Analysing the concept of peace in post-conflict African countries

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Abstract

Peace is one of the issues in Africa that needs to be rethought or revisited. When discussing peace in Africa, one has to explore the society's ontology and cosmological order, as the African concept of peace is deeply engrained in the people's culture and moral tradition. The purpose of this article is to pose a question about interventionist Western-oriented peacebuilding and why it has failed to bring durable peace to post-conflict African countries and its implications on peace dividend. The study follows the literature study method. The paper, consequently, presented the Ubuntu and Oromo peace epistemologies as a possible alternative or authentic viewpoint on the collective. This paper has outlined that peace in Africa is far more complicated than conventional discourses portray. It was established in the study that, to develop an effective response to internal conflicts, it is necessary to explore the cultural foundations and/or institutions that can serve as the basis for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Keywords: Conflicts, culture, peace, Sankofa;

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1.   Introduction

The Western imaginative and ideological configuration of violence, political instability, famine, civil war and barbarism has belittled Africa as a continent. According to Francis, Africa's imaginative and racial characterisations stem from two opposing images or metaphors. The first image comes from scholars who portray Africa as a 'dangerous and mysterious' continent. On the contrary, the second image comes from the film industry, which portrays Africa as a 'wildlife safari' (Francis, 2008, p. 3). Such dominant representation of Africans in Western media and academic institutions typically ignores the actualities and specificities of social, political, cultural and economic processes that occur on the continent. They were instead legitimising the dominant worldview of a 'hopeless continent' whenever the concept of Africa was invoked. Containerising Africa as a single country, on the other hand, ignores the diverse nature of Africa's constituency in terms of culture, philosophy, historical experience and sociopolitical advancement.

African and African-affiliated scholars opposed the narrative that undermines Africa as a single geographical concept and racial entity in resolving these multifaceted concerns (Eze, 2008; Francis, 2008; Mamdani, 1996; Mbembe, 2001; Mudimbe, 1988; Ngugi, 1994; Wiredu, 1980, 1996). They essentially work to de-homogenise reductionist and anachronistic perceptions to critically recognise Africa's diverse and highly complex historical entity. They claimed that to trace the origins of Africa's concept, one must consider several trajectories that produced or contributed to the invention of Africa as an intellectual construct riddled with artificial divides and paradoxical misrepresentations (see Hassan, 2010, p. 453; Mudimbe, 2020).

Peace is one of the issues in Africa that needs to be rethought or revisited. The peace malaise needs particularities or 'historical specificity' due to its subjective nature. When discussing peace in Africa, one has to explore the society's ontology and cosmological order, as the African concept of peace is deeply engrained in the people's culture and moral tradition. While 'morality' as the centre of episteme is the point of departure between Western and African concepts of peace, peace in Africa has both 'spiritual and moral values' that are rooted in the people's religious belief systems as passed down from generation to generation (Albert, 2008). People frequently try to explain their circumstances in the context of traditional religions. The spiritual is an integral part of this holistic view of reality and thought patterns of African indigenous cosmology.

As a result, the African cultural worldview should be viewed as a collection of more or less systematised beliefs and values. It serves as a lens through which the group evaluates and assigns meaning to the reality around it (Mulaudzi, 2014). Additionally, Mudimbe's (1988) argument that the non-African locus of Western epistemology should not define Africans' gnosis (desire to know and systems of knowing) is worth recalling. Instead, the indigenous knowledge and wisdom guide it. Indigenous knowledge also referred to as African knowledge, is based on a worldview that values wholeness, community and harmony, ingrained in cultural values. Furthermore, the method of acquisition is both practical and socially oriented.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this article is to pose a question about interventionist Western-oriented peacebuilding and why it has failed to bring durable peace to post-conflict African countries and its implications on peace dividend. The paper, consequently, presented the *Ubuntu* and Oromo peace epistemologies as a possible alternative or authentic viewpoint on the collective.

2. Materials and methods

The study employed the Sankofa viewpoint to see the issues as its analytical framework. This essay critically employed the Sankofa teaching to determine the benefits of returning to our roots to move forward. King Adinkera of the Akan people of West Africa is credited with coining the term 'Sankofa' (Abegunde, 2011; Slater, 2019). In the Akan language, 'Sankofa' is pronounced, as '*se wo were fi na wosan kofa a yenki*'. It translates to 'it is not forbidden to return and retrieve what you have forgotten' (Elion, 2019; Slater, 2019). This means we must go back in time and gather the best of what our history has to offer in order to harness its transformative power as we move forward fully. Sankofa knowledge is not narrow, as it encourages everybody to recognise that both the good and the terrible have shaped us into who we are today. It urges us to accept all that has happened to us and appreciate the generations that have come before us. When we take what is helpful from the past and export it to the present, we can make constructive and beneficial use of history. It is precisely this ability to learn from the past that assures a successful future. According to Akan belief, we get eternal wisdom from the knowledge of the past after a while.

In this paper, the concept of Sankofa is used to describe a process of broadening and analysing the grand bargain of peace through the lens of African culture. This research aims not to prove that there is such a thing as African culture. However, it aims to demonstrate how African states are culturally diverse and incorporate peace concepts in their sociocultural practices into modern states to mitigate their cyclic violence. The study critically questioned or problematised institutions, settings and viewpoints that have disregarded or forgotten cultural components of scholarly contribution. Furthermore, Sankofa recognises the peripheral experiences in which cultural expression may positively impact the peace process and is committed to promoting these experiences.

For this reason, Sankofa places a strong emphasis on the contributions of African societies and their role in African affairs to increase awareness of collective experience. Unfortunately, peace is frequently manifested in our lived experiences, but the African concept is frequently overlooked in academic spaces and peacebuilding *per se*. This work was shaped by the critical perspective of an Africanist scholar, whose understanding of the researcher's experience is informed by African epistemology.

3. Results

3.1. Historical anecdotes

Culture is an important community asset that describes a particular society's lifestyle. These societal reflections display how people are diverse and distinct in their language, religion, art, philosophy etc. As a melting pot of cultures, Africa is a treasure trove of rich and diverse cultural patterns that reflect the diversity of the countries and peoples that make up the continent. Unfortunately, in their exploration, some European writers, travellers and anthropologists have distorted what they observed and conveyed African culture in a derogatory sense. Africa, for example, is often pictured as a hedonist racial group that, like their primitive ancestors, believes in witches and magic while lacking the tools and skills necessary to build a meaningful future (Falola, 2008). Ignoring that pre-colonial African society had developed complex institutions and traditions centuries before Europeans realised Africa's existence. On the other hand, many literary works lauded the achievements of Africans as mathematicians, military personnel, architects, navigators, farmers and physicians (Diop, 1988; Fyle, 1999; Hydén, 1980; Lamphear, 2017). Even if the Western writers denied it and became tough to accept that Africans were ahead of Europeans in many ways before establishing colonial rule in Africa, there were strongly organised African kingdoms that could hamper colonial expansion.

Without a doubt, the Ashanti kingdom in West Africa was highly comparable to Britain in terms of power and successfully challenged them (Brackenbury, 1874; Opoku-Ampomah, 1995). In the same vein, in the Eastern part of Africa, they faced stiff resistance (Boahen & Africa, 1985; Brantley, 1981). Moreover, in the southern territory, the Zulu kingdom was empirical evidence of colonial resistance and their capability (Caygill, 2013; Meintjes, 2017). Due to this resistance, colonisers blatantly dismantle African indigenous societies and their culture, leading to social dislocation. These misconceptions that consider African culture worthless proceeded during the colonial period and justified their intrinsic agenda to invade Africa. As Falola explains, colonisers classify their culture as high, which implies authority, refinement and civilisation, in contrast to Africa's so-called primitive cultures (Falola, 2008).

The colonial impact pressured Africans to presume they were backward and forced African to look for 'new civilisation' (modernisation). Ironically, the portrayed image of backwardness in African minds has negatively contributed to African interaction, language, social movements and the educational system. Moreover, especially during the end of colonial rule (independence), the African leaders were challenged in their political sovereignty. Relating to these contestations, some scholars have attempted to provide various literature on decolonisation and a way out of Western operation (Davidson, 1967; Messay, 2004; Nyerere, 1971; Zondi, 2017). As a result of searching for alternatives to Western thoughts, African culture has become a focal point of numerous debates.

Organisation for Africa Union (OAU) was an extension of Pan-Africanism, negritude and other movements aimed at African solutions for African problems (Binaisa, 1977). Despite the emerged movements and regional institutions, Africans are embroiled in inter and intra-state conflict, particularly during independence. The failure of the post-independence state is evident when leaders seek a solution from their colonial masters when local or national conflicts arise. Even if Africa has a mechanism for peaceful conflict resolution, African post-independence leaders seek assistance from their caretakers that do not understand the local culture (Campbell, 2013; Patrick, 2017). Ironically, the African Union's peaceuilding, peace-making and enforcement schemes are weak, despite its name changing from the OAU to the AU. The system is primarily dominated by so-called peace guardians (Western), who disregard African peace culture. The African Union's blueprint stipulated that it would seek an African solution to an African problem, even if the achievement is a polar opposite (Dompere, 2006; Mammo, Phindil, & Oghenerobor, 2013; Murithi, 2005). Accordingly, it can be claimed that the African Union's toll has not reached the desired level since its inception as an organisation. These scenarios questioned why African leaders place their faith in Western countries to alleviate their internal problems and why African dispute resolution methods are not adopted along with Western approaches. While peace practice is well-known and deeply rooted in African societies, it is unclear why the African-alienated Western model continues. As a result, this paper will focus on the questions mentioned above, which are critical for rethinking peace.

To gain a better understanding of these issues, the study examined the concept of peace and the relationship between culture and peaceful coexistence in Africa. This critical examination looked at the concept of African peace and its evolution to demonstrate how top-down-alienated liberal peacebuilding has been imposed in the continent's conflict zones. Furthermore, it discussed how African states are battling to establish a peace dividend among their societies through the African-alienated peace model. Finally, the review introduced the discussion of Ubuntu and Oromo peace epistemology as a genuine alternative concept of the peace paradigm.

3.2. The concept of peace

There is no disagreement about the value of peace, but there is disagreement about what peace is and what peace entails. As a result of this variation, peace has become a topic of discussion in academia, politics, society and religion. Many scholars provided their perspectives on peace and its components (Alfred, 1981; Galtung, 1967, 1969, 1981; Tenna, 2013; Timothy, 2006, 2015; Zigale, 2016). Even though the concept of peace has universal aspirations as an umbrella concept, scholars have attempted to define peace in various ways. According to some scholars, peace is associated with conflict and violence (Alfred, 1981; Galtung, 1969; Timothy, 2015); the rest associate peace with religion, morality and social life (Galtung, 1981; Tenna, 2013).

Similar to the above characterisation, Gatlung (1967, p. 12) divides peace into negative and positive.

> *The idea of peace as the absence of organised collective violence, in other words, violence between major human groups; particularly nations, but also between classes and between racial and ethnic groups because of the magnitude of internal wars can have referred as to negative peace. Peace is a synonym for all other good things in the world community, particularly cooperation and integration between human groups, with less emphasis on the absence of violence. We shall refer to it as positive peace.*

The concept articulates that negative peace denotes the absence of violence, whereas positive peace denotes integration. Like the African traditional conflict resolution mechanism, it constitutes the restoration of relationships, creating social systems and constructive conflict. In relation to Galthung, Boulding (1978, p. 3) tried to elaborate on what positive and negative peace means.

> *According to him, positive peace signifies a condition of good management, orderly resolution of conflict, harmony associated with mature relationships, gentleness, and love. On the negative side, it is conceived as the absence of something – the absence of turmoil, tension, conflict, and war.*

From a critical point of view, however, Galtung and Boulding failed to address the reasons and mechanisms by which some countries coexist in a state of insecure or negative peace that may or may not lead to a state of relative tranquillity. In this conceptual gap, a scholar like Murithi (2006) discovers that peace in Africa is more than the absence of violence; it is also the presence of social solidarity. This claim, on the other hand, provided an additional alternative to peace studies. To study peace, either positive or negative, one must first recognise that different cultures, states and societies worldwide have different conceptions of peace. In other words, states, whether imagined as modern or traditional societies, each have its version of the peace paradigm. Thus, to alleviate violent conflict and cyclical violence in Africa, we must redefine peace culturally.

3.3. Culture and peace

Peace is a theme of culture, and peace embedded in Africa's culture has been facing daunting challenges ranging from local to international levels. Ethnic conflict, civil strife, terrorist attacks and other violence make peace an ideal notion that can never be granted. Since conflict is unavoidable, secular paradigms and conventional top-down approaches did not bring the needed outcome to deal with the complex nature of the conflict as anticipated. The 1992 United Nations peace agenda aimed to avert violent conflict through preventive diplomacy, peace-making, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding (Murithi, 2006). Preventive diplomacy is a negotiation to prevent further conflict between or among disputant parties. Peace-making is an action to bring the hostile parties to an agreement and deploy

troops with the consent of concerned parties. Finally, peacebuilding refers to rebuilding war-affected communities in political, security, social and economic dimensions. Moreover, it entails addressing the underlying causes of the conflict and promoting social and economic justice for all (Murithi, 2006). However, culture emerged as a critical issue in each of these peace initiatives, even though peace in Africa is firmly rooted in culture.

Culture-driven peace will significantly contribute to building a culture of 'living together' and thus to peace and human security (positive peace). Thus, the failure of Western-led peacebuilding initiatives is primarily due to their proclivity for following a standardised blueprint and viewing Africa as culturally homogenous. However, the local situation, conflict patterns and disputants are not homogeneous but rather heterogeneous. According to Tom (2017), the conflict involves diverse actors, including customary authorities, community organisations, ethnic groups, kinship networks, non-governmental organisations and liberal and illiberal actors. The same can be said for the process of conflict resolution. Accordingly, Africans have a solid attachment to deeply ingrained cultural traditions. The elders are critical in resolving problems, developing strategies and shaping local visions based on their abilities and pearls of wisdom. Scholars who have studied the collapse of colonialism in Africa also have identified one of the reasons for Africans' success as their ability to use culture as a tool of resistance, even during the struggle for independence (Falola, 2008).

In recent decades, much peace and development intervention has been entirely antithetical to indigenous and traditional practices. Despite its rich culture, states in Africa have been using a Western conflict resolution model to reduce the destructive aspects of conflict in communities, which is incompatible with the social order and psychological makeup. This epistemological blunder stems from a colonial history that never recognised pre-colonial developments. Numerous Eurocentric scholars asserted that African history began with the arrival of the white man on the black continent. Hydén (1980) appealed that the establishment of colonial rule marked the beginning of civilisation in Africa. In contrast to this epistemological failure, Africa's history teaches us that to develop a suitable African response to internal conflicts (to bring about positive peace), it is crucial to examine the cultural underpinnings for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Thus, the paper discussed the social capital of some selected social groups that have played an essential role in establishing and making their societal relationships exemplary. As Falola (2008) points out, it is difficult to comprehend a plethora of other issues and facets of African affairs without understanding African peace discourse and culture. Therefore, the paper discussed the Oromo and Ubuntu peace patterns among various African peace practices and their peace epistemology. These venerable traditions continue to exist and offer enormous potential for peace-making and peacebuilding in the face of contemporary conflict, not just in Africa but also throughout the world.

3.4. The concept of peace in the Oromo culture

Among the societies in Africa, it is common to mention the Oromo community. The Oromo people are the largest ethnic group in the Horn of Africa and are found in Ethiopia and Kenya. Oromo epistemology of 'peace' aims to maintain peace as a necessary component of all cosmic and human order, containing the highest and most fundamental value for humanity to pursue (Tenna, 2013). The Oromo concept of peace transcends Galtung's (1969) definition, which defined peace as the absence of violence and structural violence. Instead, the Oromo concept of peace places a high value on unity, harmony, brotherhood and sharing. This philosophy of life, most importantly, is not limited to human relations but also gives due emphasis to the cosmic order and spiritual power that is interconnected in every dimension. From an Oromo point of epistemology, according to Legesse (2000, p. 77), 'the theme of

peace is everywhere'. Accordingly, each member of society is expected to act and behave in ways that demonstrate their commitment to the value of peace. This comprehensive concept of peace, which is deep-rooted in and among the Oromo culture, requires its people to establish brotherhood, cooperation and harmonious relationships, but is not limited to in-group relationships, with non-Oromo also underlying that all humans sprung from a single source, that is *Waaqa* or God.

Furthermore, Tena (2013) asserts that such a humanistic conception of peace emerges as a political philosophy, theological perspective and moral philosophy from *Gadaa's* politico-military system. It rationalises the moral character that human actions and behaviours should possess in light of the intricate nature of human relationships. Thus, if a conflict arises, the resolution process is not limited to resolving the conflict between the parties but also to facilitating cooperation. Additionally, it is worth noting that the Oromo community's peace principle is not limited to human relationships but rather encompasses or integrates three distinct facets, namely the environment, society and the divine. Conclusively, it implies that African cultures possess a substantial body of knowledge concerning promoting peace and maintaining a harmonious community.

3.5. Ubuntu as an alternative peace paradigm

Apart from the Oromo concept of peace, another paradigm for peace is Ubuntu, which corresponds to people's loyalty in their relationships or to the essence of being human. The term derives from an ethical rule that can be found in the Zulu and Xhosa languages, respectively (Ramose, 2003). It extends the concept that 'a person is a person through another person'. Murithi (2009) asserts that this humanistic concept brings to light the critical nature of fostering peace through the principles of mutual recognition, social equality and a shared destiny communicated by diverse peoples. Unlike the Cartesian worldview, which embodies individualism, the concept of Ubuntu expresses a person's humanity through a collective lens. It is determined by compassion and humanity towards other humans. There is no such thing as a truly autonomous personal existence that is not socially and environmentally dependent. Ubuntu's epistemological foundation reflects the importance of community members as a part of the whole, not just as individuals.

In contrast to the Western philosophical thought of individualism, 'I think; therefore, I am', African existential analytics confirmed that an individual can only say, 'I am because we are', and since 'we are', therefore, I am' (Chuwa, 2014, p. 17). Ubuntu promotes a culture of peace, tolerance, forgiveness, peaceful coexistence and mutual development as a significant concept of peace. It is essential to note that 'Ubuntu' aided South Africa in overcoming the bitterness, hatred and suspicion that marked its history (Murithi, 2009, pp. 223–224). The peace resolution was successful because Ubuntu's guiding principle was founded on the idea that both parties to a dispute needed to be reconciled to rebuild and maintain social trust and cohesion. It successfully prevented the emergence and spread of a culture of retribution among individuals, families and society as a whole.

4. Discussion

4.1. Why did Africa fail to bring viable peace? Cases at a glance

Despite the wealth of African philosophical, theological and ethical concepts of peace, many post-independent African states preferred an alienated and ineffective model of peace. The argument here is not about romanticising Africa's past, but about how the Western solution since independence has failed to provide a viable or sustainable solution for African states. Africans continue to face conflict, ethnic strife, poverty, political instability and humanitarian crises. While conflicts are a characteristic of a particular sociocultural process, at the same time, the solution needs to be dependent upon the strategy

of a satisfactory alternative based on the sociocultural process and design of that society. However, the African peace process has come across as 'conceptual cramps' in favouring external actors.

To comprehend this great divide, it is necessary to discuss post-independence African countries that have attracted a body of knowledge and foreign intervention. As a result, serious interrogation of the Western and Eurocentric peace discourses is required to place the African worldview at the centre of the discussion and arrive at a more authentic reflection on African peace

As elusive as decolonisation may be, it brought moments of inspiration and promise to Africa. However, after independence, the inherited colonial institution and the perennial mental colonisation crippled the state (see Ngugi, 1994; Mamdani, 1996). Moreover, it facilitated the colonialists to protect their vested multilayer interests in the content thereof. As a result, the level and magnitude of violence have reached unprecedented heights in African history. In the wake of these intricate problems, the Cold War, according to Schmidt (2013, p. 7), brought a new surge of foreign intervention to the continent. In this period of mounting tension between East and West, African governments sometimes had a serious choice between the two blocs.

Regardless of which of the two blocs they chose, most African leaders, including their giant institution (OAU), failed to Africanise the inherited colonial institutions, politics and economy. As a result, when the East or pro-socialists failed to support many African states, certain African countries remained outside the scope of superpower tensions. In all other words, the tension morphed into an economic downturn, ethnic conflict, and a struggle for state power.

At this point, foreign aid came with conditions attached, as outlined below (with its luggage). Since the Cold War, numerous African countries have attested a peacebuilding process that necessitates intervention. Aid or intervention was predicated on the premise that peace is the result of liberal democracy, market-based economic reforms and the establishment of liberal institutions. To legitimise their concepts of peace, 'state fragility and state failure' literary works came to the fore and were used as a platform. Liberal peace and the state were seen as a Band-Aid solution to Africa's mal-administration and deteriorated state-building process. Schmidt (2013) assumes that these interventions were similar to previous imperial practices, in which more powerful nations sought to exploit Africa and its resources for their gain. That is why the Westphalian state model, which serves as the paradigm for African state-building, has failed to develop a model for integrating diverse nationalities into a unified national framework on epistemological grounds. Other than that, the process of state-building was divorced from the African conception of governance and organisational structure. Apart from these concerns, as Mamdani (1996) asserted, the institutional legacies of colonialism continue to haunt African countries' efforts to build a viable state.

In this perilous situation, structural adjustment programmes, military intervention in the name of the 'war on terror' and economic conditionality are either neoliberal or liberal state-building memos that have been extensively implemented in Africa over the last five decades. But, on the other hand, these external global demands are unable to produce the desired results in Africa's governance and the peace process. For example, Somali intervention, South Sudan civil war, Libya crisis, the Darfur multifaceted problem and ethnic tensions in Cameroon shed light on how colonial institutional legacies of statecraft and Western one-size-fits-all policy contributed to these crises (see Brown, 2018). On the other hand, the interventions and preconditions obstruct Africa's development.

To expand on a few points, I would like to discuss the current Ethiopian conflict. Due to its strategic location, Ethiopia has grown sharply under intense pressure as the conflict in Tigray has erupted. While the objective was to promote regional peace, the international community's treatment of Ethiopia is

absurd. At the subsequent United Nations meeting, the US and other European countries were callous in imposing sanctions on Ethiopia. On the other hand, Russia and China stood firm in rejecting the Security Council's resolution in favour of Ethiopia, citing the country's sovereignty. It seems much of the Cold War. China's opposition to sanctions and intervention in Ethiopia represents a roadblock to action by the US and European Security Council. The US has taken the hardest-hitting stance against Ethiopia among the Security Council's permanent members, but in this interventionist argument, the Ethiopians' demand for peace is completely disregarded. As a result, deeply ingrained and culturally rooted African peace practices were overlooked. Rather than focusing on Ethiopia's need for a rich African culture of peacekeeping, Western countries, including the US, focused primarily on temporary relief, which prolonged the war.

Additionally, the international community has been complicit in the semantics of defining the events in Tigray as genocide rather than focusing on bringing a viable solution to the catastrophe. This multifaceted intervention desire and UN sanctions imply that Western countries have still not comprehended or acknowledged the cosmology of Africa, particularly Ethiopian societies. The recent US President Biden's speech on the occasion of their withdrawal from Afghanistan, in which he stated that 'our goal is not to end conflict or to engage in nation-building', is a wake-up call to Africa. Instead, external interests have merely succeeded in altering the dynamics of internal struggles, leading to an escalation of local conflicts with devastating effects for many Africans. Numerous interventions in Africa have resulted in one of two outcomes: state collapse or despotic rule.

While it is necessary to re-examine the processes of peace-making and peacebuilding in Africa, this critical viewpoint does not come about irrationally. Several cases have been brought to Africans' attention to encourage them to reconsider their peace practices and institutionalise the peace process based on social cosmology. As Sankofa suggests, we should reflect on our culture and peace process. We should ask what went wrong in Africa after Somalia, Rwanda, Darfur and the recent Ethiopia cases of depicting interventions and pressure in the name of liberal peacebuilding gone wrong.

Based on the discussion above, I would like to make a few points about the failures and resulting ontological crisis in Africa. First and foremost, while the teething troubles are internal, the solutions are external, and they are based on a denial of the objective reality of African society and social cosmology. Secondly, they hyperbolise the importance of international intervention (a top-down approach) compared to local peacebuilding (bottom-up). Thirdly, scilicet, many African countries have structured themselves according to a Western-imported model despite the need for a context-specific model or one that considers the locally embedded fact. It is a model that prioritises individualism over collective humanism and rejects traditional institutions in the name of modernisation. The fourth point to mention is the Western world's paradoxical involvement in war-making and peacebuilding in Africa.

4.2. The way forward

Therefore, any peace process intended to bring durable peace needs to consider the cosmologies and theologies of the people in their specificity. Thus, it is essential to comprehend the people's social structure, social cosmology, philosophy of their institutions and guiding principles. Additionally, emphasising the local arrangement (traditional conflict management process) and defining the role expected of each society member is critical for delineating who should do what during the peace process.

Despite the need for local ownership in the peace process, the contemporary conservative and orthodox liberal peace concept that undermines or does out of African monopoly of wisdom over conflicts needs to be annulled. It is because liberal peace is virtually highly interventionist and threatens the process of

peace-making. That is why it is critical to revitalise and incorporate African traditional conflict resolution mechanisms into managing 'modern conflicts'. The current situation in Africa, which focuses on a quick fix system through the use or abuse of traditional and religious institutions in the conflict between different groups to promote and protect a narrowly defined concept of peace, requires a critical revision or rethink.

Overall, to resolve Africa's problems of stability, poverty and other grievances, it is necessary to revisit her cultural significance. Modern Africa, indeed, the entire complex of contemporary African culture, cannot be understood without reference to the west's influence and what is retained, borrowed or adopted (Falola, 2008, p. 20). More efforts should be directed towards documenting indigenous ways of thinking about and practicing peace and conflict resolution. They cannot be forgotten but can coexist in a hybrid form alongside the Western peace model. Thus, all those engaged in promoting peace and striving for justice can begin by building on the values that already exist as a foundation.

5. Conclusion

This paper has outlined that peace in Africa is far more complicated than conventional discourses portray. The factors that precipitate and exacerbate the majority of conflicts in Africa are multifaceted. As this perspective has shown, the Western concept of liberal peacebuilding dominates conflict resolution in Africa, which is based on the assumption that conflicts can be ultimately controlled, managed and mitigated. However, these dominant perspectives contravene African traditional approaches, which are partly motivated by the belief that conflict can be resolved meaningfully and permanently.

Unlike the Western perceptions of peace, African institutions and indigenous norms or rules conceived peace, not to conflict and war, but with an order, harmony and equilibrium. To develop an effective response to internal conflicts, it is necessary to explore the cultural foundations and/or institutions that can serve as the basis for conflict prevention, management and resolution. In general, as a means of healing the wounds Africans suffered, great faith must be placed in the potential role of indigenous institutions, their rules and local authorities in providing stability and establishing a viable state.

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