



## THE ETHOS OF STRATEGIC STUDY OF PEACE MANAGEMENT AND NEGLECT OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract:**

This paper focused on the importance of revisiting the traditional method of settling peace in our society. It also examined the activities of the European method of settling peace as was introduced to African Leaders during the era of colonization of African Nations. The paper also expressed the challenges posted to the local and international community as the evolution of institutions and strategies for attaining world peace and security. This paper seen peace as one of the humanity highest values and there are many definitions of what peace is; its meaning is multilateral and multi-disciplinary depending on which notion is central in the determination of peace as a concept. The paper looked at peace concept politically, within a state, and the conditions for which peace are created and maintained when the leaders and the citizens carry out their constitutional, political, social and economic roles by providing the needed security for all. The Article suggested that, the African methods of settling peace within the framework of African Continent should be maintained, while the Euro-centric idea of inviting people for peace settlement through police and court orders should be rejected.

**Keywords:** African peace settlement, euro-centric view, peace, security, harmony and brotherhood

### **1. Introduction**

The best concept of peace is when the world states, societies, villages, families and individuals are not at war and there are no remote sounding of war. However, absence of war does not necessarily mean that the individual or the extended social formation is at peace with itself. The meaning of peace has emerged, grown and expanded over the history of philosophy and general human history. The quest for sustainable peace and global security has continued to bother the minds of all actors, especially international organisations, governments, security agencies and NGOs, who are involved in the maintenance of peace and security in the world, and the beneficiaries who are the members of civil society. In other words, African traditional method of settling peace has been long forgotten and European system of arresting and court detention is being

applied. African traditional system of peace settlement in its various ramifications is very important, such as from the stage of simple level of discontent to increasing level of tension to the stage of outbreak of violence. (Aja, 2007)

The challenge posed to the international community is the evolution of institution and strategies for attaining world peace and security. The establishment of the United Nations could said to be the forth purpose in settling peace. Since the end of the world-war 11, while international cooperation, regional and sub-regional cooperation are attempting to perfect their political diplomacy by the use of military might from peace-keeping to peace enforcement. Scholars and experts are researching to understand the dynamics of peace and conflicts in the process of constructing the roadmap to sustainable peace. A number of theories for conflict management tools and strategic action plans for peace were developed which seem to work for North America and Europe but did not work in African Continent. The developed countries were able to sustain internal peace and security until the recent act of terrorism ravaging the world. The story is not the same in Africa as postulated by Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoum, Special Adviser to UN secretary thus said:

*“In all the debates of Africa, one issue stands out above others, the issue of Conflict, its root causes and its self-destructive impact. Nearly a third of Africa’s 53 states suffer from conflict situations and often the destabilizing consequence of civil war in one country will spill across the borders and affect whole region of the continent. War in Africa eats up scarce resources and destroys development. Moreover, it contributes to a chronic loss of confidence in the continent”.*

The issues raised by Sahnoum may explain why the circle of violence conflict is persistent and standard of living continues to decline in some African States. The challenges to design and implement strategic action for peace today is a global one, though greater challenges lie ahead of African Governments and experts. They have to battle with the downlink economic conditions, corruption and deteriorating health situations. One important variable that has continued to give significant gap in achievement of the goal between the North and South is the use of systematic approach by the North as against the traditional practice of developing countries in Africa, of non-integrated compartmentalized approach in state governance. According to Aja (2007), the works of experts in the civil society and Government are not linked to each other, neither as feeder network nor for coordinated policy direction of activities.

The field of peace and conflict industry is not only growing fast but actors are adopting scientific techniques at the expense of African system in designing and managing their response to them. Like the business cycle, the need for advance decision-making process is more relevant now than ever before. Strategic planning is one of the tools that business entrepreneurs have employed in being able to cope with the changing nature of the business environment. Today, the pathway to sustainable peace is becoming more complex (Akinyemi, 2001). The underlining causes of conflicts

are now beyond struggle for unfulfilled needs, security needs, identity, recognition and cross-border influence to those people that can be referred to as conflict managers who gain by generating conflict.

According to Annan (1998), the end of the cold war has brought a major gain for world peace; but has also brought into focus new challenges to security throughout the world, as societies and regions adapt to rapid change. Policy-makers have to think in new ways; about religious and ethnic tensions, about migration, population and access for resources, about new technologies and global communication, as well as about African Traditional sources of conflict management at the government level. This has brought new players to the stage, as diplomats are joined by non-governmental bodies.

## **2. Concept of Peace**

Peace is one of the humanity highest values and there are many definitions of what peace is, its meaning is multilateral and multi-disciplinary depending on which notion is central in the determination of peace as a concept. The most common use of the concept of peace is in the absence of dissention, violence or war. Peace is also seen as a state of mind in concurrence with serenity, a state of harmony, tranquility, concord and a balance of equilibrium of power. Peace is the opposite of conflict; it abhors violence and war. Peace is also a state of justice, goodness and civil government. Peace can be expired or abstract, normative or descriptive, active or passive, (Best, 2016). Peace derives its meaning within a cognitive framework or theory. There are many perspectives or variants of the definition of peace. Psychologically, peace is a state of mind in harmony and balance; invariably, a function of the mindset of an individual or a group of people to their state of wellbeing. What is their environment like? Is it hazardous, unsafe and contaminated? Is there much stress due to lack of basic infrastructure like water, electricity and good road? Is justice dispensed according to the dictates of the law? Peace has to do with the citizens' mindset and perception of how they see active measures by government in security of life, liberty and property (Borton, 1990).

The sociological perspective views peace as a value that emanates from just human relationship which enhances social harmony, creativity and productivity and prevention of war. Harmony is a fundamental category in traditional practice and thought; it is finding a way in which differences can coexist harmoniously, the smooth relationship between human being. Basically, in personal life, harmony is the ability of the person to reconcile between the desires and means; between sentiments and reality and coordinate the thought process to carry out the social and religious duties. Peace has a profound religious meaning and is an integral part of the scriptures and religious teaching. The spirituality of peace sees it as an unabated level of calm, which opens the perceptions of the person to a higher reality. St Augustus posited that;

*“Peace ----of the body lives in the ordered equilibrium of all its parts, the peace of the irrational soul, in the balanced adjustment of its appetites, the peace of the reasoning soul, in the harmonious correspondence of conduct and conviction, the peace of the body and soul taken together, in the well-ordered life and health of the living whole”.*

The above understanding of peace pertains to the individual’s sense of himself or herself and relationships between people characterized by good work, respect and justice. It pertains to underling state of calmness, serenity and tranquility. Above all, people who cherish the will of God, God of love who created all things, this would bring the harmony and tranquility of mind that is a spiritual serenity that creates a state of mind through which the message of God can be accepted. Peace is then, a construct intrinsic to a religion that people accept. Harmony in the society is promoted through spiritual awakening, (Yakubu, 1995).

The political perspective depicts peace as a broad concept subsumed in number of ways such as balance of powers or as a civil government. The balance of power is a must for peace as a social contrast underlying a structure of social expectations and associated social cooperation. However, (Casmir, 2009) posits that, peace entails institutionalization of political structures required value and stability. The implicit meaning is that to have peace, there must exist stable structures and security, which requires and assumes broad-based political participation by the citizen of a state.

### **3. Management of Peace and Neglect of Traditional Practices**

Politically, within a state, the conditions for peace are created and maintained when the leaders and the citizens carry out their constitutional, political, social and economic roles by providing security for all. The government must ensure the community adequate peace. Despite those multi-disciplinary conceptions, what the politics of peace sees as a good statecraft, and a product of successful management of justice, values and resources are in the equitably distribution between all the members of the state. Despite these multi-disciplinary conceptions of peace, we are yet to look at the essential fundamental and analytical exposition in Africa continent. However, it is necessary to look at the etymology and morphology of peace. The concept peace is both an ethical virtue and an axiological value. Peace is seen as a virtue necessary for the perfection of the individual, the community and the achievement of justice and well-being in the society. Thus, peace is acquired as a moral achievement, a value which increases the worth and dignity of the individual. It is an adornment pursued from the collective acquisitions for individuals in society which enhances the possibility of social, political and educational achievements of the perfect society as conceived by philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant and Krayshah (Sosoco, 1992).

According to Augsburg (1992), exploring the philosophical position on peace is a way of analyzing the world, idea and experience of peace. A critical look of the profile given by the Webster Dictionary on peace exposes its limitations, which center on the

question; does the absence of war or hostilities means peace in a community or state? For instance, when Nigeria is not at war with any nation, does that translate to the philosophical and empirical fact that Nigeria is at peace with itself? It concludes that the Webster's profile on peace common to global thinking has spawned to false thinking and understanding of the elements of peace as conceived by philosophers over the ages. In peace management, there is a framework in the philosophy that divides peace into a duality of equals, which has as its levels;

1. The dialectics of society justice;
2. Equity and welfare of the members of particular society.

Peace is seen as both negative and positive in some societies, in embodying these dialectics of development or lacking them in all essentials. In African setting, there are ways of making peace between individuals or husband and wife. African method is quite different from the European system of settling peace in the court of law. Peace is described in African society, as a condition in which justice reigns, where the equality of humans obtains and the pursuit of the welfare and the happiness of the greatest member becomes the ambition of leaders. But today, this is not seen in Africa due to the neglect of African Traditional Practices of settling cases. In respect of African management and settlement, the dynamics generate positive attributes: peace, harmony, economic growth and increasing well-being of the civil society. This has implications for global and national peace, especially where leaders of African societies are involved in the challenges of governance and poverty reduction. However, being at war externally or internally is negative peace. There may be in the presence of negative peace, a presence of vibrant conflict and injustice, within the states which is perpetuated as exploitation, and oppression of the poor and certain groups or corruption among the leadership of some African States, for example, Nigeria experience (Folger, Pooce & Stutman, 1997).

According to Yakubu (1995), the philosophical deposition on peace management is a dialectical, holistic and dynamic reality, which does not see peace as a unit or factor in human society as far as African system is concern. Rather, it is more of a comprehensive and successful assistance to mankind to meet the modern challenges of peace. The Eurocentric conception of peace demonstrates lack of comprehension of the dialectical nature of peace in African States. This dialectic exposes the relationship between peace and every other societal factor or dynamic settlement of peace. To African system, peace is center connected with the level of socio-economic cultural and political development and the nature of the struggle between all the contending social classes in the society. What constitutes the enabling conditions and dynamics for peace in Africa society cannot generate peace in another society. Secondly, the political and terroristic wars in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century have clouded a time sturdy and exploration of the meaning of peace. Thirdly, philosophical exploration of the concept of peace will erase the ensuing confusions, fantasies and speculations that hamstring our understanding of peace.

Peace in African experience is not a fantasy, speculation or utopia not based up in proper of societal forces that have both underdevelopment and development connotations. Traditional method enforces lasting peace in African settings due to its method of application; this is done within the society by inviting parties concerned before elders for settlement within the family circle and not in the court of law. It is the philosophical conception of peace, which exposes these main dimensions of peace that will give us a systematic, dialectical and comprehensive understanding of what both peace and war are. War is an attribute of peace, especially when injustice reigns in global, federal or state systems. War is an everyday phenomenon in the world. The specter of globalization in Africa experience compels us to come up with a concept of peace, which will be authentic, possible and dialectic, (Cunningham, 1998)

An added factor on this issue had to do with the impartiality or lack of it, introduced by Colonial Masters into African Society. It is now received wisdom that the colonial authorities within each of their colonies and protectorates. In some colonies, it should come as no surprise that the precolonial ascendant national groups resisted the imposition of colonialism, while oppressed national group welcome it, this creates conflict in these protectorates as such there were no peace. In some African countries actually, the colonial authorities favor those who welcome them and introduced colonial system of solving dispute by going to court and neglects of African practices to the disadvantage of those who opposed them. Such was the case of the Belgian colonial authorities in its dealings with the Hutu and the Tutsi in its colonial territory of Rwanda-Burundi (Lederach, 1995).

The second idea in the basket of ideas is the absolute necessity of installing democracy in Africa, with European influence and practices which created a lot of conflicts. No one can quarrel with that. But so far, we have defined democracy in terms of antimilitarism; a government of civilians as against a government of the military. Does this definition of democracy address the national question via African context as regards issues leading to conflict in different areas? In most part of Africa which have experienced military rule, scholarly analysis reveals a convergence of views, perceptions, and political agenda between the civilians and the military elites of the same nationality. That was what led to the saying, "*same people, different cloth*". If this is true, then I suggest that democracy defined in terms of antimilitarism is too restrictive. In Africa, we are still practicing a party democracy of first-past-the-post-winner-takes-all. In this respect, African ways of settling issues are applied, therefore, for military to take over the Government by force is not African ways at all (Subery, 1996).

However, this is not the only type of party democracy in practice all over the world. There are those who practice proportional representation. Even the United Kingdom which bequeathed to Nigeria a winner-take-all party system is seriously considering the adoption of a proportional representational system. I would suggest that those who are serious about tackling the problem of stability in Africa should pay serious attention to proportional representation to ensure inclusivity rather than exclusivity in government. Most importantly, when disagreement ensure, there is

bound to be conflict where African system were not used, rather European practice was applied (Ziedless, 1984)

Philosophically, it is recognized that in all historical periods in the evolution of human thoughts, peace has always played a significant role in molding mass thinking and thoughts. This social validity has compelled social scientists and philosophers not only to take preservative measures to preserve it but also to make contributions to the conception of peace central to the philosophical position in the pursuit of peace as a value, a virtue and property necessary for the continuity and stability of any society. Some have pursued the idea of a harmonious and peaceful order, without being able to explain exactly what peace is in African context. The zeal for the idea reflects the reality of all men and women everywhere that social progress and personal happiness are only possible under peaceful condition. This is possible when African system of conflict settlement is applied not by police arrest and court detention (Lederach, 1995)

According to Ibobighe (2007), human society achieves peace when it succeeds in developing the society, when the potentialities of its citizens are fully grounded and developed. It is a condition of well-being in which after development and unfolding of their potentials, the citizens are allowed full participation in governance and their welfare: the purpose of governance. Besides, Plato posits that, peace is an ideal perfected only in forms and abstraction; but for Aristotle, peace is reliable only in a polis when it serves the purpose of human life. For Aristotle, peace is the purpose of human life attainable in a polis, since it is the organisation that enables man to develop his potentials and happiness. The development and the full realization of our capacities is possible only in a society, which has as its chief objective the welfare of its members and the unfolding of their potentialities.

According to Aristotle's idea, politics must be tied to the ethical value to enable man to achieve peace, which is the purpose of life. He must live in an ethically built society, which is organised that the socio-economic democratic and justice minimal are assured the citizens and that they are allowed to participate in governance. In Aristotelian's view, we can see that, "*at a very early point, peace took the character of a very superior value with normative properties*". Peace is seen also as a means to implement other societal and individual goals of self-fulfillment and collective well-being (Onu, 2009). Karl Marx succeeded in engineering a concept of peace that has a historical and dialectical value, which is the context of antagonistic class struggles that become a chimera that cannot be realized except when class struggle ends. Since such a socio-economic chimera is not possible until the dawn of communism: a classless society; which has remained an ideal, unrealizable in the context of global "real" politics, then such a philosophical conception is not as practical as that related either by Plato or St. Augustine. Karl Marx makes the end of class-related exploitation as a condition for justice and peace to reign (Kraushal & Kwantee, 2006).

#### 4. Conclusion/Recommendation

Internally, it is important for African nations to address the issue of neglecting African traditional method of settling peace; this may bring African unity to the standard of our brotherhood. In expressing the process of peace, this study is particularly practiced in the Aristotelian perspective in its effort to construct a practical philosophical model of defining a typology of peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as regards African perspective. Peace is defined as “not” a condition but a process. In other words, it is a dynamic socio-economic process, rather than a condition; peace is a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and educing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community. Peace is a condition which can only happen in a polis, a well-ordered society or state where there is a self-fulfillment, rounded social well-being development of citizens’ potentials and they are allowed to participate in governance.

Hence, we can safely conclude that a workable formula for peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in African continent must start with a philosophical conception which sees peace as “social, dynamic”, work-in-progress, multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary. While considering traditional method of settling peace and developmental, issues seen in terms of a compass within two counter-balancing pointers of development of the society should also be expressed in respect of African method. The movements of two pointers peace process are driven by social, economic and political conditions within given society and in the wider international society. The paper recommends that, in combining our philosophical evaluation and the process view, traditional method of solving problem should be observed and adhered to, having discovered that the conception is essentially a process, holistic, dialectical and reflects the dynamism of social forces of development. We should therefore revisit our traditional method of settling peace within respective African society and reject European method of police arrest and court settlement because court settlement does not heal the wound created in the heart of the African people.

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