

**Bombshells with Black Faces: Examining the Intersection between Terrorism, State Failure, and Sexual Gender Based Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa©**

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## Abstract

At the time of this writing there exist a handful of studies that examine the relationship between fragile states and the emergence of political violence; few that restrict their research to the study of Africa, and even fewer that assess the impact this relationship has on women. In conflict ridden societies where the state has collapsed and there are fledgling political infrastructures, there has been a gross negligence in the protection of women and girls. In failed states, women are at a high risk of becoming the victims of rape and other gender based violence; and while studies have examined this phenomenon and the psychological impact this type of violence has on women, there are few existing studies that evaluate the socio-political impact on women; mainly how exposure to gender based violence influences women's attitudes towards the key political issues of terrorism and political violence. I raise this issue because in conflict ridden societies where sexual dominance and female inferiority have become institutionalized as a societal norm, there is a propensity for these women, after having been sexually victimized, to cling to their feelings of revenge, which has later been cited as the overwhelming reason why women seek to join and support terrorist organizations. The female suicide terrorism literature supports this assertion, pointing to the victimization and powerlessness of women as the major impetus that motivates females to engage in acts of terrorism. Consequently, using sub-Saharan Africa as the unit of analysis, where terrorism and political violence are on the rise, and conflict, rape and gender based violence are prevalent, I evaluate the attitudes of women, who have been victimized, and their support for political violence. The findings suggest that the international community could soon encounter the emergence of terrorist threats from sub-Saharan Africa with female faces.

## **Introduction**

States in crisis experience tremendous upheaval, and the consequences of state decline, and subsequent failure are severe and have long term implications for society, especially for the most vulnerable members—women and girls. In the majority of cases of state collapse, women and girls are overwhelmingly the most tragic casualties of the violence. Rape, and gender based violence become the reality for women in conflict zones and collapsed states. In states such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and South Africa, sexual based violence has become increasingly prevalent since the decline of these states—and there is no argument that with state collapse, and the breakdown of the security infrastructure, women become a target for violence.

In failed states, women are at a high risk of becoming the victims of rape and other gender based violence; and while studies have examined this phenomenon and the psychological impact this type of violence has on women, there are few existing studies that evaluate the socio-political impact on women; mainly how exposure to gender based violence influences women's attitudes towards the key political issues of terrorism and political violence. I raise this issue because in conflict ridden societies where sexual dominance and female inferiority have become institutionalized as a societal norm, there is a propensity for these women, after having been sexually victimized, to cling to their feelings of revenge, which has later been cited as the overwhelming reason why women who have been sexually assaulted choose to join terrorist organizations. The female suicide literature supports this assertion, pointing to the victimization and powerlessness of women as a major impetus that motivates females to engage in acts of terrorism. Consequently, using sub-Saharan Africa as the unit of analysis, where terrorism and political violence are on the rise, and conflict, rape and gender based violence are prevalent, I evaluate the attitudes of women, who have been victimized, and their support for the use of terrorism and political violence.

In the following two sections I present the most relevant literature, the major theoretical arguments and the general proposition that guides this analysis. Next I discuss the data, and the strategies of inquiry which embody the more specific hypotheses of the study. The section that follows is a presentation of the results. Finally, in the conclusion I discuss the implications of this analysis and make suggestions regarding future studies.

## **Argument**

### *Revenge and Rape as a Motivator*

Sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) is a phenomenon that knows no socio-economic or political boundaries. It is a manifestation of the dysfunction within communities and it transcends all areas of society, cutting across race, class, religion, state boundaries, and age. In recent years, there has been a steady increase in SGBV in sub-Saharan Africa; this is because, in conflict ridden societies, with fledgling political and security infrastructures, there is a gross negligence in the protection of women and girls. The increasing frequency with which women and girls are exposed to sexual violence in sub-Saharan Africa raises the key issues for this study. The main assertion of this study is that when compared to women who have not experienced sexual violence, female victims of sexual and gender based violence are disproportionately more likely to join political extremist groups and engage in political violence and terrorism because of the shame and trauma associated with their attack. An examination of terrorism research, regarding the individual motivations of women who engage in terrorist activity, provides support for this assertion.

Existing literature suggests that there are two motivational sets for participation in terrorism: the first of which emanates out of a clash of cultures, driven primarily by migration and immigration. An example of this can be observed in Western Europe where in recent years the young, radicalized Muslim population has engaged in terrorist attacks in major cities such as London, Paris and Madrid. These

individuals are drawn to terrorism because of a sense of isolation and alienation, a desire for meaning and purpose in their lives, and a loss of identity. These individuals are psychologically and socially vulnerable, and the radical ideology of terrorist groups resonates with them.

The second motivational set, which is most applicable to this analysis, emanates out of societies that see themselves under occupation or are confined within conflict zones (Palestinians, Iraqis, Chechens, etc.) (Speckhard, 2008). The primary motivations of these individuals are nationalistic and their personal motivations are born out of trauma and revenge. These individuals often exhibit dissociative behavior as a mechanism by which they can cope with the trauma due to the frequency of such experiences in these conflict zones. Individuals who engage in terrorism within conflict zones, generally view themselves as acting in defense of their communities, and themselves, and revenge represents a compelling motivator for these types of terrorists.

Delving deeper into the dual concepts of trauma and revenge, female terrorists are far more likely than men to be attracted to terrorist groups because of these two factors. The desire for revenge has long been cited as a common motive for joining a terrorist organization (Jacques and Taylor, 2008; Silke, 2003) and for engaging in political extremism (Kimhi and Even, 2004; Moghadam, 2003; Jacques and Taylor, 2008). Research suggests that women who cite revenge as a motivation for carrying out a terrorist attack (Kimhi and Even, 2004; Speckhard and Akhmedoava, 2006) that this revenge emerges from personal factors, the most notable being an incident of sexual abuse (Kimhi and Even, 2004). Further, in Speckhard's analysis of female suicide terrorists, she finds that "trauma is a major factor in motivation [to engage in terrorism] even when it is just witnessed trauma, and dissociation is a likely psychological defense that facilitates [women] to be able to carry this [terrorism] act out..." (Speckhard, 2008, p. 1002).

Also, according to Mia Bloom, the author of *Dying to Kill* (2005), one of the few works that specifically focuses on what compels women to engage in terrorism, particularly suicide terrorism, she finds that of the Kurdish women who joined the PKK, the majority of them reported being raped in Turkey by the military. And the same is true for the Tamil women who joined the LTTE. The vast majority of the women who made up the ranks of the LTTE reported being raped by the Sinhalese security services. Thus, Bloom argues that “in many patriarchal societies, if a woman has been sexually violated, she is stigmatized not only because of the shame and trauma of the act, but then by her own cultural norms, and oftentimes she is not allowed to marry or have children” (2005, p.55). In these cases, there are few options left for these women and so they can be seduced by the allure of terrorism as a way to redeem their honor, or in the case of suicide terrorism, to end their suffering.

### ***Why Africa?***

In this study I restrict the unit of analysis to sub-Saharan Africa because this region represents a unique case when it comes to observing the intersection between state failure, political violence, and sexual violence. The unfortunate reality is that, as the following section will demonstrate, these factors are disproportionately present in sub-Saharan Africa, and occur at higher frequencies when compared to other regions of the world.

### ***State Failure in sub-Saharan Africa***

First, state failure is an apparent pandemic in the region of sub-Saharan Africa. With the exception of Western Sahara and Swaziland, fifty two of Africa’s fifty-four countries are on the 2011 Failed State Index as states at the critical levels of warning or alert. It is believed that state failure remains such a problem in sub-Saharan Africa because the region was never organized along the

Westphalian state model that we recognize today. As a result, the region must now struggle to build political and economic institutions capable of sustaining a functioning state.

Research dedicated to understanding post-colonial African states acknowledge that a number of scholars try to impose a concept of statehood based upon the models of Weber that are not appropriate given the context of ethnic and tribal identities unique to post colonial African nations (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Bates, 1981; Widner, 1995; Herbst 1996). Africa was never comprised of classically defined sovereign states that maintained a monopoly over the territory within its boundaries. Furthermore, many colonial powers that established a presence in Africa made no effort to extend the administrative authority of the government beyond the capital city. “In most cases, the colonial governments were little more than elementary bureaucracies, with limited personnel and finances, and were more comparable to rural country fiefdoms in Europe than modern independent states” (Jackson, 1993). After achieving independence, several African nations continued this trend and did little to extend the administrative authority of the government beyond the urban centers.

Consequently, given Africa’s historical background, Herbst argues that the failure to resuscitate failed states or prevent weak states from failing in Africa is the result of the international system’s legitimization and recognition of several African nations that were never really states to begin with (1996). The vast majority of reports and analytic studies that examine the state continue to use existing nation-states as their unit of analysis. Yet, borders manufactured by colonial powers make the concept of statehood in Africa very difficult to achieve. Given that post-colonial Africa lacks a history of state development, it is very difficult for these contemporary states to create strong states. Many post-colonial African nations are experiencing episodes of state failure because they simply lack a blueprint. Thus, it is difficult for states that lack a history of prior state development to establish strong and

effective states today because the political and economic institutions necessary to promote state building were never cultivated in the past.

### *Terrorism, Insurgency and Political Violence in Africa*

Political violence in sub-Saharan Africa is more widespread and commonplace than many may realize. Africa's most tragic failed states, Sudan, Sierra Leone, and Somalia are all well known sponsors of terrorism, and at various time periods in their histories have all provided safe haven for dangerous terrorist networks, including al-Qaeda.

As if managing terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa was not difficult, this region must also contend with insurgent activity. Insurgent movements in sub-Saharan Africa have waged a campaign of terror against citizens within their own country, which could rival the attacks of any international terrorist operation. For example, while some would classify Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) as primarily an opposition movement, the U.S. State Department has identified the RUF as a terrorist group, pointing to the violence that characterized their campaign of terror against the weak government during the nineties. Regardless of one's position on the appropriate classification of the RUF, the RUF's relationship with al-Qaeda through its diamond smuggling operation, and its harboring of members of this terrorist group within Sierra Leone is well known.

Insurgent and terrorist activity is also well documented in Sudan. Backed by the Sudanese government, in 2003 the paramilitary organization the Janjaweed began implementing a brutal campaign against the popular resistance movement, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), which is comprised of three non-Arab groups—the Masalit, Fur, and Zaghawa. The conflict between the two forces has plunged the Darfur region into anarchy, and led to the internal displacement of over two million forced migrants, and more than 200,000 refugees have fled to neighboring Chad. At the same time, Sudan remains on the U.S. State Department's list of states that sponsor terrorism, given that the



state has provided safe haven for Hezbollah, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, the Egyptian Islamic Group, and the Abu Nidal organization, all well-known and very dangerous terrorist organizations (Linden et al., 2002).

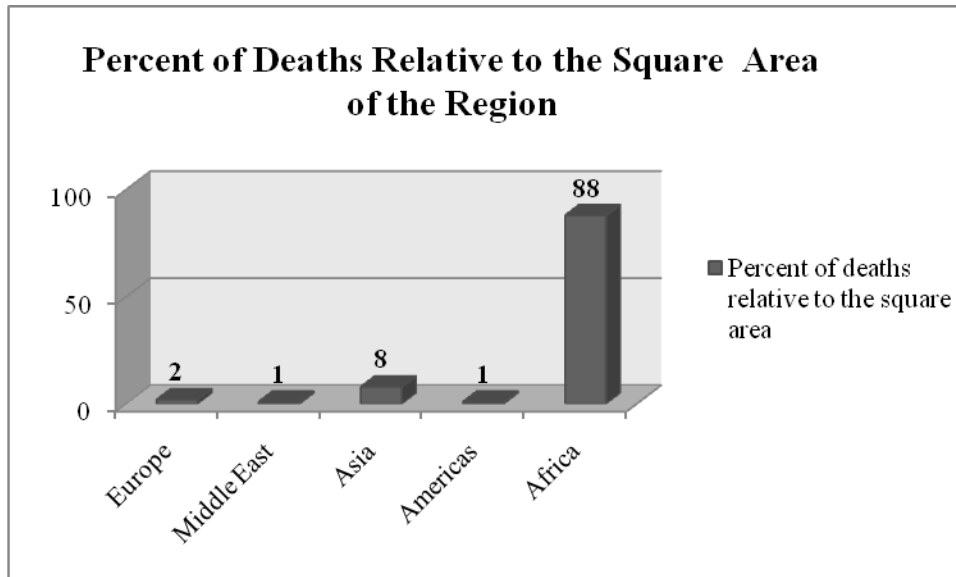
Beyond insurgent activity, and terrorism, sub-Saharan Africa is continually plagued by civil struggles between corrupt governments and rebel groups. From Liberia's protracted armed struggle, to the endless cycle of resistance and rebellion movements in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Nigeria, to name a few, "many post-independence rebel movements in Africa have unleashed extremely brutal forms of violence against [its own citizens]"<sup>1</sup> all in the name of rebelling against the corrupt national governments of these failed states (Mkandawire, 2002, p. 200).

Therefore, with the enduring presence of political violence in sub-Saharan Africa, this region represents an ideal case for analysis, as this region has disproportionately been affected by intra-state conflict more than any other region in the world in the past two decades (See Figure 1.1). Thus, citizens, particularly women, have likely been affected by the consequences of political violence in some capacity, and have certainly been exposed to extremist groups; therefore, I expect they will have clearly defined opinions regarding the use of political violence as a legitimate political tool.

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<sup>1</sup>Mkandawire, Thandika. (2002). "The Terrible Cost of Post-Colonial Rebel Movements in Africa." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Volume 40 (2), July 29, [cited 23 November 2009]. Available from <http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/newsview.nsf/0/8FAAC90AF84D90A6C1256C0500529E87?OpenDocument>

**Figure 1.1: Conflict Death Tolls Relative to the Square Area of the Region, 1990-2007**



Source: Figure compiled by author; Data come from Hawkins, Virgil. (2008). *Stealth Conflicts; How the World's Worst Violence Is Ignored*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

### *Sexual Violence in Africa*

Beyond sub-Saharan Africa's pandemic state weakness and the prevalence of political violence, the region is also plagued by another darker, deeply rooted problem, and that is sexual violence.

In South Africa alone, it is estimated that a woman or girl is raped every twenty-six seconds<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, 72% of pregnant teenagers and 60% of teenagers who had never been pregnant reported having been coerced into having sex (Jewkes et al., 2002), and of the teenagers interviewed, 21% reported the sexual abuse occurred before the age of fifteen.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has also received worldwide attention in the past year. According to *Al-Jazeera*, it finds that based upon reported attacks, there are approximately 400

<sup>2</sup> Keepin, Will and Cynthia Brix. (2008). *Gender Reconciliation South Africa: A New Initiative-Proposal for Three Year Initiative, 2008-2010*, Satyana Institute in Collaboration with Phaphama Initiatives, February 15 and The Women's International Network News, 25-4, Autumn 1999.

rapes per day in the DRC,<sup>3</sup> and there are growing fears among UN aid officials that the use of rape has become an institutionalized weapon of war in the conflict in the eastern DRC between UN-backed Congolese government forces and Rwandan Hutu rebels. "Rape has been used by all armed groups as a weapon that is more readily available than bullets and bombs. In many cases the social stigma associated with rape leaves the survivors shunned by husbands, parents and their communities" (Adow, 2009).<sup>4</sup>

The DRC and South Africa are undoubtedly unique cases that are positioned on the extreme end, nonetheless, sub-Saharan Africa is plagued by a disturbing prevalence of sexual violence against girls and women. In Kenya, 43% of women ages 15-49 reported having been sexually abused (Population Council, 2008). And in Ethiopia, 59% of women ages 15-49 reported experiencing sexual violence (Population Council, 2008). Similarly in Tanzania, 31% of women ages 15-49 reported having experienced sexual violence (Population Council, 2008). When compared to the statistics for the United States, which has the highest incidence of rape among any industrialized nation, and reports an incidence rate of 17.6%, with 21.6% of rapes occurring before the age of twelve (National Violence Against Women Survey, November, 2000)<sup>5</sup> one can see the situation in sub-Saharan Africa is alarming.

For many reasons, the rise of sexual violence in sub-Saharan Africa is a tremendous humanitarian concern. Female survivors of sexual violence not only sustain physical injuries, but are more likely than other women to have sexual and reproductive consequences, psychological and behavioral disorders, and are at greater risk of suicide (IFPP, 2004; Campbell & Sefl, 2004). Violence, and the fear of violence, severely limits women's contribution to social and economic development, and rape accounts for 5-10% of healthy years lost by women (WHO, 2005).

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<sup>3</sup>Adow, Mohammed. "Rape Used As A Weapon in DR Congo." *Al Jazeera* [updated 23 October 2009; cited 23 November 2009]. Available from <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2009/10/2009102282534764573.html>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.feminist.com/antiviolence/facts.html>

Beyond the humanitarian issues raised by the disturbing phenomenon of rape in Africa, this situation also has socio-political implications. From our discussion of the motivators of terrorism, and that female terrorists are overwhelmingly motivated to participate in and support political violence after being sexually victimized, there is a strong inclination that with the high incidence of rape and the increasing presence of political violence and extremist groups in sub-Saharan Africa, the presence of female terrorists could soon emerge in the region. This is the main argument of this study, which I test in the following section.

## **Data and Methodology**

### **Data**

The data for this analysis come from the Afrobarometer survey which collects data from several sub-Saharan African countries, with approximately 1,200 respondents of voting age from each state. The survey was conducted in three rounds and is gathered using face to face interviews based upon a random representative national sample. For the purpose of this study, I use the third round (2005-2006) which consists of a total of eighteen cases ( N~1200 for each case): South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Mali, Cape Verde, Kenya, Mozambique, Senegal, Benin and Madagascar<sup>6</sup>.

As discussed at an earlier point in this paper, the overwhelming majority of Africa's nations are considered failed states. An examination of the 2009 Index of State Weakness reveals that with the exception of Cape Verde, South Africa and Botswana, the remaining fifteen cases in the sample rank in the bottom three quintiles (Table 1.1). The 2011 Failed State Index reports similar findings, except it

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that the Afrobarometer survey data are intentionally biased toward liberalizing regimes, therefore authoritarian regimes, and countries embroiled in conflict are underrepresented.

ranks all eighteen of the cases from the Afrobarometer's Survey as either a state in the phases of warning or alert (Table 1.2). The indexes illustrate that as a unit of analysis, Africa presents a unique opportunity to observe state failure and that the sample is representative of this particular phenomenon in the region, which is why all eighteen cases are included in this analysis.

**Table 1.1: The 2009 Index of State Weakness Rankings for the Country Cases in Round Three of the Afrobarometer Survey**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Failed State Index Ranking</b>	<b>Quintile</b>
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	8	Bottom Quintile
<b>Uganda</b>	27	Bottom Quintile
<b>Nigeria</b>	28	Bottom Quintile
<b>Zambia</b>	32	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quintile
<b>Mozambique</b>	39	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quintile
<b>Malawi</b>	46	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quintile
<b>Madagascar</b>	49	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quintile
<b>Kenya</b>	50	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quintile
<b>Mali</b>	52	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quintile
<b>Lesotho</b>	53	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quintile
<b>Tanzania</b>	55	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quintile
<b>Senegal</b>	68	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quintile
<b>Benin</b>	71	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quintile
<b>Namibia</b>	82	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quintile
<b>Ghana</b>	84	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quintile
<b>Botswana</b>	102	4 <sup>th</sup> Quintile
<b>South Africa</b>	110	4 <sup>th</sup> Quintile
<b>Cape Verde</b>	123	5 <sup>th</sup> Quintile (The Highest)

\*Rankings based upon a total of 141 Countries

**Table 1.2: The 2011 Failed State Index Rankings for the Country Cases in Round Three of the Afrobarometer Survey**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Failed State Index Ranking</b>	<b>Quintile</b>
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	2	Alert
<b>Kenya</b>	14	Alert
<b>Nigeria</b>	15	Alert
<b>Uganda</b>	21	Alert
<b>Malawi</b>	28	Alert
<b>Zambia</b>	60	Warning
<b>Lesotho</b>	67	Warning
<b>Madagascar</b>	68	Warning
<b>Tanzania</b>	70	Warning
<b>Mozambique</b>	72	Warning
<b>Mali</b>	83	Warning
<b>Cape Verde</b>	84	Warning
<b>Namibia</b>	96	Warning
<b>Benin</b>	97	Warning
<b>Senegal</b>	102	Warning
<b>Botswana</b>	116	Warning
<b>South Africa</b>	122	Warning
<b>Ghana</b>	124	Warning

**\*Rankings based upon a total of 177 Countries**

## Model

In order to test my assumptions I estimate a logistical regression model that examines the role victimization plays in a woman's decision to support the use of political violence. In this model, the attitudes of women who have been victimized are observed while controlling for the attitudes of men who have been victimized, as well as women who have not been the victim of an attack.

**Figure 1.2: Logit Model- The Impact of Victimization on Female Support for the Use of Political Violence**

$$\text{Logit Model} = \ln \left( \frac{p_i(\text{political violence})}{1 - p_i(\text{political violence})} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Women Victims} + \beta_2 \text{Women Not Victims} + \beta_3 \text{Men Victims} + \beta_4 \text{Men Not Victims} + \beta_5 \text{Education} + \beta_6 \text{PersEcon} + \beta_7 \text{Ethnic} + \beta_{11} \text{Urban} + e$$

## Description of the Variables

### *Dependent Variable-Political Violence*

The dependent variable estimated in the logit model captures individuals' attitudes regarding the use of political violence as a legitimate tool to secure tangible goods or concessions from the state. The measure for political violence is based upon the following question in the Afrobarometer Survey:

*Question (Variable=Violence): Which of the following statements is closest to your view. Choose Statement A or Statement B.*

*A: The use of violence is never justified in [respondent's country] politics*

*B: in this country, it is sometimes necessary to use violence in support of a just cause.*



*Value Labels: 1=Agree Very Strongly with A, 2=Agree with A, 3=Agree with B, 4=Agree Very Strongly with B, 5=Agree with Neither, 9= Don't Know, 98=Refused to Answer, -1=Missing Data*<sup>7</sup>

In order to estimate the model, I set the values “1” and “2” to zero, values “3” and “4” to one, and code the remaining values as Missing Data. This leaves me with 23,993 observations out of an original 25,397 observations. My reasoning for coding the variable in this manner is because I am only interested in those respondents that favor the use of violence in relation to those that do not. I do not know the motivations of respondents who do not have an answer, or agree with neither statement, so this information is not useful to me. In the end, the transformation of the variable allows me to determine which independent factors increase the likelihood that individuals will support the use of political violence. Therefore, the value “1” indicates the respondent agrees with Statement B and supports the use of political violence, whereas the value “0” indicates the respondent agrees with Statement A and does not support the use of political violence.

### *Explanatory Variables*

#### *Victimization*

As discussed at the opening of this paper, strong states provide one basic, fundamental public good, which weak states lack: the public good of security. Without security, it is difficult for states to provide other basic goods that indicate a state is stable. This paper illustrates that the victimization of women has social and moral implications for society, but in this particular analysis, I contend that the victimization of women also has devastating political consequences. Therefore, I operationalize the measures of security and gender to capture the dimensions of female victimization.

The measure for the public good of security (*Security1*) is based upon the following question in the Afrobarometer Survey:

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<sup>7</sup> All missing data, including the value label “-1=Missing Data” are removed from the analysis.

*Question 1(Variable=Security2): Over the past year, how often (if ever) have you or anyone in your family: Been physically attacked.*

*Value Labels: 0=Never, 1=Just once or twice, 2=Several times, 3=Many times, 4=Always, 9= Don't Know, 998=Refused to Answer, -1=Missing Data*

For the purpose of this analysis, I transform the variable *Security1* into a dichotomous measure where “0” remains zero, and the values “1-4” are coded as “1”. I label this variable *Victim*. This new variable leaves me with an indicator of whether or not a person has been the victim of an attack, or someone close to them.

The measure of gender is also operationalized in this model. It is based upon the following question in the Afrobarometer Survey:

*Question 2(Variable=Gender): Respondent's gender*

*Value Labels: 1=Male, 2=Female*

*Note: Answered by interviewer.*

In order to estimate the model, I label the values so that “0” equals male and “1” equals female. I then interact gender with security to arrive at various measures of victimization that are applicable for this analysis (See Table 1.3).

**Table 1.3: Illustration of the Interaction between Gender and Security<sup>8</sup>**

		<b>Security</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Men Who Have Not Been Attacked (0*0) N=22,553	Women Who Have Not Been Attacked (1*0) N=22,838	
	Men Who Have Been Attacked (0*1) N=1,757	Women Who Have Been Attacked (1*1) N=1,472	

<sup>8</sup> Note: This variable is transformed into three separate dummy variables in order to estimate the logit model

### *Controls*

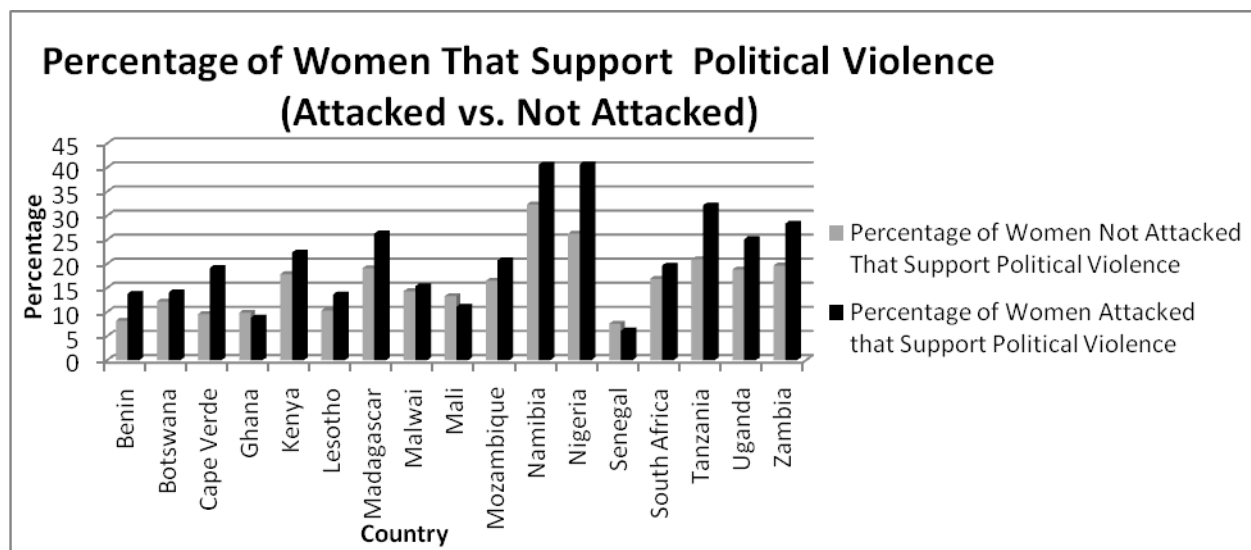
I operationalize a series of control variables that capture the socioeconomic conditions of the respondents. I argue that one of the most salient differences between the respondents in this study is socioeconomic levels. Otherwise stated, I believe that support for political violence is more likely among the “have nots” and the marginalized populations of society. Based upon the literature, I also believe that women living in rural areas, without education, or economic mobility, are more likely to be raped, and exposed to violence (Population Council, 2008). Therefore, measures of socio-economic inequality must be taken into account in these models.

I include the variables, level of education, personal economic situation, ethnic groups’ economic situation, and whether the respondent lives in an urban or rural area. I argue these control variables serve as ideal indicators of an individual’s socioeconomic position within that country. See the Appendix for a description of the control variables, and their measurement.

## Results-Descriptive Statistics

Before turning to the logistical regression results, I delve deeper into the dynamics of the Afrobarometer data. The results of the first set of descriptive statistics reveal that with the exception of Ghana, Senegal and Mali, women in the Afrobarometer survey who report being the victim of an attack indicate a higher likelihood of supporting political violence when compared to women who have not been a victim of an attack (See Figure 1.3).

**Figure 1.3: Percentage of Women that Support the Use of Political Based Upon Their Levels of Personal Security-Whether they have been the victim of an attack or not (2006)**



Source: Figure compiled by author; Data come from Afrobarometer Survey (2006)

The findings reported in Figure 1.3 are consistent with our hypothesis, that women who have been victims of violence, are more likely to support the use of political violence. I argue that this is because feelings of powerlessness and revenge compel women who have experienced the trauma of sexual violence to seek a violent outlet for these destructive feelings, and supporting and engaging in acts of terror and political violence represent a powerful catalyst.

In the logit model which follows in the next section, I estimate the impact of male victimization on support for political violence. I do this because my argument is grounded in the theory that victimization is overwhelming a motivating factor for women with regards to support for terrorism, but this is not necessarily so for men. In Figure 1.4 I once again draw comparisons; however, in this case I take the aggregate of females and males in the survey who have been attacked and their comparable support for political violence.

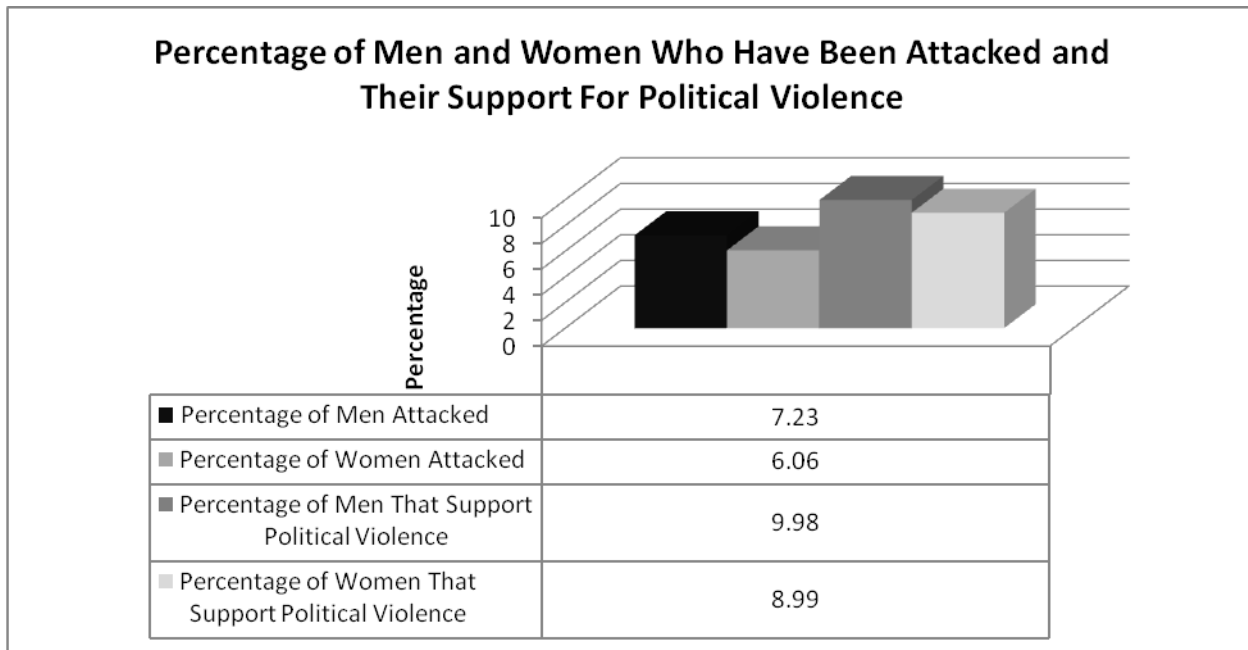
The first point of interest regarding Figure 1.4 is that men report a higher percentage of victimization than women. This is surprising because according to existing data and studies, women are disproportionately the victims of violence in weak and declining states due to the weak rule of law (Population Council, 2008; Campbell and Sefl, 2004; Jewkes, Levin and Loveday, 2002). Although, the percentage difference is small, I argue that it is highly likely that many of the female respondents did not feel comfortable in the face to face interview admitting that they were victims of an attack.

The second interesting finding to emerge from Figure 1.4 is that victimization appears to be highly correlated with support for political violence<sup>9</sup>. Further, less than one percentage point separates men and women who have been victimized and their support for political violence. This finding would suggest that regardless of victimization, gender does not present a significant difference in attitudes regarding support for political violence.

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<sup>9</sup> Pearson Correlation Coefficient=.486, p=.000

**Figure 1.4: Percentage of Men and Women that Support the Use of Political Based Upon Their Levels of Personal Security-Whether they have been the victim of an attack or not (2006)**



Source: Figure compiled by author; Data come from Afrobarometer Survey (2006)

While the findings in Figure 1.4, would lead one to believe that there is little difference between men who are victimized and women who are victimized and their support for political violence, which would suggest the experiences of women who are attacked are somehow the same as the experiences of men who are attacked. It is important to test this particular hypothesis given what was revealed in Figure 1.4. Therefore, based upon the number of observations for men and women, I test whether or not there is really no difference between the two statistically, when it comes to men and women being victimized, and their support for political violence. If this is the case, that there is no difference, then we would expect similar findings in the logit results. However, the results illustrated in Table 1.5 reveal that this is not the case. In a test of the mean difference between the victimization of women and men, I reject the null that there is no statistical difference between the two variables. The same is true for political violence, I reject the null hypothesis that there is no statistical difference between men and women's support for the use of political violence.

Therefore, the test of mean differences reveals that gender differences remain salient in men and women's attitudes toward political violence, as well as their feelings regarding victimization. These findings are important with regards to the logit model because I expect to find that women are more likely than men to support the use political violence given their levels of victimization, despite that men report a higher percentage of being attacked than women.

**Table 1.5: Test of Mean Differences for Men and Women Regarding Political Violence and Victimization**

Mean Difference Between Men and Women's Support for Political Violence	Hypothesis	Level of Significance	Result
.0099612	H0: Mean Difference=0	HA: Mean Difference ≠0; p=.0004  HA: Mean Difference >0; p=.0002  HA: Mean Difference <0; p=.9998	Reject the null that there is no statistical difference between men and women's support for the use of political violence
<b>Mean Difference Between the Victimization of Men and Women</b>			
.0117236	H0: Mean Difference=0	HA: Mean Difference ≠0; p=.000  HA: Mean Difference >0; p=.000  HA: Mean Difference <0; p=1.000	Reject the null that there is no statistical difference between the victimization of men and women

## Results-Logit Model

**Table 1.6: Binary Logit Estimates For Women Who Have Been Victimized And Their Support For Political Violence**

Variable	Model	Model With Specific Interactions
Men*Victim	.347*** (.065)	.353*** (.065)
Women*Victim	.434*** (.071)	.426*** (.071)
WomenNotVictim	-.063* (.038)	-.180 (.120)
PersEcon	.045** (.016)	.045** (.016)
Education	.059*** (.009)	.038** (.013)
Ethnic	-.013 (.019)	-.012 (.019)
Urban	.072 (.038)	.044 (.053)
Urban*Women	----	.056 (.077)
PersEcon*Women	----	-.020 (.031)
Education*Women	----	.043** (.019)
Constant	-1.77*** (.094)	-1.71*** (.109)
Observations	20716	20716
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.0065	.0068
LR $\chi^2$	132.47	132.46
Prob > $\chi^2$	.000	.000

Note: \*\*\* $p < .01$  for two tailed test; \*\* $p < .05$  for two tailed test; \* $p < 0.1$  for two tailed test; standard errors in parentheses

**Table 1.7: Marginal Change in Variables of both Substantive and Statistical Significance for the Model-Women Who Have Been Victimized And Their Support For Political Violence**

Variable	Marginal Change	Percentage Change	Support For Hypotheses
Men*Victim	.058	5.8	Yes
Women*Victim	.075	7.5	Yes
WomenNotVictim	-.009	-0.9	Yes
Education	.009	0.9	Yes
Education*Women	.007	0.7	Yes

Note: The marginal effect indicates an increase in the predicted probability of the dependent variable according to one standard deviation change in the independent variable, holding all other variables constant



### *Findings for the Logit Model-Women Who Have Been Victimized And Their Support For Political Violence*

The findings in Table 1.6 and 1.7 represent the crux of this analysis by establishing that living amongst a climate of state failure has a specific impact on the political attitudes of women who have been victims of violence, particularly that women who have been sexually victimized are more likely to support the use of political violence against the state, when compared to other groups. This argument is based upon my assertion that women's perceptions of physical insecurity, and their level of shame and powerlessness, accompanied by a desire for revenge after an attack leads them to support political violence at a higher probability than men who have been attacked, and women who have not been attacked. The implication of this finding is that the traumatic consequences of state failure could be breeding a new wave of female terrorists, specifically in sub-Saharan Africa where rape is a tragic legacy of the region.

The findings support the hypotheses presented in this study. For women who have been victimized, they are 7.5% more likely to support political violence than comparison groups. With regards to men who have been victimized, they are 5.8% more likely to support political violence than comparison groups. And as for women who have not been attacked, the findings are telling. This group is 0.9% less likely to support the use of political violence.

Other interesting findings to emerge are those surrounding the variable, *Education*. The findings reveal that the more educated the respondent, the more likely they are to support the use of political violence. This is also true of educated women. This is an intriguing finding, simply because it contradicts the existing notions of terrorists being unemployed, poorly educated men (Victoroff 2005, Alexander, 2002; Clark, 1983; Gunaratna, 2002). From the findings I would argue that the more educated the person, especially a woman, the more exposed they are to the media, and the more likely

they are to have very definitive opinions of the state and the regime in power. Further, I argue that the level of education for an individual confers upon that person a certain ideology and expectation that with higher levels of education, comes higher economic status, and improved living conditions. That is the expectation, but often that is not the case in these particular states, which can then lead to individual dissatisfaction with the state (Gurr, 1970).

Finally, in the model, the variables that measure ethnicity and whether a respondent is from an urban area, fail to achieve statistical significance, which suggests, in the relationship between victimization and support for political violence, these factors have little to no impact on shaping a person's attitudes.

## **Discussion**

This analysis highlights an under-researched facet found in the study of terrorism and political violence, and that is the importance of state failure and the tragic and long-lasting implications of this phenomenon.

The results of the statistical model reveal that women who have been attacked are more likely than any of the comparison groups to support the use of political violence. This finding is consistent with the existing literature on female terrorists which finds that women who have been subjected to sexual and gender based violence report that is one of the major motivators for them to become involved in a terrorist movement (Kimhi and Even, 2004; Speckhard and Akhmedoava, 2006; Speckhard, 2009; Bloom, 2005; Cunningham, 2003). Where this study diverges from the existing terrorism literature is that I restrict the analysis to sub-Saharan Africa, where there has yet to be the emergence of a wave of female terrorists; however, I argue, given the results of this analysis, and the conditions in the region, it

is only a matter of time before the international community will soon see an emergence of terrorist threats from Africa, with female faces.

The questions that remain for this study is *when* will this happen and *why* hasn't it already? While I cannot begin to answer the first question, I can shed some light on why sub-Saharan Africa has lagged behind, so to speak, when it comes to female terrorists. The major factor that distinguishes this region from the Middle East and South Asia, where female terrorism is prevalent, is ethnic fractionalization and thus a lack of cohesion regarding a common enemy. William Easterly (2000) finds that in weak states with fragmented societies, ethnic diversity makes cooperation difficult, and therefore it becomes difficult for rebel groups and movements to unite with a common purpose against the fledgling government. Consequently, these rebel movements in sub-Saharan Africa compete against each other *and* the state. Thus, there is no unified target, and without a unified target there is no common evil which rebel leaders can then package to the people as a legitimate target to be attacked (Collier and Hoeffler, 2001). However, if extremist and rebel groups in sub-Saharan Africa were to mobilize against a single target—namely, the state, the major barrier of cooperation would disappear.

A final discussion of the results turns to the weaknesses of the analysis, the main one being the use of a proxy measure of rape. The Afrobarometer Survey does not ask the respondent specifically if they have been raped, only if they have been attacked. Therefore, there are women who answered this question, who were subjected to a violent attack, but not necessarily raped. I realize this is a major weakness of the analysis, but also see no way around it. With face to face interviews, I remain convinced that had a question been posed to women as to whether or not they'd been raped, many would have denied the incident, even if they'd actually been sexually assaulted, given that rape remains the most underreported crime globally<sup>10</sup>. The fact that men in the sample reported being attacked more than

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<sup>10</sup> Vera Institute of Justice. (2008) the Rule of Law: A Global Approach A Report to the World Justice Project. [http://www.onyxpc.com/pdf/dimrol\\_en.pdf](http://www.onyxpc.com/pdf/dimrol_en.pdf)

women may illustrate that women are probably less likely to report being victims of sexual violence, because all other evidence would suggest that women in weak states are overwhelmingly the victims of violence when compared to men. Therefore, by asking a broad question regarding whether they have been attacked, I argue that it is very likely women are probably more willing to be truthful than had they been asked a more specific question, since they are not required to go into any details regarding the nature of the attack.

One important limitation of the analysis and the findings is that we note women who have been victimized experience feelings of revenge and have a higher probability of supporting political violence than comparison groups, but we do not know toward whom these feelings of revenge are directed, subsequently, we cannot be entirely certain that every woman who has been victimized in the survey supports political violence directed specifically against the state. This limitation of the study is further compounded by the fact that we are unable to gather data on the perpetrators of the violence. Unlike the armed struggles between the Tamils and the Sinhalese government, the Chechens and Russia, and the Palestinians and Israel, in sub-Saharan Africa conflicts oftentimes do not simply involve a non-state actor against the state, just as these conflicts tend to be multifaceted with multiple combatants. Thus, the analysis is unable to reveal the target for such acts of political violence supported by the victimized women in the survey.

Finally, another weakness of this study is that the majority of the countries in the analysis are liberalizing regimes. Therefore, while these states are considered failing or in crisis by national indexes, they are not necessarily at the brink of collapse, such as Sudan or Somalia. Consequently, the countries in the sample do not include extreme cases of state failure, which is certainly a limitation of the analysis that can be attributed to the availability of the data.

## Conclusion

A state in failure or even decline is plagued by internal struggles for power, violence, corruption and conflict. As a consequence, the most vulnerable members of society are the most likely victims. In war torn Africa where state collapse is the norm and not the exception, the most brutal and heinous sexual violence against women and girls has emerged. I argue that this is the legacy of state failure. Without the state to provide the most basic and fundamental tenant of a functioning society in the modern world, and that is the public good of security, women and girls are subjected to sexual and gender based violence, leaving their lives forever altered by the tragic act.

Thus far, in sub-Saharan Africa, we have not seen an emergence of terrorism perpetrated by women. However, the conditions for such a phenomenon are present—a patriarchal society where rape leaves women stigmatized, and a viable target for attack in the form of the corrupt and failing state. At one point it was unthinkable that a woman would engage in terrorism, let alone the most extreme kind in the form of suicide terrorism, but with the Lebanese pro-Syrian group, the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (SSNP) initiating the trend of using women as human bombers in 1985, the unthinkable has become a situation of great concern. The Liberation of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) began using female bombers in Sri Lanka and India in 1991 with the well documented case of the woman known as Dhanu who assassinated Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) used female bombers against Turkish markets beginning in 1996. Well known as the Black Widows, Chechen rebels turned to the use of these women as terrorists in 2000. Palestinian female suicide bombers began targeting Israel in 2002. Finally, al-Qaeda related networks began to use female terrorists in Iraq in 2005, and Somalia (al-Shabaab) in 2006 (Speckhard 2008); and with the 2009 suicide bombing in Mogadishu at a medical school graduation ceremony where the bomber was largely able to carry off the

attack because he was dressed as a woman, there is certainly the likelihood that more such attacks could follow in the region—with the use of actual *women*.

Female suicide terrorists cite rape and revenge as the major factors that motivate and mobilize them into joining a terrorist movement. And the findings from this analysis suggest that women who have been sexually victimized support the use of terrorism and political violence at higher probabilities than the comparison groups. Therefore, given the findings of this analysis and with recent trends in history, could female terrorists begin to emerge in sub-Saharan Africa? Undoubtedly, yes—and only time will tell when. Consequently, efforts to rebuild collapsed states are essential if the global community does not wish to contend with a new wave of terrorist threats from Africa, with female faces.

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## **Appendix**

**Table 1.11: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
violence	23993	.1896803	.3920563	0	1
gender*violence	24310	.0605512	.2859864	0	1
security1	24290	.7142445	1.154027	0	4
security2	24310	.2035788	.6049248	0	4
presence1	24207	.4823398	.907163	0	3
presence2	24206	.1816905	.5812226	0	3
presence3	20736	1.041667	1.104477	0	4
corrupt1	19685	1.173787	.9253391	0	3
corrupt2	19960	1.248697	.8737496	0	3
corrupt3	20562	1.278134	.9010785	0	3
corrupt4	20271	1.352721	.8658986	0	3
corrupt5	20280	1.349162	.8793982	0	3
legitimate1	22219	1.530492	.9100338	0	3
legitimate2	22187	1.541308	.9762087	0	3
goods1	25347	1.134296	1.381171	0	4
goods2	24568	2.563538	1.256931	0	4
goods3	25048	2.45297	1.045318	0	4
property	23654	2.040374	.6894866	0	5
gender	25397	.4998622	.5000098	0	1
victim	24310	.0605512	.2385102	0	1
persecon	25308	2.606211	1.189938	1	5
education	25305	3.117803	1.995429	0	9
ethnic	22000	3.161864	.9888373	1	5
urban	25397	.618262	.4858224	0	1

**Control Variables**

### 1) Education

**Question:** What is the highest level of education you have completed?

**Variable Label:** Education of respondent

**Values:** 0-9, 98-99, -1

**Value Labels:** 0=No formal schooling, 1=Informal schooling (including Koranic schooling), 2=Some primary schooling, 3=Primary school completed, 4=Some secondary school/ High school, 5=Secondary school completed/High school, 6=Post-secondary qualifications, other than university e.g. a diploma or degree from a technical/polytechnic/college, 7=Some university, 8=University completed, 9=Post-graduate, 98=Refused to Answer, 99=Don't Know, -1=Missing Data

**\*In order to estimate the model, I code the values of "98" and "99" as Missing Data**

### 2) Personal Economic/Living Conditions

**Question:** In general, how would you describe: Your own present living conditions?

**Variable Label:** Your present living conditions

**Values:** 1-5, 9, 998, -1

**Value Labels:** 1=Very bad, 2=Fairly bad, 3=Neither good nor bad, 4=Fairly good, 5=Very good, 9=Don't Know, 998=Refused to Answer, -1=Missing Data

**\*In order to estimate the model, I code the values of "9" and "98" as Missing Data**

### 3) Gender

**Question Number:** Q101

**Question:** Respondent's gender

**Variable Label:** Gender of respondent

**Values:** 1, 2

**Value Labels:** 1=Male, 2=Female

**Note:** Answered by interviewer.

**\*In order to estimate the model, I label the values so that "0" equals male and "1" equals female**

### 4) Ethnic group's economic status

**Question:** Think about the condition of \_\_\_\_\_ [respondent's identity group] Are their economic conditions worse, the same as, or better than other groups in this country?

**Variable Label:** Ethnic group's economic conditions

**Values:** 1-5, 7, 9, 98, -1

**Value Labels:** 1=Much Better, 2=Better, 3=Same, 4=Worse, 5=Much Worse, 7=Not Applicable, 9=Don't Know, 98=Refused to Answer, -1=Missing Data

**Note:** Interviewer probed for strength of opinion. If respondent had not identified a group on question 79, this question was marked as "Not Applicable."

**\*In order to estimate the model, I code the values of "7", "9" and "98" as Missing Data**

### 5) Respondent is from an urban or rural area

**Question:** Do you come from a rural or urban area?

**Variable Label:** Interviewer urban or rural

**Values:** 1, 2

**Value Labels:** 1=Rural, 2=Urban

**Note:** Answered by interviewer.

**\*In order to estimate the model, I label the values so that "0" equals rural and "1" equals urban**