing purpose of

indoctrination, suicide terrorism or in this case 'martyrdom' would be highly improbable to pull followers and would be widely stigmatized even in the regions where it is currently being celebrated and condoned.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The agenda of countering terrorism has dismally failed partly because of the grounded misconceptions that form the basis for the philosophical foundations which underpin the Western world's understanding of terrorism in general and suicide terrorism in particular. Suicide terrorism is not a war to be fought and won but is ideologically founded and is closely related to the cold war that took place between 1945 and 1991 (Davis & Jenkins, 2002; Cronin, 2002). As a result, the war on terror will never be won through guns and weapons as long as there are secret organizations that exploit and misinterpret common grievances to justify terror and chaos. The Western nations fail to understand that terrorist organizations are influenced by ideologies which may be religious or political depending on the orientation of their communities and they take advantage of these existing ideologies to justify their actions. Hence, the best way to gain an upper hand in the war on terror is to devise counter-ideologies.

There are several counter-terrorism strategies that can be applied which do not include the use of the military or violence. Suicide terrorism is perpetuated by the media attention that the activities generate rather than the terrorist acts themselves. Thus, there is need to deprive terrorist organizations any media attention which is very vital to any terrorist organization's outlook, but this is a tall task to achieve. Any terrorist act committed by a terrorist organization is made significant due to the media attention that is focused on the act that is, the greater the media attention, the more effective the act becomes. Usually, the victims unknowingly assist in advertising and promoting suicide terrorism whenever they broadcast the acts on public media since this spreads panic, demonstrates the helplessness of the victims whilst at the same time boosting the morale of the perpetrators at the same time proving the effectiveness of terrorist activities and focuses attention on terrorist organizations that would be craving for attention (Moghadam, 2005). This may appear insensitive to the victims but there is need to deny the "oxygen of publicity" to terrorist attacks which would pre-empt, discourage and undermine suicide terrorism and the responsible organization. Added to this, there is need to assure any future volunteers of suicide terror that they will be denied any posthumous glory of any kind instead they must be assured that their sacrifice will be forgotten and interpreted as acts of violence and murder. Every year, an estimated 1,000-7,000 victims are killed from terrorist activities which translates to around 42 people daily, whilst hunger kills 40,000 daily; on the other hand, 500,000 lives are yearly taken by light weapons. Influenza kills 3.9 million each year, whilst HIV/AIDS claims annually 2.9 million lives; 2.1 million lives are extinguished yearly by diarrhea, whilst tuberculosis kills 1.7 million each year (Doward, 2015; Wolfendale,

2007). These comparisons then indicate that terrorism is given undue attention which is detrimental to the supposed victims of terrorist attacks whilst the "real" deadly killers are ignored by the media.

Indoctrination can also be used against the terrorist organizations that sponsor and promote it, especially by broadcasting on public television the collateral victims of suicide attacks. This is very effective because most suicide operations usually end up killing members of society affiliated or sympathetic to the terrorist cause and it is the killing of these collateral victims that needs to be constantly broadcast in their local communities and languages in order to turn the communities against the terrorist organizations. This will also discourage the use of future suicide attacks and remove the illusion of martyrdom from volunteers since they would feel that they are killing the individuals that they are supposed to defend and sacrifice for, such that their sacrifice will appear to have been in vain.

The closure of terrorist affiliated social network accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo, Google, Instagram, YouTube, among others, will deal a heavy blow on terrorist organizations since they rely on these social networks for indoctrination, recruiting, funding, communication and spreading of hate speeches to poison the minds of their followers. Moreover, these social networks mentioned above need to promote the idea of opening new accounts which campaign against terrorism, in general, and suicide terrorism, in particular. This will also shrink in size the influence of some of these global terrorist organizations which have members across the globe who use the social network platforms to communicate with their mother organizations. Again, the tracking down of individuals who frequent these terrorists affiliated social network accounts will also go a long way in tracking down and apprehending members of the suicide terrorist organizations.

Isolating or preventing easy access to targets is also a temporary way of reducing immediate suicide attacks. These temporary security measures can thwart suicide bombings from taking place (Iqbal, 2010). A classic example is in Israel where a fence was built around the cities to prevent suicide terrorists from accessing their targets. Between 2001 and 2003 there occurred 83 suicide bombings within the Israeli soil, but after portions of the fence had been completed there were just 16 suicide attacks between 2003 and 2006 and after the fence was completed in 2006, there were only 3 suicide attacks from 2006 to 2009 (Lankford, 2011). However, this is a costly exercise which cannot be applied against global suicide bombings. Despite the fact that preventing suicide bombers from gaining access to their targets greatly reduces the number of suicide attacks, it has to be understood that this is merely a cosmetic solution since it does not remove the resentment and desperate desire to do harm by the suicide bombers and in most cases it greatly increases the existing hostilities.

Widespread media campaigns against suicide terrorism especially in territories prone to suicide attacks will prevent more people from becoming suicide bombers and this

deprives terrorist organizations from recruiting followers (Atran, 2003). Suicide terrorism is a war that can never be won on the battlefield but on the ideological plane and by ruining and even weakening the ability of the ideologies of terrorist organizations from appealing to the general populace and this will be a sure way to victory (Cronin, 2002). This campaign can be carried out by addressing common grievances through aid and compassion. Moreover, public awareness campaigns, joined by religious authorities through teaching against suicide terrorism and distributing free copies of the Koran in local dialects, which is usually twisted and misinterpreted so as to appear as if it condones suicide terrorism and other inhuman acts, may be an effective strategy. It is imperative to redefine and celebrate real heroes and martyrs and to distinguish them in character and deed from the perverted version of suicide bombers who are named as heroes and martyrs rather than naming them for what they really are (Lankford, 2011; Cronin, 2002; Iqbal, 2010).

Furthermore, terrorist organizations are far ahead in terms of communications, media and publicity campaigns which they used in weaving their suicidal narrative as they utilize various electronic social networks, websites and traditional links to pass on information, recruit and advertise themselves than the US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) which seeks to co-ordinate efforts within the counter terrorist coalition against the Islamic State, to deliver both a counter-narrative to ISIS's and to support the building of the coalition itself (Quintana, 2015; Lawson, 2015). Hence, adding various electronic and print media outlets in suicide terrorism prone territories can help in waging anti-terrorism campaigns. A case in point was in Pakistan where one state controlled television was buttressed by 60 more private television networks which challenged the use of suicide terrorism between 2007 and 2008 and by 2009 support for suicide terrorism had dropped to 5% from 13% in 2002 (Iqbal, 2010). These media outlets need to be used especially in announcing the real reasons for suicide attacks since the real motives usually die with the perpetrator and the fact that the ordinary suicide rate is very low in Islamic states due to their religious intolerance. Thus, the majority of potential suicidal individuals choose to volunteer to be suicide bombers for personal reasons such as an incurable disease, barrenness, unwanted pregnancies, scandalous adulteries, homosexuality, collaboration with the enemy, substance abuse and addiction (Lankford, 2011; Moghadam, 2010). This is because the main reason behind suicide terrorism is not the random destruction of property and lives but to capture the world's attention in order to create a platform to air out their own organizational agendas by 'misinterpreting' the real cause of death of the volunteer as an act of self-sacrifice and heroism since the volunteer will not be able to do so. Hence, taking away this ability to interpret the cause of suicide operations will nullify the ability to broadcast and manipulate the society. In addition, the announcement that so and so committed suicide bombing because he or she had contracted a venereal disease or was a homosexual or had an unwanted pregnancy out of wedlock weakens the impact and magnitude of the

suicide act and will question whether the volunteer really went to paradise because of his or her many sins. Therefore, rather than the act being celebrated as a victory, it will be seen as a cause for shame, hypocrisy and cowardice.

Available data on profiles of suicide terrorists can be effectively utilized to identify, thwart and capture them. Several characteristics have been known to be prevalent on potential suicide bombers, such as individuals among crowds who are extremely nervous and concentrated in appearance, or those with shaven heads and beards which is a ceremonial preparation for the potential suicide bomber for paradise. Other potential suicide bombers wear excessive or baggy clothing to conceal explosives which is very queer in arid regions were suicide terrorism is prevalent. Some suicide bombers wear satchels with a firing switch and wire protruding at the top, whilst others pretend to be pregnant. The Tamil Tigers have been known to wear a necklace with a cyanide capsule which can be consumed in the event of capture to avoid torture and interrogation (RUSI, 2007). Therefore, these common characteristics can be used to quickly screen and identify suicide bombers before a catastrophe takes place by simply interrogating and searching individuals with these characteristics.

Additionally, other profile data reveal that the majority of suicide bombers are male and 83% of these males are single, 64% are between 18 to 23 years old, almost all of them are below 30 years and devoutly religious with an Islamic fundamentalist background (RUSI, 2007). This available data can be used in countering suicide terrorism by tracking down members of society with these features. Most of the suicide terrorist ranks are swelled by the youths because of their gullible nature to notions of heroism, glory and a false sense of importance. This emanates from their idleness and vulnerability caused by widespread unemployment, religious extremism and social turmoil which expose them to violent and extreme organizations. This in turn fuels their untapped energy and zeal and hence makes them feel that they are part of a larger system than themselves. However, it is rare to find married individuals volunteering to be suicide bombers because of their family obligations. Given this observation, it is crucial to socialize the vulnerable youths as part of something bigger than themselves (such as: sports teams, community service group and non-extreme religious organizations) and this will influence them to abstain from terrorism. This will make it difficult for suicide terrorist organizations to lure the youth into their organizations since they would feel that they have something to live for.

The Arab world views shame as a painful and undignified form of existence thus prefer to die with dignity than to live in shame. These feelings of shame and indignity inherent in the Arab culture are harnessed by terrorist organizations which use them to indoctrinate and influence the young to carry out suicide operations (RUSI, 2007). In light of this, it is important to launch de-radicalization programs. This shame emanates from a deep sense of military occupation and victimization by an enemy who is perceived as

immoral and militarily invincible inciting a sense of desperation such that no method used in driving the perceived enemy out is taboo, including suicide attacks. For this reason, measures to restore the lost dignity and pride can go a long way in reducing and even creating new ties with the hostile communities. This is because many communities in the Middle East have been destroyed by the United States and allies' war on terror campaigns since the beginning of the millennium and have left communities in shambles and seething with the desire for revenge. Therefore, it is imperative to promote dialogue, especially with the destroyed communities, by apologizing for the damage done and providing basic necessities such as shelter, water supply, food, clothing and medical treatment in these communities since the terrorist organizations use these very same grievances to swell their membership with recruits and potential suicide operatives and also acquire safe havens (Quintana, 2015).

The fact that most radical Islamic organizations are grounded on strict moral codes and values, such that tendencies like prostitution, adultery, homosexuality, abortion and religious tolerance among others are punishable by the most extreme measures, including death, is a possible weakness that can be used against them. Thus, rather than killing the leaders of these groups, which is usually counter-productive, there is also the need to broadcast their secret activities, especially those actions that contradict the moral codes of their organizations, such as sexual perversions, embezzlement of funds or any other dirty secret whether they did it in the past. This will force both the communities and followers to lose faith in their leaders and can also help in weakening these organizations since they take pride in their ability to adhere to a strict code of conduct and leaders with a compromised character will lose their ability to indoctrinate and direct their followers since they are not fit to lead a "holy war" when they are found to be "unholy". More so, these above suggested forms of counter-terrorism which support a non-violent and communication based approach to countering suicide terrorism are also very cheap in terms of human life, time, logistics and financial resources, as they can be used by individual communities and states attempting to curb the spread of suicide terrorism.

We conclude by stating that attacking the ability to indoctrinate by terrorist organizations via open-ended containment is a mammoth task but it can yield long lasting results as compared to other counter-terrorism measures that are currently in use, such as military operations, preventing terror financing, targeting leaders, compromising to some of the terrorist demands or isolating targets, among others. These counter terror strategies, if successful, are usually short-lived and have a tendency of aggravating future suicide terror as the current situation is demonstrating. In addition, indoctrination is mainly responsible for the training, recruiting, expansion and creation of future terrorists and organizations. Consequently, targeting the ability to indoctrinate will result in removing an organization's ability to expand, recruit and train new members, meaning that terrorism and the organizations responsible will die a natural death.

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