Religion and Terrorism: A Socio-Historical Re-Consideration

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Abstract: Terrorist activities have taken a new turn in the wake of 21st Century, thereby creating a sense of insecurity in the global family. The reason for the upsurge of terrorism has also remained an enigma. However, scholars have posited diverse reasons and motivations for terrorist activities. Scholars mostly of western orientation, blame religion for it. On the other hand, scholars with liberal inclinations place the blame on the socio-political exigencies that fosters authoritarianism as the sole cause of the social phenomenon. The third group of scholars posits eclectic sources of terrorism. They opine that though, socio-political exigencies are at the root, however, religion fans the ember and gives it legitimacy. The fourth group proposed an alternative model in which they subsumed that globalization and not religion is the purveyor of modern terrorism. They noted that globalization agenda depersonalizes culture, breaks traditional identities, nullify national sovereignty and violates human rights and life of those at the fringes of development. Thus, those affected adversely by the scheme resort to terrorism as retaliation for the violation done to them. Religion, on the one hand, occupying a central position in human life becomes a medium of translating this socio-political conflict into a moral one. It is by religion that secular conflict acquires a cosmic nature. Any conflict understood in cosmic terms acquires stateless and timeless status and as such become unending. Therefore, the paper surmises that terrorism will not end unless globalization ends.
1. Introduction

We live in a turbulent time marked by violence, which manifests itself in manifold forms such as terrorism, bomb blasts, massacre ethic cleansing, cultural genocide, atrocities on women, children and tribal minorities and most often in full blown wars (Uka, 2005:15-34; Okoro, 2010: 323). Thus 21st century which ought to be the most peaceful century in the world history, supported by advanced scientific development in all areas of human discipline, human based policies and global, continental and regional relationship, has turned to the most volatile period in human history and development. Therefore, there is no hiding place for man in the 21st century. Consequently, the experience of violence affects humanity adversely by creating a sense of insecurity in the life of all peoples and nations within the global village arrangement. All spheres of human existence become threatened and threatening too, hence human beings in the 21st century are at threshold of obliteration (Okoro, 2010: 323). Wilson (2010) gives a vivid but worrisome account of the degree of danger the contemporary age is facing as he writes:

... Terrorist attacks have taken a heavy toll on humanity, especially innocent civilians. According to UNICEF, 80% of victims of such oppression in the recent years have been civilians, mainly women and children. Looking back at the last century, despite all its valuable accomplishments, the 20th century has turned out the bloodiest century in human history. It is estimated that more than 60 million people were killed by fellow human, more than all the previous centuries of human history. The century ended with about 21 million refugees around the globe, including about 6 million internally displaced people and more than 300,000 child soldiers (under the age of 18 girls as well as boys engage in armed conflict).
Besides wars, military and civil dictations that violet human rights and life, the most threatening social acerbic is the contemporary terrorism in its diverse forms and manifestations. Terrorism, though as old as human history, has taken a new dimension in the recent period, taking its demeanor from September, 11 2001, when the whole world was shocked with the destruction of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, both representing the economic and military powers of USA and by extension the global community.

Actually, terrorism has no univocally and wildly accepted definition (Atran 2004: 47-49). However, Ariel (2007: 16) defines it as ‘the substrate application of violence or threatened violence intended to show panic in the society, to weaken or even overthrow the incumbent and bring about political change. Karacasulu (2005: 8) avers that terrorism is the act of violence committed against innocent persons or non-combatant that are intended to achieve political end through fear and intimidations. Overtly, terrorism has more frequently been associated with a crime committed against the poor and the under privileged by disenfranchising them. Thus by design, terrorism is an unpredictable use of violence against individuals, groups, community or nation to attain the goal of the perpetrators. This may include but not limited to the overthrowing, destabilizing or replacing the existing system and institution or a retaliation for the hurt and harm committed (Wilson, 2010: 1-9). Notably, there are several motivations that strut terrorist attacks on the unsuspecting victims. These motivations include but not limited to, political, social, moral, personal and religious. Ali (1997: 23) notes that terrorism has been used all through history through out the world by states, organizations, groups and individuals.

However, amidst all diverse motivations of contemporary upsurge of terrorist attacks, religious motivations have been spotlighted as the major source of terrorism in the 21st century. According to D’ Souza (2010) ‘... so there is little wonder the claim that religion is awful and leads to violence ...It is certainly true that many horrible things have been done under the cover of religion-the inquisition springs to mind along with Islamic terrorism and the Catholic –protestant wars that have raged and influenced ...'
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European and America politics for centuries’. In the same vein, Wilson (2002), supports the forgoing argument as he writes, ‘...though human conflicts and the September 11 tragedy can be explained in political and social terms, explicitly or implicitly, religious components shaped and motivated them. Against this background, Juergensmeyer (2008: 23) demonstrate his misgiving about the role of religion as he writes, “most people feel that religion should provide tranquility and peace not terror, yet many of these cases, religion has supplied not only the ideology but also the motivation and organizational structure for the perpetration of terror in the world.” Okoro (2008: 105-115) shares the foregoing view as he opines that religion and her institution are major sources of violent conflict and crisis, including terrorism not only in the contemporary period but also down the human history.

Against this backdrop, Brahm (2005: 1-7) opines that at the dawn of 21st century, a causal glance at the world affairs world support that religion is at the core of much of the strife in the globe. Now when religion is a large part of the picture of global conflict-terrorism in particular-then the most enduring question becomes, ‘what has religion to do with human destruction? Could these violent acts be the fault of religion qua religion, or the result of a dark strain of religious thinking that leads to absolutism and consequent violence, or has the innocence of religion been abused by wily political activists, who twist religious essential message of peace for their own devious purposes? Is religion the problem or the victim of conflictual human existence in the 21st century? (Juergensmeyer, 2005: 12). It is therefore this complex and confused role of religion in the contemporary terrorist attacks that motivated us to do a sociological re-consideration of the relation between religion and terrorism in the contemporary period.

2. Religion and Terrorism: Major Argument

Waves of anger and fear circulate over the bright and darkened land of the earth, obsessing our private lives, the uncontrollable odour of death offends the September night ...We kill to defend ourselves but die to convert and conquer
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(Saighal 2003: 20-21). The escalation of global violence-terrorism-associated with religion and her institutions is an ever-present reality with us. Narrating his own experience, Juergensmeyer (2000: 8) writes:

The ferocity of religious violence was brought home to me in 1998, when I received the news that a car bomb had exploded in a Belfast neighbourhood I had visited the day before. The following day firebombs nipped through several pubs and stores, apparently in protest against the fragile peace agreement signed earlier in the year. It was a repetition of what happened several years before, a suicide bombing claimed to have been by the military wing of Palestinian Moslem political movement - Hamas.

Islamic religion all over the world has been alleged as the gravest architect of religious violence vis-à-vis terrorism. Therefore, Saighal (2003: 22) opines that Muslims continue to push their communities into medieval practices and as such they pose challenge to communal harmony and perpetrate the backwardness of their community. Therefore, the clash of civilization is being provoked by Islamists in many parts of the world. In this direction, Avolos (2005: 72) asserts that religious terrorism is indeed caused by religions or rather that religion creates an imagery supply of sacred resources over which human being contend.

Accordingly, Avolos (2005: 73) regards all forms of social and political conflicts to be contest over scarce resources. The ones who do not have the scarce resources want them and the ones that have them want to keep them. In relating this postulation to religious conflict, Avolos maintains that the scarce resources are the things that religion specifically supplies, which include the favour of God, blessing and salvation. These are the graces not bestowed equally on everyone and must be earned and protected. Against this backdrop, Dulles (2002: 1-9) and Okoro (2008: 105-115) assert thus:

The relation between various religions of the world has often been hostile and in
many places, there remain so today. When we pick up daily news papers, we can hardly avoid reading about conflicts between Jews and Muslims, between Muslims and Hindus, between Hindus and Sikh and between Muslims and Bahais and all these faiths have at one time or the had their clash with Christianity.

Dulles (2002: 1-9) further observes that Christianity had had more than a fair share of religious tensions in human history. Hence Christians have persecuted Jews and fought wars against Muslims, within Christianity; there have been internecine wars, especially between Roman Catholic and Protestants but sometimes with Eastern orthodox. The challenge of Rabbi Kahame might be relevant here as he charged the Jews to restore God’s honour. It was this scarce God’s favour that must be earned and protected that he charged Jews to restore using all means and methods. Therefore, an ordinary battle in religious parlance is considered a conflict to earn the highest honour both to God and to his faithful.

Influenced by these postulations, causal observers accept as fact even in western culture that religion is the worst culprit of the global terrorist attacks. In his own words, Wilson (2010: 5) ‘...in the current climate of Muslim political victims, a significant sector of Americans and Europeans public assumes that Islam is the problem. It is this position that crystallized into the public belief that religion, particularly Islam, fully supports and consequently perpetrates acts of terrorism. The association of religion (Islam) with global terrorism is a major example of the habit of thinking of the western modern minds (Wilson, 2005: 1-5). The implication of this association of religion with terrorism is vaunting Jihad to a supreme position in the Muslim lives and practice beyond all other pillars of Islamic faith. However, according to Bruce (2000: 17), “the strident exposition of the way of thinking and found only the assertion of Christian Televangelist such as Pat Robertson and Jessy Falwell that the prophet himself was a terrorist.” It was also in this same spirit that Senator Christopher Dodd, representing Connecticut, told American not to expect
much tolerance from Islam given its present propensity for ideological control of public life (Wilson 2010: 1-9). The basic assumption of those who hold that religion- Islam- is the problem is based on the notion that the religion and her adherents relationship to politics is quite peculiar. However, to make such conclusion on Islam is unwarranted and erroneous, since history can show that even in the traditional societies religion had had a close relationship with political authority and religion often play a major role in undergirding the moral authority of public life. Notable examples are in Judaism, the Davidic line of kingship is anointed of God, in Hinduism, the kings are thought to uphold divine order through the white umbrella of dharma, also in Christianity, the political history of Europe is rife with contesting and sometimes emerging lines of authority between the church and the state. The violent Jews, Hindu and Christians activists in the recent years have all like their Muslims counterparts, looked to traditional religious pattern of politicizing religion to justify their militant stances (Wilson, 2005:1-9).

Some Muslim scholars seem to accepting that religion in general and Islam in particular has played significant role in the current global terrorist attacks with particular reference to September 11 episode. Adducing reasons for such assumption, Bergson (2001: 19-20) writes:

The tragic event of September 11, 2001...was supposedly meant to be a retaliatory action for all the direct and non-direct support the USA has given to the nation of Israel, which is in continual conflict with Palestine. It was for USA’s infliction of death and suffering on innocent civilians in Iraq by refusing to lift the decade-long economic sanctions. It was for USA’s support of some corrupt regimes in the Middle East-like Saudi Arabia and Egypt. It was for the stationing of army in Saudi Arabia, the home of Muslims, the Holy places of Mecca and Medina. It was for the systemizing dissemination of Western values in the Muslim world. In order words, as far as
the executors and schemers of the of the terrorist attack, it was a repayment for all the insults against Islamic faith and for the injury to Islamic communities in collaboration with several Muslim regimes in the Middle East.

It was fervor above that was behind the bombing of the World Trade Centre in 1993, the bomb attack on USA embassies in Nairobi-Kenya and Der-es-Salam in Tanzania in 1998 and the attack on USA Cole in Yemen in 2000 (Rachael, 2001:8). Thus, it becomes a popular opinion that among scholars, general public and USA allies that though the human conflicts in the global village with particular reference to September 11 could be explained in political and social terms, however, religious components colours and motivates the gruesome terrorist attacks on the world developments. Therefore Wilson (2005), notes:

While the majority of the world was going through shock, a small group of sympathizers of such terrorist actions were jubilant, not because they delighted in death and suffering of others but rather they felt that their religious perspective provided them with a means of response to what they perceived as evil. For them, it was a successful accomplishment of a planned action to uphold Islamic truth. It was a moral revenge and a spiritual act. Religiously, it was jihad against evil society and infidels in America.

However, Islamic faith is not the only religion implicated directly or indirectly on the acts of global terrorism, Wilson (2005), justifies this assertion when he says the three religions implicated in the September 11 event are Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Wilson’s assumption was based on the fact that the major religions in the world polity are indiscriminately drawn from these religious groups. In his own words, “The USA and the rest of the Western nations are predominantly shaped by Christian values and world views, the Middle East and Central Asia by Islamic traditions and
culture and Israel and Jews living in USA by Jewish values and traditions.

Actually, almost all the major world religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam contain within its tenet of faith the seed of terrorism. Thus history in whatever realm is dotted with bloodbath conflict in the name of God(s). Thus in the Jewish tradition, Yahweh is understood as permitting wars and granting of victory to His chosen people-Israel. Here reference is made to the songs of Moses and Miriam, which speaks of a warrior-Lord-who, triumphed gloriously over Pharaoh and his might army (Ex.15: 1-21). Furthermore, Deuteronomy 20:1-20 stipulates law of war and conflict for God's People-Israel. Even the central symbol of God's presence among the people- the ark of covenant- was carried into the battlefront to assure victory (Num.10: 35-36, 1 Sam. 14:1-8).

In the modern times, major races of Judaism are manifested in the movement of Zionism, with the founding of the Zionist organization in Basel in 1997. The Zionist movement was a socio-political organization with secular leadership meant to overcome all the adversities that were faced by the Jewish community. In fact, the number of wars and armed confrontation since 1948 with Arabs neighbours, the continued occupation of neighbouring territories and the prevention of the formation of independent state of Palestine has made both the Palestinians, Arab, large section of Muslim world and western critiques to consider the state of Israel as aggressors and perpetrators of terror against Palestine people (Partner, 1997: 17). The state of Israel on her own, considers all her aggressions on Palestine and her neighbours as self-defense and self-preservation. Though the acts of war and aggression were not necessarily done as religious acts, however, for the outsider, these acts of terror and religion exist in symbolic relation as the state of Israel is primarily anchored on faith community (Wilson, 2005: 1-9).

Christianity, which is an offshoot of Judaism, is not spared of the stories of heinous attacks on humanity. Notably, Christianity which begun as marginalized and oppressed community, a community on the fringes of history and politics of the day, when liberated in 312AD, developed her own means of using force to achieving her own objectives (Partner, 1997: 23) The faith adopted persecution,
punishment, imprisonment, banishment etc of those whose doctrine the consider spurious. The church also tried and executed those who refused to recant their conviction, which the church considered as heresy. The church also embarked on crusades to retrieve their lost territories and reclaim members. These methods of force developed steadily as Christianity’s power consolidated with the sponsorship of the state. Many of these acts of terror done to humanity in history were carried out with the protection and blessings of Christian rulers and political powers.

Now having incriminated most of the world religions with the act of violence and terror, the opinion of the majority of people is that the contemporary act of terror against humanity is essentially religious. However, to simple close the matter at this point will violate the spirit of democracy in our time. Therefore, we turn our attention to the opinion of the minority or rather the unpopular argument.

3. Religion and Terrorism: The Minor Argument

This second argument attempts to exonerate religion from the alleged criminality against humanity in the modern world by the instrumentality of terrorism and bloodbath conflicts. This school of thought though in minority is vocal and unanimous in their insistence that religion is not the problem of the modern world rather it is an innocent victim of chance and circumstances (Juergensmeyer 2002: 1-9). In Juergensmeyer’s own words, “…religion is not the problem…in some cases it is seen as an innocent victim, in other case it is seen simply as irrelevant.” In his legendary work, ‘Dying to Win’ Robert Pape (2005) argues that religion is not the motive in most acts of suicide bombing/terrorism that is an ever-present reality in the modern world. Pape concludes after a painstaking investigation on the causes of suicide activities that such heinous acts are motivated by a blind religious fervour and calculated political maneuver. Thus, Pape underscores the fact that the primary motive is the defense of national and politico-cultural territories. Notably, records show that until recently, at least 2003 that most suicide bombing were not conducted by religious
groups but by secular ethnic movements (Juergensmeyer 2002:1-9).

Justifying the above assumption, Pape (2005) and Juergensmeyer (2002), D'Souza (2009) write:

It is certainly true that many horrible things have been done under the cover of religion...it is also true that many men have used religion as a tool to gain power, no different than nationalism and racism. Having acknowledged that freely let me also throw some numbers at you. 11,000,000+ people murdered in the Holocaust, Nazis was essentially a secular religion with nationalism and racism as its creed and Adolph Hitler as its focal point. Over 1,600,000 Cambodians murdered by the Khnier Rouge, which officially outlawed religion. More recently, we see North Korea, by all accounts as the most repressive nation in the world with barbaric living conditions. Atheistic Cuba is another of the world greatest oppressors of her own people ...of rich religious states that are also the most oppressive, they are universally Islamic, which should further discredit the blank condemnations of religion as repressive.

With reference to the afore citation, it could therefore be asserted with D' Souza (2009) that the absence of religion is hardly a recipe for an utopia existence. The most horrifying conditions in the modern times are most often found in most secular and developed states, places like former Soviet Union, Communist China, and North Korea. It therefore becomes an axiom that there is a far more danger to liberty and freedom...from a powerful state than there is a powerful religion (D'Souza, 2009:1-6)

Against this backdrop information, Pape (2005) presents database to support the foregoing discussion on the position of this minor group. In this study, Pape studied 450 men and women who were not uneducated, poor, immature religious zealots or social losers as they are sometimes
portrayed. However, whatever these have in common is either their territory or culture has been invaded by an alien powers that cannot easily be overthrown. In such desperate state of social survival, they turn to the simplest and most direct form of militant engagement by using their own bodies as bombs. Thus contrary to the popular opinion, suicide bombers and other terrorist are not religious loners but usually part of the large militant organization with well-honed strategies aimed at ousting foreign control from what they consider their own territory (Juergensmeyer 2002: 1-9).

On the strength of the foregoing argument, Okwalinga (2006: 1-2) posits that terrorism do not have a pejorative connotation since it is an act of state struggle and an act systematically justified as a necessary means of replacing a corrupt and authoritative government with a new and better society of equity, equality and justice and fraternity. In tracing the contemporary origin of terrorism, Okwalinga (2006) maintains that with the concept of ‘Sovereignty’ and re-articulation of the roles of nation-state and citizens and the emergence of radical political thought such as Marxism, Nihilism, secularism of governance, the focus of terrorism shifted from religious to political platform. The quest for self-determination by national liberation movement across the colonies after the 2nd world war marked the height of political terrorism.

Overtly, this perspective shares the idea that when one hears a statement, “ the use of religion for political purpose’ that such exonerates religion from the culpability of creating an atmosphere of violence. Therefore US intelligent report in the Middle East once underscores the fact that religion is only being ‘used’ to masking the problem that are essentially economic in nature (Juergensmeyer, 2002:1-9). The report goes further to situate that if jobs are available for the unemployed Egyptians, and Palestinian- that the problem of religious politics in these impoverished societies would quickly vanish.

The implication for the above assumption is that unemployment is the core source of terrorism. Thus it is unthinkable that religious activists would actually be motivated by religion or at least by ideological views of the world that is framed in religious language. In the same vein, Sell (1996) citing the same source of reference with Pape
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(2005), maintains that religion is essentially irrelevant to the motivation of terrorism (12). Further in this argument, the proponents maintain with an air of finality that religion is not just neutral to violence but summarily opposed to it. Here Haralenbos' definition of religion becomes relevant in supporting this position, for him, religion is a socio-spiritual phenomenon, which binds human beings to their gods and fellow human beings (Okoro, 2010: 323-343). Summarily, Odea (1966: 2) echoed the assumption by describing religion and her institution as the most viable of all human associations, embodying the most sublime of human aspiration. Religion for Odea is the bulwark of morality, source of public order and individual peace.

Against this backdrop, religion stands for peace, fraternity, tolerance and magnanimity. It fosters spiritual and temporary excellence of mankind and unequivocally negates all forms of fundamentalism, violence and intolerance as a means of settling discords. Religion is against all forms of injustice meted out to people across the world, which can not be obviated by acts of terrorism and exasperated out burst (Saha 2006: 1-2; Okoro, 2010: 323-343).

While liberative or terrorism offers widely divergent on every topic, one matter is clear, not all terrorists are religious fanatics or even religious (Richard and Alcorta 2010:1-8). Actually, These scholars are of the opinion that it is the media that gives the false impression that religion and terrorism are strongly associated. Hence terrorists, especially suicide bombers are often depicted in the media as delusional religious fundamentals, hopelessly brainwashed and out of tone with reality. The picture that is emerging from recent research, however, is far different. For example, Berebi (2003: 17) has shown that Palestine suicide bombers have average education and economically better than the general population.

4. Religion and Terrorism: The Middle Argument

If terrorists in general and suicide bombers in particular are not crazed religious zealots, what then is the relationship between religion and terrorism? In attempting
this all time question, Juergensmeyer (2003: 27) and Pane (2005) unanimously opine that though religion might not be the root cause of conflicts but is rather a tool used by terrorists to achieving their goals. Thus religious belief, rituals and institution are proximate mechanism that facilitate otherwise improbable behavioural outcome. In this direction, Juergensmeyer (2002: 28), argues that while religion is not the most cause of most conflicts involving terror, religion is the means by which terrorist translates a local political struggle into cosmic wars. In other words, terrorist frame their disputes in religious rather than political terms (Pane, 2005: 75; Juergnensmeyer, 2002: 48). Juergnesmeyer (2005: 1-9) in his further argument asserts that religious language and ideas play an important role, though not necessarily the initial one in relation to conflict and terrorism. According to him, the condition of conflict and terror that lead to tension are usually economic and social in character and often a defense of territory and culture that is perceived to be under the control of outside powers (Pape, 2000:1-7).

Howbeit, at a point in conflict, usually at time of frustration and desperation, the political contest becomes religionized. Then what was primarily a secular struggle takes on an aura of sacred conflict. This creates a whole new set of problem. According to Jeurgnesmeyer (2005: 2), the transformation from political to religious struggle encourages actors to perceive that they are participating in something of divine significance that transcends individual self-interest. Making a notable observation on the Sikh militant, Juergensmeyer (2004: 48) remarks ...the sikh militant in Punjab are motivated by the heady sense of spiritual fulfillment and the passion of holy war. In this vein, Osama bin Laden, using the same category has been able to successfully transform his local grievances into cosmic clash between civilizations. Therefore, religion is a major if not the sole tool of translating local power struggle into conflicts. Accordingly, framing political /local struggle into religious category helps to broaden both the ideological and geographical base of terrorism. Furthermore, whenever political conflict adopts a religious frame, it extends the horizon of victory. Against this background, terrorists perceive that they are fighting a cosmic war in divine time,
thereby removing the incentive to win within one's lifetime (Richard and Alcorta, 2010: 1-9).

Religion facilitates terrorists' goals by providing moral legitimacy to their cause. Notably, all religions impose moral framework upon their adherents, thereby enabling terrorists to present their conflicts in moral absolute dichotomies, such as good versus bad or righteous versus evil. While legitimizing one's own cause, religion is particularly effective at demonizing those with opposing views (Richard and Alcorta, 2010: 1-8; Lincoln, 2003: 29). Notably, history of all shades of time and context is dotted with examples of in-group passion aroused and out-group hatred ignited. According to Pane (2005: 16) indeed one consistent predictor of suicide terrorism is a religious difference between perpetrators and victims. This situation occurs when the terrorist group appears to have a secular motivation such as the LTTE, who the Hindu fighting Buddhist majority. Thus 90% of attacks were aimed at the victims of different religions (Berman and Laiton, 2005: 37).

Religion does not only provide the moral legitimacy for violent acts of terror but also defines the reward for the combatants. The reward for the terrorists with religious convictions, according to Juergnesmeyer (2004: 34-38) is a particular religious experience. This is in the sense that they are participating in something greater than themselves. In addition to such spiritual reward of transcendence, religion may also offer benefits in the life after that can hardly be matched in this world. Sois (2003: 72), substantiates this fact when he says:

The promise that 72 virgins await a shahid (martyr) is often joked about, but afterlife rewards are a critical feature of successful ideologies that enable terrorist organizations to motivate recruits to carry out their mission. As Hamas member describes, 'we focus on paradise, on being in the presence of Allah, on meeting the prophet Mohammad, on the interceding for his loved ones so that they too can be saved from the agonies of hell. On the houris (virgins) and on fighting the Israel occupation and removing it from the Islamic trust that is Palestine.'
In the same direction, Hassan (2001: 39), also avers that the female counterpart of shahid is promised to be the chief of the virgins and exceed their beauty. Thus the September 11 hijackers all believed that they would meet in the highest heaven (Lincoln, 2003: 980). While the kamikaze pilots were assured that they would be transcending life and death (Richardson, 2006:122), which helped them to rationalize their actions.

However, one of the most significant role of religion in terrorism is the incorporation of emotionally evocative and highly memorable symbols, myths and rituals that serve to individually motivate and collectively unify diverse individual under a common banner (Atran, 2003: 4). Hence, Pane (2005: 26) suggests that all terrorist groups face the challenge of creating group commitment and individual devotion to common cause. Durkheim (1995: 72), noted that fundamental “faith based’ element of religion, that is symbols, myths and ritual, foster this in-group commitment more than any other and better than any other social institution.

Overtly, cohesiveness among terrorists with religious motivation is further fosters through powerful symbols, which often become focal point in the occupation involving religious difference (Pape 2005: 89). Certain religious practice defines martyrdom as the sacrifice of oneself for one faith. Thus religion provides ritual and symbols to both motivate and memorize the local heroes by affording them an otherwise unattainable status that is also eternal (Richard and Alcorta 2009:1-9).

Pape (2005: 29) also observes that suicide terrorist organizations commonly cultivate ‘sacrificial myth’ that include elaborate sets of symbol and ritual to mark an individual attackers death as a contribution to the nation. By incorporating counterintuitive concepts within the belief system, religion creates reliable costly symbols to fake. Sosis (2003: 30) further argued that the repeated ritual performance fosters and internalizes these counterintuitive beliefs, which typically include a non-material system of reward and punishment, including expectations about afterlife activities. Therefore, this school of thought summarily conclude that though religion is not the chief
purveyor of terrorism in the modern world, it acts as a major instrument in fostering and cementing commitment of individual suicide attackers to the organization and nation.

5. Religion and Terrorism: The Alternative Argument

In a situation where more and more people are utterly disillusioned about the prospect associated with modernization and development and the capacity and willingness of the new political and economic elites to deliver their promises, they (people) feel abandoned and are thrown back on their ethnic, cultural and religious identities to provide a sense of coherence and purpose for their lives (Konrad, 2005: 45; Okoro, 2006: 152).

With the forceful imposition of the global economic categories of the west (America) known as ‘globalization’ most of the world communities feel estranged from the real meaning of existence. Thus greater percentage of the world population feels that globalization has failed to bring its promised hope to the common folk within the global village arrangement. Dass (2002), noted this failed agenda of globalization with disappointment as he observes:

The United nation Organization (UNO) declares the 1960s, as the dawn of global development, now after four decades of waiting, life of the poor has not changed. It is harder and getting worse, poverty still enslaves the majority of the people, especially Asia and Africa, huge army of the poor unabatedly increases, while a small troop of elites continuously becomes powerful.
The implications of the citation above are multidimensional and complex. The first point in the issue is that globalization adopts a neo liberal economic paradigm that proposes growth-centered development. Thus developmental model has been systematically braking down the social and economic structure of the other nations of the non-west, particularly Asia and Africa. Accordingly, Dass (2002: 1-7) observes that the consequent environmental implications have made it obvious that the developmental route the world has traveled is unsustainable. Therefore, the global realities and the practices of unsustainable development have direct influence on our political, economic, social cultural and environmental context. The recent World Bank (WB) report substantiates this fact thus:

...over 100million people are living in poverty today than a decade a ago, while the gap between the rich and the poor is wider. Each year 2.4 million children die of water born diseases and nearly a billion people have entered the 21st century unable to read or write. More than 1.8 million die every day of indoor pollution in rural areas, while forests are destroyed at the rate of an acre per second, with unimaginable loss of biodiversity. There are as many as 1 billion people who do not even meet the basic requirement to decently live. Among the 4.4 billion people, that is about 70% of the world population, living in developing countries in Asia and Africa, three fifths live without sanitation, one third without safe drinking water, one quarter lack adequate housing and one fifths live beyond the reach of modern health services. One fifth of children do not get as far as grade five in school and equal number are under nourished (Dass, 2002:1-7).

With this demographic data from the WB, it suffices that the negative impact of globalization on the indigenous
communities are quite overwhelming. It has a holistic devastating effect on its victims—the indigenous peoples and communities-. This system has ravaged the indigenous areas, which had to face massive oil exploration and other developmental projects, which ignore the tribal communities; the example of Niger Delta areas of Nigeria is evergreen in our minds.

The commercial culture of globalization has also introduced alien forces, which has resulted in the breaking down of community life and the destruction of the indigenous culture-ethnocide. Thus the tribal people are exterminated by the process of attrition, through this means their land are taken away, their rivers poisoned, their culture violated and their lives made intolerable (Dass, 2002:1-7). Chang (2006) adds force to the foregoing discussion as he noted that the cultures of Asia, Africa and Middle East have experienced conflict due to their differences in value from the Western dominated culture, which globalization propels. He summarily avers that cultural globalization threatens to wipe out the minority cultures or the cultures at the fringes of development. In his own words, ‘Many peripheral cultures—such as the Australian aborigines, Indonesia tribesman or Brazilian rain forest dwellers or indigenous Africans-face extinction’. Accordingly, Okoro (2009: 22-34) underscores the fact that Africa having experienced the highest global invasion has drank the dreg of the diverse negative effects of globalization. Therefore, Africa stands at the blink of life, since the overall aim of globalization is the integration of all the people and nations into one common cultural system.

Hebding and Gluck (1992: 39) underscores the importance of culture as they note interlia, ‘that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, moral, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a particular society. Accordingly, culture is not limited to arts and music but also consists of values, morns and rules one lives by, ones idea of good and evil, ones language, religion etc. Culture also includes and refers to all that people have learned and through cultural facts, peoples thoughts, actions, and feelings are known. Culture therefore defines values, attitudes, belief, mindsets, central tendencies, worldviews and orientations that are prevalent in the society (Edgell, 2005:1-8; Okoro, 2009: 22-34).
If we adopt this description of culture as a standard for the purpose of this work, it suffices that the destruction of one's culture is synonymous with the destruction of one's personhood. Hence, Okoro (2009: 22-34), has already noted that culture makes one relevant or otherwise in the community of other cultural groupings. Shephard and Hayduck (2002: 16), lend credence to the foregoing as they opine that cultural globalization is a senseless extinction of other cultures and the euphemism for western cultural imperialism.

Against this backdrop, Campbell (2001) reiterates thus:

Some commentators have suggested that terrorists conceive the attack, as a direct assault on the forces of globalization; however, on display is not globalization under siege rather a clash between modernization and traditional culture. Debates within Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, Pakistan and Iran centre only on the most trivial way on western contamination, such as hoping pop music and video games of their culture. The struggle within these societies concerned economic inequalities, who should wield powers and the complex relationship between political and religious authorities.

In this direction, Campbell views globalization as the unremitting expansion of market forces, the breakneck speed with which capital moves around the globe and the constant search for realizing greater economic efficiency. This economic scheme influences everything from indigenous culture and environmental regulation to labour standard and patterns of productivity. Accordingly, globalization in all its shades of opinion has potential forces to impact on global terrorism of 20th and 21st centuries (Okoro, 2009: 23-34).

Collorary to the foregoing, Manuel (2009) reiterated that Islamic cultural invasion or cultural war against the west can be seen as a retaliation for continual western economic penetration of the Middle East and the rest of the world (1-13). Bennett (2005: 76), supported this point of argument when he opines that the Jihadists in reality is simply fighting
a global resistance that is all about the ‘gap’ where globalization is coming in and reformatting traditional societies that are unprepared for new rule sets. Therefore, ‘Radical’ extremists rise up in resistance to globalization, believing it is evil and driven by infidels.

According to Bennett, in gap theory, the more discontent a country is, the more dangerous it is for global peace. Robb (2007: 27) contrasted Bennett’ argument, when he avers that gap or poor countries are already globalized via black market or what he called ‘black globalization, which involves criminal activities, like drugs, human trafficking, weapon, exotic plants, animal, other illegal good and all the newer kinds of transnational crimes. Robb (2007) and Glenmy (2008) are of the opinion that that terrorists in the new global world use tactics of warfare but in the form of guerrilla. Against this backdrop, Bobbett (2008) affirms this new development, nation-state and warfare as we know it will disappear to be replaced by corporate surrogate, and the enemy-terrorism-of the new market based world provide a means whereby those who will not like the choice provided by the new market standard will be more in number than those favoured by it.

In the strength of this argument, Friedman (2000: 32), states explicitly, “...there are some people who feel so strongly against globalization, they would kill over it. Such empowered angry people usually act out of fear, among other things, of the unknown, if not the danger of a homogenized society.” Consequently, Wilson (2005) subsumed that the phenomenon of terrorism will not leave human community unless it deals with the issues that perpetuate it locally and globally. Overtly, globalization created negative consequence and marginalization of some groups and global social and economic inequalities, terrorism gained more support from the marginalized people in different nations and become global. Krouin (1997: 19), made this assumption overt when he observes that frustrated population are against the US-led globalization. Thus people at the lower end of the social and economic spectrum realized that they cannot have equal share in the global world, their demand are not recognized by the strong nations and they started to show reaction. These reactions become threatening as they have started to give support to terrorism against globalization. According to
krouin (1997: 23), the ones left behind or threatened by US-led globalization increasingly felt the need to assert their identity against the forces of hegemony threatening by terrorism.

6. Conclusion

In this work we have attempted to establish the basic contemporary scholarly positions on the relationship between religion and contemporary terrorism. This paper notes that modern terrorism cannot be explained historically or otherwise by the use of mono-category-religion. Though, majority of scholars have pitched their tent with the school of thought that situate that these religions lie at the root of all modern terrorist attacks, however, this position is arguable, giving the outcome of contemporary research. Therefore, other group of scholars attributes modern terrorism to socio-political constraints inherent in authoritarian administration of the global village-family. While the third group is of the view that though modern terrorism is motivated by the socio-political exigencies in the social system, however religion being a socio-spiritual phenomenon that held sway the peoples life can not be exonerated from terror activities in the modern word. Thus they maintain that religion is always at the background, giving it moral and spiritual legitimacy.

This paper goes further to present an alternative insight into the nature and motivations for terrorist attacks in the modern age. It posits that no clear insight will be gained on the nature and motivation of terrorism without a critical consideration of the role of globalization in the modern world. It asserted that globalization has created a great chasm between the rich and the poor in the utopia global village arrangement. Thus the poor people and nations are adversely affected as they are placed at the desperation of life. The worst of all facets of globalization is the globalization of culture, which has depersonalized the tribal people by making them rootless, without history and identity and as such worthless in the global village arrangement, except that they are ‘hewers of wood and fetchers of water’

Therefore, in reaction to the above state of affairs, they turn to violence as the last resort for their human violation.
However, to legitimize their violent enterprise, they employ religious myths and symbols and translating their socio-political, cultural and economic marginalization into religious categories. This being the point in issue, modern terrorism, whether with a secular agitation or not acquires religious fervour and backing in order to give it acceptance. Notably, whenever a socio-political and economic battle acquires a religious sentiment, the battle becomes unending and lethal. Thus wars or conflict understood in religious terms becomes a cosmic war. Cosmic wars are wars without a defined geographical boundary. It thus becomes a spiritual battle waged by believers against unbelievers, light against darkness, the powers of good against the powers of darkness. It is a war of allegiance to God (s) and a war for the survival of the progeny. Against this background, this paper foresees a situation in the global village arrangement where terrorism will not end rather it will increase in it ferocity and intensity, except if the condition of marginalization and oppression, injustice and inequality is addressed corporately by members of the global village. Hence, the paper situates that the destruction of Afghanistan Iraq or any other nation for that matter will not end terrorism in the modern world. Globalization is the sole cause of modern terrorism. Globalization is the problem of the modern world.

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