READINGS IN PEACE & CONFLICT

Essays in honour of
Professor Isaac Olawale Albert

Editors:
Elias Suleiman Bogoro
Matt Meyer
Nathaniel D. Danjibo

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Society for Peace Studies and Practice

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I will like to acknowledge the immense contributions of Professor Elias Suleiman Bogoro, the Board Chairman of the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP) in ensuring this book sees the light of day. Great appreciation goes to Professor Is-haq Oloyode, the Registrar of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), for the foreword of this book. The technical contributions of Professor J.K. Ayantayo remain commendable. I cannot, but recall with gratitude, the Editorial and Secretarial services of Mr. Gabriel Ojo and Bukola Omolawon Magbaralewon. The great sacrifice of time, expertise and commitment of Mr. Lekan Olagunju who abandoned his schedules in Abuja to come down to Ibadan to painstakingly supervise the production of this book within an incredibly short time-frame is highly appreciated. Finally, I acknowledge the efforts of the contributing authors.

Dr. Nathaniel D. Danjibo
National President, SPSP,
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Preface

Professor Isaac Olawale Albert successfully midwifed the commencement of one of the very first academic peace studies in Africa. The processes leading to it was sponsored by the British Council West Africa in 1996 and the first batch of MA students was admitted in 2000. The Peace and Conflict Studies Programme in the University of Ibadan instantaneously became the pride of the University. The programme has not only developed the capacity of students, security personnel and even academics, it has consistently combined theoretical with practical methods to engender peace education using training workshops, talk-shops, seminars and colloquium.

The sheer volume and diversity of academic papers in this Festschrift clearly demonstrate the resounding impact of peace studies, and reveals a rapidly growing awareness of the critical role of human engineering in bringing the gown to town. As a pioneer of Peace and Conflict Studies in Nigeria and as a prodigious author in related fields, Professor Albert has unwittingly created a school of peace-builders whose constructive roles in nation-building can neither be downplayed nor neglected. It is not surprising that he was recently awarded Full Membership of Chatham House in London (113597). Similar awards had earlier come to him from several universities in Nigeria and Ghana.

This book consists of seventy two chapters. The introductory chapter provides the foreground. Thirty articles focus on theoretical issues; sixteen on conflict management and resolution; six examine peace policy and governance; six critically analyze gender and peace-building; twelve re-examine case studies on peace interventions. The concluding chapter is on peace and conflict research in Africa. It is interesting to note that over twelve accomplished academics, majority of who passed through the tutelage of Professor Albert contributed chapters to the book using objective, passionate, empirical approaches for examining sociological, religious, ethical, psychological, educational, security, medical, and professional perspectives.

Contributors to the book not only cut across the six geographical zones of Nigeria, there are others beyond the shores of this country. This indicates a symbolic and indeed, significant "all encompassing" nature of the book and clearly nuanced the the foot print of Prof Albert on Peace and Conflict Studies. In this regard, I have no doubt that this book will serve as invaluable resource material to scholars in Peace and Conflict Studies; remain a toolkit for Curriculum Development on Contemporary Peace and Security matters in Nigeria and, by extension, the African continent. This is the dream of Prof Albert, whose main academic interest has been fixated on developing peace

studies programmes and producing Afrocentric publications for supporting their growth in the context of the mantra of "African solutions to African problems."

Therefore, this book is adequately situated to enhance policy formulation and implementation in the Nigerian and African polity, now and in the nearest future.

Professor Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo
Professor of Religious Ethics, Religion and Society, and Religious Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Foreword

The 21st Century marked a significant watershed in the history of violence and peace processes worldwide. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall (towards the end of the last Century), the world swiftly moved to the direction of peace-building activities to support world peace, security and development. New peace actors and credible platforms began to emerge to institute peace structures at various spatial and thematic levels across various regions.

Happily, Africa has remained a major participant in these peace struggles. Having experienced violent overthrow of governments, armed conflicts, inter-communal wars, electoral violence, inter-religious cum ethnic violence and lately, terrorism and insurgency, the continent has been devising its own internal mechanisms for responding proactively to these challenges. Part of these efforts manifested in the establishment of peace and conflict studies programmes at the tertiary education levels to promote research on peace and peace-building strategies and consequently skew the minds of the younger generation towards peace and peaceful co-existence.

Two decades ago, the first, and perhaps, the largest Peace and Conflict Studies programme in Africa was introduced at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. This re-established Nigeria's leading role in the campaign for instituting the culture of peace and non-violence on the continent. Today, Nigerian universities offer Peace Studies either as a General Studies (GS) programme or as a full-time degree programme. Graduands of Peace Studies now occupy positions of influence and leadership in many international and sub-regional bodies including the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), apart from the academia.

History and dimensions of Peace Studies in Africa would be incomplete without reference to Professor Isaac Olawale Albert, an academic titan and intellectual colossus who initiated the first academic programme in the discipline in the entire black Africa; and in whose honour this book is published. His monumental scholarship is unrivalled and has created a niche for him globally just as his publications in Peace, Security and Conflict Studies are available in various libraries and institutions across the globe. He is one of the finest and most reputable peace practitioners that ever came out of Africa.

During my tenure as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin (2007-2012), Professor Albert helped establish the Peace Studies programme in the University of Ilorin. He also established the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies (CPSS) in 2009; graciously served as pioneer Director; and consequently laid a solid and formidable foundation for the Centre. The publication of the *Dynamics of Peace Processes* (2010), which I co-edited with him, is an eloquent testimony to a major milestone achieved within a year of serving in Ilorin. No doubt, his experience at the University of Ilorin provided impetus for the establishment of the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies (IPSS), University of Ibadan, in 2015. Here, too, Professor Albert also served as pioneer Director.

No befitting 60th "birthday gift" could have been more suitable for such an impactful and impressive scholar than this Festschrift, a priceless text and crucial study material for the teeming scholars, practitioners and students of Peace and Strategic/Conflict/Security/Development Studies across Africa. I equally appreciate the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP) for initiating the project.

Let me congratulate the contributors to *Readings in Peace and Conflict: Essays in Honour of Professor Isaac Olawale Albert @ 60* for producing deeply-engaging, well-researched and intellectually-stimulating essays.

Finally, as Francis Bacon once wrote, "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few are to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention," I believe that this book will be found to belong to the last category by serious-minded students, scholars and researchers in Peace and related Studies.

Happy reading.

Prof. Is-haq O. Oloyede, OFR, FNAL, fspsp
Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilorin
Registrar, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB)
October, 2019

Philosophy and Practice of Peace in West Africa

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INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, until very recently when there was a resurgence of international conflicts as witnessed between North Korea and United States of America, there has been a paradigm shift in the context and content of violent conflicts in the world. The ending of the Cold War between the Western powers led by the United States and the Eastern Communist block under the overarching control of the then Soviet Union, ended one era of conflict in Africa and ushered in a contrasting era (Furley 1995:7).International conflicts receded while there is increase in what Kador (2007) called new wars – national conflicts in most parts of Africa especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The situation in the sub-Saharan Africa was exemplified in the writings of Adebajo, (2011: 139) when he posits: "....West Africa has been among the most volatile regions in the world. Local brushfires have raged from Liberia to Sierra-Leone to Guinea-Bussau to Senegal to Cote I'voire in an interconnected web of instability." Indeed, conflicts constitute a major threat to African development in terms of loss of human life, destruction of property and of huge resources meant for improving infrastructure and promoting sustainable development into arms purchase and funding of expensive peacekeeping support operations (Albert, 2008). In Liberia, there was a 14-year civil war which started on 24 December, 1989, that consumed almost 300,000 lives, worsened the nation's abysmally poor infrastructure and the debilitating material conditions of the mass of the Liberian people. The war in Liberia nurtured the already volatile political situation in Sierra-Leone as a rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) led by Foday Sankoh, launched a two–pronged attack from National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) controlled territory in Liberia against President Momoh's All People's Congress (APC) led government in Sierra-Leone in March 1991. Though the conflicts in these countries have been substantially managed, the spate of violent conflicts in the sub-Saharan Africa is far from dwindling as many countries in the sub-region are currently experiencing one form of violent conflict or the other. Lately, the *Boko Haram* insurgency which started in Nigeria in 2009 has become an intractable conflict ravaging and destabilizing the North-East of the country and other sovereign states in the sub-region.

Flowing from these experiences, West Africa's leaders, regional and international organizations, international non-governmental organizations and local civil society organizations have done a lot in terms of institutionalizing structures and mechanisms to create peace, mitigate conflicts and promote sustainable peace in the sub-region. Despite these efforts, West Africa is yet to be at peace with itself. It is therefore appropriate that we continue to interrogate the challenges of peace and efforts that have been deployed in West Africa to deal with these challenges (Chambas, 2015). This becomes imperative in light of the need to articulate a more pragmatic and effective strategies for the promotion of peace in the West Africa sub-region.

Against this background, within the purview of the three strands that, broadly speaking, encapsulate the practice of peace in the sub-region, namely, the state approach (track one), the civil society organizations approach (track two), and what may be referred to as the hybrid approach, which encompasses the traditional methods of making peace, managing conflict and promoting peaceful co-existence among the people, this chapter examines the principles that underline the practice of peace in the sub-region. It also examines the relevance of African philosophical approaches and practices to peace, conflict management and peacebuilding and articulates how best to address the violent conflict unleashed on the Nigerian state and her neighbours by the *Boko Haram* insurgents. This exercise is undertaken with the consciousness that the quest for development and improved material conditions of the people of the sub-region and elsewhere can only be achieved in the context of peace and tranquility which, to say the least, has become elusive. The 2016 *Global Peace Index* (GPI) shows clearly that a number of the countries in the West Africa sub-region are occupying the lowest rung of the peace scale. Indeed, Nigeria, the leading nation in the region in terms of resources and influence, is in the 149th position out of the 163 countries captured in the GPI report. Mali, another country in the sub-region, is occupying 137th position. With the exception of Ghana that has a relatively commendable showing being 44th, other countries in the sub-region are occupying unenviable positions on the peace scale (GPI, 2016).

THE CONCEPT OF PEACE

It is important in this paper that we interrogate the meaning of the concept of ''peace'' with a view to providing a conceptual framework that would guide our exposition of the subject matter: philosophy and the practice of peace in Africa. The clarification of the meaning of the concept of "peace" becomes imperative in light of the multiplicity of perceptions on what the word connotes. The plethora of definitions adduced for the concept "peace" is largely because of its universal appeal as every society and individual have conceived it from their cultural, religious, ideological and intellectual perspectives. The term features prominently in the two leading religions in the world, Christianity and Islam. For example, the popular Christian salutation '*Shalom*' and the Muslim equivalent, '*Asalaam aleikum*' – mean 'Peace be unto you' (Albert, 2008:33). In all other religions, including what is generally referred to as the African Traditional Religion (ATR), diverse meanings of the idea of peace is enunciated. Moreover, scholars from diverse intellectual backgrounds and orientations have given various definitions of the idea of peace. This accounts for definitions that are reflective of disciplinary identities such as: sociological definition of peace and philosophical definition of peace. The point we are trying to establish is that the word "peace" has been conceptualized and operationalized in many ways. Consequently, it is contended that "an important task in peace research has always been and will always be the exploration of the concept of peace" (Galtung, 1981:183). Indeed, the precarious security profile of the world today, defined largely by terrorism and all forms of violent extremism and the quest for a peaceful world is deepening the crisis of definition associated with the concept "peace". Siddiqi, in his Ph.D. proposal titled "The Role of Islam in Establishing Peace in the Contemporary World" encapsulates the global concern for peace when he points out that "Peace is considered the greatest good in the world today and is the greatest need of the contemporary world".

Etymologically speaking, the word peace comes from the Latin feminine noun *'pax'* from which the English word "peace" is derived. The term peace has varied connotations such as: "the reaching of agreement between two parties; respect for others; quality of life; peaceful time; civil safety and security" (*The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace, 2010: 350*). Earlier, this conception of peace is captured in the *Webster Dictionary* as "a state of tranquillity or quiet: freedom from civil disturbance: a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom; specifically, absence or cessation of war; a state of reconciliation after strife or enmity" (*Webster Dictionary, 2001: 927*).

Although peace is a value that is central to the accomplishment of societal goal and individual well-being, there is lack of consensus among scholars and even among the adherents of the leading religions on what constitutes peace. However, it is widely accepted that peace and war are opposites. Albert (2007:33) reiterates this when he writes: "The most simplistic but popular understanding of peace is that it is the opposite of conflict or violence". Thus, generally speaking, peace is defined as the opposite of war or converse of war. This idea of peace has been seriously criticized as being too narrow a conception as it only recognizes physical form of violence to the exclusion of other variants of violence, such as psychological and structural. Joan Galtung, a Norwegian peace scholar, in the editorial to the first edition of the *Journal of Peace Research*, introduced a new concept to peace studies when he labelled this conception of peace as 'negative peace'.

The Norwegian peace theorist, Galtung, expanded the definition of peace with his exposition of what he calls the two dimensions of peace, namely, negative peace and positive peace. According to him, negative peace represents absence of direct violence and war and positive peace depicts the absence of direct violence plus the absence of unjust structures, which he calls structural violence. His idea of positive peace is one where socio-economic and political conditions for the realization of the potentiality of the individual and collective goals are present in a polity (Galtung, 1964b).

In literature on the definition of peace, six definitions of the concept of peace have been widely received and employed by many peace researchers and the global-*cum*-development community. These definitions encapsulate what could be referred to as classical and contemporary perceptions of the idea of peace. They are: peace as the absence of war (absence of direct violence), peace as justice, peace as world order, peace as human rights, peace as development and peace as security. The first three represent the classical conceptions of the idea of peace, while the last three depict the contemporary idea of peace.

It is important to establish that, though peace is a value that every society desires, the conception of peace held by each society is context or need driven. In other words, the particular historical and political context of a country and community determines their perceptions of peace. Naturally, a society experiencing incessant warfare and unabating armed conflict will interpret peace as the converse of war. In the same vein, a society that is driven by structural violence will be more disposed to equating peace with justice while, in a society where the mass of the people inhabiting the polity are in penury and poverty, the tendency is to embrace a conception of peace that is grounded on development (Francis, 2008).

In light of the fact that conflict has become somewhat endemic and a defining element of the West African's underdevelopment- which, from every indication, is largely responsible for the perennial national conflict in many of the countries in the sub-region- this paper adopts a process view of peace as its operational definition of the concept of peace. In other words, our conception of peace is grounded on a dynamic socio-economic process, rather than a condition. Ibeanu (2005) articulates the position of the advocates of the process view of peace when he writes: "Peace is a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community". Simply put, peace represents a dynamic process that facilitates the creation of a conducive environment that enables the stakeholders in a polity to interact harmoniously for the establishment of the society's goal and the realization of the potential of the individual. This conception of peace thus encapsulates the two dimensions of peace articulated by Joan Galtung, namely, negative peace and positive peace. In other words, the definition that is adopted here is one that underscores "a broad spectrum of what is needed for maintaining decent living -- absence of human suffering in its physical, psychological and structural dimensions" (Albert, 2008:35).

INTERROGATING THE PHILOSOPHY OF PEACE IN WEST AFRICA

In every society, the meaning of peace that is subscribed to is a function of the philosophical and cultural thoughts that govern the worldview of the people in that polity. This accounts for the divergence in the meaning of peace in the Western world and the meaning of peace embraced in Africa in general and in the West Africa sub-region in particular. Broadly speaking, the meaning of peace espoused in the Western world is rooted in her conception of person as individual being. This philosophical worldview underlines the liberal peace theory that is employed by the West to drive post-conflict peace building processes across the globe, especially in West African countries such as Liberia and Sierra-Leone following the violent conflict that ravaged the countries. The Western idea of a person (individual being) thus, is fundamentally distinct from the African conception of a person (communal being). The point here is that the individualistic Western philosophy of *"cogito, ergo sum"* (I think, therefore I am)underline the assumptions, presuppositions and the fundamental principles upon which the Western idea of peace is predicated while the collectivist African *ubuntu* philosophy of "a person is a person through other people" encapsulates the fundamental assumptions and the presuppositions that undergird the idea of peace subscribed to in Africa, nay, West Africa (Brock-Utne, 2004: 1).

Having provided some insight into philosophies that underpin the peace processes engaged in by the stakeholders, which, for the purposes of systematic presentation and analysis are grouped into three divisions, namely, we may safely proceed formal institutions, semi-formal institutions and informal institutions (traditional institutions), we may safely proceed For formal institutions, the focus will be on the most visible sub-regional intergovernmental institution- *Economic Community of West African States* (ECOWAS) and the States in the West- African sub-region, particularly, Nigeria and Liberia. The semi-formal institutions will be civil society organizations- *West African Network for Peace building* (WANEP) and the *Search for Common Ground* (SFCG). Informal institutions such as the traditional/indigenous structures, principles and processes of conflict prevention, management and resolution will be interrogated.

FORMAL INSTITUTIONS AND PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE IN WEST AFRICA

West Africa, like all other regions of the African continent, has been confronted with a plethora of security challenges especially with the outbreak of civil wars in Liberia and Sierra-Leone in the early 1990s. Aside the wars in these countries, there are other peace and security threatening issues, such as drug trafficking, arms smuggling and proliferation, transnational crime and terrorism, ethnic militia and insurgencies that have become sources of great concern to the intergovernmental and governmental institutions in the sub-region.

Consequent to the precarious security situation in the West African sub-region and the centrality of a peaceful atmosphere to the realization of the development goals of the nations in the region, concerted efforts were and are being made by *Economic Community of the West African States* (ECOWAS) and the States in the sub-region to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and build peace. It is instructive to point out that the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the early 1990's and in Guinea-Bissau opened new vistas of engagement in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building for a body that was primarily set up to promote economic collaboration and integration among the 15 Member-States in the organization.

Following the transformation of the ECOWAS from its original mandate, a series of new and revised treaties and protocols to create a more political and security-oriented role for the body were put in place. The most remarkable action taken by the body in view of its new status was the signing of an agreement by the member States of the 'Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security' (1999). Essentially, the Protocol "constitutes the most comprehensive normative framework for confronting the

threats to peace and security in the region on a more permanent basis by boosting the conflict prevention capabilities of ECOWAS to pre-empt potential outbreak of violence, resolve conflicts when they occur and to engage more effectively in post-conflict reconstruction in places, where peace has been restored" (ECOWAS,2008: 19). The 1999 Protocol was strengthened when in December 2001, ECOWAS Member States adopted the 'Protocol on Democracy and Governance' as a supplementary protocol to the Mechanism. These two protocols provide the legal and normative frameworks 'for ECOWAS' intervention in Member States on issues relating to governance, democratic culture and human rights, respect for constitutionalism and rule of law, and peace and security'.

It must be observed that, while the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security focuses more on the establishment of early warning networks for conflict prevention and the processes for conflict management in the West-African sub-region, the Protocol on Democracy and Governance addresses the structural conditions that are largely responsible for the protracted conflicts in the sub-region. Indeed, the deplorable socio-economic conditions of the mass of the people, arising largely from decades of bad governance and corruption, is a major factor responsible for the plethora of incessant conflicts in many nations in the West-Africa sub-region.

As a correlate to the body's Protocol on Democracy and Governance, which obviously is meant to promote participatory democracy and good governance, the lack of which has contributed significantly to the spate of violence and conflicts in the sub region, the Assembly of the Heads of States, on the 21st December, 2001, signed the *Economic Community of West African States Protocol on the Fight against Corruption.* The 27 Article document seeks to "promote and strengthen the development in each of the State Parties effective mechanisms to prevent, suppress and eradicate corruption". It is instructive to note that the scourge of corruption has been the bane of efforts to eradicate poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment and ignorance not only in the West Africa sub-region but in the entire continent. Indeed, the greatest threat to efforts at promoting peace and security in West Africa has always been the rising levels of political corruption in the sub-region. For example, in Nigeria, the \$2.1 billion appropriated for the purchase of arms meant to fight *Boko Haram* insurgency ended up in the private accounts of some of the leaders of the then ruling party, PDP.

Following the wars in Liberia and Sierra-Leone, there was massive flow of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) to the West Africa sub-region which, predictably, tremendously increased the levels of violent conflicts, armed robbery and terror acts. As a response to this, the Commission's Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation, and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa of 1998 was replaced with the signing, in June 2006, of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons. This Convention is targeted at strengthening the body's legal and normative framework in her fight against the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the sub-region.

Essentially, what we can refer to as ECOWAS comprehensive document for conflict prevention, management and peacebuilding (peace and security architecture) is encapsulated in the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). Ekiyor (2008:3) reiterates this when she writes: "*The Economic Community of West African States* (ECOWAS) has recently completed a lengthy process of developing a regional conflict prevention framework to guide the conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of conflict prevention initiatives in the Commission and Member States". The central objective of the ECPF is mainstreaming conflict prevention into ECOWAS' policies and programmes and strengthening capacity within the sub-region to achieve integrated conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

It is instructive to point out that ECOWAS' conflict prevention and peace and security architecture takes its bearing from diverse but related regional and international normative sources such as the *Africa Union*, the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD) and the *United Nations* (UN). For examples, the 2000 Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol

to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the continental body of July 2002, Article 52 of the UN Charter and the UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security of October, 2000 are some of the documents/ Resolutions that informed the constitutive elements of the ECPF (Ekiyor, 2008:5).

Let me at this juncture state that the guiding principles and philosophy that underpin the ECPF is that of participatory democracy and human security. Little wonder, the adoption of the ECPF coincides with the new vision of ECOWAS – from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of Peoples. ECOWAS of the Peoples emphasizes the involvement of the people, not only in terms of raising their awareness of the pivotal place of peaceful co-existence in the realization of the goals of economic growth and development, but in terms of getting the local people and the generality of the people integrated into addressing issues of conflict and in participating, in all its ramifications, in peacebuilding processes. Indeed, the implementation strategy conceived is grounded on formal institutions-state agencies and actors- working with community based organizations and actors with a view to ensuring ownership of the peace and security architecture of ECOWAS by communities across the region (Ekiyor 2008:11).

At the level of the individual Member States, conflict prevention, management, resolution and peacebuilding processes are underpinned largely by the character of the state and regime type. The state, including state institutions and officials, plays a strategic role in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, as well as in peacebuilding. Indeed, the state is the most powerful institution with the instruments and resources to address issues of peace and conflict within a polity. Under the military rule, which virtually all the states in the Africa sub-region experienced at one stage or the other, the philosophy that undergirded conflict prevention, management, resolution and peacebuilding was the idea of national security, largely interpreted to mean the security of the regime in power. In other words, the guiding philosophy in the military era was informed essentially by the concern to protect those in power and their cronies. For instance, under the General Abacha military rule in Nigeria, issues of peace and conflict, i.e. conflict prevention, management, resolution and peacebuilding were defined essentially by the interest of the maximum ruler, Gen. Abacha, and the survival of his regime. Even conflicts between citizens brought before the courts were largely interpreted to preserve and protect the interest of the ruling cabal. This was the case in all the states in the sub-regional under the military rule.

With the enthronement of democratic rule in all the states in the sub-region, the principles enunciated by liberal democratic peace become the underlining philosophy that drive conflict prevention, management, resolution and peacebuilding processes. In line with democratic values and ethos- respect for human rights, rule of law, economic liberalization and due process become the fundamental assumptions that undergird peacebuilding and conflict resolution activities in the various states in the West Africa sub-region, at least at the level of theory (normative). Curtis and Dzinesa, (2013:10) writing about the philosophy that underline peace processes in the African continent, which basically is mirrored at the West African sub-regional level, succinctly express this when they posit that liberal peacebuilding is thus both a normative agenda, as well as a framework for understanding the diverse activities and initiatives to promote peace on the continent. The point that is being established here is that the normative framework of peace processes in West Africa is a microcosm of what obtains at the continental level. The Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria, a document prepared by the *Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution* (IPCR) in 2002, to understand the root causes of conflicts and how best to promote peace in the country frown at the use of force that characterized the military era, and advocated for the adoption of the multi-track diplomacy, which essentially emphasizes the participation of all stakeholders in the task of promoting peace.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND PEACE PROCESS IN WEST AFRICA

Following the inability of the tract one diplomacy, often referred to as the official track (state) due to the problems of bureaucracy and the possibility of partisanship from political interests, particularly of office holders (Abdulrahman & Tar, 2008:188), the tract two diplomacy, which refers to a broad range of unofficial contacts, i.e. civil society organizations are playing invaluable role in the promotion of peace in the West Africa sub-region. For instance, civil society organizations such as *West Africa Network for Peacebuilding* (WANEP) and *Search for Common Ground* (SFCG) have designed and implemented different strategic plans for peace in many states in the West Africa sub-region using essentially the principles enunciated by western democracies as the underlining framework and philosophy. For instance, in Nigeria, civil society and particularly, the professional experts working in the non-state sector have designed and implemented different strategic plans for peace through the participation of critical stakeholders and opinion leaders such as religious leaders, traditional rulers, women leaders and youth leaders.

The *West Africa Network for Peacebuilding* (WANEP), a leading non-state organization committed to conflict prevention and promotion of just and peaceful coexistence that is grounded on the dignity of the human person, was founded in 1998 as a response to the civil wars that plagued West Africa in the late 1980s.WANEP anchors its peacebuilding framework on facilitating cooperation among all the stakeholders. The cooperative philosophy that underlines the peacebuilding works of WANEP is clearly revealed in its mission statement which goes thus:

> to enable and facilitate the development of mechanisms for cooperation among civil society-based peacebuilding practitioners and organisations in West Africa by promoting cooperative responses to violent conflicts; providing the structure through which these practitioners and institutions will regularly exchange experience and information on issues of peacebuilding, conflict transformation, social, religious and political reconciliation; and promoting West Africa's cultural values as resources for peacebuilding
>
> (WANEP, 2007:2)

Another civil society organization that has played invaluable role in the peace processes in the West African sub-region is the *Search for Common Ground* (SFCG). Though the organization embrace the principles enunciated by the liberal peace theory, the underlining principle governing SFCG's engagement in peace work in the sub-region has always been to shift the way the world deals with conflict from the adversarial approaches towards cooperative solutions (SFCG,2009: 12). Indeed, the philosophy that underlines the organisation's operation is reflective of its name in that the focus of SFCG in carrying out its mandate is to establish a common ground that would engender a positive perception of all the elements central to achieving a collaborative-*cum*-joint problem solution by all the stakeholders in a conflict. Put differently, SFCG's engagement in peace processes is framed and anchored on inclusiveness and participatory process.

PHILOSOPHY OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO PEACE PROCESSES

In this segment of the paper, the philosophy that underlines the indigenous mechanisms through which disputes are resolved and peaceful co-existence are promoted in Africa in general and in West Africa in particular will be interrogated using *Ubuntu* as a general framework of analysis because several indigenous ways of solving conflicts and promoting peace on the African continent are connected to the worldview of *Ubuntu* (Brock-Utne, 2006:6). One of these is the *Ọmọlúàbí* philosophy of the Yorùbá, South West, Nigeria and the other one is the *Saasywood* practices in Liberia. These two will be examined in light of the *Ubuntu* philosophy to bring into fore the philosophical assumption that undergird conflict prevention, management, resolution and peace promotion processes in the West Africa sub-region.

The Ọmọlúàbí Philosophy of the Yorùbá

Ọmọlúàbí is a Yorùbá word meaning a person of good character, or good behaviour.The Yorùbá believe that every individual is endowed with the values that define what an Ọmọlúàbí should be and that the inborn Ọmọlúàbí virtues can be leveraged on to resolve conflicts and promote peaceful co-existence in the society (Albert, 1995:9). Ifá, the received instructions from Ọ̀rúnmìlà, the Yorùbá god of wisdom, encapsulates the Ọmọlúàbí philosophy in what is called ìwà (good character or moral rectitude). But before I espouse some of the constitutive elements of what is called ìwà in Yorùbá worldview, it is important to make a little more clarification on what Ifá is in Yorùbá thought system. It must be observed that scholars of Ifá are divided on the meaning of Ifá. However, our position on the meaning of Ifá is in tandem with the view expressed by a foremost and prominent scholar on the subject, Wande Abimbola. According to him, "the Yorùbá god of wisdom is mostly called by either of two names, Ifá and Ọ̀rúnmìlà, Ọ̀rúnmìlà refers to the deity himself while the name Ifá refers only to his divination system" (Abimbola, 1976: 3).Ifá and Ọ̀rúnmìlà can be used interchangeably to refer to Ọrúnmìlà, Yoruba god of wisdom, and the process of divination or the wisdom divinely revealed to the god, Ọ̀rúnmìlà. Ifá encompasses the Yorùbá thought system and thus expresses the philosophical viewpoint of the Yorùbá on all issues of life.

Let us at this juncture state that though the Yoruba believe that being wealthy and having wives and children and access to the good things of life is good and desirable, the most desirable asset that one should strive to possess is "Iwa". And this is clearly emphasized in the Ifa literary corpus. Ogbe Alara, one of the corpuses in Ifa underscores the primal place of Iwa when it posits:

...... Ìwà, ìwà làǹ wá o,
Ìwà.
B'énìyàn l'ówó
Bí kò nîìwà,
Owó ọhún, owó-olówó ni,
Ìwà, Ìwà làǹ wá o,
Ìwà.
B'énìyàn l'ọmọ
Bí kò nîìwà,
Ọmọ ọhún, ọmọ-olọmọ ni
Ìwà, Ìwà làǹ wá o,
Ìwà.
B'énìyàn l'áya
Bí kò nîìwà,
Aya ọhún, aya-aláya ni,
Ìwà, Ìwà làǹ wá o,
Iwa...

...Good character is primal,
Yes, good character.
He who has money
But lacks good character.
Forfeits his money to someone else;
Good character is primal,
Yes, good character.
He who has children
But lacks good character.
He who has wives
And lacks good character,
Forfeits his wives to someone else:

> Good character is primal,
> Yes, good character.......
>
> Adegbindin (2014: 146–147).

Ìwà, which defines who an *Ọmọlúàbí* is, represents an ethical concept that is indispensable in the understanding of the philosophy that underpins the Yoruba idea of peace and conflict resolution. Indeed, the *Ọmọlúàbí* Philosophy encapsulates the virtues that are at the core of the peoples' conception and practice of conflict management, conflict resolution and peace-building. Adegbindin(2014) identifies some of the virtues that are embedded in *Ọmọlúàbí*. According to him, to be an *Ọmọlúàbí* is to exhibit virtues such as patience, honesty or truth telling, being kind hearted, justness, which also embodies the principle of fair hearing popularly called *audi alteram partem* (hear the other side), altruism, forgiveness, goodwill towards others, dutifulness, orderliness, hardworking and the principle of fairhearing.

The point that we are trying to establish here is that the *Ọmọlúàbí* philosophy has virtues that define it that can be deployed to manage, resolve conflict, promote harmonious relationship and build peace in the society. In other words, the virtues which characterize who an*Ọmọlúàbí* is can be leveraged on to address peace and conflict issues for the achievement of the individual and collective good of all in the society. Albert, 1995: 8-9 reiterates the centrality of the *Ọmọlúàbí* philosophy to the attainment of peace and harmonious relationship in the society when he posits:

> Yorùbá people believe that every person is an *Ọmọlúàbí* by instinct and that in a dispute, settlement can only be achieved by appealing to the *Ọmọlúàbí* of both parties, which is believed to lie in the conscience/mind of everybody. Thus, any appeal to *Ọmọlúàbí* is an appeal to conscience (*ẹ́ríọkàn*)intricately interwoven with the concept of the family (*ẹbí*) to which every person belongs, and of a higher being Olódùmarè (Supreme Being) to whom every person is accountable.

An exposition of two of the virtues- justness and forgiveness- that are exemplified by an *Ọmọlúàbí* would suffice to establish the nexus between the *Ọmọlúàbí* philosophy of the Yorùbá and the peoples' conception and practice of peace and conflict resolution.

An individual referred to as an *Ọmọlúàbí* is deemed to be fair-minded and exhibits a sense of justice. These are virtues that characteristically promote peace in a society. Indeed, justice is precondition for peace in any society. Thus, a just man becomes a vehicle for the enthronement of peaceful and harmonious relationship between individuals and groups in a society. A just man, according to the Yorùbá, is one who is honest, speaks the truth and gives others their rights and dues which engenders the principle of "live and let live" (Adegbindin, 2014:150). Also of importance to the Yorùbá in the estimation of a just man and woman is the capability to exhibit fair hearing in judgment in a dispute between individuals or groups. As a matter of fact, the Yorùbá consider the denial of fair hearing in judgement as one of the most unjust actions. Hence, they say: "*àgbà ò□ìkà lón gbẹjọ ẹnìkan dá*",meaning, "it is only a wicked elderly person that bases his judgement on the evidence of a single person" (Albert, 1995:9, Adegbindin, 2014:152).

The point that is being established here is that parties in conflict are given the opportunity to state their case after which the elders deliberate on the issue and this process is guided by the concern for justice and the collective interest of the society. The ultimate goal of the whole process is a settlement which will not leave any animosity between the disputants as the settlement terms and conditions are collectively agreed to and thus mutually acceptable to the disputants. The implication of this model of peace process and conflict resolution is that the win/lose outcome that defines the litigation/court approach to conflict resolution is circumvented for a win/win outcome that characteristically enables the disputants to work together again and ultimately engenders social cohesion, peaceful and thus harmonious relationship is fostered in the society.

Another virtue that is embedded in the *Ọmọlúàbí* philosophy in resolving conflicts between individuals and groups and promoting peace is the concept of "forgiveness". The Yorùbá acknowledge the inevitability of conflict in human social relationship and believe that when conflict arises, it should be amicably resolved. This is expressed in a popular Yorùbá epithet which says:

> *Ahọ́n àti eyín ń jà*
> *Ká jà, ká parí rẹ̀ niyì ọmọlúàbí.*
> The tongue and teeth often come in conflict
> To quarrel and get reconciled is a mark of responsibility

A corollary to this is:

> *Kò sí awá'yé májà*
> *Bẹ̀ẹ̀ sì ni kòsí a jà márẹ̀ẹ́.*
> No sojourner on earth is immune against dispute
> No disputants remain enemies forever

<div align="right">(Albert, 1995:6)</div>

The point here is that the *Ọmọlúàbí* philosophy recognizes reconciliation as one of the key virtues that is embedded in a person referred to as *Ọmọlúàbí*. It must be stated that this spirit of reconciliation is nurtured by the idea of forgiveness which the Yorùbá believe is central to the attainment of both the individual peace and harmonious and productive relationship among the groups in the society. This is clearly expressed in a saying by the Yorùbá which goes thus:

> *Bí a ò bá gbàgbé ọ̀rọ̀ ànà,*
> *A kò ní rí ẹni bá □eré.*

Meaning, if we do not put past misunderstandings behind us, we risk losing future relationships. Put differently, it is believed that our joy and harmonious relationship with other members of the society is a function of our ability to forgive and forget past misunderstandings.

Sassywood Practice in Liberia

The Sassywood practice which is highly respected by the indigenous Liberians is grounded on the belief in ancestral spirits (spirits of their forefathers) as unbiased agents for adjudication in disputes. Residents of Gbarnga, a province in Liberia Yerkula Zaizay and Bono, have this to say about Sassywood: "It is a tradition that our forefathers left us. This is better than going to court. We cannot waste out time going to court. Sassywood is our courtroom. This is what our forefathers have been practising in the past and it has been working" Chereji & King (2013: 9). It must however be pointed out that, the Sassywood traditional justice system and conflict resolution methods are defined by some practices that could be said to be antithetical to civilized practices and procedures. Two of such practices - the drinking of bitter herbs and the practice of placing a machete or metal in a fire – to determine guilt or innocence of an individual in cases like theft or murder would suffice.

In the case of the drinking of bitter herbs as a judicial process for determining a culprit(s) in a murder case, for instance, the accused is given a mixture of bitter plants to drink. If, after taking the substance, he/she puked, it is seen as a demonstration that the accused is not guilty of the offence he or she was alleged to have committed. The accused is deemed guilty if he or she declined to drink from the bitter plants. The other practice mentioned above involves bringing the accused in contact with a red-hot machete or metal. If the accused withdraws from the heat, he or she is adjudged to be guilty. If the red-hot machete or metal does not harm the accused, he or she

is pronounced innocent of the allegation levelled against him or she (Chereji & Wratto King, 2013: 7, 9).

Though the Sassywood traditional justice system and conflict resolution methods have since been outlawed by the Liberian government, they are still being practiced by the people following their confidence in its potency as one of the sure means of resolving disputes. Indeed, it is strongly believed by the local population in the country that "no amount of laws or government order can stop Sassywood" (IRIN, 2007).

Let us at this juncture state that both the Ọmọlúàbí philosophy of the Yorùbá of Nigeria and the Sassywood practices that are popular among the local people of Liberia hold as central the idea of reconciliation of the disputing parties. Indeed, a Yorùbá saying: bá a báń jà, bí i kákú kọ, meaning that "our misunderstanding should not degenerate to the point of wishing each other death", captures the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation of disputing parties in the peoples' worldview. Similarly, the Sassywood practices emphasise reconciliation between the feuding parties and the community at large. Chereji and Wratto, (2013: 7) reiterate this when they posit: "One unique characteristic of this form of traditional justice system (Sassywood practices) is that it provides an opportunity for the guilty to unite with his victim and reintegrate into society".

It must however be noted that though the Ọmọlúàbí philosophy of the Yorùbá and the Sassywood practices of the local people of Liberia have proved effective in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes in traditional society, they cannot be said to be infallible. Indeed, numerous intra and inter-tribal wars were recorded in those traditional societies. The concern now has to do with whether these traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution and peacebuilding are still relevant in the context of a modern and complex society.

TOWARDS A HYBRID APPROACH FOR DURABLE PEACE IN WEST AFRICA

It must be emphasized that the traditional approaches for managing conflict and promoting peace are still very relevant in the context of the contemporary African society in light of the people's attachment and respect for traditional beliefs and practices. Indeed, "the continent would become a better place if these local approaches could be integrated with modern approaches for managing conflicts on the continent"(Albert, 2008: 43).This position has been validated in many studies carried out on the recurrent violent conflicts and civil wars in many parts of Africa in the 1990s (Smock 1997, Murithi, 2008).

There is the need to ground the modern conflict management strategies and peacebuilding processes on the cultural values and belief systems that define the cosmologies and theologies of the people. In fact, it is expedient that the Ọmọlúàbí philosophy and indeed the Ubuntu worldview be given more expression in the conflict management and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts ongoing in the West Africa sub-region in particular and Africa in general in view of the increasing polarization and division that have come to define politics and religious practices across the continent. Explicating the centrality of a people's cultural worldview to the idea of social relations, conflict management, peacebuilding and development, Ogot,(1999:138) argues that:

> people do not live only by economics, public order or science and technology. Before these they have their concepts and beliefs (religious, ideological or philosophic), they have their value systems which define the priorities and quality of social relations; they have their attitudes, aspirations, hopes, fears, expressions and manifestations of ethical and traditional code of conduct...

The above position was reiterated in the writing of Vraalsen, (1997:22) who observes that "...any successful attempt to resolve conflicts and make peace in Africa must be a genuine recognition of, and respect for, the identity of the peoples of the continent, their tradition and their

proud cultural heritage….". The truth of the matter is that people interpret nature and the world they live from the prisms of their cultural beliefs and practices. The implication is that whatever concepts and practices that people would be receptive to must be couched and located within their cultural worldview.

Aside from the fact that a people's cultural worldview is central to any efforts at managing conflicts and promoting peaceful coexistence, it must be clearly stated that the argument for the integration of the traditional conflict management and peace-building processes with the modern methods and practices of peace process is strengthened by the reality of the intrinsic value embedded in the traditional conflict management practices exemplified in both *Ọmọlúàbí* and *Ubuntu* philosophies which, the modern conflict management and peacebuilding practices can rarely boast of. Interrogating the *Ọmọlúàbí* philosophy of the Yorùbá, which essentially is a microcosm of the *Ubuntu* worldview, there are two values that clearly exemplify what the *Ọmọlúàbí* philosophy in particular and the *Ubuntu* philosophy in general is all about, which can be invaluable in terms of their usefulness in addressing the

They are: first, the *Ọmọlúàbí* philosophy and by extension the *Ubuntu* worldview acknowledge and emphasise the "interconnectedness of humanity at all times" (Murithi 2008:) This is clearly expressed in the popular dictum among the people that a person is a person through other people. The Yorùbá of the southwest in Nigeria establish this in their popular saying: "*ènìyàn ni aṣọ ènìyàn*", meaning that "our nakedness is covered by the other people and, without the others, we are nothing". The second fundamental value that is embedded in the traditional conflict management and peacebuilding process is its inclusiveness. The traditional methods of conflict management and peace process gives primacy to the principle of inclusivity and a sense of shared or common destiny between peoples irrespective of religious or political leaning. These values- interconnectedness of humanity and inclusivity- that underline the traditional conflict management practices and peace process, are invaluable assets to the promotion of peace especially in contemporary African society that has become so polarized by religion and politics.

CONCLUSION

The kernel of our discussion in this paper is that the much-desired peace in the West-Africa sub-region and indeed in the African continent can only be achieved when the mechanisms for conflict management and peace process are grounded on the values of communalism and inclusiveness rather than the individualistic ethos and practices that undergird the liberal peace, which, unfortunately, has become the framework for conflict management and peace process on the continent. The point is that a peace architecture that is built on the cherished values, ethos and practices of the people would advance the course of peace and harmonious relationship in that society much more than one defined by foreign values and idiosyncrasies.

This, however, does not mean that we are saying that all about the traditional conflict management and peace process is glorious and that the western models are bad and should be completely abandoned. This is not even feasible in light of globalization and the adoption of some core western ideas of governance such as democracy and separation of powers. Our argument is that the enthronement of a peace architecture that is reflective of the African peoples' core values of interconnectedness of humanity, shared destiny and inclusivity rather than the extant largely western models, would change the current negative narratives that present the West Africa sub-region and the continent as the dark world.

Essentially, it is imperative that the ECOWAS peace traditions, which largely are predicated on the philosophy of regional integration and good governance be anchored on the *Ubuntu* philosophy that underline the peoples' peace and conflict processes. Integrating the two strands has become necessary in light of the centrality of peaceful co-existence of the various groups to the realization of the goals of sustainable development. This integration, it must be observed, is achievable by ECOWAS working more directly with membership based grassroots organisations that truly represent the yearnings and aspirations of the people.

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The ever growing awareness and appreciation of the field of Peace and Conflict Studies globally comes with the challenges of fashioning out innovative ideas both theoretically and in practice as intervention strategies in addressing global peace and security issues. *Readings in Peace and Conflict: Essays in Honour of Professor Isaac Olawale Albert* is one of such innovations.

The University of 'Ibadan Peace and Conflict Studies Programme established by Professor Isaac Olawale Albert was the first in Africa's academic institutions. This Programme also birthed the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP) which has been instrumental to establishing other Peace Studies Programmes in Nigerian Universities. The Society has also carried out 13 International Conferences and published several books and journal volumes.

Readings in Peace and Conflict: Essays in Honour of Professor Isaac Olawale Albert consists of 72 chapters. The chapters are discussed under four general themes: theoretical issues; conflict and conflict management; policy and governance; and gender perspectives in peace and conflict. As a major project of the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP), contributing authors are drawn for their expertise and fields of endeavor interfacing research and practice. The richness of the book combines the many conflicts that Africa is inundated with but also outlays different African methodologies in addressing conflicts. The book will therefore, remain Africa's major contribution to global peace practice which academics, policy makers, security experts, civil society organisations, non-governmental organizations, and other peace practitioners will find useful.

-Nathaniel D. Danjibo, PhD, fspsp, FICMC, The National President, Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP)

Though not always recognized by or well-networked with one another, many Universities in Africa currently have peace-based centers for research, teaching, and what is often called "from the gown to the town" grassroots practice.
-Matt Meyer

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