



A Critical Appraisal of State Terrorism, Non-State Terrorism and Legitimate Authority

Abstract

Several questions converge in sociopolitical and ethical discourses on terrorism such as: how best can we define terrorism? Who is a terrorist? Can a state be rightly defined as a terrorist state? What differentiates acts of terror from terrorism? What is the role of legitimate authority in terrorism discourse? Should one man's freedom fighter be defined as a terrorist? Can terrorism be justified? This paper examined some of these issues with specific reference to state terrorism, non-state terrorism and legitimate authority. Legitimate authority is central to the discourse on state and non-state terrorism. With legitimacy, state agents can use force on citizens the way non-state agents ought not. But on the contrary Uwe Steinhoff dismisses the need for legitimate authority in the pronouncement of war, or any form of violence. The study argued that Steinhoff misses the point when he disparages the role of legitimate authority in the question of violence. Using the qualitative method the study evaluated Steinhoff's denigration of legitimate authority from the perspective of terrorism. This allowed a different angle to the state vs. non-state terrorism debate averring that legitimacy removes the accusation of direct state terrorism. The study concluded with Metz's Afro-communal ethic as a principle that responds to Steinhoff's queries.

Keywords: Ethics of Terrorism, Legitimate Authority, Non-state Terrorism, State Terrorism, Thaddeus Metz, Uwe Steinhoff.

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Introduction

Every community, society, state, country or nation is always made up two basic groups namely: the state and citizens. The state is represented by the government and its institutions including judiciary, legislature, security forces (army, navy, air force, police, overt and covert intelligence agencies, etc.), ministries, supervisory agencies (like central/reserve banks, health insurance, social security etc.). These two groups, with various

responsibilities, obligations, duties, and rights to one another and by implication the state, interact within reasonable limits to ensure the stability and progress of both the state and citizens.

In living up to its responsibilities defending and protecting, the state is allowed the use of force through its militaries, police, and other security bodies. In this line of duty, wars (either called preventive or defensive) have been fought, crimes, criminals and enemies

(either certain or perceived) have been dealt with and insecurities managed. Sometimes, peace has been brought to the environment and at other times fear, rage, and insecurities have resulted. All these encompass the legitimate authority of the state and its legitimacy of force. Such use of force is not always legitimate for use by private citizens or groups of citizens.

This use of force is what some groups of individuals choose to employ against other citizens or the state which is why some scholars better domicile terrorism with non-state agents. States, they argue, cannot be described as terrorists because they have the legitimacy to use force and violence when necessary. This paper takes a critical look at state vs. non-state terrorism arguments aiming to show that what is termed as 'state terrorism' can better be explained as state "acts of terror" while what non-state agents engage in is suitably described as terrorism. This further leads to the question: is there a difference between 'terrorism' and 'acts of terror'? To drive home our point, the next part of this paper looks at some definitional peculiarity of the term terrorism. This is followed by a focus on perspectives of state terrorism. The fourth part argues for the legitimacy of authority of states while criticizing Steinhoff's call to do away with legitimate authority.

Terror and the 'ism' that Changes 'Terror' from an Act to an Ideology

To invoke the term terrorism, according to Blattler (2011), is to "invoke more than just a word. It means triggering emotions and associations." She rightly points out

that if a term with an exceptionally strong negative connotation is both vague and politically weighty (as terrorism is) it is prone to be used in a manipulative way. To Alex Schmid (2011, p.39) and several authors "there is ...no single definition of terrorism that commands full international approval." The view of the individual(s), group, or institution defining terrorism is always perspectival. Whether agent neutral, agent centered or act centered, there is always a perspective to every definition. Neutral definitions can be identified with any agent while others explicitly identify non-state agents are mostly culpable.

Anne Schwenkenbecher and Igor Primoratz give definitions that are neutral. Schwenkenbecher (2009, p.106) describes terrorism as "an indirect strategy of using fear or terror induced by violent attacks or force (or the threat of its use) against one group of people (direct target) or their property as a means to intimidate and coerce another group of people (indirect target) and influence their actions in order to reach further political objectives." According to Primoratz (2013, 30) terrorism is the deliberate use of violence, or threat of its use, against innocent people, with the aim of intimidating some other people into a course of action they would not otherwise take. Both scholars focus on the 'act' of terrorism making either state or non-state agents liable of being identified with terrorism once their acts can be so defined.

Coady (1985, p.52) defines terrorism as "a political act, ordinarily committed by an

organised group, which involves the intentional killing or other severe harming of noncombatants or the threat of the same or intentional severe damage to the property of noncombatants or the threat of the same." According to Lizardo (2012, p.102) modern terrorism refers to a type of violent interaction initiated by a non-state actor, which is not formally recognised as a legitimate wielder of the means of violence or a valid initiator of violent interactions, directed against the representatives (human, material or symbolic) of a formally recognised state actor in the international system, which does not follow the institutionalised rules and conventions of military engagement.

The act of designating a group or behaviour as terrorist is an attempt to suggest that the perpetrators of the violence are immoral, wrong, or go against clear-cut ethical standards that any rational person could adhere to (Lutz and Lutz 2004, p.10). This understanding reflects the definition of Coady and Lizardo. The acts of non-state actors, to these scholars, are terrorism essentially because they are not legitimate employers of violence, such legitimacy is reserved for states.

On the one hand, non-state actors employ terror against civilians or noncombatants to draw attention to their interests in pursuance of their goal of influencing the state. On the other hand state agents sometimes employ terror to victimize opponents (or enemies of the state) or citizens who are perceived as recalcitrant or sometimes to force government policies on citizenry. The use of terror by

both parties is immoral. Weibel (2004, p.10) rightly points out that "virtually, no one has talked in a meaningful way about the roots of terrorism-terror. This is an omission that stands out amidst the endless talk of fighting a war against terrorism/terror. It is also a glaring lacuna in current scholarly investigations."

Weibel (2010, p.10) aver that "terror denotes both a phenomenological experience of paralyzing, overwhelming, and ineffable mental anguish, as well as a behavioural response to a real or perceived life-threatening danger." He notes further that terror is "profoundly sensory (often auditory), and is pre- or post-verbal. The ineffability of terror is a complement to, and often a result of, the unspeakable horror(s) of war(s) and other forms of collective political violence" (2010, p.11).

The root word of 'terrorism' in Latin is terror and the widely accepted association of terror and terrorism to state politics was during the Jacobins reign of the French revolution. Allhoff (2012, p.4) says the primary aim of the Reign of Terror was to "eliminate opposition to the revolutionary government, but this aim was accomplished precisely by terrorizing the population (including would-be antirevolutionaries). The message was clear: oppose the revolution, and be decapitated under the guillotine." This method has been employed by several regimes and government but this does not change the 'terror' tactics of such regimes to terrorism. Conversely, this same tactics of terror executed by state agents becomes an ideology of terrorism

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in the hands of non-state agents. The simple reason is the legitimacy of force which non-state agents lack. We will look at this question of legitimacy later in the paper but for now let us set a basic understanding of ideology, what we mean by how adding 'ism' to terror changed it from being a tactic (or an act) to an ideology.

Alex Prichard (2018) views an 'ism' as a "suffix that denotes a more or less systematic set of beliefs, opinions, and/or values about the world. The suffix is added when something moves from being quite specific to encompassing more expansive or general views, beliefs and attitudes." Today, words that include the ism suffix form a crucial part of our cultural, political and scholarly language (Kurunmäki and Marjanen 2018, p.242). Liberalism, Marxism, capitalism, communism, socialism, terrorism etc. are notable examples. Kurunmäki and Marjanen further identify characteristics of isms to include:

First, ism concepts are prone to be under a double contestation due to the fact that both the root and the ism suffix can be contested. Second, the ism suffix often adds a particular claim of ownership to the use of a concept due to the generalising and universalising effect of the suffix...the use of isms carries with it a dynamic relationship between universalising claims and their particular applications, this oscillation between particularistic and universalistic claims needs to be taken into account when explaining the omnipresence of isms and their usefulness in political rhetoric Third, isms have had important roles both in the formation of modern political

culture and our understanding of it (Kurunmäki and Marjanen 2018, pp.243-244).

As Kurunmäki and Marjanen note, terrorism is a contested ideology and this paper is a response in part to this contestation. Some scholars (Held 2008, Nathanson 2010, Shinar 2018), cite that those identified as terrorist are better seen as freedom fighters just as the question of the innocence (or lack) of the victims is in contest. Perhaps the most contestable issues revolve around the questions: what is terrorism and can it be justified?

Adding ism to the tactics of terror has generalised it to the concept of terrorism but the overwhelming nature of the concept affects relationship with particular instances of terror. An instance is the view of Greene (2014, p.413) that terrorism has departed from its basic definition of state-sponsored violence intended to instill fear and terror in order to control and rule an otherwise anarchic society to express the exact opposite of political violence against the government. The earliest reference of terror as noted was the 'reign of terror' where its use was to subdue the populace by the state. In contemporary times, terrorism is better understood as an ideology.

Ideologies map the political and social worlds for us (Freedman 2003, p.2). We can argue the fact that we need ideologies and our isms not only to help frame explanations of world politics but also as raw material for exposing the political and moral assumptions scholars work with. Political ideologies are typically described by an ism, and isms are

frequently treated as synonymous with ideologies (Kurunmäki and Marjanen 2018, p.242). In his inquiry about contemporary contemplations of ideology, Žižek opines that ideology can refer to anything from an action-oriented set of beliefs to a contemplative attitude that fails to recognise its reliance on social reality, from the essential medium through which people live out their relationships to a social structure to erroneous notions that justify a dominant political power (1995, p.3).

State Terrorism

Arguments are not wanting against state as greater agents of terrorism. If one suggests, according to Primoratz (2004, p.113) that “the army or security services are doing the same things that, when done by insurgents, are invariably described and condemned as terrorist, the usual reply is: but these are actions done on behalf of the state, in pursuit of legitimate state aims: the army, waging war, or the security services, fending off threats to our security.” Here’s a summary on this view:

By all accounts, state terrorism has been one of the greatest sources of human suffering and destruction of the past five centuries. Employing extreme forms of exemplary violence against ordinary people and specific groups in order to engender political submission to newly formed nation states, transfer populations, and generate labour in conquered colonial territories, imperial powers and early modern states killed literally tens of millions of people and destroyed entire civilizations and peoples across the Americas, the Asia-Pacific, the sub-continent, the Middle

East, and Africa (Jackson, Murphy and Poynting 2010, p.1).

Citing figures to support their position Jackson and his colleagues write that “during the twentieth century, modern states were responsible for the deaths of 170 million to 200 million people outside of war, a great many of them murdered during notorious campaigns of state terrorism” (2010, p.1). Describing state terrorism further, Blakeley and Raphael write that “a significant proportion of state violence has been used to coerce populations into complying with the agendas of political and economic elites by using such violence to instill fear in an audience beyond the direct victim” (2016, p.340). Westra also points out that the first thing to consider in any analysis of terrorism is that state terrorism seems to be more morally reprehensible than non-state terrorism. It is also important to consider whether a state can be considered a terrorist state if it regularly engages in such activities or if its use of terrorism is sporadic rather than persistent (2012, p.66).

Undoubtedly, state acts have been more lethal than whatever non-state agents can be accused of. At least, no non-state agent(s) are guilty of aerial or carpet bombings; no non-state agents are guilty of casualties and collateral damages; fewer non-state agents are guilty of numbers of assassinations; fewer non-state agents are guilty of tortures and imprisonment; fewer non-state agents are guilty of threats, oppressions, intimidations, suppressions etc.; no non-state agent(s) have an arsenal as states do;

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and certainly no non-state agent(s) has ever dropped a hydrogen bomb on a populace. These are 'acts of terror' that states are guilty of in war or non-war periods. But despite the gravity of these facts, the legitimacy of force encompasses the deployment of such force (except nuclear or biological that are simply inhuman). The question of deployment of force is a moral one that can be evaluated under the just war theory or war conventions or basic moral reasoning.

If we go by the understandings of terrorism that it is the use of violence against innocent civilians with the goal of changing the mind of another, particularly the government, then we are wont to ask: whose mind does the government want to change? Who is the secondary target of the government? Is the terror of the government not directed at those the government already identifies as its opponents? According to Primoratz (2013) (and most definitions of terrorism) the key elements of terrorism are: 1) the use of violence, 2) directed towards innocent people, 3) in order to coerce others to change policy or behaviour, and 4) through the use of intimidation; we can say only 1&4 meets the criteria of what is defined as state terrorism.

The question of innocence is debatable because not all those the government goes after are innocent. Some of these people undermine the government or even in some instances attack the government, some try to replace the government through other means. Some collaborate with external sources against

the government (no state treats acts of treason lightly). The question of whether the extents of their actions are justifiable or not is different just as the perception of the government is. A despotic regime is morally questionable and attempts to unseat such regime come at great risks. The opponents aim to see an end to the government and the government wants to defend its interest so the question of innocence is, in this instance, contentious.

Concerning number (3), coercing others to change policy or behaviour, it can be argued that the government is not primarily coercing others but it is coercing those it identifies as its opponents. Those who can be defined as others in this circumstance are their supporters among the populace but more often than not the government does not face these supporters with the intention of changing the mind of their progenitors, the focus of the government is to deal with the head (although in the process some part of the group may be affected) believing that supporters will fall in line. The government acts from the head to the bottom contrary to the bottom to top approach of non-state agents. Hence, what states directly engage in are acts of terror (the morality of which can be differently examined) and not terrorism. Why do we say so? Because states have legitimate authority. Before analysing legitimate authority and Steinhoff's views there is a scenario where states can be rightly accused of being (indirectly) guilty of terrorism.

A state can be indirectly guilty of terrorism in its relations with non-state

agents. For instance, when it supports non-state agents against another state or when it supports non-state agents (within or outside its territory) against themselves. In supporting non-state agents against other state, the said state is being hypocritical or incapable of challenging the other state. For instance, in a democratic state, the process of declaring war against another state is complex and the government might not want to go through the process and decides to surreptitiously finance non-state groups within the other state against the state. A weaker state is guilty of terrorism when it sponsors insurgents against a stronger state because it cannot directly challenge it in war. For instance, although there is wide acclaim that Iran is the leading state sponsor of terrorism, states including Saudi Arabia and the United States, Russia are frequently accused of funding and supplying weaponry to terrorists to further their interests at different times.

On Legitimate Authority

The underlying assumption of legitimate authority, according to Bettina Koch, "is rooted in Max Weber's famous definition of a state as the only human community within a certain territory that claims (successfully) the monopoly on the use of legitimate physical force" (2016, p.1). Koch contends further that the state's monopoly on the use of force has often been read as absolute because a state has the legitimate right to defend itself against internal and external threats to its power (2016, p.1). Similarly, the functions of the state are noted to include

"protection and maintenance of internal peace and order in society; it organises and protects national economic activities; and it defends national sovereignty and national interests (Jalata 2008).

Blakeley (2010, p.13) observes Laqueur's claims that "the very existence of a state is based on its monopoly of power. If it were different, states would not have the right, nor be in a position, to maintain that minimum of order on which all civilised life rests." To Coady (2008, p.98) the condition of legitimate authority "has its rationale in the concern that the licence to resort to war be restricted to political agents who might be expected to exercise more responsibility than private agents or criminal groups." But this is not to ignore the fact that legitimacy is itself "a contested notion and even when unambiguous it may not put as great a brake on self-interest, folly, impulsiveness, or indeed criminality as the framers of this condition had hoped (2008, p.98). Legitimate authority, though not a blanket cover, has been (and is currently) exploited by governments, state agents and even political elites to satisfy their whims and caprices.

This is where we question of revolutions, struggles against repression or colonial struggles that employ violence. The goal of anti-colonial movements or freedom fights can be morally justified because colonialism itself is dehumanising. According to Held:

In the liberation struggles of many former colonial territories, the leaders of the freedom movements have become internationally recognised

heads of the new national entities these struggles have created. These movements have characteristically used violence and have at first been dismissed as terrorists, murderers, and criminals. But if successful, many have gradually come to be seen as the legitimate representatives of their people. Their use of terrorism can become accepted as a means of resistance contributing to liberation (2008, p. 53).

More so, such struggles do not target civilian population with the goal of forcing out the colonialists. This last view introduces a slippery slope to the analysis because some revolutionists or freedom seeking groups can claim the justness and morality of their struggle. This is not always the case when compared to terrorism. Terrorism as evident in the 21st century cannot be simply equalised to struggles for freedom and certainly the primary targets of those revolutionists were not civilians unlike perpetrators of terrorism. The civilians targeted by the revolutionists are collaborators with the colonialists' not random individual(s) among the general populace. According to Nathanson (2010, p.124) "even if people are pursuing victory in a just war and have a clear right to fight, they may not attack civilians as a means to achieving victory." Thus, revolutionary struggles are not generalisable and legitimacy of state is limited.

Nathanson (2010, p.123) suggests, and rightly so, in his realist's objection of legitimate authority that the moral authority to use power is always limited. Police officers are allowed to carry and use firearms to uphold the law, but they

are not allowed to use them against their own enemies. All officials, including those in the military and at the highest echelons of government, are subject to these kinds of moral and legal restrictions. The tyrannical acts of certain states, officials or institutions are condemnable acts of these particular governments, officials or institutions but that does not mean it should be totally declared that state authority should be done away with.

The Paradox of Legitimate Authority

Uwe Steinhoff argues that we can do away with legitimate authority giving liberty to individuals or groups to engage in private wars without recourse to the state. He sets his basis by stating that traditional just war theory (herein after referred to as JWT) supports private and individual wars. He further criticises of the JWT perspectives of James Turner Johnson (who argues for priority of legitimate authority), James Murphy (who subsumes legitimate authority under the just cause clause) and consequentialist views of Michael Gross, Nahed Zehr and John Williams that support legitimate authority. Steinhoff presents some wits to show that just as authority is unnecessary in the instance of self-defence, legitimate authority is unnecessary in war. In evaluating his arguments, we won't be seeking as much textual evidence as Steinhoff does and seeks other critics to do. Rather, we would be presenting empirical facts (to use his words) of his propositions in contemporary global setting as a way of showing its dangers. His wits, we believe,

are more of thought experiments but empirical facts may dwarf such wits.

Steinhoff equalises the justification of individual self-defence with war, hence if there was no need for any authority in the latter then no authority is necessary as established by JWT. Of JWT he states this is no different from the conditions of the justifiability of self-defense, which on most accounts include imminent attack, necessity, proportionality, and a knowledge or right intention requirement: these conditions are also taken to be individually necessary and jointly sufficient (Steinhoff, 2020, p.1). Quite intriguing we would say because there is difference between self-defence and war. For instance, Bull (1977, p.178) characterizes war as organised violence carried out by political units against each other. Self-defence is not synonymous with war and it is sensational and difficult to justify alike.

For one, the view of defensive or offensive war by traditional writers does not undermine the need for authority. Just as some early modern theorists provide exemptions, others upheld the position. The instance (or few instances) where “the private individual cannot realistically pursue his right before the judgment of his superior – for example because the superior is unwilling or unable to provide justice” (Steinhoff 2020, p.3), are exceptions but such exceptions does not warrant legislation that once a private individual perceives that he/she cannot pursue right justice the next step is to declare a private war.

That perhaps is why in modern justice systems there are levels of appeal whereby a defendant can seek further justice if not satisfied with the initial or disposition of the ‘superior’ to provide justice. So for instance, if the Tutsis’ find it harsh (and it is harsh to say the least because there is really no significant redress to the 1994 genocide) that after over twenty-five years they really have not seen justice, then they can take up arms and start a private war against the Hutus.’ At least this is what Francisco de Vitoria (whether broadly or narrowly) calls for, as supported by Melchor Cano, according to Steinhoff. Same can go for different ethnicities grouped together in a country that occasionally clash, for warlords or groups labeled terrorists. Viewing Steinhoff’s propositions from the contemporary lens of local and global conflicts (like Libya, Afghanistan, Yemen, Congo, to mention a few) we can only imagine the consequences of doing away with legitimate authority.

Reasoning broadly, evolving a theoretical framework that allows individuals, groups, warlords, ethnic groups, junta, separatists, political community and so on, to declare war without recourse to legitimate authority is a recipe for sustained belligerence and global instability. The specter of chaos and anarchy, as argued, is to say the least. It is true that “unchecked violence in the hands of organisations like sovereign nation-states may ensue in the wake of ...legitimate authority as a matter of course” (Steinhoff 2020, p.10), just as it is true that states have been more

murderous than non-state entities. But it is more likely that states who engage in such murderous spree are led by persons who want to enforce and assert their authorities over the peoples just as the non-state group or warlord wants to assert itself.

In the real sense of the word states are not established to be murderous entities. But the question can be asked about what to do to evident state aggression and murderousness in human history? Are several states not the product of such attitudes? The United States, Australia, New Zealand. Are certain states not a pointer to the existence of such attitudes even in contemporary times? For instance, what can we say to what the Myanmar state did to the Rohingyas? We may ask: how does doing away with legitimate authority and allowing private wars any solve the problem?

Thus, since moral obligations and moral permissions are not causally effective *and* do not have any empirical consequences there is no problem allowing it. In other words, as Steinhoff puts it, "to claim that the moral permission of individuals to wage wars of their own would make the world a more dangerous place is a very bad argument against the moral permission of individuals to wage wars of their own, for, contrary to the argument, that moral permission simply leaves the world as it is" (2020, p.10). So, if murders are happening despite its immorality and prohibition, then why not legislate it to keep happening if it will always happen anyway. Beyond the suggestion of statist principles Steinhoff

warns of the error of confusing the effect of a norm with its justification or falsification. According to him given an appropriate basis of justification, the empirical consequence of widespread disobedience of a particular rule may demonstrate that the rule is valid. However, just because a rule is morally correct does not necessarily indicate that it will have any positive effects; after all, individuals may choose not to follow it. Put another way, following the right rule may have positive effects, but the rule and its validity have no actual impact at all.

Steinhoff's logic that 'if this claim is supposed to mean that if individuals indeed are morally legitimate authorities, then this brings with it grave dangers, the claim is simply wrong' is also wrong. It is wrong because we are talking of individuals as war wagers here and not just attempting some logical premises and conclusion to ascertain if the argument is valid or invalid. The question of circumstance as exemplified in closing the eyes at 2pm every day to meditate is also worrisome because if an individual or group is already fixated that "in any x circumstance" I have the legitimate authority to wage war, the war will become as easy as if I feel dizzy I'll quickly take a nap.

The equalisation of legitimate authority of self-defence in a solitary attack to legitimate authority of self-defence of a state is preposterous. Basic self-defence is not in question here but the legitimate authority to war in seeking justice. The argument is that when everyone uses

appropriate and necessary methods to defend themselves from unwarranted attacks, the attackers' plans are more likely to be foiled and the rights of innocent people are more likely to be safeguarded than if they only took action after (not always forthcoming) papal approval (Steinhoff 2020, p.12), is reasonable but not a wildcard to do away with legitimate authority. It might be a way to prompt the legitimate authority to be more alive to its responsibilities.

A Possible Principle

Steinhoff's assertion that "while the mentioned universalisation principle might be able, under certain empirical circumstances, to rule out private war, there simply is no good reason to accept this principle as the final arbiter in moral questions" (2020, p.12) is agreeable. A singular principle might not be suitable for moral questions in all circumstances but a principle can be accepted to the extent that it addresses empirical circumstances with the belief that the goal is to engender humane environment. This equally goes to say that we cannot do away with legitimate authority because the issues of proportion, intention etc. cannot be fairly determined in a private war. Now let's answer Steinhoff's question using the Afro-communal ethic of Thaddeus Metz. For clarity Steinhoff (2020, p.20) asked those of us arguing against the decentralisation of legitimate authority: (a) which justification principle are they using, (b) why should we accept it, and (c) what evidence do they have for the empirical claim which, in conjunction with the justification principle, is

supposed to imply the moral impermissibility of the radical decentralization of legitimate authority.

Metz's Afro-communal ethic is a principle that goes against radical decentralisation of legitimate authority without jeopardizing the right of justice. According to Metz (2014, p.149), communal relations involves both sharing a way of life, which includes feeling a sense of unity and taking part in shared activities, as well as enjoying mutual help and working to enhance the quality of life of others. Metz in his ethic emphasizes that an action is right just insofar as it promotes shared identity among people grounded on good-will; an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to do so and tends to encourage the opposites of division and ill-will (Metz 2020, p.334). In Metz submission, this ethic urges people to prize communal relationships, ones of identity and solidarity, and in the first instance that means that they ought to commune with one another, or at the very least not act in discordant ways. However, such an orientation makes little moral sense when others are not inclined to commune and instead are systematically disposed to be divisive and to act out of ill-will. An equivalent way of phrasing this theoretic interpretation of the Metz's theory is to say that "An action is improper if it disregards connections where individuals care about each other's quality of life and share a way of life, especially if it values animosity and division (Metz 2010, p.84). This said, Steinhoff's first question is answered.

On the second question of why we should accept it, we believe it is acceptable because it is not a principle that just merely generalise how everyone is supposed to act but captures instances of how an individual can react in the face of unjustified aggression. More so, it does not lose the sense of legitimate authority because it prizes relationships. These relationships include respect for authority and reciprocal relationship between peoples and between the peoples and the state. The third question on empirical evidence which implies the moral impermissibility of doing away with legitimate authority in Metz's theory is seen in its application to social issues like capital punishment, human rights, animal rights, and moral status. For instance, capital punishment is built on human dignity (an element that is seemingly forgotten in the right to self-defence as opined by Steinhoff). The general idea of human dignity is that of a superlative final value that (nearly) every human being in the biological sense has so long as she remains alive.

Philosophically, the most plausible way to account for universally binding duties not to seriously interfere in people's lives for the greater good is to appeal to the idea that individuals have a dignity that demands respect. Metz thus reworks the popular vague statement that "a person is a person through other persons" to say something more precise such as "a human being lives a genuinely human way of life insofar as she values harmony with other human beings" or "a person

becomes a real person through communal relationships (Metz 2010, p.84).

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined some issues within the ethics of terrorism focusing on state terrorism, non-state terror and legitimate authority. We reject the submissions of Steinhoff that legitimate authority should be liberalised and individuals should have the authority to wage wars in the name of self-defence. We particularly rejected his view of identifying legitimate authority with self-defence. We have argued that doing away with legitimate authority engenders belligerence and sustained global insecurity because non-state agents can easily claim self-defence while committing atrocities. We equally looked at the interplay between terror, acts of terror and terrorism submitting that non-state agents are more likely to be guilty of terrorism while states can be guilty of acts of terror. In other words, the lack of legitimate authority by non-state agents leads them to terrorism while such authority identifies the acts of states as terror.

But the use of force must be guided by moral reasoning and justice.

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