Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics

Summary and Keywords

African history tells us of a world dominated by capitalism whose supreme value is profitability; a world where profit is the unsurpassable human achievement. This political economy, quite literally, means the production and redistribution of mass violence across the continent. In such a world, all human relations have turned into merchandise. A manifestation of this appears in the attitude of "having" such that to "be" is reduced to "have." This capitalist process turns objects into nature, and nature into objects, particularly in Africa, where people have become victims of the fetish of merchandise, as well as the perpetuators.

Analyzing the structural violence created by colonial power dynamics from a Marxian and Hegelian perspective reveals the opposite of passivity for all involved. The colonial powers searched for profit, intellectualized the necessity of profit, and formed and perpetuated a dialectic of social relations in such a way that they related to profit. These intentional activities reduced desire, joy, and fear into social relations driven by the profit motive. The legacy of these dynamics arises from history and are best understood in that context.

Although history has a certain inertia and velocity, the movement of these issues are dialectical and leave the possibility for choice open, so various actors have taken diverse paths. Some post-colonial African leaders joined the world of profit and led their countries to violence and wars. Others resisted but were overwhelmed by the democratic dictatorship of merchandise.

Wars and mass violence in Africa are the result of both the colonial structural violence caused by the search for profit and the choices many African leaders made to follow merchandised and clientelized types of relationships with their own people.

The historical (Real, Retold, and Radical), genealogical, and ontological histories were the driving forces that caused the violence and resulted in contemporary African bloodshed.

Introduction

Let us first define our method of dealing with the issue of political economy of violence in Africa. Methodology in Greek means *meta hodos*, literally translated as "before the road." Before engaging in clarification we need to understand what a political economic analysis implies and how Africans, as humans, have dealt with the issue of mass violence.

The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy (2006) "defines a political economic analysis as the methodology of economics applied to the analysis of political behavior and institutions. It provides the necessary contextual understanding and helps us understand the number and the quality of stakeholders in a specific situation" (p. 3). The political economic analysis in this case would be applied to the study of violence, its distribution, and its extent in the African continent.

Paul Collier concluded that the presence of "lootable resources"—primary commodity exports that are easily portable (Collier, 2000, p. 97), whose origin could easily be concealed and easily processed—is the leading cause of war and violence in Africa. Coffee, timber, gold, diamonds, and the columbo-tantalite (coltan) and other agricultural products are the key commodities used by belligerents in the Congo for personal enrichment and funding the war. Collier also noticed that the presence of unemployed youth in that context could only lead to violence, and after important long-term quantitative research, Collier concluded that violence is caused either by greed or by grievance.

Paul Collier's distinction between greed and grievance offers a useful theoretical debate to assess the situation. He remarks, "At one extreme rebellions might arise because the rebels aspire to wealth through capturing resources extralegally. At the other extreme they might arise because rebels aspire to rid the nation, or the group of people with which they identify, of an unjust regime" (Collier, 2000, pp. 91–92).

But Collier believes that despite the rebels' own claims, it is not easy to determine precisely whether greed or grievance is the rebellion's driving force. "Even where the rationale is essentially greed, the actual rhetoric may entirely be dominated by grievance" (Collier, 2000, p. 101). It is so because the rebels need effective propaganda to muster outside support and strengthen their movement internally.

Narratives of grievance play much better with a community than narratives of greed, and by playing upon a sense of grievance, the rebel organization may therefore be able to add more recruits cheaply (Collier, 2000, p. 99).

Collier's analysis seems to turn around a rigid distinction between two concepts, greed and grievance, which are dialectically intertwined. There is a degree of complexity lost in

Collier's theory of civil war. The latter is far from being a simple phenomenon. There is rather an ambiguous mingling between greed and grievance in the motivation for violence. The two are generally combined in individuals' mobilization and decision-making. Greed and grievance can coexist in the origin of conflict, and they are dialectically related to one another.

Collier's theory begs the question, "Does greed or grievance play a significant role in the origin of conflict?" In the case of the Congo, for example, greed could be the main motivation of violence, but it does not make the grievance narrative irrelevant.

William Reno (2003) notes that gold, diamonds, and agricultural goods had been smuggled from the Congo long before war began in 1996. In fact, the head of the government of the Congo, Laurent Kabila, had long traded in smuggled goods while an insurgent leader. His export firm, Comiex, survived his transition from insurgent to head of state and now operates with "official" sanction in association with the country's army. Nonetheless, facing its own insurgent threat since 1998, the Congo's regime realized an internal revenue of only $360 to $480 million for 1999, a decrease by half from figures a year earlier. Insurgents occupying the eastern portion of the country appeared to have captured much of this missing revenue (Reno, 2003, p. 6).

The dictatorship of Laurent Kabila transformed the world's most attractive minerals market into a buccaneer industry enriching Kabila himself and his family networks at the expense of the Congolese people.

Dealing with the political economy of war and insurgency in West Africa, Christopher Clapham (1998) argues that "insurgencies directed against indigenous African governments grew initially out of failures in the decolonization settlements, which subjected a number of peoples and territories to states widely regarded as alien and illegitimate" (p. 3). Clapham also points to the outside drivers of the relationships between insurgency and international economy. "Insurgents, like governments, depend on extracting resources from external trade, a process which in some cases serves to sustain the struggle, and in others provides the main raison d'etre for the insurgency itself. . . . Political power in Africa from earlier times has derived in large part from control over long-distance trade, and in insurgent zones the struggle for control has entered a new phase. Insurgents seek to cut off government from exportable commodities, overwhelmingly derived from the rural areas, which these have used to sustain their urban lifestyles and supporters" (p. 16).

David Keen (1998) explicitly talks about "the economic functions of violence in civil wars." Keen (1998) views wars and violence in a Clausewitzian way—war as the continuation of economics by other means. He wants us to see war not simply as a breakdown in a particular system but as a way of creating an alternative system of profit, power, and even protection:

> To understand violence in civil wars, we need to understand the economics underpinning it. Conflict can create war economies, often in regions controlled by rebels or warlords and linked to international trading networks; members of armed gangs can benefit from looting; and regimes can use violence to deflect opposition, reward supporters or maintain their access to resources. Under these circumstances, ending civil wars become difficult. Winning may not be desirable: the point of war may be precisely the legitimacy which it confers on actions that in peacetime would be punishable as crime. (p. 11)

According to Keen (1998), generally civil wars that appear to have begun with political aims have mutated into conflicts in which short-term economic benefits are paramount. Thus, portraying civil wars as simply revolutionary struggles between opposing sides obscures the emerging political economy from which the combatants can benefit (p. 12).

Mark Duffield (2001) goes as far as to include wars and their effects as part of a development discourse. As Duffield points out, "the approach adopted here is to regard war as a given: an ever-present axis around which opposing societies and complexes continually measure themselves and reorder social, economic, scientific and political life. Not only is war an axis of social reordering, historically it has been a powerful mechanism for the globalization of economic, political and scientific relations" (p. 13). Strategic complexes and the new wars are both based on increasingly privatized networks of state–non-state actors working beyond the conventional competence of territorially defined governments.

Duffield gives the example of conflicts and wars in West and Southern Africa funded by the use of the illicit alluvial diamond. He concluded that wars are no longer "a Clausewitzian affair of state, it is a problem of underdevelopment and political breakdown, and as such, it requires developments as well as security professionals to conjoin and work together in new ways" (p. 14). For Duffield, the causes of wars in Africa are, among other things, experiences of extremely uneven and inequitable economic development, in addition to the lack of effective political, legal, and administrative institutions able to manage social tensions, "where human rights violations are widespread and where there is easy access to arms" (p. 116).

According to Thomas Cox's (1976) civil–military relations in Sierra Leone, quoting Samuel Huntington (1965), there is increased instability when the rates of political mobilization and participation far exceed the rates of organizational institutionalization. And, Cox (1976) goes on to imply that, "as regards Africa per se, James O'Connell referred to the 'inevitability of instability,' noting all their pretensions of social progress and 'civilianizing burdens'" (p. 4). The colonial government was essentially autocratic and coercive and only managed to introduce "democracy" at a very late hour to legitimize the processes of decolonization. The net effect of the absence of an appropriate gestation for democracy was that "the successor authorities . . . were not only ill-schooled in the politics of representation, participation and conciliation, but, they were quick to resent the

imposition of constitutional and other restraints by the departing metropolitan state, which left them with apparently less power than the colonial officials had enjoyed" (p. 4).

Contemporary literature on the political economy of wars acknowledges the economic dimension of wars and violence in the continent, and some even recognized the authoritarian legacy of the colonial state, but authors rarely make the link to the general history of the world. This has the consequence of confusing that which generates violence with the result of violence. Many of the authors who write about the political economy of Africa have failed to link African history with the history of a world driven by the despotism of profit. They have taken the result for the cause, and the cause for the result. To understand what is presently happening in Africa, we must understand a universal history which shows that what we are observing today was happening in Neolithic times, which is chronologically far away but always present in the movement of historical contradictions. Contemporary wars and mass violence in Africa are a result of centuries of metamorphosis and advancement of historical dialectics. Today is the result of a long movement of contradictions.

Our method, therefore, should be historical, genealogical, and ontological at the same time. However, in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel (2012) states that history is not what appears, the phenomenon, or simple dry facts of the events. It is the dialectic of historical forces that are hidden under the phenomenon. There are three "R's" of history:

1. The Real history, or a chronological series of events without an interpretation: this is the phenomenon of history left to itself, the facts.
2. The Retold history, where we pretend to recount the causes of events. This is a fetishized history of an event. Phenomenology counts as well as chronology. This is a narrow-scope approach of history that analyzes closely related events and their causes. Historians (and often history textbooks) often narrate with a certain speculative distance.
3. The Radical history relates the profound foundations that make it clear that what happened could not *not* have happened. It is a recognition of the underlying principles of a wide scope of events; a radical approach in which the dialectic of the profound foundations of human relations make manifest the movement of social forces and their effects (Hegel, 2012).

The most important is the third way of viewing history, which helps us to understand the matrix of the profound driving forces of history. The Hegelian *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the movement through which the consciousness of humanity manifests itself to human consciousness. This analysis would help us understand the dialectical movement of history which made it possible for Westerners to decide to subdue the rest of humanity to colonial processes beyond the justification of "civilizing missions."

Second, we will use a genealogical analysis. In *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Nietzsche initiated a method of research whose goal was to look for what is at the basis of Christian morality. As a method, genealogy looks for the origin of a situation. What is the historical process that led to the present situation? Applied to our analysis of the

world, genealogy helps us to grasp the original social, political, and economic forces that produce the situated context.

The final analysis will be ontological in the sense that from the phenomenon of violence witnessed, we will try to understand its true essence and the background conceptual dialectics which led to violence and wars in Africa.

So, what were the historical (Real, Retold, and Radical), genealogical, and ontological histories that were the driving forces that caused violence and resulted in contemporary African bloodshed?

Historical, Genealogical, and Ontological Analysis of Violence in Africa

Generally, if they don't begin their analysis based on the fortuitous combinations of factors that left African states with porous and uncontrollable borders (Prunier, 2009; Reyntjens, 2012), authors who write about the wars in Africa sometimes go back to the failure of some colonial experience (Mamdani, 2001; Young, 1965). According to Nigerian sociologist Ade Ajayi, colonialism was only a short episode in the millennia of African history. However, V. Y. Mudimbe remarks that even though short, the colonial experience was so intense that contemporary Africans still see themselves as colonial subjects. In fact, colonialism made it inevitable that the "white man's" presence and afterward became the benchmark of Africa. Hence, we talk about pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, decolonization. . . . Colonialism had a strong impact on the continent. It is important to understand why and how colonialism contained the seeds of violence. To understand African colonial violence, it is important to understand what made the colonial process possible and even thinkable.

To critique the political economy of his time, Karl Marx proceeded through an historical, genealogical, and ontological analysis. His analysis started with the most important change that happened to humanity, the advent of the agrarian revolution. I will do the same.

Community of Beings (Hunter and Gatherers)

Thousands of years ago human beings became homo sapiens (homo: human; sapiens: species; sapiens: race. This indicates that there is only one human race) until 800 BC, human beings lived in what Francis Cousin (2012) called the "community of being" (p. 82). The human being is generically the being of my conscious community. In other words, as soon as man emerges, the community of the "us" and the reality of the "me" appear as indissolubly unified in the same synthetic whole. Far from scrabbling endlessly and desperately for food, hunter–gatherers are among the best-fed people on earth and they managed this with only two or three hours of work per day—which makes them among the most leisured people on earth as well, according to Marshall Sahlins (1972).

Further, and more to the point of our economic analysis, "To accept that hunters are affluent is therefore to recognize that the present human condition of man slaving to bridge the gap between his unlimited wants and his insufficient means is a tragedy of modern times." This echoes Marx's sentiment, "In poor nations the people are generally comfortable, whereas in rich nations they are generally poor."

Marshall Sahlins (1972, 1972), who worked among Pacific Islanders, and Pierre Clastres (2000) studied the Guayaki of Paraguay, both of whom studied communities *in situ*, found these people still living in "the community of being." In the community of persons, there was no work, no appropriation, no money, no state, and no religion.

Genos is the Greek word meaning the original matrix where people lived in immanence of relationship, in the community of being. Communism in its purist form is a dynamic of social relations which are not mediated by money, power, or status. There was no work in the community of being because people produced for their needs. Work means providing more than what one needs. Work came during the agrarian revolution when people started producing more than they needed. In its original etymology, work comes from *tripalium*, which means torture. Work was born when people stopped producing for their humanity but in exchange for value.

There was no "economy" in the community of being. Economy may have started during the Neolithic revolution when people started producing more than they needed, although arguments could be made that economy began with the creation of tools—which were objects that could be traded or "sold," which would mean that economy predated homo sapiens. Whenever it began, surplus was exchanged. Houses were needed not only for shelter but to store the "stuff" that had been accumulated. Increased vigilance was necessary to keep others from stealing stuff—death became a quick way to accumulate value. The economy was born when human beings ceased to produce for human life but rather to solve problems or to create merchandise—items to be bought and sold. The Greek etymology *oikonomia*, meaning management of the household, equates to "economy."

Politics is the control and protection of the economic movement. The Indo-European origin of the word "politic" is *pili*, the watching tower. The politics were organized to protect the economy from outside invasion and inside disorder. The towers watched over the houses of accumulation. To physically carry a person's accumulation began to be too difficult. Monetary systems were instituted. Conversely, in the community of being there is no money. Money is not only the means of exchange we use to "buy" things we do not produce but a dynamic of historical alienation that escapes us. Money controls and possesses people, not the other way around.

Finally, in the community of being there was no religion. In fact, everything was divine, and everything was a symbol of divinity. Later, religion became the domestication of the divine in structures of alienation. There was no sacred or profane, but everything was

divine: walking in the forest, killing an animal for food, kissing or dancing, everything that transpired was divine as Spinoza's *Deus Sive Natura* (God or Nature) tells us.

In the 20th century, there were still people who continued in a pre-economic form of life. Clastres (2000), Sahlins (1972, 2017), and Stevenson (1904) wrote about the Guayaki indians, stone age economics, and the Zuni indians, respectively. These authors have studied groups in the 20th century who lived in the community of being. Two movies, Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* and James Cameron's *Avatar*, which, even though romanticized for the sake of Hollywood, also depict the life of people without economy, propriety, politics, or religion.[1]

The Society of Having

The agrarian revolution marked the turning from the original *genos* to *demos* people in the economy of the merchandise. When people started producing more than they needed, they exchanged the excess with others. First, the exchange was between groups and then within groups. This marked the beginning of civilization (*civis* = discipline). The technology that was born during this time because of the excess of food allowed for specialization. Some pursued vocations of potters or weavers. As Francis Cousin (2012), following Hegel, puts it, during the first Paleolithic exchange, Wall Street was formed. The significant change was that people's products were no longer used to build lives in the community but were exchanged in the pursuit of profit. It was the first consequence of the capitalist mode of accumulation, the alienation of people who saw their product taken away from them.

The capitalist mode of production and its relentless race for profit have become the driving forces in the history of the world. They are also poison as Quinn (1992) puts it:

> Man was at least free of those restraints, . . . the limitations of hunting-gathering life that had kept man in check for three million years. With agriculture, those limitations vanished, and man's rise was meteoritic. Settlements gave rise to division of labor, division of labor gave rise to technology. With the rise of technology came trade and commerce. With trade and commerce came mathematics and literature and science, and all rest, as they say, is history. . . . The problem is that man's conquest of the world has itself devastated the world. And in spite all of the mastery we've obtained, we don't have enough mastery to stop devastating the world – or to repair the devastation we've already wrought. We've poured our poisons into the world as though it were a bottomless pit—and we go on pouring our poisons into the world. We have gobbled up irreplaceable resources as though it could never run out—and we go on gobbling them up.
>
> (Quinn, 1992, p. 80)

Indeed, the history of capitalism has not been homogeneous, but it has gone through different phases to reach the 21st century's total domination and its consequences in Africa. The agrarian revolution led to the urban revolution with the invention of the

means of transportation along rivers. Italian cities of the 13th century were indeed part of this urban evolution: Florence, Venice, Rome, and so on.

The process known as "primitive accumulation," the accumulation of the capital, was accelerated by violence. The dispossession of peasants from their lands by Henry VIII of England proceeded with what he called the "enclosures," the forced removal of peasants from their lands. The removal of Irish from their lands to be sent as slaves to the new world was part of the bloody process of primitive accumulation. This process would continue on the African continent. With the advent of World War I in 1914, capitalism became *mode de vie*. People had become steeped in a society that valued value, in which human life had less value than accumulation. The difference between the formal hegemony and real hegemony of capitalism is that in formal domination, capitalism still relies on the modes of accumulation which preceded it; and in total domination, capitalism has become so pervasive in society that it dominates all human life and turns objects into nature and nature (including human nature) into objects. The totality of human structure became mercantilized.

In formal domination, the excess was sent to new worlds including the colonies, and in total hegemony, the residue is destroyed by wars. The world today, including most of Africa, is completely dominated by capitalism. The world has become "thing-centric" rather than "human-centric." We don't ask if it is best for man to get a job but where he can get the best job. We don't wonder if a product will be good for people but only if it will generate profit, not counting the costs to humans or to the planet. We value knowledge of things that work better for things (generate more profit) instead of accumulating knowledge of things that work better for people, i.e., generate better lives —meaning more meaningful lives, or better quality of lives.

Colonialism in the Formal Domination of Capitalism

Capitalism is a mode of production which carries with it its own seed of destruction—the rate of profit. At the core of the capitalistic system is the retention by the owners of the means of production of the value produced by labor. This portion of the unpaid value is the profit. It generates relations of production which are exploitative. The problem is that the profit tends to decrease, and the capitalistic effort is to show steady growth in the profit. The production of machines was used to help the profit to increase. The machine does not produce value; only human labor produces value. Machines are not creative; they are reproductive. They can reproduce creation at an incredible rate, but they cannot create a new product. The machine accelerates the production time for the value accumulated by the human labor. With the help of the machine production tends to be faster than consumption or distribution. It generally leads to "overproduction," characterized by excess products. This is the main problem of capitalism because it reduces the rate of profit which could be defined as the ratio of the value added by the sum of the machine input and human labor: RP = Vad/Mi + Hla where RP is the rate of

profit, Vad is the value added, Mi is the machine input, and Hla is the human labor. See the following formula.

For the rate of production to show steady growth, two problems need to be solved: (1) overproduction and (2) human labor. When capitalism is confronted with the decrease of the rate of the profit, it could choose either to diminish the salary of the human labor or to solve the problem of excess production. When capitalists choose to reduce the salary of the workers it may provoke protests. In fact, movements of protest have accompanied capitalism all along its historical progress. Men and women have stood up to claim their rights radically as exemplified by the workers of Barcelona in 1937, the sailors of Kroonstad, or other social movements where people reclaimed their life and refused to give in to the destruction of their lives by capitalism.

Marx described the reserve army of laborers waiting to take the place of workers for half the salary. Marx also explained that capitalism engineers immigration for cheaper labor and to break up the virulence of the protests. The entry of women into the work force was also meant to respond to this decrease of the rate of profit. A Yankee would be replaced by three Chinese and a man by two women who would be paid less given their reduced physical resistance and the fact that they must stop working for reproduction function. This is not our topic here. We are interested in how capitalism solved the problem of overproduction.

Until World War I in 1914 the problem of overproduction was solved by shipping the excess to new lands. The colonial adventure responded to the imperative of finding new lands where the excess production could be taken. This assertion might sound anodyne, but from the perspective of Africans it changed completely the life of the continent. In fact, the colonial conquest was such that it turned the entire life of African upside downs. There was indeed violence before the colonial invasion, but violence or wars did not disrupt the communities radically as did colonial violence. For a better perspective on Africa it is important to remember that pre-colonial Africa had a long history of rulership at all levels, and it had better balance of powers than the Euro-imperialist model brought over from the metropole: kings versus queen mothers, diviners versus provincial chiefs and count officials, religious societies versus the rulers. In more than one case African kingdoms were very large and familiar with the provision of goods and services at regional political and economic levels. In South African History online we can read: "The ancient city of Mapungubwe (meaning 'hill of the Jackal') is an Iron Age archaeological site in the Limpopo Province on the border between South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botwana, 75 km from Messina. It sits close to the point where the Limpopo and Shashe Rivers meet. One thousand years ago, Mapungubwe appears to have been the center of the largest known kingdom in the African sub-continent. The civilization thrived as a sophisticated trading center from around 1200 to 1300 AD."

The point here is that the organizing force of the entire historical process in the countries that attended the 1885 Berlin conference[2] was the search for profit manifested in what Marx has called the "fetishism of the merchandise."[3]

Colonial Violence as Structural Violence

Colonialism was a dialectical product of capitalism in its modern and formal phase of domination. It does not have an autonomy outside the understanding of it as a response to the decrease of the rate of production. Born to respond to the need of absorbing Western surplus production and to provide cheaper raw material for capitalist industries, colonial states were generally characterized by order and brutality, effectiveness and inhumanity, discipline and repression, productivity and operations (Kabamba, 2015). It was not the intention of the colonial powers to build in Africa a state worthy of its name but rather to organize structures of the extraction of raw material necessary to keep the rate of profit up in the Western capitalist states. The case of the Congo demonstrates this point. This is a country whose care and commercial organization were placed in the hands of one man during the Berlin Conference, King Leopold II from the Kingdom of Belgian, a country 80 times smaller than its colony. The brutality and the violence with which King Leopold's Congo-Free State was subjected to have been the subject of many scholarly books including *King Leopold's Ghost* (Hochschild, 1998). However, beyond the phenomenon of brutality one has to understand that the essence of colonial power was to respond to the search for cheaper raw material in order to keep the capitalistic engine in the West alive. The violence of colonial Congo was not an autonomous fact; it was linked to the capitalist production. As Kabamba has stated,

> In Africa, the Congo case is unique in that it combines the disproportionate, coercive and predatory ambition of its colonizers and the abundant riches of its soil and subsoil. No wonder the Congo was one of the most exploited territories of colonial Africa. As Hobsbawn (1989) points out, at the Berlin Conference, the Congo was designed as an extraction area and never as a political space. The Congo Free State of Leopold II in 1885, and the Belgian colony, from 1908 were governed by the original project of extraction and exploitation of raw materials. The network of roads and railways, the health and education system, the metropolitan administration of the colony all met the predatory logic of Leopold's project that Adam Hochschild (1998) characterized, rightly as business of barbaric plunder.

> (Kabamba, 2015, p. 3)

However, according to Roosevelt (2011) the colonial state was neither disciplined nor effective. It was not disciplined because it was mostly made up of drunken and lazy people who abused their power over the locals. It was not effective because it could not win economically through persuasion or people's adherence but only by using forced labor. The colonial state was not even economically effective because each successful industry was run into the ground and left the Congo in economic trouble which transmuted into violence and sometimes war. Except in the opinion of colonial apologetics such as Van Reybrouck (2012), who claimed the Congo was so organized and well supplied with infrastructure at independence, the colonial enterprise was a failure for the Congolese.

The Political Economy of War and Violence in Africa: A Hegelian and Marxist Interpretation

From a failure we can learn many things. But, what exactly does failure mean when it refers to a historical experience? What exactly do we mean when we say that the colonial experience of 100 years in Africa has failed? Colonial states in Africa failed because of the form of the state it constructed after colonial power packed its political luggage. The remainder of this article will show how the seeds of structural violence were planted with the colonial conception of African states as extractive spaces (some were pools of indentured servants or labor reserve for mining work) rather than political spaces where people decided on their future and the form of social organization adequate to their culture and dreams.

The extraction of cheap raw material to solve the problem of the decrease of profit was the main reason for the colonial invasion. After the 15th century, slavery, which consisted of shipping human labor from Africa to the New Land, became less productive and was abolished; the alternative was then to use that human labor in Africa and rather ship the products to the metropole. To reach its goal, the colonial administration had to resort to forced labor and construct an authoritarian form of state. It was not a question of African emancipation or any political space where colonizers could get involved to express their social dreams.

As Jacqueline Ki-Zerbo (1972) puts it:

> Today, Africa is undergoing a sort of slavery stronger than the sixteen century slave trade. Not only millions of men and women are crossing the Atlantic Ocean from Goree to Louisiana, but all Africans are now subjected and exploited on their own homeland.

The integration of Africa in the global order through colonization resulted in a strong grip of powerful Western companies on the mineral resources, political institutions, and social structure. In this context, men and women were no longer human being but only tools, utensils just good for extraction.

Even the independence movements of the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s were not about destroying the colonial model of the state. It was rather a question of replacing the colonial manager by an African one while leaving untouched the form of state.

In the case of the Congo, Crawford Young (1965) did a good job of capturing the brutality and absurdity of the independence:

> Belgium . . . constructed in Africa a colonial State which stood out by the thoroughness of its organization, the formidable accretion of power through an interlocking alliance of state, church and capital, and the ambition of its economic and social objectives. The very strength of the system as a colonial structure, and its steadfast refusal to face effectively the problem of political adaptation until it began to disintegrate, made an ordered transfer of power peculiarly difficult. A colonizer who suddenly lost the profound conviction of the righteousness of his

policy was confronted with a revolution by the colonized which lacked both structure and ideology. Total colonialism was replaced by total independence virtually overnight, yet the very completeness of the victory of the colonized has as its concomitant an impotence which emptied the success of its substance. (p. 572)

The violence that followed the independence of the Congo was indeed related to the very form of the authoritarian state, which was inherited from the past combined with the unpreparedness of the African political classes to manage a state they had not taken part in building. Violence and wars have continued to be the Congo's way of existing since the 1960s: from violence of independence to wars of secessions and invasions from neighboring countries and civil wars—all these are manifestations of the persistence of the Leopoldian model of the state whose goal is to extract and not to organize the life of people.

Colonialism was far from being homogeneous in the entire continent. Each colonial power acted according to its cultural understanding of the colonial mission. French, Portuguese, British, German, or Spanish, each country acted in Africa according to its political and cultural understanding of colonialism and the types of profit it expected to make from the new lands it was in charge of.

Another difference stemmed from the countries' recipients of colonial subjugation. The common goal of colonialism was to respond to the rate of the decrease of the profit, but each colonized country related to that goal according to its own idiosyncrasies and the types of wealth it had to offer. So, as far as violence and wars are concerned, African states reacted differently during the colonial power than they had in post-colonial periods. Hence, some states in Africa have managed the structural violence of colonialism according to the policies of the colonizers and also the presence of resources exploited by the colonial power.

The Native Question: Direct and Indirect Rules

The major issue confronted by colonialists was the question of numbers. How can a small number of colonialists subdue millions of natives? The answer is twofold. First, it is the result of the 15th-century invasion of the Americas: dispossessing the natives from their land and, in the case of Amerindians, exterminating them and taking charge. This is called "direct rule" (Mamdani, 1996).

Second, it is the result of keeping local structures as they exist and using them to extract wealth for the colonizers. This is the indirect rule used by the colonial power in India and elsewhere. Many of the indigenous structures of production remained in place. These structures were not homogeneous across countries.

The 19th-century colonialism in Africa was different from other conquests. All other colonialism just skimmed from the top. They colonizers didn't transform internal relations. But, modern colonialism transformed internal relations in a pervasive way.

Explaining the Difference Between Regions of Africa

Samir Amin (2014) provides a typology explaining the differences between the regions. According to Amin, the colonial power divided the continent into three regions:

1. The labor reserve economies (migrant labor economy). Here man goes to work in the mine or plantations; woman remains on the land. South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Kenya, Algeria, and Cameroon were considered labor reserve economies.
2. Countries considered peasant or merchant. They provided food crop, cash crops through the tax system, prices, and licenses. Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya were classified in that category of food producers. Somalia, and especially Darfur, were part of the nomadic peasants.
3. Renter economy countries. They had highly valued natural products, minerals, and oil. The colonial power had the monopoly of pricing. Most income came from rent, taxing oil, and minerals. Angola, Nigeria, and the Congo were part of this group.

The point Amin made was that Africa was looked at in terms of economic zones and not political units. The structural violence that followed depended a lot on the countries' position on Amin's typology and also on the specific colonial power's idiosyncrasies: Belgian colonialism was different from British, German, Portuguese, or Italian or Spanish colonialism. This explains why Northern Rhodesia (current Zambia) experienced different types of violence than its northern neighbor, the Congo. In short, because of the type of British involvement in Zambia—the creation of a quasi welfare state around the Copper Belt and agriculture in the rest of the country—and the idiosyncratic nature of the relationships between the locals and the British in the rest of the country, Zambia enjoyed a less violent post-colonial experience than that of the neighboring Congo where financial stakes were higher due to the presence of an extraordinary number of mineral deposits.

However, all the colonized countries had something in common; they were adjusting to the decrease of the rate of profit and the dictatorship of the merchandise which caused them to be colonized in the first place. War and violence in the colonies were the result of the re-composition of the crisis of the capital on the basis of the initial conditions of each country—hence, the differences in the degree of violence of the colonial extraction. Settled colonies like South Africa and Zimbabwe (to some extend Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau) were also structurally different in terms of extraction from non-settled colonies like Zambia. For its part, Kenya experienced considerable white settlement and also featured a significant Asian population. This situation led to land

alienation especially around Nairobi and in the "White Highlands." A strong state then was needed to protect white settlements from the Mau Mau rebellion.

Post-colonial Africa was for many countries the continuation of the colonial states but with new managers (Ake, 1996). Depending on its resistance to subjugation by the colonial rule, some African states or kingdoms were subdued by ruthless armed force and others by bribery or subterfuge. The bottom line is that the colonial experience was not the same in all African colonies. However, the colonial logic of extraction remains the same everywhere on the continent. Adejumobi (2005) rightly argues that

> Colonialism, though primarily an economic project meant to facilitate the brutal exploitation of labor and natural resources in the colonies, evolved a political infrastructure that fostered relations of domination and control, which were a prerequisite for the colonial enterprise. Although methods of colonial governance differed slightly among the colonial powers, for example between the British 'indirect rule' policy and the French policy of "assimilation," the logic and dynamics of these regimes, and the institutional structures and process of state formation which they set in motion, were basically the same. (p. 25)

Post-colonial states are still clients of powerful foreign economic and political interests. France, for example, concluded agreements with all its former colonies and for many years stationed troops on African soil to monitor, manipulate, and control their governments. It is what is known as "France-Afrique," which guaranteed the survival of friendly regime and removed the unwanted ones. Countries with mineral resources and without those types of agreements, such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Nigeria, were subjected to violence for internal control of their resources. Other countries with less resources and with the colonial heritage of patrimonial and authoritarian states seemed to be more controlled by their despotic leaders. This could explain why some countries have displayed a level of violence different from others. But, the structural violence of a colonially imposed territorial state remained the same with its new indigenous managers.

The new managers of the African states, like their colonial predecessors, relied on violence to keep the power, and no democratic process would make them relinquish power. Very few African countries went through democratic change to replace their leaders. Of 53 African countries, a few countries in West Africa (Senegal and Ghana) and some in southern Africa (Zambia, Botswana, Angola, and South Africa) managed a real democratic transition. Even those countries that witnessed peaceful political transitions remain extractive spaces in the sense that they continue the colonial model of providing cheaper raw material to the new capitals of the globalization of the merchandise. Rwanda is exceptional in the sense that it went from the violence of genocide and massacres to an economically stable dictatorship of President Paul Kagame.

Rwanda

To understand the path of violence in this country of 12 million people we have to look at what pushed Western capitalism to solve its seemingly unsolvable problem of the decrease of the rate of profit. Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor who hosted the 1885 Berlin conference, awarded himself countries to colonize in Africa, among them Rwanda, Tanzania, and Cameroon. When the Germans arrived in Rwanda they found the Country of Thousands of Hills with a population of agriculturalists: Hutu, the biggest majority, and a minority of cattle herders and royal groups of Tutsi, and a small number of Twaa, the pygmies whose height (average 4.2 inches) is explained by the lack of vitamin D caused by the absence of exposure to the sun. When the German colonial power arrived in Rwanda, they were confronted with a society politically structured around the kingdom of the Tutsi with a Hutu majority playing the role of food producers with limited loyalty to the Tutsi king. Ethnicity was rather a sort of social status. As Mamdani (2001) puts it, there was a tacit agreement that a Hutu who managed to gather 10 cows would become a Tutsi and a Tutsi who lost his cows and turned to agriculture became a Hutu. Even though this did not happen very often, the fact that that such a structure existed completely changed the understanding of the two groups. It implied a flexibility in these two groups that we do not find in most caste systems. The closest comparison could be with a group that emerged at the junction of many empires in antiquity and who were very good at the exchange and transfer of money. This group was later called the "Jews." They were not a race because the person who ceased to deal with money and sedentarized himself ceased to be a "Jew," and an agriculturalist who wanted to get involved in the exchange of money joined the group and became a Jew (Marx, 1844 [2017]).

So once in Rwanda, the Germans made a choice that would completely change the existence of this tiny country of central Africa. The Germans decided to work with the Tutsi as aides and civil servants to organize the colony. By choosing to work with one ethnic group, the Germans inadvertently reinforced the difference between Hutu and Tutsi. They gave the Tutsi an additional reason to think that the Germans had confirmed Tutsi superiority over the Hutu. For the Hutu, the decision by the Germans to work with the Tutsi in the exploitation of the colony was additional proof that Tutsi are aliens and that the only natives of Rwanda are the Hutu (Mamdani, 2001).

It is important also to look at the German side to understand why in the colonial organization of Rwanda they preferred working with the Tutsi minority rather than the Hutu majority. Put simply, the German eugenic tendencies of the 19th century led them to see superiority in the more Aryan-appearing Tutsi. This is a case of transposition of the colonial master's hierarchy of race to the colony where ethnic groups were not at all race or caste. They were more of social status with the flexibility that goes with it.

The encounter with the German colonial experience crystalized ethnic relations which were indeed flexible. From there the two groups found ways to distance themselves from the other and to resent one another. In 1919, when Germany lost World War I, the

Versailles Treaty imposed drastic measures on Germany to reimburse the countries it had destroyed during the war. Germany also lost its colonies as a sanction from the allies. Cameroon was taken by the French, Tanzania by the British, and Rwanda-Urundi by the Belgians.

The Belgian colonial experience in Rwanda was a continuity of the German policy but with a qualitative difference that would lead to the first confrontation between the Hutu and Tutsi in 1959. Belgians sent the Tutsi to school and the Hutu to the field. The Tutsi were educated in French, a language of globalization, while the Hutu were using local language. The most qualitative change Belgians made in Rwanda was the imposition of ethnicity in the identity card of Rwandan.

This move which might appear to be a simple administrative change carried strong ontological consequences because it turned into race or caste ethnic relationships that were more flexible and interchangeable. From the introduction of ethnic groups in the identity cards, the Hutu and the Tutsi became two different races. This act reinforced the Hutu in their conviction that they were natives of Rwanda and that their natural rights were usurped by the alien Tutsis with their Belgian colonial allies. However, when Belgians started sending to Rwanda more liberal governors who were more open to the fate of the Hutu majority, the situation changed. With the help of liberal Belgians, the Hutu were educated and started claiming their right over their country.

In 1959, while the Belgians adopted a neutral posture, the Hutu massacred the Tutsi in a sweeping campaign whose goal was to eliminate the aliens. The violence that exploded in 1959 in Rwanda between Hutu and Tutsi under the nose of the Belgians caused the displacement of many Tutsi, who went to Uganda, the Congo, or Tanzania. This was the first open violence between the two communities. It was interpreted differently: for the Tutsi it was a genocide of their community by the Hutu. For the Hutu, the 1959 massacre of the Tutsi was a movement of the oppressed majority of natives claiming their land and their rights usurped by the alien Tutsi. These two interpretations of the 1959 events in Rwanda were so antithetic that even today it is difficult to teach history in Rwanda. Each group has its own interpretation of the historical events.

Rwandan Genocide and Massacres

The massacre of the Tutsi in 1959 precipitated a series of other massacres of the minority by the majority. At its independence in 1962, Gregoire Kayibanda became the first president of Rwanda. Kayibanda was overthrown by Juvenal Habyarimana in a state coup in 1972. While Kayibanda believed that all the Tutsi were foreigners and should leave Rwanda, Habyarimana recognized that those Tutsi who remained in Rwanda after 1959 were Rwandans but those who had gone should not come back to Rwanda.

The violence in Rwanda that culminated in the 1994 genocide, which resulted in 800,000 people being killed in 100 days, is rooted in the colonial past. The latter was a necessity caused by the decrease of the rate of profit that Western capitalism carries with it. Before

1914, the problem of saturation of the market was solved by shipping the surplus to new land, and colonial space absorbed that capitalist overproduction. But the genocide occurred when Rwanda had already been independent for more than 30 years. The independence of African countries meant that the country had changed managers but the form of the country as an extractive structure remained the same. The new managers—African leaders—remained as authoritarian as their predecessors had been. The number of Hutu dissidents who opposed the politics of Habyarimana were increasing in the 1990s. At the same time, Ugandan President Museveni decided to send back to Rwanda those Tutsi (who had run to Uganda to save their lives during the 1959 massacre) who helped him take power against president Milton Obote in Uganda in 1986. The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) led by General Paul Kagame started attacking northern Rwanda in 1990. The Habyarimana regime resisted the attacks from the RPA with the help of Congolese soldiers and French weapons. Faced with inside Hutu dissidents and outside RPA invasion, and under regional pressure to make peace with rebels, Rwanda President Habyarimana agreed to a power sharing with the dissident Hutu and mostly with the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front, the political brunch of the RPA). Hutu dissidents hoped that by allying themselves with the Tutsi from the RPF they would overthrow the government, and since the Hutu were the majority, they would win the post-Habyarimana elections. These calculations were missing one fact, that is, the Tutsi RPF was not interested in power sharing (Kagame sabotaged the Arusha agreement which was supposed to formalize the power sharing agreement) but they left Uganda to take power in Rwanda. On April 6, 1994, Habyarimana's plane, returning from signing the Arusha agreement, was gunned down. In the plane were two French crew members, the Rwandan army chief of staff, and the Burundian president, Cyprien Ntaryamira. They all died and the mass killing of Tutsi and dissident Hutu started as soon as the news of the president's death spread.

The genocide ended with the RPF capturing power in Kigali and the Rwandan Armed Force fled to the neighboring DRC with millions of Hutu who feared retaliation from the RPF. The genocide was followed by many Hutu massacres by the RPF (e.g., in Kibeho where Zambian UN "Bleu Helmets" could not protect the Hutu against RPF retaliation). The violence of genocide could be traced back to the colonial experience of Rwanda first with Germans and then with Belgians who mostly crystalized the differences between the Hutu and the Tutsi. On the other hand, the form of the state put in place by the colonial power was authoritarian and never meant to be a political space where local people could insert their dreams. The entire Rwandan experience, colonial and post-colonial, was indeed a consequence of the "fetishism of merchandise" of the Western colonialists and their local successors who were as brutal as their colonial masters. The violence of the post-colonial Africa follows the same path of the fetishism of the merchandise as exemplified by the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.

The Aftermath of the Genocide: 4 Million Deaths in the DRC

The 1994 Rwandan genocide spilled over into the DRC where almost 2 million Hutu ran to escape RPF retaliation. In 1996 the RPF regime decided to get rid of refugee camps in the neighboring Kivu province of the DRC because it was too close to Rwanda. The attack on the Hutu refugee camps pushed many Hutu (900,000) to return to Rwanda by force and those who did not return (300,000) were executed, especially in Tingi Tingi where more than 200,000 Hutu refugees were massacred by RPF soldiers (Boisbouvier, 2010). From 1996 to 2003, the American NGO (nongovernmental organization) International Rescue Committee counted almost 4 million deaths in the Congo which are blamed on Laurent Kabila and his Rwandan supporters. Many of the people who died in the Congo did not die from bullets but from curable disease in peacetime. All health personnel had run for their lives.

Before talking about the wars in the Congo, it is important to note that like most of the genocide experience in the world, the Rwandan genocide did not escape the temptation to turn into a genocide industry. Out of guilt for not being able to stop the killing, many Westerners blindly poured billions of dollars into the Rwandan economy. Some countries like the Netherlands and the UK took charge of orphans in such a way that the RPF government was free to use its money to purchase weapons and build a strong army. The genocide memorial in Kigali serves as a symbol of anamnesis as well as a source of income for the country—the genocide industry.

A second attitude related to the aftermath of genocide—the "license of the victim." Because Rwandan Tutsi had been victims of genocide, the world turned away and did not want to see the injustice and violence the Tutsi were inflicting on others (notably, the Congolese). The license of the victim played plainly with the Rwandan invasions of the Congo under the pretext of following the Interamwe, the Hutu militia who are blamed for the 1994 genocide, even if most of them had been only 10 years old in 1994. The world chose to turn away and let the RPF loot the natural resources of the Congo. The wars in the Congo were prolonged because of coltan or cassiterite extraction. The similarity to the silence of the world community in the Israeli–Palestine conflict tells us much about the license of "the victims."

The Recent Congo Wars

The wars from 1996 to 1998 and 1998 to 2003 were basically the spillover of the Rwandan genocide and its aftermath. But, violence in the Congo is not an autonomous phenomenon; it is directly linked to the form of what I called the Leopoldian model of the state. The origin of violence in the Congo is also the persistence, subtle or violent, of the colonial project that was primarily based on the exploitation of the natural resources. The same structure is now continued by multiple "guardians of the Leopoldian structures," as the Congolese current leaders are known. The question of violence in the Congo is

structural. The persistence of the Leopoldian model creates two contrasting dynamics: centrifugal movements inside the Congo where people want to avoid the predatory center of the state, and the centripetal movements that are supported by outside forces and make the state stronger. The perpetual confrontation of these two dynamics makes the country very fragile and a victim of plunder from neighbors and multinational companies. The war of 2006 was mainly led by Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers in order to profit from the fragility of the failed colonial Congo state, which was supposed to disappear but did not.

Angolan Wars

The Portugese Angolan colonial regime was one of the most brutal. The Portuguese considered their African colonies an extension of the motherland, Portugal. What remained to the colonized was to assimilate (*assimilados*) and imitate the life of the Portuguese. Oxford Bibliographies (2014) described Portugal's colonies as follows:

> To much greater extent than those of other European colonial powers, Portugal's African empire was woven deeply into the culture, politics, and economics of the metropole.

> Long after the more developed and industrialized States of Europe had decolonized, Portugal maintained its narrow centralized form of the rule . . . from Mozambique to Angola, in the South and from Guinea-Bissau in the West to the Atlantic archipelagos of Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe. It did not do so easily, the last decade and a half Portugal's imperial presence . . . from the early 1960s until the final collapse of the empire in the mid-1970s . . . was marked by guerilla warfare in the three continental territories and anticolonial agitation in the islands.

Post-independence Angola was not at peace because the U.S. supported the UNITA guerrilla movement in Angola. The violence of the civil war lasted almost 25 years from Angola's independence in 1975 to the death of Jonas Savimbi, the chairman of UNITA in 1992. The American-sponsored local proxies put the country in a civil war for two decades.

In Mozambique it was the same. The U.S. and South Africa supported the RENAMO destabilization of the post-independent FRELIMO government of Samora Machel. Violence and wars in Angola and Mozambique were not only the product of colonial state but also actively engineered by outside powers.

Wars and violence in the Congo, Angola, and Mozambique, and in many African countries, were generally the result of the same logic of the pursuit of cheaper raw material to solve the problem of the decrease of the rate of the profit. Since profit has become the leading, organizing, and driving force of the world, Marx described the "fetishism of the merchandise": it is conceivable to destroy human life (through colonialism, dictatorship,

authoritarianism) in exchange for material profit. Colonial states contained within them the structure of violence and war because they were primarily conceived as extractive space and never as political space for Africans to imagine their community and project the future for themselves and for their children. Post-colonial African states were not qualitatively different from their predecessors. The structure remained the same but the manager changed. The continuation of violence in the post-colonial state was also partly a choice of African leaders.

African Agency in Violence and War

If it is true, as Marx postulates, that merchandise is the essence of all things, and that colonialism is a product of the dialectics of capitalism in its modernity, then African conflicts and wars are products of these historical circumstances that created capitalist extractive space whose persistence against the will of the people provokes violence and desolation. A question then rises at the heart of Marx's own genealogical analysis. If the decrease of the rate of profit was the basis of the colonial enterprise that set Africa to violence and left behind structures of violence, did Africans have the choice to turn their countries in different directions and to less violent transitions? The historical determinism that runs through Marx and Hegelian analyses is the opposite of passivity. It is the intellection of the necessity. It is a dialectics of social relations. It means that the historical circumstance like colonial states are not stones falling on one's head but dialectical interaction; they are intentional interactivities made of desires, emotions, joy, or fear. They escape all static apprehension. One is the product of historical circumstances as long as one is able to react and respond to them.

Historical experiences are dialectical movement that leaves one with possibility of making a choice. Hegelian dialectical movement should theoretically be comprehended in the following way: with the conception of being, the conception of non-being is a given. From the antagonism of the two (being and non-being) results a higher conception of becoming. The dialectic is the back-and-forth movement between a being and its negation that produces the becoming. For Hegel, everything is pregnant with its opposite. It means that everything is and is not at one and the same time because everything is in a state of permanent change. History is a process of evolution. The historical circumstances are dialectical interaction that allows one to make choices. So, at the heart of colonial experience, and especially its aftermath, there was space for African choice and agency. Mobutu of Zaire, Idi Amin of Uganda, or Bokassa of the Central African Republic made choices that were different from those of Mandela or Nyerere of Tanzania.

Violence in many African countries is also the result of choices pursued by some African leaders. African politicians once promised that formal independence meant everything and then blamed their own failings on persistent colonialism. Mobutu in Zaire imposed a patrimonial rule where he used his country's Central Bank as his personal account. The mismanagement of the country was such that Zairian soldiers resorted to violent looting of businesses in 1993 and 1994. The war in 1996 broke out also because despite his 30

years of power with disastrous results Mobutu chose to cling to power until a six-month war that raged from eastern to western Zaire resulted in his running away. Rwandan Habyarinama made the same choice of clinging to power until his assassination, which started the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi followed by widespread massacres of the Hutu in the eastern Congo.

Ugandan Idi Amin (1971–1979) chose to castrate all short people in the country in order to purify the race of the country. This violence was perpetrated by an African—not a foreign power. Angola sustained 25 years of civil war partly related to Portugal's colonial experience which saw the economies of Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau as an extension of Portugal. The post-independence wars in Angola and the political violence in Mozambique were partly a choice made by some post-colonial leaders like Jonas Savimbi of UNITA and Dhlakama of RENAMO to serve as proxy of Americans and South Africans. In Somalia, Eritrea, Soudan, Rwanda, Uganda, Congo, Zimbabwe, Mali, Cote D'Ivoire, and many African countries the violence is not only the result of historical circumstances exemplified by the colonial experience, but also the result of anti-democratic choices made by African post-colonial leaders. They perpetuated their colonial oppressors.

The Contemporary Violence: The Gaddafi Factor

Previously I have shown that wars and violence in Africa are the consequence of the decrease of the rate of capitalist profit. The invasion of African countries by the colonial powers in the later 19th century was a result of the desire to evacuate the surplus generated by the machinery for extraction and other valueless items. In the formal domination of capitalism, overproduction is sent to new lands. Colonial states were extractive spaces organized in response to the issue of the decrease of the rate of the profit. They were not meant to emancipate the colonized. Colonial states, authoritarian and brutal, contain the seeds of violence and war.

If it is true that wars and violence are the result of structural violence of colonial circumstances, it is equally true that historical circumstances are also dialectical interaction that calls for a choice to be made. Some post-colonial African leaders chose authoritarianism and dictatorship, which sparked violence and sometimes civil wars in their countries.

Mali and Niger are experiencing a type of violence and war that are neither the colonial legacy nor the choice made by their leaders, but the violence is imported by Islamic militants. The assassination of Gaddafi in Libya by a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also known as North Atlantic Alliance) coalition had the effect of opening Pandora's box in the Sahel region. All Gaddafi's weapons moved southward after his death. Islamic militants had invaded northern Mali and inflicted death in Niger. NATO is an intergovernmental organization of the United States and European countries signed on April 4, 1949. It was created to protect Europe from the threat represented by the

USSR at the end of World War II. But, with the collapse of the USSR and the Warsaw Treaty uniting all the countries around the Soviet Union, NATO's mission was reduced to protecting Europe from hypothetical attacks from Russia or another country or helping the U.S. in its multiple wars (e.g., Afghanistan). The involvement of NATO in Libya was rather unusual and openly violated the United Nations mandate in 2011 that was limited to keeping a no-fly zone in Libya. Conducted by the U.S. and the British under the instigation of the then French president Sarkozy, the war in Libya ended with the assassination of Muammar Gaddafi on October 20, 2011, by the NATO-supported Libyan National Transition Council Forces armed, trained, and organized by French, UK, and US special forces.

This war, clearly imported by outside forces, not only destroyed Libya as a state but also destroyed the entire fabric of Libyan society because NATO did not have any plan of reconstruction after the destruction and the bombing of the country. Libya today is the breeding ground for Islamic forces, the uncontrolled road of migration to Europe, and finally in recent days Libya has resumed a long-forgotten human slave trade. Thanks to its oil, Gaddafi's Libya bought a lot of armament to defend the country in case of an attack. But after his death all these weapons fell into the hands of Touaregs and other Islamic militia who brought violence and death in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire.

In Libya, the economic motivations of the NATO involvement were not a secret to anyone. Political reasons to protect the Bengazi people from Gaddafi's fire were only propaganda to get some share of the Libyan oil revenues. Barack Obama admitted that the Libyan war was the worst mistake of his presidency (Somin, 2016). Since 1975, when the U.S. used South African proxies to destabilize Angola and later on Mozambique, and besides the intervention in Somalia followed by the intermittent bombing of pockets of Islamic Shebabs in Somalia, the United States had not openly intervened to change a regime until the Libyan war. The Libyan war was also part of Marx's "fetishism of merchandise," which turns objects into nature and nature (including human nature) into objects of profit.

Conclusion: The Negation of the Negation—The Road Ahead

In this political economy of war and violence in Africa I relied on the Hegelian intuition that the truth is the whole. The whole here is the understanding of the driving forces of the history we live in. Africa is not in paradise or under the ocean, but it is in history, a history dominated by the driving forces of capitalism. The latter contains its own impossibility, namely, the crisis of the decrease of the rate of profit. To keep profit up, capitalism utilizes machines to accelerate production time, with the risk of overproduction and the decrease of prices and hence the profit. The problem of overproduction has been solved in two ways in history: in the formal domination of capitalism overproduction is resolved by founding new land. In the real domination of

capitalism that started in 1914, overproduction is resolved by wars and violent deflagration. Colonialism was a response to the crisis of overproduction. The colonial state in Africa was a dialectical product of capitalism in its modernity. It was not about building African political space but rather about organizing an extractive space for cheaper raw material and the absorption of the excess production of capital in the metropole, both activities that will keep the rate of profit up in Western capitalism. Colonial states contain structures of violence. They were conceived as extractive space and after independence the same structures remained but were run by African leaders that Fred Cooper (2002) calls "gatekeepers" (p. 5).

Genocide in Rwanda was constructed during the German and Belgian occupation that turned flexible relationships of ethnicity into more rigid types by almost racializing them and petrifying them in an ID card. The DRC is the ground of wars and all sorts of violence that stem from the race for cheaper raw material and mostly the confrontation between internal centrifugal dynamics inside the country with external centripetal forces from outside.

Violence in many African countries is not an autonomous event. It is dialectically linked to the structure of the state. Since wars and violence are dialectical products of colonial states it implies that there is a space for choice. Historical material dialectic is far from passivity. It is an intellection of the necessity and implies a choice. Dialectical movement between the being and the non-being results in a superior synthesis related to human choice. Many leaders in Africa choose to continue and to perfect the authoritarian regime inherited from the past in order to stay in power forever. Leaders like Mugabe, Mobutu, Eyadema, Biya, or Sassou Nguessu have either died in power or used violence to hang on to their power. The production and distribution of violence in Africa are not only the fact of historical conditions of colonialism but also the result of deliberate choices of the course of events by African leaders and their cronies.

The violence related to the death of Gaddafi followed the same path of capitalistic objectification of human beings for the sake of material profit—the fetishism of merchandise—but its bluntness made it different as a clear example of abuse of power by the North Atlantic Alliance. The irresponsibility of leaders like Obama, Cameroon and Sarkozy is at the forefront of what is happening today in Libya and in Mali, Niger, Cameroon, and Burkina Faso. Nigerian Boko Haram can also be classified among those who have benefited from Libyan arms dispersion in the continent.

To conclude this article, it is important to come back to the Hegelian dialectic method of the movement of negativity and the negativity of negativity. Pre-colonial Africa was moving at its pace of natural development. The continent had different economic and political organizations. Kingdoms were the basic way of organizing society and the relationships between people. Its frontiers were not hermetic. People were producing according to their needs, not for accumulation purposes. Everything was divine. There was no church that domesticated the divine. People were not slaves of exchange values. The community was what Marx called *Gemeinwesen*, or the community of being. Africa

had a past rooted in the organic community where young people helped the elders, the strongest helped the weakest, and the economy was at the service of the human community. The naturality of pre-colonial Africa was the organic community where people made sure that everybody had a roof, a field, and cloth to wear. All primary goods were available according to need. It does not mean that there were no conflicts, but conflicts did not reach the point of destroying the entire community.

The Negation

African *Gemeinwesen* was disrupted by the colonial invasion which took away people's ways of life and turned them into producers for capital. Kingdoms were destroyed and social relations were turned into relationships of exploitation. With mandatory taxation of men, families were destroyed because men had to produce cash crops while women remained the only producer of food. When famine occurred because of food shortages, the colonial crop of cassava was imposed. Cassava is purely carbohydrate; it has no vitamins or protein. The colonial solution to malnutrition was permanent malnutrition. And when the tax is to be paid in money, the man has to leave home to work in a mine for a minimum of six months in order to be able to pay the tax. The absence of the man for six months destroyed the family. The colonial violence destroyed the fabric of the family in Africa on top of the physical violence and wars it generated. It was indeed a cultural genocide.

The Negation of the Negation

Violence and wars are the result of the colonial negativity of the African being. Colonialism itself is the product of the crisis of capital and the decrease of the rate of the profit. The violence inherent in the colonial state is then attached to the fetishism of merchandise. Marx, who wrote not for the biology of early industrial capitalism of the 19th century but for the necrology of capitalism in the 21st century, thought that capital would reach a moment when it would no longer reproduce itself. It is the terminal crisis of capital when the real domination reaches its full accomplishment. In the meantime, we can only try to create spaces where a human being regains primacy over the process of objectification to which the capital has condemned the human being.

In 1900, Africa was home to 7.5% of the world population. It is now twice that and forecast to be 40%, about the same as Asia, in 2100. Europe had 25% of the world's population in 1900 and will have 6% in 2100 (UN DESA report, 2015). Africa is the only region whose population is growing rapidly; all the others are in decline.

There are indeed spaces in Africa where money is not controlling people. Despite the violence of colonial and post-colonial African states, despite the dictatorship of the "gatekeepers," in Africa the human being still has primacy over objects. Human relationships in much of rural Africa are not mediated by power, money, or status; they are immanent. This immanence of relationships is the greatest gift Africa can bring to the

world dominated by the fetishism of the merchandise, especially when one person out of two in the planet will come from the African continent. But, for this to happen, Africans would need to identify the historical reasons that might change the balance of forces in the world. In this way they would prevent the resurgence of wars and violence.

References

Adejumobi S. (2005). Identity, Citizenship and Conflict: The African Experience. In W. A. Fawole & C. Ukeje (Eds.), *The Crisis of the State and Regionalism in West Africa: Identity, Citizenship and Conflict*. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Ajayi, J. A. (1870). Colonialism: An Episode in African History. *Colonialism in Africa*, *1960*(5), 497–509.

Ake, C. (1996). *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute.

Amin, S. (2014). Understanding the Political Economy of Contemporary Africa. *Africa Development*, *XXXIX*(N.1), 15–36.

Boisbouvier, C. (2010). **Invité Afrique—Reed Brody—juriste américain et porte-parole à Human Rights Watch**.

Clapham, C. (Ed.). (1998). *African Guerilla*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Clastres, P. (2000). *Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians*. New York, NY: Zone Books.

Collier, P. (2000). Doing Well Out of War: An Economic Perspective. In M. Berdal & D. M. Malone (Eds.), *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agenda in Civil Wars* (pp. 91–111). London, U.K.: Lynne Rienner.

Conrad, J. (1996). Heart of Darkness. In *Heart of Darkness* (pp. 17–95). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cousin, F. (Ed.). (2012). *L'Etre Contre L'Avoir: Pour une critique radicale et définitive du faux omniprésent . . .* Retour aux Sources.

Cooper, F. (2002). *Africa Since 1940:The Past of the Present*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Cox, T. (1976). *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone: A Case Study of African Soldiers in Politics*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Duffield, M. (2001). *Global Governance and New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. London, U.K.: Zed Books.

Hegel, G. W. F. (2012). *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. London, U.K.: Courier Corporation.

Hobsbawn, E. (1989). *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914*. First Vintage Books Edition.

Hochschild, A. (1998). *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Boston, U.S.: Houghton Mifflin.

Kabamba, P. (2015). A Happy Congolese Sisyphus? Rolling the Rock of the Conradian Project at Vitaem Eternum. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, *15*(3), 23–28.

Keen, D. (1998). *Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars*. Adelphi Paper 320. Oxford University Press.

Ki-Zerbo, J. (1972). *Civilisation de la femme dans la tradition africaine*. Paris: Harmattan.

Luxemburg, R. (2003). *The Accumulation of Capital*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Mamdani, M. (1996). *Citizen and Subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mamdani, M. (2014). *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Marx, K. (1843). "On the Jewish Question" with an introduction and translation by Andy Blunden, Matthew Grant and Matthew Carmody in 2008/9 from a Dutch publisher. Deutsch-Franzosische Jahrbucher.

Marx, K. (1844/2007). Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, New York, NY: Dover Publications.

Mudimbe, V. Y. (1988). *The Invention of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

MacQueen, N. (2014). **Portuguese Colonial Rule**. *Oxford Bibliographies*.

Prunier, G. (2008). *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Prunier, G. (2009). *Africa's World War: Congo, The Rwanda Genocide, and Making of a Continental Catastrophe*, Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.

Quinn, D. (1992). *ISHMAEL*. New York, U.S.: Penguin Random House.

Reno, W. (2003). Political Networks in the Failing State: The Roots and Future of Violent Conflict in Sierra Leone. *International Politics and Society*, *2*, 29–43.

Reyntjens, F. (2012). *La grande guerre africaine: Instabilité, violence et décline de L'etat en Africque Centrale* (1996–2006). Paris: Belles Lettres.

Roosevelt, A. (2011). Behind the Veil: Culpability in the Assassination of Patrice Lumumba. *CongoNova*, *4*, 1–11.

Sahlins, M. (1972, 2017). *Stone Age Economics*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Somin, I. (2016, April 13). **Opinion | Obama Admits That His Handling of the Libya War Was His Worst Mistake—But Not That It Was Unconstitutional**. *The Washington Post*.

Stevenson, M. C. (1904/2016). *The Zuni Indians*. Sydney: Wentworth Press.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). *The World Population Prospects: 2015 Revision*. UN Publications.

Van Reybrouck, D. (2012/2014). *Congo: The epic history of a people*. Harper Collins.

Weingast, B. R., & Wittman, D. (Eds.). (2006). *Oxford handbook of political economy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Young, C. (1965). *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Notes:

(1.) Relationships to property, money, and power are indeed more complex in these movies than stated here because these communities were already in contact with movement of exchange. Graham Greene plays the holy man of the Lakota in *Dances with Wolves*. There was also property—the things of the holy man were not available to everyone in the tribe—the headdress of the chief was only to be worn by the chief. The same holds true for *Avatar*. There is a representation of a tree in *Avatar* that is part of the central religion. There is a sense of propriety—conformity—that is violated by the new order that challenges the order of the community. Marx was also inspired by Lewis Henry Morgan's work on the Iroquois.

(2.) The Berlin Conference gathered in Berlin in 1885, under German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, all European powers competing for territory in Africa. At the end of the conference Africa was divided into territories under the colonial control of European countries.

(3.) In volume 1, chapter 1, section 4 of *Das Kapital*, Marx understands the "fetishism of commodity" as an obsession for the merchandise or commodity detached from the generic being. Commodity has become a fetish. As Francis Cousin (2012) puts it, we now live under the democratic dictatorship of the merchandise.

Patience Kabamba

Department of Behavioral Science, Utah Valley University