BEYOND GREED AND GRIEVANCE:

NEGOTIATING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT AND PEACE IN AFRICA

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Abstract

This paper avoids the murky debate over religion as a cause of war. Instead, it concentrates on the contradiction between the political and divine orders, so abundantly x-rayed by religion. The very process of unmasking the failings of the political order provides divine sanction, and support for efforts by rebellious protagonists to undo repressive systems. Failing to reckon with the tension between the religion-informed notions of social justice and the political order, the greed and grievance thesis reduces the causes of conflicts to human emotions. The reductionist categories of greed and grievance not only obfuscate the place of religion, and an amoral political economy in the decision-making calculus of anti-state elements but, also, downplay the destructive effects of conventional development. The paper reaches beyond the veil of the psychological argument to examine hidden but vital explanatory causes of internal conflicts in Africa. Lessons are drawn from the conflicts involving the Ogoni, and *Gamaa Al Islamiyya* in Nigeria and Egypt respectively.

Beyond Greed and Grievance:
Negotiating Political Settlement and Peace in Africa

Introduction

Conflict has engaged the interest of scholars and given peace-loving humanity cause for anxiety since the earliest times.[1] Thus, the explosion of internal violence in contemporary times, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, has elicited a similar explosion of studies seeking to explain, and unveil the causes, dynamics and trajectories of these conflicts. Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis argue that 20 percent of the populations of Sub-Saharan Africa live in conflict-afflicted countries.[2]

Popular explanations of violent conflicts single out ethnicity and religion as the two most significant factors in the emergence of conflict.[3] While 'primordialists' argue that conflict is organic to cultural differences, 'instrumentalists' are of the view that, rather than a given, difference is constituted as a tool for realising elites' parochial political ends.[4] In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, the primordialist explanation appears to have achieved the status of a scientific fact.[5]

There is in the literature a more or less eclectic approach, which focuses on the availability of light weapons, absence of democratic structures, poverty, and factors in the arena of international political economy.[6] In this connection, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler synthesise a range of causal explanations of conflicts into two essential categories: Greed and Grievance.[7]

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[1] Adebayo Adedeji, "Comprehending African Conflicts", *Comprehending and Mastering African Conflicts: the Search for Sustainable Peace and Good Governance* (London: Zed Books, and African Center for Development and strategic Studies, 1999), pp.3-21.

[2] Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, "Why Are There So Many Wars in Africa? Understanding and Preventing Violent Conflict", *Journal of African Economies,* Vol. 9, no. 3 (2000), pp.244-269.

[3] Indra De Soysa, "Paradise Is a Bazaar? Greed, Creed, and Governance in Civil Wars, 1989-99", *Journal of Peace Research,* 39, 4 (2002), pp. 395-416.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *The Globalization Reader* ed. Frank J. Lechner and John Boli, (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 25-33.

[6] Dietrich Jung, Schlichte Klaus, and Jens Siegelberg, "Ongoing Wars and their Explanations", *Between Development and Destruction: An Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post-Colonial States*, eds. Luc van de Goor, Kumar Rupesinghe, and Paul Sciarone (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996), pp. 50-62.

[7] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War", online at http://econ.worldbank.org/files/12205_greedgrievance_23oct.pdf

This paper argues that while greed, grievance, disintegrating social contract, and weak institutional base may be relevant to conflict explosions, these factors do not by themselves explain insurgents' conviction that they can force change, against unfavourable power relations. Moreover, beyond the greed-grievance thesis, a cognitive framework, which fosters the notion that a just cause will triumph regardless of existing power relations is a pointer to why badly armed peasants are willing to fight at the risk of certain death.

Therefore, against the popular notion of religion as a cause of conflict, I argue that frustration and grievance, borne out of socio-political realities, and the sense of insecurity they gave rise to better explain why peasants take to anti-state action. Additionally, a history of frustrated efforts at making their voice heard suggests violence as the only means of forcing through their objective. The appeal to religion is merely to demonstrate that the gods are not against the adoption of violent tools to undo perceived injustice. Religion comes after the will to political action; not before.

A study of both the Ogoni and Upper Egypt rebellions show that although the revolt had tinges of sectarianism, such was lost in the universalist ethos espoused by the insurgents. Following from the above, it is useful to our understanding of the origin, dynamics, and shape of conflict to unravel the particular worldview, which shapes the choices leaders make. Moreover, a greed-grievance approach hides the selfless component of the will to conflict. Even more importantly, the model does not provide analytical space for its emergence.

The remaining part of this paper divides into three sections. The first section reviews very briefly the Greed and Grievance thesis and the origins of the Gamaa Al Islamiyya, and Ogoni rebellions. In section two, I examine the onset of hope in modernisation, and the frustration of that hope by subsequent developments. Section three appraises the critical play of syncretism in the worldview and daily life of peoples in the loci of conflicts. In the conclusion, I hazard some suggestions as a way out of the circle of unending poverty, and conflicts.

A Reappraisal Of Greed And Grievance

Although Indra De Soysa draws copiously on the Collier and Hoeffler model, he faults the greed and grievance thesis for lacking an institutional component.[8] In a similar vein, S. Mansoob Murshed emphasises that grievance plays a crucial role in the rise of conflicts in contexts marked by inequality and marginalisation.[9] Although capturable resources such as diamonds and gold may be the source of violence between two or more competing claimants,[10] the forces of greed and grievance can only degenerate into violence where processes that weaken the subsisting social contract have been at play.[11]

Marginalised Violent Conflict

The failure of modernisation to transform the conditions of life as promised continues to impact negatively on the lives of millions. Reflective of the impact are the disappearance of hope in progress, and the ascendance of pervasive pessimism among the marginalised. The turn of events has given rise to widespread frustration. Neoliberal economic development has recently worsened an already bad situation as its debilitating impacts continue to menace the lives of ordinary peoples.[12]

   The *Gamaa Al Islamiyya,* brainchild of Upper Egypt's *fellahin*, held the State guilty for betrayal of Egypt's Islamic values. They espoused a vision of an Islamic State under *Sharia*, and a restructuring of social power in Upper Egypt. The *Gamaa's* violent approach, however, alienated significant sections of civil society, which agreed with the group's goals and values. The onset of militancy is traceable to radical changes, such as the debilitating impacts of market economy, joblessness, and a constricting social order. The militants considered the condition of marginalisation as unjust, and proceeded to "inject a new emphasis on social justice into prevailing religious belief systems, and linked the new interpretation to "true" national values."[13] The Islamists charge that the

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[8] Ibid, 400.
[9] S. Mansoob Murshed, "Conflict, Civil War and Underdevelopment: An Introduction", *Journal of Peace Research*", 39, 4 (2000), pp. 387-393.
[10] Murshed, "Conflict, Civil Wars and Development", pp. 389.
[11] Ibid, pp. 390.
[12] David E. Apter, ed. "Political Violence in Analytical Perspective", *The Legitimization of Violence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997), pp.1-27.
[13] Tschirgi, pp. 25.

State undermined Egypt's national values found salience in the hardship and frustrations of the people.[14]

In the case of the Ogoni, environmental devastation, political and economic marginalisation, and the violent predation of multinational oil companies conspired to ruin Ogoni hope for progress, while endangering their very existence.[15]

The Ogonis blamed the Nigerian State for betraying the national values of federalism, equality, and social justice, as well as for destroying the revenue allocation formula, based on the principle of derivation.[16]

Tschirgi explores what made the insurgents' message credible, and why poor, numerically small, and powerless peasants believed that the change promised by the insurgents was indeed realisable, regardless of the awesome military power of the State. The greed-grievance argument provides us with no clues. Tschirgi argues that such conviction emerges in a "cultural context permeated by a syncretistic religious orientation in which the miraculous or magical is accepted as a normal part of life."[17]

The internalisation of a cognitive consciousness, laced with notions of a just cause and divine support against an evil system, by insurgents shaped the decision to act politically. The goal of the protagonists was to enthrone social justice for all citizens within the framework of the pre-existing State as opposed to the visualisation of the latter as a capturable resource to be snatched through regime change or secession. The insurgents' appeal utilised the existence of injustice as a basis to mount a movement for the universalisation of social justice, and the operation of true national values for the benefit of all, poor or rich.[18]

Hope And Progress

> "With the rise of the modern world, a distinctly modern faith – faith in progress – arose to make sense of, and give ultimate meaning to the new notions and institutions that were now

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[14] Ibid, pp. 32.
[15] Moesinger and Maglio, "TED Case Studies", online.
[16] Maeir, p. 90.
[17] Ibid, pp. 26.
[18] Ben Naanen, "Oil-Producing Minorities and the Restructuring of Nigerian Federalism: the Case of the Ogoni People", *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 33, 1 (March 1995), pp. 46-78.

dominant. Our deep reverence for science and technology was inextricably linked up with this faith in progress."[19]

The idea of progress is perhaps the most enduring and pervading element of modernity.[20] Although, hope was critical in giving vent to human aspirations, it was also the banner under which the onslaught against the "traditional means of autonomous subsistence, and the cultural footholds that could give… spiritual autonomy and personal confidence", and against the market, industry, and nation-state, was mounted.[21]

The hope in progress, which heralded decolonisation, and modernisation, significantly waned under the destructive impacts of science and technology. In its place is embeds a vicious sense of hopelessness. The resurgence of neo-liberal economic policies in the 1980s attempted to reawaken the hope of progress by pointing to the Asian Tigers as unmistakable examples of poor countries fast catching up with the developed countries. Moreover, it offered the promise that it is possible to overcome untold human sufferings, societal disorder, and the debt burden by giving free rein to market forces.

However, the vestiges of hope in progress that the neoliberal economic movement managed to salvage, buckled under the weight of the global recession of the 1980s and the subsequent strangulating debt burden afflicting Third World countries.[22] The IMF and World Bank's remedial Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have failed to revamp the ailing economies, and return them to the path of growth.[23]

Invention Of Hope – Egypt And Nigeria

Upper Egypt is richly endowed with agricultural resources.[24] Paradoxically, it is the poorest region in Egypt. The resource-rich domain is home to 72 per cent of Egypt's poor

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[19] Jose Maria Sbert, "Progress", *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge and Power*, ed. Wolfgang Sachs, pp.192-205 (London: ZED Books Ltd, 1992), 192.
[20] Ibid, pp. 195-196.
[21] Ibid, pp. 197.
[22] Ibid, p. 119.
[23] Ibid, p. 121.
[24] Egypt is a country made up of two separate land areas: Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. The terms "Upper" and "Lower" can be confusing. The names refer to one's location according to the flow of the Nile River. "Upper" is land upstream, or to the south and "Lower" is land downstream, or to the north. Upper Egypt is a narrow strip of land that extends from the cataract boundaries of modern-day Aswan to an area south of modern-day Cairo. The land of Upper Egypt was more isolated from activities to the north. There were a number of differences in the ancient world between Upper and Lower Egyptians and many of

and operates a dismal local economy. Against debilitating socio-economic conditions, Gamal Abdel Nasser unfolded his regenerative modernisation project in the 1960s. The populist years of Nasser witnessed efforts to transform the region through land reforms, and poverty reduction.[25] Specifically, the land reforms sought to make farmlands available to the *fellahin* to reduce or eliminate their dependency, and superfluousness.

Moreover, the government opened Free Universities in the 1960s, in pursuit of the goal of improving literacy and making education accessible to indigent but intelligent students who otherwise faced the spectre of exclusion from the benefits of modernity. As a follow-up to the novel interventions in the field of agriculture and education, the government demonstrated a commitment to mass employment of university graduates. In consequence, the government became the largest employer of labour, and provider of the means of livelihood and prestige to sons of peasants. The result of Nasserist modernisation was wealth redistribution, and an unparalleled rise in the hope of progress.[26]

A different but similar set of events in the history of Nigeria appears to have elicited hope among the Ogoni people in the Niger Delta region of the country. The onset of colonial rule in the early 20th century resulted in the balkanisation of the Ogoni ethnos; an event which segmented Ogonis as minorities under the Native Authorities of other dominant ethnoses.[27] After over two decades of agitation, the British colonialists, in 1946, granted the Ogoni people their separate Native Authority, under the colonial government.

The discovery of oil in Ogoni land in 1958 was a wellspring of hope for the Ogoni because they consider that oil wealth would translate into Ogoni development, free from the predation of the dominant Igbo ethnos. In line with that reasoning, the Ogoni allied with the federal government against the Igbo-led secessionist Biafra in 1966.[28] As the war

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these differences still exist in modern times. They spoke different dialects, had different customs, needs and interests. See http://www.website1.com/odyssey/week1/UpperEgypt.html

[25] Dan Tschirgi, "Marginalized Violent Internal Conflict in the Age of Globalization: Mexico and Egypt", *Arab Studies Quarterly,* 21, 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 13-34.

[26] Ibid, pp. 21.

[27] Vincent Amanyie, *The Agony of the Ogonis in the Niger Delta* (Bori: Fredsbary Printers and Publishers, 2001), p. 9.

[28] "Pouring Oil on Troubled Waters", online at http://www.accord.org.za/web.nsf/Pub%5CConflictTrends2000-3!OpenPage

progressed, oil production increased, and so did oil rents. Rivers state, of which Ogoni is a constituent unit, gained reputation as the oil Mecca of Nigeria. With huge oil wealth at its disposal, the state embarked on massive infrastructural development. Also, the State bureaucracy became a significant employer of labour, and civil servants in the state earned almost double what their colleagues earned in other states of the federation. What became of hope under neoliberal onslaught is the focus of the next section.

Dashed Hope

In Egypt, the initial limit of populist modernisation came into view when the bloated national bureaucracy found it progressively impossible to absorb fresh university graduates. It was double jeopardy for graduates from Upper Egypt. They faced serious discrimination in the growing unemployment market on grounds of regional and social backgrounds.[29] In both Egypt and Nigeria, the turn to neoliberal market economy in the 1980s brought grave economic and social misfortune for the poor. "During the same period, Upper Egypt's *fellahin* faced reduced possibilities of engaging in migratory labor as the oil economies of the Gulf contracted."[30] The situation of the *fellahin* deteriorated further with the State's reversal of land reform that had favoured the former.[31] There is hardly any controversy that, as Tschirgi observes,

> "for many of the two groups considered here, change initially became seen as a welcome avenue that would lead to the satisfaction of raised hopes. It was not long before such hopes yielded to fears that change might not only fail to produce improvement but actually lead to a deterioration of an already dismal situation."[32]

The specific pattern of oil development, its intensification and extensification, soon conspired with the federal government to facilitate the expropriation of communal, and familial lands, often without adequate compensation, by multinational corporations.

The appropriation of locals' means of subsistence progressed side-by-side with extensive oil pollution resulting in land degradation and destruction of marine life.[33] The

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[29] Tschirgi, pp. 25.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid, pp. 23.

[32] Tschirgi, "Marginalized Violent Internal Conflict", pp. 25.

[33] Ben Naanen, "Oil-Producing Minority and the Structuring of Nigerian Federalism: the Case of the Ogoni People", *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 33, 1 (March 1995), pp. 46-78.

worsening conditions forced a petition from Ogoni Chiefs to the governor of Rivers state in 1970.[34]

The structural adjustment programme in Nigeria affected the Ogoni. For instance, the export promotion component of the programme as well as the generous fiscal incentives conceded to the oil industry attracted several oil corporations to the region, resulting in massive and uncontrolled exploitation.[35] As a result, the extent to which the Ogonis could seize upon the local economy of fishing and farming was severely limited against the background of environmental pollution, and land expropriation.[36]

Another notable development that affected the hope of progress was the gradual abrogation of the pre-independence Derivation Principle from the late 1970s.[37] The steady whittling down of the revenue sharing formula got as low as 1.5 percent in 1983. Thus, it became impossible for the constituent states in Nigeria to maintain their workers and social services against the background of elite' appropriation of national wealth.[38]

Frustrated, and with the hope of progress punctured, the sense of insecurity among the Ogonis heightened. Thus threatened, they decided to fight for their own salvation.[39] Similarly, change, which appears to threaten and overwhelm the *fellahin* dashed the hope of progress invented in the era of Nasser's modernisation efforts. The vacuous conditions of hopelessness provided fertile grounds for the *Gamaa Al Islamiyya* and the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), insurgencies.

Godless Development?
Murshed argues that conflict could be very rational, and thus dismisses the pathological perception of conflicts as the activities of insane troublemakers. Grievance encompasses

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[34] Karl Maeir, *This House Has Fallen: Midnight in Nigeria* (New York: BBS PublicAffairs, 2000), p. 84.

[35] Kerstin Moesinger and Amy Maglio, "TED Case Studies: Ogoni in Nigeria, Conflict, and Oil", online at http://www.american.edu/TED/OGONI.htm

[36] "Pouring Oil on Troubled Waters", online.

[37] J. B. Ebojowa, "Who Owns the Oil? The Politics of Ethnicity in the Niger Delta", *Africa Today* 47, 1 (2000), pp. 29-47.

[38] Richard Joseph, Peter Lewis, Doren Kew, and Scott Taylor, "The Making of the Modern Nigerian State", *Introduction to Third World Politics,* 2nd Edition, eds. William A. Joseph, Mark Kesselman, and Joel Krieger, 270-345 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), pp. 294-251.

[39] Eghosa E. Osaghae, "The Ogoni Uprising: Oil Politics, Minority Agitation and the Future of the Nigerian State", *African Affairs* 94 (1995), pp.325-344.

motivations rooted in a "sense of injustice in the way a social group is treated." while greed has to do with an "acquisitive desire similar to crime".[40]

Murshed details how grievance can originate from economic, social and political conditions.[41] However, Murshed's analysis does not explain why one aggrieved group and not another, within the same domain of greed and grievance generating forces, as well as fractured social contract, resort to violence. For instance, why did the Ogoni and Ijaw peoples of the Niger Delta of Nigeria take to open confrontation with the State while the neighboring Ikwerre, and Edo, peoples of the same region remained peaceful? Similarly, an issue not resolved by the grievance-greed explanation bodes on Tschirgi's question,

What caused these relatively small numbers of mainly impoverished peasants in Mexico and lower stratum Upper Egyptians to believe they could force desired change despite the full military resources available to governing authorities?[42] Tschirgi concedes that frustration, anger and desperation maybe relevant explanatory categories. He is however, of the view that frustration does not explain the conviction of those who rebel that their cause is just, and will triumph.

In the following section, I examine the syncretistic religious contexts in which the Ogoni and Upper Egypt rebellions where birthed, and how both were shaped by subsisting beliefs in the magical and miraculous as well as the notions of a just cause.

Syncretic Locus: Upper Egypt

Religion is of critical relevance to the development of Upper Egyptian society. At the extremely low socio-economic level of the *fellahin*, the religious universe is palpably laced with unorthodox folk traces, some dating back to pharaonic times. A syncretistic worldview characterises the Upper Egyptian countryside. This includes "beliefs in the magical, miraculous and occult."[43] Thus, one can argue that monotheism meshes with unorthodox beliefs, including the notion that spirits populate the mountains.[44]

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[40] Murshed, pp. 389.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Tschirgi, pp. 26.
[43] Tschirgi, pp. 21.
[44] "Egypt: Contemporary Islam", online at http://www.1upinfo.com/country-guide-study/egypt79.html

As shown above, the land reforms of the Free Officers following the 1952 revolution benefited mainly peasant smallholders. For instance, the cultivable land owned by peasants grew from 30 percent in 1952 to 52 percent in 1965.[45] However, by the 1980s, a combination of factors including population growth, inflationary trends and high production costs, had eroded the peasant gains. Thus, by 1990, rural Egypt was as stratified as in the period preceding the revolution.[46]

Many of the landless peasants and young university graduates, facing job discrimination in the employment market, emigrated to other Arab countries where they benefited from the oil boom of the early 1970s as temporary labourers. The *fellahin* returned home, after the oil boom, relatively wealthy and with a "more uncompromising and egalitarian vision of Islam", which had been moulded by their experiences in Saudi Arabia.[47] To their dismay, the returnees discovered that social mobility was still largely impossible, constrained as it is by the traditional stratification system. Tschirgi argues that the returnees reacted to their less than adequate environment and frustration with greater religiosity. There was a resulting proliferation of private and adequately funded mosques "in which an activist, socially conscious interpretation of Islam challenged the status quo religious vision of the *Asraf* and Arabs."[48]

Syncretic Locus: Ogoni

The Ogoni people are mainly animists who revere their gods. Thus, the land, rivers, and streams are not merely material resources for human use, they are sacred and bound up with the life of the people.[49] The Christian church, which penetrated Ogoni land in the early 19th century, proliferated, and converted many Ogoni people. However, the new religion has not diminished the people's reverence for the gods.[50] For instance, the Ogoni people consider the shrine of the Ogoni spirit as a most sacred domain, and as such, they

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Tschirgi, pp. 21.
[48] Ibid, pp. 22.
[49] Abdul Rasheed Na'allah, ed. *Ogoni's Agonies: Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Crisis in Nigeria* (New Jersey: African World Press, Inc., 1998), p.124.
[50] Chris McGreal, "Ken Saro_Wiwa: Not Entirely Innocent?", *Mail and Guardian* (April 4, 1996), online at http://archive.mg.co.za/NXT/gateway.dll/PrintEdition/MGP1996/31v02027/41vo2226/51v.

cannot contemplate violating it for whatever reason.[51] Moreover, prior to the historic Ogoni Day demonstration of January 4th 1993, Ogoni leaders utilised symbols and texts from various religions to sensitise, and mobilise their people.[52] Ken Saro-Wiwa, leader of the Ogoni people, quoted from Sura 42, verse 41 in the Holy Qur'an: "All those who fight when oppressed incur no guilt, but Allah shall punish the oppressor.", to underline the divine acceptance of politically motivated rebellion against unjust systems

Yet, as part of enlisting divine favour in the struggle for survival, the Ogonis organised a memorial church service where prayers were made for actualisation of their goals. In a rather syncretistic development, the Ogoni filed out from the church in a procession to the grave of Paul Birabi, an Ogoni nationalist figure, where they prayed, and sought ancestral support for the struggle.[53] The Ogoni worldview includes belief in the *Wiayor,* "a mythical Ogoni character who comes down from heaven to liberate his people."[54] It is arguable that the presence of religious messianism, and millenarianism in the Christian cosmology, and the traditional worldview meshed into an influential syncretism to prepare the Ogoni people for the message of Saro-Wiwa. Likened to the Biblical Moses by his father, Saro-Wiwa considered himself the *Wiayor.* Saro-Wiwa, indeed, affirmed that he took up the Ogoni struggle on the prompting of the Voice of the Ogoni spirit.[55]

Conclusion

This paper argues that the Collier-Hoeffler model de-emphasises the role of culture and cognitive consciousness in the choices leaders make. The focus on greed swamps a more fundamental phenomenon: hopelessness, occasioned by the destructive impacts of development, now masquerading as neoliberalism. Importantly, the study argues that greed and grievance do not explain the conviction of the "justness", certainty, and triumph, which practically galvanise poor powerless peasants to an anti-state path. This paper argues that modernisation, and the neoliberal paradigms of development have

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[51] Maeir, p. 105.
[52] Ibid, p. 93.
[53] Amanyie, p. 65.
[54] Maeir, p. 78.
[55] Ibid, p. 92.

wreaked destructive consequences on the poor.[56] In reaction, movements, steeped in the religious, and secular notions of justice have emerged to oppose the predation of a state-led development trajectory. Therefore, the attempt to shield development from violence is misleading as violence appears organic to conventional development.

Moreover, peace efforts will benefit from the understanding that notions of justice, equity, belief in the miraculous and magical, as well as the conviction of the ultimate victory of a godly cause over unjust systems, rooted in increasingly critical religious worldviews, have become central elements in the emergence of both domestic and international violence. Because the conviction to fight, and if need be, die, derives from a supernatural domain, military might and force may be inadequate deterrence to those committed to changing their conditions of existence.

In light of the above, can religion serve the cause of peace? It is possible to redirect religious energies for global peace. However, such a project must evolve in a political economic context where the values of justice have assumed performative roles. It is a disservice to peace efforts both to deny the history of violence so often used to legitimise conflicts, or portray it as immutable historical fact. The functional path is to reinterpret the history of violence. In a classic example, Mahatma Gandhi, recast the *Bhagavad-Gita* story of the battle of *Kurukshetra*, not as a sanction for physical violence but as a metaphor, which underlying message is that the human heart is a battlefield where battles are fought on a daily basis.[57]

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[56] Ayodele Embry, "War and Peace: Africa in Transition", online at http://www.stanford.edu/~ankle/edge/4.html.
[57] Lester Kurtz, *Gods in the Global Village: the World's Religions in Sociological Perspective* (California: Pine Forge Press, 1995), p. 223.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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