Conflict and Religion in Eastern Africa: A Conceptual Consideration of Radicalisation, Fundamentalism, Extremism, Terrorism, Tolerance, and Their Interaction Dynamics

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Abstract

Eastern Africa, with its combination of fragile governments and institutions, abject poverty amid great resources, wealth and a legacy of incessant violent conflict, has increasingly become integrated into the global security architecture as it strives to live in peace. In examining the root causes of conflict and violence in eastern Africa, the author underlines the influence of religious radicalisation and religious fundamentalism in fermenting terrorism, conflict and violence on the one hand, and the other, advocating tolerance and conflict resolution. With growing globalisation, insecurity anywhere is a threat to security everywhere. Given this context, Eastern Africa's own insecurity is serving as a source of concern for many countries, including the global powers. East Africa is plagued by a broad spectrum of religious, traditional and non-traditional security threats on the one hand, and yet, as will be seen in this article, home to an emerging regional and international security consciousness and activism on the other, enhanced by the Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (SCCRR) whose founder and chair is the author of this article. It is the purpose of this paper, therefore, to seek to understand the reasons for radicalisation and extremism in Eastern Africa and the ideological dynamics that underpin and structure the way in which they are manifest in Eastern Africa. It includes the explanation of the key terms used, elucidation of their conceptual nuances, and interconnectedness, followed by an introduction to the underlying causes of radicalism and extremism in eastern Africa and finally, proposals to address and counter these challenges. According to the author, conflict and peace have a religious face. Much of the literature on violent extremism, according to the author, focuses on why and how people become drawn into terrorism – the problem often referred to as radicalisation – and how violent extremist groups and networks are organised. Curiously, most of this work or genre is on terrorism as a threat to the West, while the reality is that it is in the countries of Africa and Asia that most of the acts of violent extremism are committed.

In eastern Africa, as elsewhere in the world, peace and stability are highly valued precisely because they are preconditions for human security and sustainable development, among other things. As elsewhere, conflict is a general feature of social life, a multi-dimensional phenomenon that can be understood with reference to the needs, wants and obligations of the parties involved. The essence of conflict centres on the incompatibility of goals between two or more parties or when they wish to carry out mutually inconsistent acts.[1] Conflict permeates all dimensions of social behaviour: between individuals, in families, at workplaces, and in domestic and international politics. Individual intentions and motivations are insufficient to explain human behaviour.[2] When individual intentions and motivations are aggregated, they precipitate the formation of structures in societies that constrain and facilitate

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[1] Anthony de Reuck, A. "The Logic of Conflict: Its Origin, Development, and Resolution", (96-111), In *Conflict in World Society: A New Perspective on International Relations*, ed. Michael Banks, (New York: St. Martin Press, 1984). 96-111.

[2] Burrhus Frederic Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. (New York: Penguin Books., 1982).

decision-making and behavioural expressions, as the case may be. Social change is structural, reflecting the heterogeneity of values and interests that arise, which may, in turn, introduce new incompatibilities of goals.[3] Structural violence is defined by Galtung[4] as "Existing in those conditions in which human beings are influenced so that their somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations" In this regard, "if the incompatible values and positions are perceived as fundamental, the parties' behaviour, witnessed by hostile, distrustful and suspicious attitudes may well be violent".[5]

Conflict is an intrinsic aspect of social change. New constructs are being continually generated that clash with previously held positions and thus impact on social change. Therefore, in any analysis of conflict, it is essential to consider the social context. Conflict may involve manifest behavioural violence or structural violence. In line with structural violence, more often than not, individuals who exist on the margins of society may not be conscious of the role that structures bear on why and how they express themselves. Indeed, individuals in general, regardless of structural violence, are frequently not mindful of the impact that structures have on decision processes and their behavioural expressions. Structures are invariably of practical importance in that they significantly determine decision-making and the manifestations of social behaviour, be it peaceful or conflictual.

Structural violence can develop into manifest behavioural violence if the unmet basic human and ontological needs, values and positions of people become unbearable in the political, economic and religious domains of society, to name a few pertinent spheres.[6] While acknowledging religious differences, in general, the essence of all religions is about God, humanity, and creation, living in a state of inter-connective harmony and mutual interdependence, epitomised by and spiritually oriented to a communion of peace at a transcendental and human level. Religion's relationship to conflict is existentialised, with humankind as the core actor in this interactive engagement of the sacred, the human and the cosmos-environment.

Peace is unsettled by conflict, evidenced in violence, be it manifest and/or structural. To transform manifest and structural conflict to peace, especially in war situations/strongholds of terrorism, requires high proficiency in theoretical and practical knowledge. Knowledge of conflict is comprehension of its conceptual underpinnings, causes, dynamics of expression and why it persists. Understanding the concepts and dynamics of tolerance, radicalisation, fundamentalism, non-violent extremism, and violent extremism is crucial for any organisation involved in conflict transformation, interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding work.

It should be clear to most observers, particularly religious leaders, security personnel, scholars and politicians, that eastern Africa is a strategically important region to extremist groups, domestically and internationally, for the recruitment of new members, espousing manifest violent means to achieve religious, social and political goals. It is also clear that it is

[3] Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Aggression". *Journal of Peace Research.* 1, No. 2 (1964): 95-119.
[4] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research". *Journal of Peace Research*, No.3, (1969): 167-191.
[5] Holsti, Kelvin J. *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis.* (Englewood: Princeton Hall, 1983), 433.
[6] John Burton, *Violence Experienced: The Sources of Conflict Violence, and Crime and their Prevention.* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997).

not only a regional problem, as violent extremist ideologies are gaining an unprecedented level of traction across the globe, taking root in local communities and controlling territory in several fragile states.

To comprehend the links between conflict and religion concerning radicalisation, fundamentalism, non-violent extremism, and manifest extremism operationalised in terroristic acts (the ultimate expression of intolerance) in eastern Africa, it is essential to understand the essence of these concepts and their interconnectedness. The need to understand the socio-religious contexts and ideologies that underpin and structure the manifestation of these concepts is of equal importance. Perspectives can then be proffered on managing and transforming the conflict-related interaction dynamics of these concepts.

Much of the literature on violent extremism focuses on why and how people, regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation, become drawn into terrorism. This process, understood as radicalisation, permeates how violent extremist groups and networks emerge, organise and perpetuate. Curiously, most of this work or genre is on terrorism as a threat to the West, while the reality is that it is in countries of Africa and Asia that most of the acts of violent extremism are committed.[7]

They are committed by organised groups acting either independently or on behalf of higher organisations, which want to execute and extend their political-economic interests and spread their faith's religious institutional structures. This goal requires targeting and changing existing established authority and its allies, real or perceived, bearing in mind that perceptions are frequently erroneous. Religious identity is consistently used to promote their cause. However, the degree to which their motivations are religious or otherwise is not easy to determine. All of these issues contribute to the destabilisation of human security in this vast region of the African continent. Moreover, they slow down the pace of socio-economic-political-spiritual development, thereby impeding qualitative improvement in the lives of the affected populations and undermining human dignity.

Overall, the resulting insecurity undermines the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). In the context of conflict and religion, it is worth recalling that Article 18 states that, everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this includes freedom to change their religion or belief, and freedom either alone or in community with others and in public and private, to manifest their religion or belief in teaching practice, worship and observance.

1. **Interactive Discussion of Key Concepts: Radicalisation, Fundamentalism, Extremism, Terrorism and Tolerance**

Understanding and defining these concepts is imperative, and we must be mindful that they are not universally understood in the same way. While the definitions of the concepts are not specific to Eastern Africa, discussions of their meanings can be contextualised in Eastern

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[7] Arie W. Kruglanski, Michele J. Gelfand, Jocelyn J. Bélanger, Anna Sheveland, Malkanthi Hetiarachchi, Rohan Gunaratna "The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization: How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism." *Political Psychology*, *35* No.1*,* (2014): 69-93.

Africa. Specifically, they are essentially contested concepts. Essentially, contested concepts are a category of concepts in the social sciences, the application of which, according to Gallie[8] and Lukes,[9] is inherently a matter of dispute. The reason given is that competing versions of such concepts – power[10], for example - inevitably involve relativity of values. Thus, according to this view, using an essentially contested concept can be appraised empirically but will remain relative to the evaluative framework within which the particular version of the concept is couched. The framework is critically essential to counteracting issues of relativity and the fact that appraising also entails values.

The terms 'fundamentalism,' 'radicalisation,' 'extremism' and 'terrorism' are essentially contested concepts in the sense that they "have different meanings for different people…" and "their meanings are constantly evolving as they manifest themselves in different ways in different parts of the world"[11] Similarly, tolerance is an essentially contested concept and perhaps even more complex in terms of parameters and measurement.[12] The meanings emerging from such evolutions and manifestations are frequently determined by the level of fusion between religious and ideological worldviews on reality and the future structure of society envisaged. Hence, the need to focus on religion in its interplay with world views and vice versa, as they mutually influence conceptual developments and expressions of radicalisation, fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism and tolerance.

1.1 Radicalization

One helpful definition of radicalisation offered by Hann and Fertleman,[13] which accents religion and psychological identity, is that "radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice. Radicalisation is therefore seen as the process that leads to violence, which, in the final analysis, is what distinguishes a terrorist from other extremists".[14] This definition follows a general trend where extremism is understood as not necessarily synonymous with acts of terrorism or physical violence, in that one can hold extremist views but not act on them in a manifestly violent manner.[15] 'Manifest violent extremism' refers to "the creation of ideologically motivated or justified violence, as well as support for such acts".

[8] W. B. Gallie ''Essentially Contested.'' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 56, No.1, (1956):167-198. Cf. David-Hillel Rube, "W.B. Gallie and Essentially Contested Concepts." Philosophical Papers, 39:2 (2010): 257-270.
[9] Steven Luke Power*: A Radical View*. (London: Macmillan, 1974).
[10] Robert Greene, The concise 48 Laws of Power. (London: Profile Books, 2002)
[11] European Commission. Strive for Development: Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism. https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20160906_strive_2016_en_proof_combined.pdf (2016), 4.
[12] Mikael Hjejm, Maureen Eger, Andrea M. Bohman, and Filip Fors Connolly, "A New Approach to the Study of Tolerance: Conceptualizing and Measuring Acceptance, Respect, and Appreciation of Difference." *Social Indicators Research,* 147, No. 1(2020): 897–919. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-019-02176-y'
[13] Gayle Hann, and Caroline Fertleman, eds. *The Child Protection Practice Manual: Training Practitioners How to Safeguard Children*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 106-108.
[14] Gayle Hann, and Caroline Fertleman, eds. *The Child Protection Practice Manual: Training Practitioners How to Safeguard Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2016).
[15] European Commission. "Strive for Development: Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism." https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20160906_strive_2016_en_proof_combined.pdf (2016).2006, 5.

Another helpful explanation of the term 'radicalisation' comes from Horgan.[16] He argues that it is the social and psychological process of incrementally experienced commitment to extremist political and religious ideologies. "This incremental transition is in most of the literature whereby when a decision is made that fear, terror, and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change, radicalisation to violent extremism occurs".[17] In line with the foregoing, radicalisation is a process that unfolds over time and may ultimately lead to manifest acts of terrorism.

Generally speaking, with respect to its connectivity with terrorism, radicalisation requires the presence of four ingredients: Firstly, arousal and activation of the goal of psychological significance. Secondly, non-violent extremism's expressiveness. Thirdly, identification of terrorism/manifest violence as the appropriate means of significance. Fourthly, the relative devaluation of alternative goals is incompatible with terrorism.

These perspectives are in line with psychologists and social psychologists who have addressed issues of radicalisation, fundamentalism, extremism, and terrorism.[18] Without a terrorism-justifying ideology that instructs disaffected individuals as to what must be done to obtain significance, goal activation alone is insufficient for terroristic, violent behaviour on their part to occur. Ideology is relevant to radicalisation because it identifies radical activity (such as non-violent extremism and manifest violent terrorism) as the means of choice to the goal of personal significance.

1.2 Fundamentalism

The concept of fundamentalism is frequently touched upon in discussions of radicalisation and extremism. For the purpose of this paper, it is discussed under the umbrella of religion contextualised in state-citizen relations, respecting the assumption of international relations being primarily based on a statehood system. The term fundamentalism is used in a variety of ways. What it means, implies, denies, or entails depends on the context in which it is used.

Fundamentalism can be characterised as a militant truth claim that derives its claim to power from a non-disputable higher revelation, people, values, or ideologies. Frequently, it is used in an ideological manner that reflects a perception of reality which is distorted by social-historical experience. It justifies, urges, uses and propagates non-state or state-based force to achieve its goals. Fundamentalism, historically, has been associated with the domain of religion

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[16] John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements.* (London: Routledge House 2009.

[17] European Commission. "Strive for Development: Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism." https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20160906_strive_2016_en_proof_combined.pdf (2016)., 2006, 5.

[18] Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Terrorism.* (New York: Random House. 2005). Cf. Thomas Schirrmacher, *Fundamentalism: When Religion Becomes Dangerous.* Trans. Richard McClary, ed. Thomas Johnson (Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2013), Arie W. Kruglanski, Michele Gelfand, Jocelyn Bélanger, Anna Sheveland, Malkanthi Hetiarachchi, and Rohan Gunaratna, "The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization: How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism." In *Political Psychology*, 35, (February 2014), 69-93.

and its revelations. From the perspective of religion, Armstrong[19] considers fundamentalism as an "embattled form of spirituality" and "militant piety". However, over time, the term has been extended to designate various forms of behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes that fall outside the field of religion. In the broadest sense, a religious or worldview movement is described as fundamentalist if it calls for reversion to the roots of a particular religion or ideology, which, if need be, should be asserted with radical and, in part, intolerant means.[20]

However, religion and the State are not the only motive forces of fundamentalism. All cultural, scientific, political, economic and even artistic systems which assert a claim to be the exclusive bearer of truth, a single solution to existing problems, are fundamentalist. Even the fundamentalism associated with these domains rarely lacks religious belief influences.

The standpoint of fundamentalism is indisputably about dissent from a particular existing socially acceptable practice, belief and attitude in a wide range of domains. A hard-core adherent of fundamentalism in the sphere of religion, with specific reference to Islam, for example, is self-convinced that they only know the truth but also know that the truth of everyone else is false unless it is the same as his/hers. Fundamentalism is not a constant mindset for the same person at different periods or a group of people at one time period. It is a mental attitude that changes in character or degree gradually or in very slight stages without any clear dividing point between militant and non-militant aspects. Still, the threshold between these two expressions demands a decisive paradigm shift, evidenced in manifest violence. The two states of mind cannot exist on a par with each other in the same person simultaneously. Either the former or the latter tends to be typical, depending on circumstances and environment. The non-militant is inward-directed, and in terms of behaviour, it cannot have significant social effects because its substance is self-absorption. The former, militant, is outward-directed, and in terms of behaviour, it has negative social effects in the form of aggression against those whose truth is perceived as false.

Efforts by State actors, faith-based organisations, non-government organisations, and community-based organisations that serve to counteract the drivers and dynamics of fundamentalism have functional, not dysfunctional, consequences for tolerance and inclusiveness. Both non-militant and militant streams of fundamentalism have the potential to serve as drivers of conflict dynamics.

However, it is imperative to point out, in no uncertain terms, that manifestations of non-militant fundamentalism as aggression, expressed as hostile feelings and understood as potential for physical violence against other people whose truth and institutionalised practices are different, be they public or private, are internalised in the form of individual self-absorption. Self-absorption, unlike hostile feelings and violence, is socially acceptable because it neither harms other individuals, their *raison d'etre* - nor adversely affects existing institutional arrangements. Thus, in this connection, it is at once quite reasonable and plausible to state that

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[19] Karen Armstrong, "Fundamentalism and the Secular Society". *International Journal*, 59, No. 4, 2004): 875-877.

[20] Ali, Tariq *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads, and Modernity*. (Brooklyn, New York: Verso., 2003).

under conditions of non-militancy, fundamentalism gets sublimated into self-absorption, which is functional for peace, at least in the sense of an absence of manifest violence.

The dynamics of fundamentalism at their best may result in a synergy that can be very effective in achieving its goal in the early stages and less productive during later times, and vice versa, depending on the level of opposition encountered. This comprehension follows from the fact that fundamentalist behaviour is generally, in the long run, an unsuccessful attempt since it is always a defence - and alongside that, forcible – against authority or established social values.[21] Fundamentalism is likely to be perceived as an internal challenge, directly and indirectly, to state power; specifically, it is a challenge to state tolerance. In general, fundamentalism offers recourse to final truths as the reason for acting against the legitimate use of force by the constitutional State.

Fundamentalism has the capacity to be radicalised during its lifespan with respect to intensity and social expression, either at its conception or latter stages, depending on circumstances. The radicalisation may take the form of either non-violent extremism and/or violent extremism, ensuing almost concurrently or distant in time. Extremism stemming from radicalised fundamental perspectives is an object of state surveillance by criteria of legalism and tolerance.[22] Engaging in non-violent extremism is tolerated, not ignored, because it does not harm the cause of the State, because its content and expression are other than disorder in the form of force.

Intolerance, the opposite of tolerance, is, arguably, non-violent extremism, but it is much closer to manifest violent extremism than to tolerance. When non-violent extremism transitions to violent extremism, it, in effect, metamorphoses into terrorism (terroristic acts), thereby becoming an object of intolerance on the part of the State in the form of eliminations, arrests, detentions and the like. In terms of process, the non-militant fundamentalist has the potential to be radicalised into a militant fundamentalist, finding expression in non-violent extremism. This radicalisation process may degenerate further into violent extremism operationalised in terrorism.

1.3 Tolerance and Extremism

Tolerance is politically constituted and juridically legitimated by the state. The practitioner of tolerance is the government, and the object of tolerance is the social and not the psychological. Tolerance is psychologically exclusive and socially inclusive; it is collective in that it does not accept any absolute liberty for the individual According to Marcuse, under a system of constitutionally guaranteed and (generally, without too many and too glaring exceptions) practised civil liberties, opposition and dissent are tolerated unless they issue in violence and/or in exhortation to, and organisation of violent subversion. "The underlying assumption is that the established society is free and that any improvement, even a change in the social structure and social values, would come about in the normal course of events,

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[21] Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms Around the World*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
[22] Wojciech *Sadurski "On Legal* Definitions of *Religion". Australian Law Journal* 63, (1989): 834–843

prepared, defined and tested in free and equal discussion of the marketplace of ideas and goods."[23]

Tolerance regards all individual liberty as subject to the overriding authority of the public interest of the state. In ideal terms, tolerance, as practised by the State, welcomes every point of view, so to speak, but it demands that addressing and managing conflict internal to the polity be expressed through proper channels and procedures. The order and organisation of these expressions are structured by established power relations and sanctioned by constitutional prescriptions.

It follows, therefore, that although tolerance is basically liberal, it has the potential to become repressive if it is threatened by militant fundamentalism or terrorism. The limit of tolerance is the point in time at which a specific conflict, internal to the polity, is deemed by the powers that be as constituting disturbance of the peace or an undermining of government authority of juridical prescriptions that give order and organisation to the social formation. As such, the limitations to tolerance on the part of the government, as defined by judicial institutions and culture, include clear and present danger, signs of manifest violence, threats to national security, and the like.

The parameters of tolerance are that the existing institutional arrangements embody a free society based on a social contract[24] and that improvements require and depend on engagement with all the stakeholders.[25] The ideals of tolerance should not be reduced to achieving negative peace only, understood as the mere absence of violence. Tolerance should ultimately concern itself with being the foundational launch pad focused on attaining positive peace whereby all sides are mutually and proactively committed to the human security of the other, individually and collectively. In this regard, the fulfilment of basic human and ontological needs,[26] at a minimum, is crucial. In certain eastern African countries today, tolerance as politically constituted, juridically legitimised and practised is an object of violent extremism expressed in terroristic aggression, seemingly underpinned by multifaceted fundamentalism stemming from an interpretation of Islam.

1.4 Terrorism

A generally accepted, if not standard, characterisation or definition of terrorism[27] is that it is a form of politically or religiously motivated action combining psychological (fear-

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[23]Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance.'' In *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, eds. Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse, 81-123. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969). Herbet Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984)

[24] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*. (Amsterdam: Chez Marc-Michel Rey, 1762).

[25] Mikael Hjejm, Maureen Eger, Andrea M. Bohman, and Filip Fors Connolly, "A New Approach to the Study of Tolerance: Conceptualizing and Measuring Acceptance, Respect, and Appreciation of Difference." *Social Indicators Research,* 147, No. 1(2020): 897–919. https:Hier//doi.org/10.1007/s11205-019-02176-y. cf. Perry London, *Behaviour Control*. (New York: Harper and Row. (1971).Burrhus Frederic Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. (New York: Penguin Books., 1982).

[26] Burton, J. Violence Experienced: The Sources of Conflict Violence, and Crime and their Prevention. New York: Manchester University Press. (1997).

[27] Boaz Ganor, B. *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision Makers* (Herzliya: Interdisciplinary Center, 2003) UNODC. "The Doha Declaration: Promoting a Culture of Lawfulness." (2018).

inducing) and physical (manifest violent action) components, carried out by individuals or small groups to induce communities or states to meet their terrorists' demands. The concept remains notoriously difficult to define with any precision. For example, this major problem can be summarised in one of the often used adage's that, "one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter". The issue is complicated further because some would argue that acts of terrorism do not belong exclusively to the political or politico-religiously motivated but may also be employed by criminals and psychopaths depending on context. The present tactics used by terrorists are widespread, including kidnapping, bombs in public places, hijacking aeroplanes, attacks on property (markets, educational institutions, religious buildings), the extortion of ransom, raids on banks, accession of territory, and state oppression, arrests and torture etc. Overall, political terrorism can be thought of as the use of violence by a group either acting on behalf of or in opposition to an established political authority.

From the perspective of terrorism, many categories of tactics and strategies, as well as analytical ideological frameworks, drive the manifest acts of violence associated with the term. For example, there are alternative perspectives and divergences of meaning when the term terrorism on the one hand, is applied to the coercive imposition of imperial annexation and/or religious ideological extremism, and on the other hand, to the collective violent deeds of those who resist such belligerent behaviour in the cause of self-determination, freedom and independence. Surely coercive imperial annexation – past and present - which often entails the enforcement of religious extremism through intolerance of other ideological and religious perspectives (Ireland, India, Sudan, ISIS, Al-Shabaab) are terroristic acts beyond question. However, is the manifest violence used in the cause of defence against the extremism of the agents of imperial manifest violence, structural violence,[28] and violent religious ideologies to be labelled as terrorism? Surely not, for example, if their actions are guided by the definitions of humanitarian intervention[29] and/or if one upholds the principles of the Just War Theory when in combat.[30] However, if one violates these principles and engages in the killing and maiming of innocent civilians, then the accusation of terroristic acts is morally, ethically and legally justified.

These three dimensions of terrorism emanating from imperial annexation, religious ideological extremism, and the non-justifiable actions of insurgents resisting the previous two categories can all be present in the same conflict zone. Furthermore, imperial annexation and religious ideological extremism can be simultaneously operational and mutually reinforcing each other in a terroristic organization. Indeed, this reinforcement may be so fused that disentangling them may be practically impossible. This scenario is evident in the case of ISIS in the Middle East and Sahel, and its similar if not affiliate organization Al-Shabaab in eastern

https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/terrorism/module-4/key-issues/defining-terrorism.html. Richard E. Rubenstein. *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

[28] Johan Galtung, Violence, "Peace and Peace Research". *Journal of Peace Research*, 3, (1969): 167-191.

[29] J.L.Holzgrefe, and Robert Keohane O. eds. *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[30] Thomas Johnson J. "The Idea of Defence in Historical and Contemporary Thinking about Just War". *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 36, No. 4 (2008): 543-556.

Africa.[31] It is also important to bear in mind that conflicts, their drivers and dynamics, are not static and do evolve, impacting the processes of interaction between the three categories.

Manifest violent extremism is usually considered to be a more inclusive term than terrorism, although both are broadly synonymous in use.[32] The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) considers violent extremism to revolve around procedures of advancing, engaging in, preparing, and supporting violence which is ideologically motivated and justified for the advancement of social, economic, religious, and/or political objectives.[33]

Manifest religious ideological extremism is operationalized through terrorism, evidenced in a variety of forms and actions. Terrorism is the tool used to purge society of tolerance for other modes of existence with respect to worldviews and faith positions, thereby eliminating other perspectives and configurations on how society should be structured and function. Manifest religious ideological extremism is concerned with eradicating alternative modes of existence and religious perception in society through terrorism.

The process of purging tolerance and reconciliation from society may also be operationalised through non-violent religious ideological extremism. Expressions of this purging can take many different forms. Primarily, it is demonstrated in a lack of willingness to listen or even try and understand the position or perception of the 'other'. Secondly, through an intolerance of the 'others' world view or faith perceptions being allowed to be publicly heard or witnessed, evidenced in eradicating proactively their beliefs and perspectives from the socio-religious-political narratives of society. To counter these negative processes, paradoxically, there is a distinct need for an 'intolerance of intolerance'.[34]

The measuring rod of what defines the substance of human rights becomes of utmost importance to determine the parameters of what is and is not acceptable in terms of tolerance or intolerance[35]. In this regard, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[36] is the fundamental historical reference document for evaluating the merits of governance systems of which democracy is held in the highest esteem.

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[31] Uyo Salifu, Irene Ndung'u, and Romi Sigsworth, "Violent Extremism in Kenya: Why Women Are a Priority", Institute for Security Studies. (2017) https://issafrica.org/research/monographs/violent-extremism-in-kenya-why-women-are-a-priority

[32] Mark Sedgwick, *Muhammad Abduh*. (London: One World Publications. 2014).

[33] Andrew Glazzard and Martine Zeuthen. *Violent Extremism, Professional Development Reading Pack* 34. (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2016).

[34] Patrick. R. Devine, "A Critical Analysis of the Role of Religion in Fuelling or Healing Conflict". No.1(2011) *Tangaza Journal of Theology and Mission*, 52-69.

[35] *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* (2007). *Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter-terrorism*. Published by the Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public Information – DPI/2439B/ Rev.2. https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/factsheet32en.pdf. Cf. W.K.Omoka, and Patrick Devine, "Human Rights are a Foundation of Shalom-SCCRR's Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Interventions". (2020). Retrieved from https://shalomconflictcenter.org/human-rights-are-a-foundation-of-shalom-sccrrs-conflict-resolution-and-reconciliation-interventions-2/

[36] United Nations [UN]. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. New York: United Nations Department of Public Information. (1948).

Within a framework of democratic governance that respects human rights, tolerance for a diversity of fundamental perspectives and interpretations on related issues is expected. The democratic mode of governance can incorporate various forms of fundamentalism within society. However, when fundamentalism begins to get radicalised towards intolerance, undermining the articles of the UDHR, the toxicity of extremism emerges.

Overall, non-violent and manifest violent extremism is a result of a general radicalized retrogression, primarily away from a state of tolerance which respects the existence of different fundamental positions. Then, through further negative radicalization processes, this shift deteriorates into standpoints of non-violent extremism expressing intolerance, involving dimensions of psychological and spiritual warfare – forms of terrorism, too. This stage in the process can then become the breeding ground for further radicalisation, degenerating into a phase of manifest violent extremism, set on imposing one model for how society should be structured and operate. This latter phase is operationalised in blood-letting terrorism, set on ridding society of any shred of democracy and respect for fundamental human rights; the use of forceful coercion to purge society of all contrary perspectives (political and religious) and configurations on how society should function. At the Abu Dhabi declaration on human fraternity in 2019, Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and Pope Francis[37] jointly stated**,** terrorism is deplorable and threatens the security of people, be they in the East or the West, the North or the South, and disseminates panic, terror and pessimism, but this is not due to religion, even when terrorists instrumentalise it. It is due, rather, to an accumulation of incorrect interpretations of religious texts and to policies linked to hunger, poverty, injustice, oppression and pride. That is why it is so necessary to stop supporting terrorist movements fueled by financing, the provision of weapons and strategy, and by attempts to justify these movements, even using the media. All these must be regarded as international crimes that threaten security and world peace. Such terrorism must be condemned in all its forms and expressions.

2. CAUSAL FACTORS OF RADICALIZATION AND EXTREMISM

In Eastern Africa**,** both radicalization and violent extremism are manifest problems and government bodies, INGOs, NGOs, CBOS, FBOs, and civil society in general must be actively engaged in countering the conditions and momentum that enable this process to continue. What are the underlying causes of the processes of radicalisation and extremism in this region? The causes can only be understood by analysing past micro and macro influences at the ideological level and the negative consequences of associated policy decisions. It is important to emphasise that no single cause is a stand-alone factor, nor exclusive of possible other explanatory variables, depending on context. More often than not, radicalisation and extremism occur when there is a combination of several factors affecting an institution and/or an individual's outlook, religious belief and decision-making mechanisms at a given time. Psychological decision-making mechanisms influencing transitions from tolerance to terrorism are ever-present and

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[37] Francis, and Al-Tayyeb, A. "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together." (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 2019), 7. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html

open to many influential factors. The potential for extremism and associated manifest violence being generated by micro and macro ideological policy decisions needs constant observation.

2.1 Socio-Ideological and Livelihood Factors

Social ideological factors arising from contexts of underdevelopment and poverty[38]youth bulge and unemployment, weak state structures and discriminatory law enforcement[39]media and globalisation, easy access to weapons and sources of funding.[40] They are frequently referred to in the literature as causes of radicalisation and extremism leading to terrorism worldwide.[41] Results of a sample survey of religious radicalisation in Nairobi, Kenya, by Rink, A., and Sharma, K.[42] They are generally in line with the foregoing. As the literature demonstrates, each of these causal factors of intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism is important.

Undoubtedly, the present systemic economic hardships, partly stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, have exacerbated many of these social problems, particularly those pertinent to satisfying basic human and ontological needs. The youth, for example, those in informal urban settlements, have been rendered ever more vulnerable,[43] targeted and amenable to recruitment into manifest violent organisations that promote political and religious ideological extremism. Covid-19 has increased the pressure on the resources needed for the infrastructure of human security, not only in Africa but around the world.

At the inter-ethnic level in eastern Africa, manifest acts of violence in the past have been explained through factors of attaining core environmental resources, cultural-belief variations, corruption in the political economy, and the impacts of state infrastructure

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[38] Alberto Abadie, "Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism." *American Economic Review*, 60, (2006): 50–56. https://doi.org/10.1257/000282806777211847 Cf. Botha, A. Political Socialization and Terrorist Radicalization Among Individuals Who Joined al-Shabaab in Kenya, in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 37(11), (2014): 895-919, Mukinda, F. "Kenya: Al-Shabaab Preys on Poor Youth with Promises of Cars and Wives." (11 February 2016). *Daily Nation*, retrieved from http://allafrica.com/stories/201602120171.html. Cf .D. Shinn, D"Poverty and Terrorism in Africa: The Debate Continues," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 17, No. 2, (2016): 16–22.

[39] Susan E. Rice, Corinne Graff, and Carlos Pascual, Brookings, *Poverty, Development and Violent Extremism in Weak States*. (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute, 2010). Botha, A. "Political Socialization and Terrorist Radicalization Among Individuals Who Joined al-Shabaab in Kenya". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 37, No.11, (2014): 895-919.Aldrich, Daniel P. "Radio as the Voice of God: Peace and Tolerance Radio Programming's Impact on Norms," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6, no. 6 (2012): 36–60.

[40] US Agency for International Development. *Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations* (ADS 201 Additional Help). (2018). https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/suggested-approaches-integrating-inclusive-development-across-program-cycle-and-mission. Cf. US Institute of Peace.*"Preventing Extremism in Fragile States: A New Approach*. (2019). https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/preventing-extremism-in-fragile-states-a-new-approach.pdf

[41] Patrick R. Devine. Radicalization and Extremism in Eastern Africa: Dynamics and Drivers. *Journal of Mediation and Applied Conflict Analysis, 4(2)* (2017).. http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/9086/7/PD-Radicalisation-2017.pdf

[42] Anselm Rink, Kunaal Sharma *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62, No. 6 (July 2018), 1229-1261

[43] J.A. Otsieno. *Youth and Local Leaders Conflict in Nairobi's informal settlements: An analysis of the role played by unequal access to opportunities and existing mitigation measures*. Briefing Paper, 1 (27 October 2020). https://shalomconflictcenter.org/briefing-paper-no-1/

insecurity[44]. Recruiters to extremist groups do not just confine themselves to urban environments. They also target youth and followers in rural locations characterised by inter-ethnic and inter-clan conflicts.

From a macro socio-political-economic perspective, critical attention needs to be applied to the negative effects of macro policy decisions taken by institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, among others. Harvey[45] highlights the negative outcomes of neo-liberal socio-economic policies on third-world countries and the associated dynamics emerging from global institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The impact of such institutions on traditional, underdeveloped African countries emerging from imperial annexation and neo-colonialism[46] has generated reactive, violent social upheaval in social-political-religious domains.

Many African countries were subjected to the decision-making processes of these major institutions with their Western-controlled value mindsets. Often, these processes seem to be expressed and implemented through the hegemony of power, an arrogance of ignorance and the ignorance of arrogance. In retrospect, the application of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) from the 1980s onwards is a case in point. SAPs were conditional economic policies that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) promoted for developing countries. Worldwide, the implementation of SAPs was extensively criticised on the grounds of being inhumane. Bond and Dor[47] provide a specific analysis of the negative socio-economic impacts of SAPs in Africa, particularly on issues of unemployment, income disparities and the deterioration of living standards. With their top-down command-control compliance conditions, they were seen as undermining state sovereignty. From a humanitarian-peace-development nexus perspective, they were considered insensitive to the complexity of cultural and structural dynamics underpinning Africa's, and other continents, multi-diverse political, economic, and social-religious compositions. The above policy interventions were often formulated without adequately considering the depth, entrenchment, and determining influence of conservative African spirituality, be it traditional, Islamic, Christian or Hindu, on customary social life and national identity. The upsurge in radicalisation and extremism needs to take into account the failures and negative consequences of imperial and neo-colonial policies.

Religious faith-belief is something that should never be taken for granted by those formulating political-economy policies, because of its institutional allegiances and relational connectivity to the dignity of human life (and its sacredness among many), respect for creation and the environment, and the cultural pillars underpinning reconciliation - peace, truth, justice

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[44] Patrick. R Devine. *Persistent Conflict Between The Pokot and The Turkana: Causes and Implications*. (Chennai: Notion Press, 2024); see also, *The Turkana-Dassenach Conflict: Cause and Consequences.* [Unpublished Master's Thesis] Hekima University College, Nairobi, Kenya. (2009).

[45] David Harvey, "Neo-Liberalism as Creative Destruction." *Gegraffiska Annaler. Series B. Human Geography,* 88 No.2. Geography and Power, the Power of Geography 145-158. (2006). Retrieved on 20/04/2020 from https://www.jstor.org/stable/3878384

[46] Pierre Englebert, "Pre-Colonial Institutions, Post-Colonial States, and Economic Development in Tropical Africa", *Political Research Quarterly*, 53, No.1, (2000): 7-36.

[47] Patrick Bond, and Gearge Dor, "Neoliberalism and Poverty Reduction Strategies in Africa." Discussion Paper for the Regional Network for Equity in Health in Southern Africa. (2003).

and mercy[48]. For those analysing the causes and persistence of terrorist organisations, religious identity and associated social values are core components needing astute attention. In this regard, transitional changes in psychological perspective and underlying beliefs leading to identity modifications are all active dynamics along the continuum from tolerance to terroristic acts. From a psychology of religion perspective, conceptual mindset transitions and associated behavioural dynamics correlate with the retrogression from tolerance to fundamentalism, leading to nonviolent extremism and deteriorating further to manifest religious ideological extremism - operationalised in terrorism.

Some scholars argue that it is not macro or micro social ideological factors or religious beliefs that primarily motivate or propel people towards joining extremist groups. Instead, the propulsion is motivated by a psychological need for significance that extremist groups provide regarding purpose, self-worth, certainty and belonging to a cause[49]. Some analysts point to a "crisis of national identity" as a cause of radicalization in this region whereby people are more easily persuaded to buy into radical, transnational narratives or, on the other hand, it can also manifest as radicalization along "ethnic, clan or communal lines when a strong sense of nation is absent from the national consciousness".[50]

This psychological desire to belong and to make one's mark in the world is a recruitment tool used by extremist organisations in areas where socioeconomic and political opportunities are minimal. In these settings, the option to join a global or regional cause of seeming significance can be, and often is, very appealing. In this context, religion is frequently used as an appeal process for generating and satisfying the identity need for significance. From the perspective of identity and extremism, there are few phenomena, if any, that are identified with terrorism more than the role of religion as a major factor causing conflict and, on the other hand, a transformer of conflict[51]. Whether religion is the underlying factor causing conflict or not is another issue that needs urgent attention in any in-depth analysis of religion and conflict. Focusing on religion here does not deny that other factors, such as national identity or ethnicity, among others, may be of major significance, if not more, depending on context.

2.2 Religio-Ideological Extremism

When religion becomes preoccupied with increasing quantitative membership and the imposition of institutional control on social behaviour rather than qualitative spiritual transformation, its potential to become a major destructive factor in conflict generation escalates. This perspective is the experiential and theoretical standpoint that informs the author in terms of the link between religion on the one hand and the drivers and dynamics of radicalisation, fundamentalism and extremism on the other. In eastern Africa, evidence for this

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[48] John Paul, Lederach, *The Journey Towards Reconciliation*, (Scottdale, Pa.: Herold Press, 1999).

[49] Adam-Troian, Jais Tecmen, Ayşe Kaya, Ayhan. "Belonging Nowhere: Marginalization and Radicalization Risk among Muslim Immigrants." *Behavioural Science and Policy*, 1, No.2 (2015): 1-12.

[50] Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). "Preventing Youth Radicalization in East Africa." (2012). Retrieved from: http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Preventing-   Youth Radicalization-in-East-Africa-Program-Summary-ACSS.pdf

[51] Patrick Devine. "A Critical Analysis of the Role of Religion in Fuelling or Healing Conflict". *Tangaza Journal of Theology Mission*. No. I (2011).

can be drawn from a multiplicity of examples ranging from attacks on US Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, businesses in Uganda, Westgate Mall and DusitD2 hotel in Nairobi, massacre of students at Garissa University in eastern Kenya, insurgences in Mozambique, and most notable the ongoing manifest conflict in Somalia.[52]

Within this environment, the propagation of religions as institutions becomes the primary focus rather than their core spiritual message with respect to tolerance, peace, truth, justice and mercy. This context often breeds a form of religious ideological extremism which predominantly fosters exclusivist violent tendencies, violating fundamental human dignity and rights. In this respect, religion can be the foundation and driver of radicalisation and extremism, exemplified by imperial annexation of territory, solely bent on creating theocracies which are intolerant of all other forms of religious belief or freedoms. Essentially, this points to how religion can potentially be manipulated in the interest of either promoting negative values and extremist positions or the opposite.

Moreover, all religions depend on the motivations and interpretations of their adherents and, therefore, are susceptible to misuse of their pedestals. However, it should be noted that in the debate on religion causing extremism, some research[53] suggests that theology remains a prevalent scapegoat for extremism and that many perpetrators of terror already have violent histories and criminal records before they eventually endorse terroristic acts. Even so, it is clear that religious interpretations, networks, rhetoric and places of worship have been and are abused for radicalisation and extremist aims. This abuse is not a new phenomenon confined to any one religion[54].

The religionization of politics and the politicisation of religion have severe negative implications on the process deterioration of tolerance to intolerance, leading to more radicalised fundamentalism, which in turn becomes a basis for further degeneration into non-violent and manifest extremism, whereby society is to be purged of any contradictory position. When the purity of the 'Divine' values and principles in a religion's message is distorted, subverted or forfeited in the interest of a religion's institutional earthly socio-political-economic objectives, the authentic beliefs and corresponding behaviour become toxic. The idealism and purity of the 'Divine' message are subjected to socio-political realism, objectives of worldly security and interests.

Religion in its purity is not the underlying cause of conflict, but when the structures of religion and their expansion become more important than the adherence and fulfilment of the sacred message that underpins their very institutional existence, religion then enters the volatile arena of becoming a significant factor not just causing conflict but even contributing to its persistence. Radicalization and extremism are enabled to take root to the detriment of tolerance and reconciliation; empowering intolerance and preventing conflict transformation restorative

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[52] Intergovernmental Authority and Development [IGAD], 2020. https://igad.int/. Southern Africa Development Community [SADC], 2020. https://www.sadc.int/

[53] Manni Crone, "Radicalization Revisited: Violence, Politics and the Skills of the Body". *International Affairs*, 92, No. 3, (2016): 587-604.

[54] Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).

processes between adversaries. When the defence and expansion of the institutions of religion become more important than witnessing to the authentic sacred content of its revealed religious message, concerning the 'Divine', human dignity, peace, truth, justice, mercy and reconciliation, religion then enters the realm of contributing to the causes and persistence of conflict. The sacredness of the message is forfeited for the world of realism dynamics that uses power for the interests and security of religious institutions rather than the sacred purity of the 'Divine Message' in its holistic truth.

Thus, the sacredness of the revealed Divine Message concerning human dignity and relationships with one's neighbour, self, cosmos, and God are not the underlying causes of conflict. The comprehension of this perspective is the foundation for understanding the argument that religion is not an underlying cause of conflict or its persistence. However, this perception enables and empowers enlightenment on how religion can become a major factor contributing to the causes, dynamics and persistence of conflict through religious factors being involved. This analytical perspective applies to the analysis of the causes and persistence of conflict where religious institutional factors seem to be evident, especially in Africa and Asia, but also in areas of Europe – Northern Ireland/UK and the Balkans.

Within the context of clashes, be they ideological, religious or civilizations,[55] conflict will almost inevitably emerge in forms of structural and/or manifest violence, to achieve these ends. It is within this process dynamic that the intolerance of alternative faiths, institutions, and even a person's right to be born or exist becomes acceptable. This intolerance is unquestionably evident in the domains of both non-violent extremism and manifest violent extremism.

While the institutional concerns of all religions are prone to the dangers of their core spiritual message being radicalized in the direction of non-violent and manifest violent extremism, these dangerous tendencies in Islam have become the focus of paramount attention. However, history has demonstrated, and continues to do so, that these tendencies can be found at various times in most, if not all, major world religions. This dynamic is evidenced to various degrees in certain forms of fundamentalism and extremism underpinning the history of Crusades, Jihads, Christian-right movements in Europe and the USA, traditional African religions, the Hindu BJP in India, and ethnic cleansing on religious grounds, among others. Thus, Islam does not have a monopoly on these dangers as they are historically found in the institutional dynamics of other religions, as well as in the secular domain of society. However, in the current context of Eastern Africa, the predominant religious identifiable social group employing the language and manifest violence of terroristic activity is associated with Islam, specifically Al-Shabaab.[56] This reality is not to ignore the possibility of shifts in terrorist-cell allegiances away from trust in Al-Shabaab and Somalia leadership to Al-Qaeda and ISIS activities operational in eastern Africa, from Egypt down along the coast to Mozambique and

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[55] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate: A Foreign Affairs Reader*. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1993).

[56] David M. Anderson, and Jacob McKnight, "Understanding al-Shabaab: Clan, Islam and insurgency in Kenya". *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 9, No.3, (2015): 536-557.

neighbouring inland countries. Neither is this reality ruling out the possibility of co-operation between all the terrorist groups!

According to UNDP[57], Islam-based radicalization and extremism in Africa is done through formal and informal community grassroots institutions. Religious institutions are highlighted as playing a critical role in terms of the substance and dynamics of political radicalization processes. The report considers that, "imams, mosques and madrassas may be insufficiently prepared to play the effective guidance role that may be required of them, especially when internal institutional governance mechanisms are weak or lacking". Religious institutions of this nature become prone to extremist recruiters and even subjected to institutional control and compliance. Human agency is an ever-present factor in the cause of conflict, religious ideological extremism, terrorism and peace building[58]. The UNDP report points out that, "in recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of madrassas (1:7 ratio of mosque to madrassa, [faith associates]". Youth education in many locations totally depend on these institutions, many of which have limited quality control over the curriculum; "mosques and madrassas have free reign to teach and preach what they choose. As a result, religious institutions become easy targets for the proliferation of extremist ideologies".[59]

These are all clear indications of the interplay between the politicization of religion and the religionization of politics. Religion's role in fuelling or healing conflict, either directly or indirectly or, as the case may be, deliberately or unintentionally, ultimately has to critique its institutional politicization. This politicization is where its institutionalism faces the real danger of usurping the focal point of religion and positioning God as an additive to justify the institution's behaviour. When the institution becomes the god-sacred epicentre, instead of the 'Divine', then the violence will seek justificatory arguments to defend cases ranging from those of individual abuse (including covering up child abuse) to suicide bombing and mass killing. All the major religions of the world have to take stock of the internal dangers within and to their structures and governance to avoid their 'Divine' or 'sacred' message becoming radicalized by institutional concerns, leading initially to non-violent extremism and then regressing towards the justification and actuality of manifest violent extremism operationalized through terrorism.

2.3 Countering Extremism

As the previous sections indicate, the underlying causes of radicalisation and extremism are complex and varied. Therefore, any intervention to counter these factors needs to consider these perspectives. It is imperative to offer a multifaceted yet unified approach to transforming the conditions that allow radicalisation and extremism to emerge, escalate, and intensify.

Furthermore, specific transformative interventions must be created and applied to contexts where extremism has already taken root. An alternative narrative and presentation of

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[57] United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]. *Third Expert Consultation,* Addis Abeba, 2015.
[58] Robert *Rotberg I.,* "The Challenge of Weak, Failing and Collapsed States." In *Leashing the Dogs of War, Conflict Management in a Divided World.* .Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, Pamela R. Aall, eds. (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007).
[59] United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]. *Third Expert Consultation, Addis Ababa,* (2015).

opportunities are necessary to prevent and counter radicalization and non-violent extremism transitioning to intentional manifest violence. A conflict transformation-development approach is obligatory if the underlying causes are to be strategically addressed and resolved. In doing so, it is essential to draw on the theory and practice of qualified and experienced peace and development practitioners[60].

The importance of empowering communities living in conflict and marginalized zones (all easily impacted by radicalization and extremism) with both the appropriate practical analytical skills about what is causing conflict and with the applicable conflict transformation-peacebuilding techniques, cannot be accentuated enough. In tandem with this, if more people have access to socio-political-economic amenities, they are generally less susceptible to messages promoting violence and turbulence as a means to a certain end because they have investments and stability that they have to protect. Besides, the sense of purpose that an individual gains' when in secure employment, with potential for personal advancement, often counters the lack of identity experienced by the jobless or young people looking for opportunities of self-advancement and/or a sense of significance.

Governmental and Security Sector Reform is another approach that is considered necessary in adequately addressing the core problems relevant to this discussion. The repressive state apparatus,[61] in the form of the police and army, is insufficient to deal with the underlying causes of radicalisation, fundamentalism and extremism. It is undoubtedly the case that terroristic acts associated with religion and conflict are on the increase in the face of governments' and international organisations' use of force. What amounts to seemingly a most plausible explanation of this state of affairs is that the use of force is not only reactive but also ad-hoc and episodic[62]. To attend to the underlying causes, there is a need for greater utilisation of the ideological state apparatuses mobilized through civic, educational and religious institutions, and the media. The weak state structures and evidence of discriminatory law enforcement in some parts of the eastern African region need to be challenged and reformed. This should also include stricter legislation concerning gun control and the movement of weapons in each State and across their borders.

Advocacy and communication are essential tools in tackling radicalization and extremism. With the increased access to social media and the global problem of misinformation, there needs to be a concerted effort to promote and disseminate an objective factual narrative. This is vital in order to counter those that encourage and activate division, exclusion or demonization of the 'other,' to the point where violence is somehow justified and

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[60] John Paul Lederach, R. Neufeldt, R., and H. Culbertson, "Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Toolkit. (Notre Dame: Kroc Institute of International Studies, University of Notre Dame. (2007). John Paul Lederach, "Peacebuilding and Catholicism, in Peacebuilding: Affinities, Convergences, Possibilities in *Peacebuilding Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*. Robert J. Schrieter, R. Scott Appleby,and Gerard F. Powers, eds., (New York: Orbis Books, 2010).

[61] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and ideological State Apparatuses" in *Lenin, Philosophy, and Other Essays*. (1971): 127-186.

[62] Institute for Security Studies [ISS]. *Will Africa adapt its counterterrorism operations to changing realities?* (2020, October 26). https://issafrica.org/pscreport/. Woldemichael, S. *Counter-Terrorism in Africa Must Adapt to New Realities* (4th November, 2020). https://issafrica.org/iss-today/counter-terrorism-in-africa-must-adapt-to-new-realities

pursued. The lack of objectivity in reporting, be it 'fake news', mendacious, and/or non-lying half-truth news, is a crucial issue for journalism to address if the devastating processes that lead to terrorism are to be countered. More than ever before the qualifications and standards required from journalists and news networks need to be assessed against the benchmark of credibility.

Religious institutions have a vocational role and responsibility to play, first and foremost, in fostering the values of freedom, tolerance, peace, truth, justice, mercy and reconciliation over deception and division. Religious leaders and their followers should continuously promote tolerance, bearing in mind that their sphere of influence and opportunities to persuade others is often, for example, psycho-spiritually more in-depth and further-reaching than governmental institutions. Promoting interreligious conflict transformation necessitates consistency in interpreting and amplifying texts and doctrines that validate tolerance.[63] The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, and Pope Francis, at the Abu Dhabi declaration on human fraternity in 2019,[64] said that they resolutely declare that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence of the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are consequences of a deviation in teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women. God the Almighty has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want his name to be used to terrorise people.

The 'Divine' or 'sacred messages' of religion, particularly on issues relating to the sacredness and dignity of human life and rights, should never be sacrificed for the sake of mere institutional propagation and expansion.

Countering religious violent extremism is not for the faint-hearted and demands expertise in its interventions[65]. Essentially, there is an incompatibility of goals and a 'war of ideas' at the heart of all conflict that leads to violent extremism operationalized in terrorism. There is a need for religious leaders to have greater exposure and proficiency in studies addressing peace and conflict transformation, psychology of religion, development and international relations. Transformative interventions must emerge from a constant profound

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[63] Harold Coward, and Gordon S. Smith, eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding* (Albany: State University of New York Press. 2004).

[64] Francis, and Al-Tayyeb, A. "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together." (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2019). http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html

[65] Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation [SCCRR-Shalom]. *Inter-Religious Dialogue in Action;* (2012). https://www.shalomconflictcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/June_Newsletter_2012.pdf cf. Mullan, D. "The Welcome Address by Prof. Philip Nolan, President Maynooth University and the Response by Deputy Chief of Staff, Major General Kevin Cotter, to Rev. Dr. Patrick Devine's Lecture on Peace, Security and Sustainable Development in Eastern Africa." (3 January 2018). https://shalomconflictcenter.org/response-by-deputy-chief-of-staff-major-general-kevin-cotter-to-rev-dr-patrick-devines-lecture-on-peace-security-and-sustainable-development-in-eastern-africa. Cf. Tadeo, P. E., E.N. Kibe, and Said, A.A. *Shalom-SCCRR Deliberates on its Intervention to Counter and Transform Radicalization and Extremism in Easter Africa*. (19 March 2019). https://shalomconflictcenter.org/shalom-sccrr-deliberates-on-its-interventions-to-counter-and-transform-radicalisation-and-extremism-in-eastern-africa/, Sant'Egidio. "Nobody is Saved Alone – Peace and Fraternity" International Meetings of Prayers for Peace (2020). https://preghieraperlapace.santegidio.org/pageID/31256/langID/en/tab/31288/Rome-2020.html

reflection on relevant theoretical perspectives and experiences in conflict environments. The interventions need to be constantly monitored, evaluated, reported on, and learned from. Strategies must be structured with sensitivity, empowering local influential opinion shapers – governance, civil, religious etc., – to be the architects of their progressive, interdependent, conflict transformation, and peaceful coexistence[66].

From the communication perspective, dialogue should strive for fraternal authentic encounters at all levels of society. An attitude of seeking out shared wisdom and truth, social transformation, integral human development and the common good needs to permeate the encounter. Engaging in consistent doctrinal inter-religious dialogue is vital as only theological reasoning can solve theological problems.[67] The theological content should enlighten and underpin phenomenological perspectives to plan and activate significant '*dia-praxis*'. The interactive aspects of dia-praxis incorporate the important dynamics of 'religious prosociality', as Seul[68] discussed, nurturing increased beneficial trust and collaboration oriented to conflict resolution. *Dia-praxis* focuses on substantive, practical interventions by community actors from all faiths, working strategically together for conflict prevention, tolerance and peaceful interdependent coexistence.

In respect to counteracting the radicalisation dynamics along the continuum from tolerance to terrorism, it ultimately requires not only being theoretically knowledgeable but necessitates insertion into, and engagement with, the breeding grounds of radical extremists[69] – "theory without practice is empty and practice without theory is blind"[70]. At a minimum, these interventions are about generating communities championing inalienable human rights based on the intrinsic dignity of human life[71]. One should never underestimate that conflict situations of negative peace are particularly susceptible to reverting to, or escalating into, manifest violent conflict when they are devoid of expertise and appropriate transformation processes oriented towards positive peace.

The transition from manifest conflict to negative and positive peace is essentially built on a culture of encounter between adversaries, where the human dignity of each person is

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[66] Patrick Devine "Radicalization and Extremism in Eastern Africa: Dynamics and Drivers," *Journal of Mediation and Applied Conflict Analysis, 4(2).* (2017). http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/9086/7/PD-Radicalisation-2017.pdf. Cf. Kamau, J., and Said, A. A. *Interreligious Intolerance; Shalom-SCCRR Interventions* (2020, January 2). https://shalomconflictcenter.org/inter-religious-intolerance-shalom-sccrr-interventions-2/

[67] F.N. Mvumbi, *The Identity of Christ in Islam*. Paulines Publications Africa. (2008).

[68] Jeffrey R. Seul,. "Treat the Stranger as Your Own: Religious Prosociality and Conflict Transformation" *The Journal of Interreligious Studies* 24 (December 2018)

[69] Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation [SCCRR-Shalom]. (2020), www.shalomconflictcenter.org

[70] Kwame Nkrumah, "Consciencism:" *Philosophy and Ideology with Particular Reference to the African Revolution*. New York: Monthly Review Press (1964)

[71] Donna. Hicks, and Desmond Tutu, *Dignity: The Essential Role It Plays in Resolving Conflict*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press. (2011). http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm0gb. Cf. United Nations [UN]. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. New York: United Nations Department of Public Information. (1948). Cf. Francis. The Holy See Encyclical Letter: *'Fratelli Tutti' on the Fraternity and Social Friendship.* (2020). http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

esteemed, reverenced and non-negotiable[72]. Dignity, as humankind's inherent value and worth, is intrinsic to the essence and existence of every human being. Everyone is born with dignity, and their embodiment deserves the utmost consideration in all processes oriented toward countering radicalisation, fundamentalism, and extremism. As positive peace, epitomised by reconciliation, is the transition's end goal, all sides need to honour the concept and actualisation of human dignity. Reconciliation between groups in conflict is the object emerging from acknowledging the past, reframing the present and envisioning a communal future[73] imbued with values of peace, truth, justice and mercy, whereby all sides are committed to the security, development and well-being of each other.

Youth engagement is crucial during their formational and educational advancement so that their potential somatic and mental realizations are fulfilled.[74] Young people are full of potential yet vulnerable to social context and peer pressure. If they perceive only one route, they will most likely follow it. Schools, universities, youth clubs, and sports clubs must engage with vulnerable groups and offer them alternative opportunities and perspectives compared to radical or violent paths. Youth require formative attention in the present in order to fulfil their youthfulness holistically, not just because they deserve attention for the reason that they are going to be the leaders of the future. Radicalisation reflects an increased commitment to the ideological quest for significance and the violent means of its pursuit, coupled with a reduced commitment to alternative incompatible pursuits. A radicalised youth has fallen under the influence of social networks of which they have become a member[75]. In this connection, deradicalisation as countering the cause of extremism constitutes weakening such influence and falling outside its sphere of contagion.

Thus, achieving deradicalisation involves the following: (1) vocational education training to reintegrate the disaffected and detained into society, thereby enabling them to regain a sense of personal significance. The psychological research-based evidence for this point is that the seeming heterogeneity of motives underlying engagement in terrorism boils down to a major underlying motivation, namely the quest for personal significance; (2) Involving detainees' families in the rehabilitation process as a way of activating non-ideological concerns incompatible with violent sacrifice for a cause; (3) Separating the leaders from followers, thus breaking the collective group reality dominated by the extremist; (4) Deradicalization having as one of its dimensions a set of constituted spiritual activities whose object is the individual; (5) Psychological transformation addressing issues of tolerance, revenge and intolerance. Revenge is the desire to reciprocate harm against those who have caused damage to oneself or one's group, thus redeeming one's lost significance.[76] Revenge levels the playing field and

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[72] P.M. Ssentumbwe, *Dynamics of World Peace: Holy See and UN Cooperation.* (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications – CUEA Press. (2009). Cf. Donna Hicks, and Desmond Tutu, *Dignity: The Essential Role It Plays in Resolving Conflict.* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 2011). http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm0gb
[73] John PaulLederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies*. (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press. 1997)
[74] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research." *Journal of Peace Research*, 6, No.3, (1969): 167-191.
[75]Elga Sikkens, Marion Van San, Stijn Sieckelicnk, Micha de Winter, "Parental Influence on Radicalization and De-Radicalization According to the Lived Experiences of Former Extremists and Their Families," *Journal for Deradicalization* 12, 2017): 199–200. http://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/115
[76] John Dollard, *Frustration and Aggression.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939).

restores the balance of power by dealing a humiliating blow to one's enemy, thus redeeming one's lost significance. Deradicalization should first and foremost establish whether the extremism fundamentally stems from matters social, economic, political, religious or cultural or whether it is a manifestation of revenge, statistically independent of these other causes, in all its forms and expressions; (6) Incorporating in primary to third level education institutions' a mandatory peace/conflict component that stems from the inviolability of human life, dignity and rights, providing analytical skills, conflict transformation methods, and peacebuilding techniques. The nurturing of a tolerant society preventing radicalization and extremism is indivisibly connected to the educational and character formation systems of any nation; and (7) Large-scale human security development projects, such as the Great Green Wall initiative[77] from west to east Africa across the Sahel (a breeding ground for radicalization and extremism), to improve livelihood resilience, thereby countering the adverse effects of environmental problems stemming from climate change and the like, thus providing youth social economic opportunities which are alternatives to joining violent extremist organizations.

CONCLUSION

To transform the causal relationship between conflict and religion, it is an analytical necessity to have theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and techniques to know what makes for both negative and positive peace. To counter radicalization and extremism, it is necessary to recognize that it is the duty and task of everyone in society. There are no quick fixes or easy solutions. A multi-disciplinary approach is necessary, engaging levels and strata from civil society, academia, religious institutions, governments and inter-governmental structures. Every sector of society should be included in policy discussions and intervention strategies to transform both the underlying causes and persistence of the problem. This should be coupled with theoretical and historical education about the issue and appropriate provision of relevant technical mastery aptitudes.

Non-violent and manifest religious ideological extremism undermines tolerance, reconciliation, world peace and human security. To counter these processes of extremism, constant vigilance is required from states and the international organisations of peace and security committed to upholding the UN Charter and the UDHR. This vigilance needs to be operable in society through the ideological (education, media) and repressive (law, police, army) apparatuses of states to ensure the promotion of human dignity and a rights-based approach that incorporates, paradoxically, an 'intolerance of intolerance'. Moreover, to surpass tolerance and achieve reconciliation, policies that actively empower all parties in conflict, from the grassroots up, to be the transformers and architects of a reconciled, interdependent future of co-existence, are indispensable.

Regarding the foregoing, a realistic vision for the future of nation-states and their societies will not be that all people abandon the truth claim of their religious faith, ethics, or political convictions – especially since one could only compel that externally with force. Rather, at a minimum, it is imperative to learn how to structure and accomplish dialogue, conflict transformation, peacebuilding, among people of differing convictions, religions,

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[77] W.K. Omoka. and Patrick Devine. "Human Rights are a Foundation of Shalom-SCCRR's Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Interventions". (2020). Retrieved from https://shalomconflictcenter.org/human-rights-are-a-foundation-of-shalom-sccrrs-conflict-resolution-and-reconciliation-interventions-2/

ideologies and race. This objective should not be reduced to just tolerating the qualitative and quantitative dynamics of behavioural differences, which may only be regarded as mere negative peace.

Ultimately, the dialogue, pegged on religion, has to transcend and translate into mutually agreed upon engaged activities - dia-praxis - to counter the radicalisation dynamics which lead to the terrorism of religious ideological extremism. Central to this process will be the fortification of a tolerant society championing human dignity, exemplifying the UDHR, and pervaded by values of peace, truth, justice, and mercy. The promotion of these values within a framework that advocates tolerance and reconciliation is essential for fostering inclusive societies, countering all forms of non-violent and manifest religious ideological extremism operationalised in terrorism.

All sides are challenged to be visionary and envision greater communal enlightenment and practical engagements to advance respect for human dignity and rights, inclusiveness, and reconciliation praxis for all humanity. The realisation of the vision primarily rests on individuals and institutions adeptly exploring the others' perceptions, beliefs and ideological positions. Correctly reading the 'signs of the times' is critically important in the process. However, of equal significance, and certainly more demanding in the quest to counter all forms of radicalisation that lead to terrorism, is the need for the aptitudes and resolve to transform the 'times' of the signs. It is imperative that all actors engaged in preventing and countering religious ideological extremism have conceptual knowledge of radicalisation, fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism, tolerance, and their interaction dynamics.

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