# AFRICAN JOURNAL ON
# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

# African Journal on Conflict Resolution

ACCORD

THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

29 YEARS OF WORKING TOWARDS PEACE

# Contents

# Foreword from retiring editor

*Jannie Malan*

What we are once again presenting to our readers in this issue, is a number of articles with an interesting and interrelated set of conflict resolution messages. Several of the topics deal with conflict-causing situations in which governing bodies pursue  interests of their own or those of their own ethnic group. The fourth and fifth articles (Adejoh and others, and Osiemo) focus on the reaction of the huge young component of the population – either violently aggressive opposition or restraint from terrorism, and either aggravating the conflict or working towards peace. Osiemo's article links indigenous mechanisms to the practices of peacemaking, a theme which is also dealt with in two other articles (Wafula, and Alamineh and others). The efficacy of indigenous mechanisms with regard to community saving, cooperation and cohesion, and conflict transformation – in general and in the case of blood feud – is discussed and promulgated. The need of government to adjoin indigenous mechanisms to their formal justice systems is also emphasised. The research of the second article (Ali) concentrates on the predicament of factory workers who are, under government policy, bereft of the opportunity to agitate for their rights. And in the first article (Agwanda and Asal) a pertinent case of an ethno-nationalistic conflict is outlined and discussed.

In the conclusions and recommendations of these articles, we get prompts and encouragements with regard to fulfilling responsibilities, practising inclusiveness and dialogue, showing goodwill, building relations and relationships, and revitalising indigenous methods. In the book reviews there are more examples of inclusiveness, experience and expertise. So, I wish you instructive and inspiring reading.

To these few sentences about the contents of this issue I must however, add some personal comments. Firstly, an apology that due to health problems I could not do my part of all the editing and proof-reading of this issue. At the beginning of the year, we planned that at my age of 89, and with a very well qualified successor on ACCORD's staff in the person of Dr Andrea Prah, the two of us would work together for the first six months, and I would then hand over to her at the end of June. At the beginning of April, however, my health suddenly took a dip – keeping me in hospital for three weeks, beginning with a successful cancer-removing operation, but then followed by a double stroke and four days in a coma. In May and June I could do little bits again, but not nearly what I should have done as my part of the journal's work.

Secondly, such an occasion of laying down one's job and saying farewell to one's colleagues obviously awakens rather strong feelings, and those are what I am experiencing. I can immediately add, however, that the main feelings are satisfaction and thankfulness.

I am genuinely satisfied that the journal has indeed been fulfilling a need about which we were convinced – stated as follows in the foreword of Vol. 1, No. 1:

> Starting a Journal is an undertaking which implies a determined and sustained commitment. Accepting such a responsibility presupposes the conviction that there is a definite and ongoing need for the envisaged Journal.

> At ACCORD we are convinced that such a need does exist, and that we should add our contribution towards fulfilling it. We are of course aware of the fact that acknowledging this need points in more than one direction.

> Firstly, it points to the reality of our human situation. Accepting the need for regular literature on conflict resolution means accepting the unremitting presence of conflict itself. This can be done, however, in a responsibly realistic way, without surrendering to the pessimism of those with an authoritarian mindset. At ACCORD we prefer to regard the prevalence of conflict as an absorbing and challenging reality, which should be approached frankly and constructively.

> The second direction in which the need for conflict resolution writings points, is the entire dimension of responding to conflict.

> This is the fascinating field in which we as an ACCORD team are rendering our services to fellow human beings. We remain committed to work as constructively and effectively as possible in each and every situation where we can be of help.

About my gratitude I wish to say that my sincere thankfulness goes to everyone who was and still is involved. To ACCORD's Founder and Executive Director, Vasu Gounden, who had the initial vision of a research-assisted organisation, and soon thereafter the ensuing vision of an academic journal in the field of dealing with conflict. To all the authors of 240 articles, who made the meaningful results of their research available, and to the reviewers of 55 relevant books. To colleagues who rendered their faithfully cooperating services as Co-editors and as members of editorial teams. To the quality-controlling Advisory panel members, and ad hoc peer reviewers, who voluntarily fitted the assessment of articles into their own very busy schedules. (A special word of thanks to the two Advisory panel members who have served continuously from 1999: Ms Phyllis Johnson and Dr Alioune Sall.) To Mr Edward Katz, who excellently managed all the language editing from the very beginning. To ACCORD's lay-out team, who professionally made all the issues publication-ready. And to Sabinet, ThinkTeam and African Journals OnLine, for making all the issues freely accessible online.

I offer my surest and most sincere best wishes for the innovative work ahead to ACCORD and to the African Journal on Conflict Resolution!

# The Anglophone problem in Cameroon: The change from crisis to conflict, and a possible way forward to resolution

*Billy Agwanda and Uğur Yasin Asal\**

## Abstract

Since the dissolution of the federal system in 1972, Cameroon has been entangled in an internal crisis between the Anglophone region and the government. After four years of violence, the outcome of peace efforts have largely been countered by more incidents of violence. This article traces how the crisis has evolved over the years from a political crisis into a conflict situation. While appreciating the theoretical perspectives of internal colonialism and ethnonationalism in explaining the conflict, the authors highlight that the evolution from a crisis into a conflict has been driven by factors such as the expanding waves of democratisation, the emergence of new actors (militias) and the evolution of the digital space (social media as platform for mobilisation). The article emphasises that whereas grievances over marginalisation form the underlying drivers of the conflict, disagreements over the judicial (common law) and education system in the Anglophone regions exacerbated the crisis, thereby leading to the outbreak of violence. Against this background, the article provides recommendations that may encourage a recourse to peace and stability for a nation previously lauded as one of the (few) stable countries in the Central Africa region.

**Keywords:** Anglophone, Cameroon, Conflict, Crisis, Ethno-nationalism, Francophone, Marginalisation

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## 1. Introduction

Africa feasibly represents an excellent embodiment of a paradox. This is because the presence of diverse cultural, linguistic, geographical, historical, and natural resources in the continent do not concur with the socio-political and economic conditions. Whereas the comparatively underachieving status of the continent can be attributed to several factors, colonial intervention with its concomitant slave trade, is one of the most significant experiences in the history of Africa (Agwanda and Ozoral 2020:57). The partitioning of Africa during the 1884 Berlin Conference as part of the colonial process, established an enduring legacy that continues to shape the social, economic, cultural, and political patterns in the continent.

The majority of African states emerged from the post-colonial era with a commitment to reverse the dark colonial legacy through ensuring economic development and providing social welfare to citizens. However, one glaring constraint was the heterogeneous nature of African societies that, for instance, deterred the selection of a single indigenous language to be used in public discourse. Additionally, the nature of public bureaucracies inherited at independence, meant that several African states had to continue relying on colonial languages. For many of the initial post-colonial leaders, replacing colonial languages with indigenous languages proved to be a pipe dream.

By such restructuring of Africa's social and political structures, colonialism sowed the seeds of an identity crisis largely shaped around linguistic affiliations. The imposition of colonial dialects at the expense of indigenous languages, not only supported the colonial structures of exploitation, but have since evolved in the post-colonial era to create discord in various states within Africa. Moreover, the effects of the partition of Africa without input from Africans, and with the advancement of colonial languages, form part of the fundamental challenges facing post-colonial African states. Indeed, it is possible, albeit trivial, to speculate about what the contemporary status of the continent could have been if there were no colonial era.

More important than speculation, however, is the reality of the challenges facing states today. There are, for instance, the crises and conflicts of identity and language which have also been experienced in other parts of the globe. Conflict over language such as in education,

communication in public spaces, access to state services, and even claim to citizenship, are increasingly becoming prominent. In several countries, particularly in Europe (Great Britain, Ireland, Belgium, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Ex-Yugoslavia and Catalonia) and the Americas (places such as Quebec), language has been a key factor in the rise of nationalism and conflict. In Catalonia for instance, there have been calls for the establishment of an independent Catalonian state because of, amongst other factors, the suppression of the Catalan language and identity by the state (Woolard 2013:210) This is a typical example of a clash between a dominant group with its identity and language, and a suppressed group with its identity and language. The dominant group treats its own members preferentially and fails to safeguard the political rights and the socio-cultural, and economic interests of the marginalised group. The fear and frustration of marginalised groups may be attributed to curtailed language rights (Nelde 2000:443). Ultimately, it is the propensity of language bias against minority groups that leads to, sustains, and exacerbates conflicts around language and identity. For minority groups, language is very sensitive as it creates a sense of community, culture, tradition or belonging – that is, language becomes the primary marker of membership to a community. At a more personal level, language make the difference between an individual having access to economic opportunities in the public sector or not.

A unique feature of the Cameroon conflict is that the clash of identities is not ethnic but rather about linguistic identity and is considered as one of the visible contemporary outcomes of colonial legacies in Africa. Distinguishing the conflict partly as a linguistic problem highlights the dynamics of language as a symbol of power and resource, and an instrument that can exacerbate conflict when there is a symbolic emphasis on one language in communication and writing over others; when language is used as an instrument to undermine the social and economic advancement of another group; and when used to consolidate economic and political power.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Several studies examining the Anglophone crisis (Keke 2020; Mougoue 2019) have explicated the crisis within the frameworks of internal colonialism and ethnonationalism. According to Hechter (1972: xiv),

internal colonialism denotes the structural social, cultural, and political inequalities between different geographical regions in a particular state. These differences are usually characterised by conspicuous unequal distribution of economic resources, by political domination, and by cultural marginalisation. Howe (2002) argues that there can be additional factors such as language and religion that contribute to internal colonialism and the continuing uneven interactions between the core and the periphery. As a consequence, this unbalanced interaction eventually leads to the emergence of less advanced and more advanced groups within a society. While the more advanced groups strive to maintain the status quo through the institutionalisation of mechanisms, the less advanced groups struggle to change their circumstances, and this may reflect in the emergence or rise of a nationalistic consciousness. In Cameroon, cultural differences have been exploited by the Francophone dominated government to marginalise Anglophone regions. While terming this a 'cultural division of labour,' Hechter argues that a state can be directly involved through formulation of discriminatory policies and this influences groups to develop group consciousness about collective oppression either as political dominance or economic marginalisation, which is then perceived as unjust and illegitimate.

Secondly, other studies (Stevenson 1999; Fonchingong 2013) also highlight ethnonationalism as a framework for understanding the Anglophone conflict. Its proponents argue that the environment that surrounds an individual is determined by the structure of social identities and how these identities are perceived by the people (Ikejiani-Clark 2009:27). Likewise, Cunningham (1998:2) emphasises that ethnonational identity is fundamental in conflicts because it influences the formation of in-groups and out-groups. These two arguments are central to identity-driven conflicts because, as noted by Walker Connor, *'conflict is the divergences of basic identity, which manifests itself in the 'us-them' syndrome* (Connor 1994:96). The '*us*' versus '*them*' is significantly applied in the Anglophone conflict.

However, there are certain variations in cultural, economic, and political issues common across Cameroon. As such, while internal colonisation and ethnonationalism provide bases for understanding the conflict, they fail to explain why 1) there has been a significant shift from a crisis situation to conflict since 2016; 2) only Anglophone

regions are fighting for independence as opposed to Francophone regions that are also underdeveloped and marginalised. In light of these shortcomings, this article argues that the context, actors, and mobilisation techniques in the conflict have become more significant in their effects since the dissolution of federalism.

Generally, the end of the Cold War was critical to the decline of intra-state conflicts: as it removed ideological polarisation, starved the flow of material and financial resources to armed groups in developing countries, and restored the role of the UN (United Nations) in dealing with issues of global security. In the context of the Anglophone crisis, changes in the international system influenced preference for diplomatic domestic discourse in pursuing the Anglophone agenda. This was the case when for instance, Anglophone leaders petitioned the UN in 1995 to seek redress on the issue of independence. Additionally, the end of the Cold War inspired a new wave of democratisation in the global south. The introduction of multipartyism in Cameroon during the 1990s led to an increase in the degree of freedom of communication and association. Political parties and civil society groups therefore took up the Anglophone agenda.

Mobilisation techniques have also transformed and have become a critical component of the conflict. Increasingly, wider access to social media platforms has facilitated the mobilisation of thousands of young people who are actively engaged in the discussions surrounding issues of participating in mass protests and demonstrations. The diaspora communities have also been using social media platforms to raise funds for militia groups against the government. Two of such fundraising movements are '*Adopt a Freedom Fighter*' – for a monthly minimum of USD 75, and '*Feed the Nchang Shoe Boys*' (Human Rights Watch, 2018; World Association for Christian Communication, 2019). Social media platforms such as Facebook have been used by separatists and other civil society organisations in Anglophone Cameroon to document and expose human rights abuses by the government. Graphic videos of such atrocities instigate more anger and emotions by presenting government response as systematically pursuing a course of genocide in Anglophone Cameroon.

## 3. Creation of Cameroon

Like the majority of African states, Cameroon is a creation of the European colonial discourse. Diplomatic in its form and economic in fact, the 1884 Berlin Conference did not start the scramble for Africa but rather, established regulations for the complete conquest and partition of the continent which was already an ongoing process. The conference laid bare and legitimised the notion that Africa had become a political, social, and economic playground for European powers. While Africans maintained control over the hinterlands, the conference sparked movement of European powers away from the coastal regions to inland areas where jumbles of geometric boundaries were established and imposed over traditional boundaries and indigenous cultures.

Cameroon was under German occupation until World War I when it was conquered by the Allied powers and subsequently placed under disproportionate spheres of influence of France (East Cameroon) and Britain (West Cameroon) (Okereke 2018:8). Britain acquired a small strip representing 20% of Cameroon's total land area along the border with Nigeria while France occupied 80% of the land area (Ngoh 1979:50). It is this disproportionate partition of Cameroon to Britain and France that led to the emergence of an Anglophone minority and a Francophone majority in Cameroon. The administration of Cameroon by Britain and France was nonetheless recognised internationally, firstly, as mandated territories of the League of Nations and later as UN trust territories (Dupraz 2019:633).

**Figure 1: Cameroon before the 1961 UN Plebiscite**
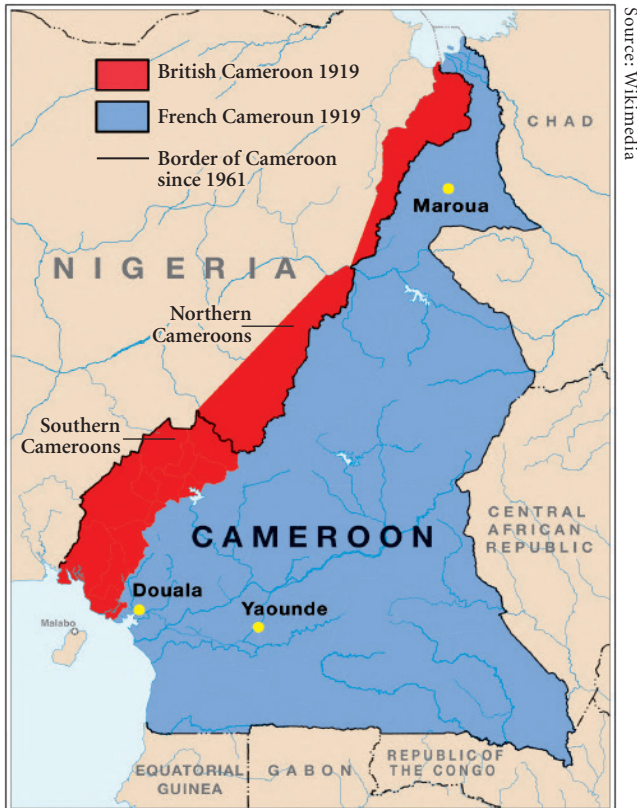
However, it is the post-World War II liberation wave blowing across the continent that ended colonial rule in Cameroon. France granted independence to the region under its sphere of influence, and the region became known as *La Republique du Cameroun*. For the British Southern and Northern Cameroon territories, a plebiscite was organised by the UN on February 11, 1961. The two questions on the referendum ballot were:

i. Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria?
ii. Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon?

**Table 1: The 1961 UN plebiscite results in Cameroon**

| Choice | Northern Cameroon | | Southern Cameroon | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Votes | Percentage | Votes | Percentage |
| Integration into Cameroon | 97 659 | 40 | 233 571 | 70.5 |
| Integration into Nigeria | 146 296 | 60 | 9 741 | 29.5 |
| Invalid Votes | - | - | - | - |
| **Total** | **243 955** | **100** | **331 312** | **100** |
| Registered Voters | 292 985 | | 349 652 | |

**Source:** Africa Elections Database

Northern Cameroonians voted in favour of a union with Nigeria, and key among their arguments was that it would have been senseless to discard the British lifestyle in favour of a French way of life (Johnson 2015:148). In Southern Cameroon, the overarching argument was that unification with Nigeria would result in a mass influx of the dominant Nigerian Igbos and, consequently, lead to loss of key employment and business opportunities. The Kamerun National Democratic Party argued that '…*we have been with Nigeria for forty years under British administration. We have no roads, no government secondary schools. It is about time we try the other side of the border'* (Ngoh 1979:94). Ultimately, Southern Cameroon voted in favour of unification with La Republique du Cameroun in 1961.

The subsequent unification of Southern Cameroon with the Republic of Cameroon necessitated the establishment of structural governance modalities guaranteed by the constitution. This was initiated during a post-plebiscite meeting held in Foumban where it was established that the Republic of Cameroon would henceforth be referred to as East Cameroon; that Southern Cameroon would henceforth be referred to as West Cameroon; that the two regions would establish a new federation known as the Federal Republic of Cameroon; and, that the form of state and federal constitution could not be changed in future (Achankeng 2015:134). It is imperative to recognise that the unification process was not tantamount to a surrender of sovereignty by Southern Cameroon,

but rather that it was a formal recognition of existence within the framework of a unitary state. The federal state was to maintain its judicial systems, economic structures, and education policies.

## 4. Dissolution of the federal republic and emergence of dissent

A decade after the creation of Cameroon, economic and political squabbles emerged between the federal government of West Cameroon and the national government. The strategic location of West Cameroon (Bakassi Peninsula) at the Gulf of Guinea, which is estimated to have the third largest oil reserves in West Africa (Baye 2010:11), became a natural resource target for the national government. Consequently, to have direct control of this natural resource, president Ahidjo Amadou organised another plebiscite in East Cameroon, that is Francophone dominated, to end the federation in 1972 (Takougang 2003:434). This unilateral decision was in contravention of the Foumban conference. Protests from Vice President Jonathan Foncha (from Anglophone Cameroon) only resulted in his dismissal from the executive. His replacement by Tandeng Muna from the Anglophone region, was in the capacity of Speaker of Parliament (Song 2015:123) and the position of Vice President was abolished, thereby, further centralising power in Cameroon.

The dissolution of the federal union, the elusive unity, and the government crackdown in Anglophone regions deterred open dissent against Francophone domination until 1982 when Paul Biya assumed power. Political reforms initiated by president Biya as part of the democratisation wave in the continent, provided an opportunity for the Anglophone political elites to voice long-standing grievances against Francophone domination (Takougang 2019:134). Firstly, protests erupted over the unilateral change of the name 'United Republic of Cameroon' to 'Republic of Cameroon'. This new name was not only similar to the name Francophone Cameroon used before the unification, but also, seemed to have ignored that Cameroon is constituted of two distinct entities.

Due to rising frustrations in Anglophone Cameroon, the first opposition party – the Social Democratic Front (SDF) – emerged in 1990 and advocated for liberal political reforms (Krieger 2008:36). Unfortunately, the unveiling of the party in 1990 was marked by the death of six

Anglophone youths after clashes with police (Krieger 2008:36). Supporters of SDF were instead accused by the government of advocating for the reintegration of Anglophone Cameroon with Nigeria by singing the Nigerian national anthem and carrying the Nigerian national flag (Konings 2004:185). The ruling Cameroon Peoples' Democratic Movement (CPDM) criticised SDF and called for severe government response against the group and its supporters – whom they branded as 'Biafrans' (secessionists).

More pressure from the domestic and the international community on democratisation influenced Biya to declare multiparty politics and an increased degree of human rights and freedoms through the enactment of the Law of Association in 1990 (Law No. 90/056) (Ayuk 2018:47). It became more possible to arrange public rallies and demonstrations, and to disseminate information through newspapers. Consequently, other political parties, civil society organisations and associations emerged to actively represent the interests of the minority Anglophone communities both domestically and internationally.

## 5. Causes of conflict

Even though the contemporary aspects of the conflict can be traced to the shortcomings of the Amadou regime, its foundation is deeply rooted in the 1961 UN plebiscite. The protracted antagonism between West and East Cameroon has often motivated scholars to review the arguments justifying calls for either reconstitution of a federal system or secession of the Anglophone regions. These arguments can be classified into the following:

*Socio-cultural victimisation.* Feeling victimised by dominant socio-cultural groups often establishes a strong sense of identity amongst minority groups – who may then develop coping mechanisms to facilitate their breakaway from such circumstances. Attempts by the government to reform the Anglo-Saxon cultural legacy in West Cameroon through the system of education are strongly resented. At the national level, students from Anglophone areas have often decried bias and discrimination in the admission processes at the higher institutions of learning (Chereji and Lohkoko 2012:13). After having had the Anglo-Saxon model in their primary and secondary schools, they would have a language drawback in a higher education that uses

the French language and model. This has forced many students from Anglophone areas to travel abroad and seek education consistent with their earlier training while a majority of others fail to complete their studies in higher education.

Previously, as part of the government unification agenda, the Anglophone General Certificate of Education (GCE) had been modified to make it similar to that of the French baccalaureate. However, protests by teachers and students' associations in West Cameroon prompted the government to establish a General Certificate of Education (GCE) board. In addition, while the Foumban accord provided for the recognition of English as an official language just like French, official communication in government and other public offices is often, if not exclusively, conducted in French regardless of the region. Media entertainment through television, cinemas, or theatres, were obligated to be in French – even in major Anglophone towns like Limbe and Bamenda. Programmes originally in English could only be broadcasted once dubbed translations of French were provided (Konings 2004).

*Political grievances.* Frustrations in West Cameroon have continued in the post-unification era when Francophone leadership has been alleged to dominate the government leaving minimal representation for the marginalised Anglophones (Caxton 2017:21). Since independence, the numerical dominance of Francophone Cameroon has ensured that the presidency is a de facto position for East Cameroon. The constitution however guarantees that if the president is from one of the regions, the prime minister must be appointed from the other region. As such, just like the presidency, the position of the prime minister has been a de facto post for Anglophone Cameroon. However, since Biya came to power in 1982, the office of the prime minister has been substantially weakened with more power vested in the office of the president. As such, most of the Anglophones feel that they are grossly underrepresented in government.

Secondly, for Anglophone Cameroonians, the concept of political sovereignty remains a distant reality. Perhaps the failure to grant independence to Southern Cameroonians as one of the options during the 1961 plebiscites may be considered as one of the continuing political grievances for the region. For Anglophone Cameroonians, there was a violation of the trusteeship agreement that was supposed to establish self-government or lead to independence – as had been stipulated in Article

76(b) of the UN Charter Article that called for independence of former colonies in 1960.

*Economic marginalisation.* There is often a direct correlation between economic and political power (Gilens 2012:24) and control of economic resources is often subject to competition not only at the individual level, but also between various levels of government. West Cameroon is considered an important national economic base due to its natural resources such as oil and production of crops like bananas, tea, palm oil, cocoa, palms, timber, and rubber (Sama and Johnson-Ross 2005:104). The recognition of these attributes can be seen in the regional presence of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) – the biggest para-state corporation and the second largest source of employment after government (Wanie and Tanyi 2013:144).

Given these important economic attributes, one would perhaps expect that the region is privileged with meaningful development. However, lack of critical infrastructure such as roads, markets, and connectivity to electricity, has impacted productivity and forced the majority of the inhabitants into abject poverty (Pommerolle and Heungoup 2017:536). But even more significant, is the appropriation of oil revenues by the national government. All of Cameroon's raw oil resources are located in the Anglophone region. But all the critical institutions such as the National Hydrocarbons Corporation (SNH), Cameroon Company of Petroleum Depots (SCDP), Hydrocarbon Analysis Control (HYDRAC), and the national refinery SONARA *(Société Nationale de Raffinage)* are located in the Francophone regions. For the inhabitants of Anglophone regions, establishing these corporations outside the region is perceived as a systematic plan by the government to deny the region employment opportunities.

## 6. From crisis to conflict

The political assimilation of the Anglophone region is hotly contested. In 1994, an All-Anglophone Conference was convened to implore the central government to either revert to the federal system or accept the demand for secession (Awasom 2007:155). This conference came up with resolutions in the form of the Buea Declaration that highlighted the stance of the territory by declaring that: *'The common values, vision, and goals which we share as a people and those of our Francophone partners in the Union are different, and clearly cannot blend within the framework of a Unitary state such as was imposed on us in 1972. We are by nature pacifist, patient and tolerant and have*

*demonstrated those qualities since we came into this Union. Our Francophone brothers believe in brutalising, torturing, maiming and assassinating dissenters. They have raped our women and daughters and used hand and rifle grenades against peaceful demonstrators. We find such barbarism alien to us and short of the civilised standards of all democratic societies*' (All-Anglophone Conference Standing Committee 1993:4–5).

This Conference marked the beginning of a new approach to the struggle for secession or federalism. This was promoted by various groups especially in the 1990s and appeared to be a period of re-enlightenment in the Anglophone territory. This is because one of the focus points of the Anglophone leadership (both political groupings and civil societies) was to transform the plight of the region – suffering under second-class treatment – from an elitist agenda to a collective group consciousness. As a strategy, this was meant to prepare and galvanise the masses through sensitisation campaigns for action in pursuit of either secession or federalism. The Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) became prominent for its agenda for secession.

In 1995, SCNC sought intervention of the UN to mediate between secessionist groups and the government and warned that failure would only lead to a sovereignty crisis (Lansford 2019:251). However, increased security crackdown by the central government disrupted the activities of the organisation. During one of its rallies in Bamenda, 200 people were arrested on allegations of attacking security officers. The arrested individuals admitted guilt, but Amnesty International drew attention to the fact that such admissions were obtained through torture (Europa 2003:162). The arrests and trial process ultimately led to the declaration of SCNC as an illegal organisation in Cameroon (Lansford 2019:251).

The state of despair within SCNC prompted Frederic Ebong, who was the organisation's High Command Council chairman, to announce that independence had been restored for the Federal Republic of Southern Cameroon (FRSC) on 30th December 1999. This led to his immediate arrest and detention by the government. While he was in detention, other members of the FRSC through its Constituent Assembly met and deliberated on a set of state symbols such as flag, national anthem, and coat of arms to reflect the region's purported independence. Between 2000 and 2015, a series of events increased the fragility of the situation, leading from a crisis to a more direct conflict from 2016. These events include:

**Table 2: Selected key events between 2001 and 2015**

| Year | Events |
|------|--------|
| 2001 | Government bans Southern Cameroon National Council (SCNC) which was the largest grouping pushing for Anglophone region secession. |
| 2004 | Southern Cameroon National Council leader (Patrick Mbuwe) is assassinated. Government suspected. |
| | Security forces assault SDF leaders during protests. |
| | Crowds estimated at 50 000 people demonstrate following the death of an SDF member, John Khotem. |
| 2005 | Over 100 members of the SCNC are arrested without charge. They were gradually released through the rest of the year. |
| | 50 members of the SCNC are arrested for purportedly holding an illegal meeting. |
| | Student-led protest for better opportunities in education for Anglophones turns violent. |
| | 23 SCNC members are arrested by police. |
| 2006 | 65 SCNC members are arrested during a meeting. |
| | SDF parliamentary members walk out in protest of electoral bills for senators and councillors proposed by the Constitutional Law Committee. They demand an independent electoral commission. |
| | Two students are killed by police during protests over inequalities in education. |
| 2008 | A constitutional amendment is made to remove presidential term limits. |
| 2009 | AU Commission on Human Rights and Peoples Rights dismisses a petition by SCNC for independence. |
| 2010 | The 64th president of the UN General Assembly, Ali Triki presents two maps as gifts to Paul Biya showing the Republic of Cameroon (Francophone) and the other representing Anglophone Cameroon. Secessionists perceived this gesture as recognition of the independence of Southern Cameroon. |
| 2012 | SCNC announces plans to issue currency, identification cards and treasury bills in Anglophone regions. Plans are also announced for a petition against Cameroon's 'illegal' occupation in Southern Cameroon. |
| 2014 | Republic of Cameroon organises and celebrates the 50th anniversary of the reunification. Anglophone Cameroonians detest this event and associate it with a distortion of history. |
| 2015 | All Anglophone Lawyers Conference themed around preserving Anglophone identity. |

Source: Compiled by authors

The crisis took a turn in 2016 when frequent and violent clashes between separatist groups and the Cameroon government emerged. Clashes with security forces led to the death of twelve protesters in December 2016 and subsequently, an umbrella conglomerate of civil society organisations known as Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC) was declared illegal (Amnesty International 2017). This escalation into conflict was exacerbated by two key events. First, the government appointment and deployment of Francophone judges (trained in Civil Law) to adjudicate over Common Law that is used in Anglophone Appellate courts.[1] The demand for lawyers to also file court cases in French in these courts sparked widespread protests from lawyers demanding the immediate reversal of such policies (Jules-Roger 2018:23). Secondly, the appointment of teachers from Francophone Cameroon to work in Anglophone institutions without adequate knowledge of the English language also sparked protests by teachers, students, and activists.

The central government instead of adopting and emphasising diplomacy as the path to resolving the crisis, has often opted to apply force to crackdown protestors (Pommerolle and Heungoup 2017:532). In 2017, continued arbitrary arrests of activists and subsequent imprisonment led to the breakdown of negotiations meant to de-escalate the conflict. During the proclamation of independence of the Republic of Ambazonia that coincided with the Unification anniversary on 1st October 2017, security forces reportedly killed 20 protestors during the violent clashes and over 500 others were arrested.

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1   The Common law system is based on the concept of a judicial precedent. Judges take an active role in shaping the law since the decisions a court makes are then used as a precedent for future cases. Whilst common law systems have laws that are created by legislators, it is up to judges to rely on precedents set by previous courts to interpret those laws and apply them to individual cases. Civil law systems, on the other hand, place much less emphasis on precedent than they do on the codification of the law. Civil law systems rely on written statutes and other legal codes that are constantly updated and which establish legal procedures, punishments, and what can and cannot be brought before a court.

**Figure 2: Violent events in Anglophone Cameroon (2016–2019)**
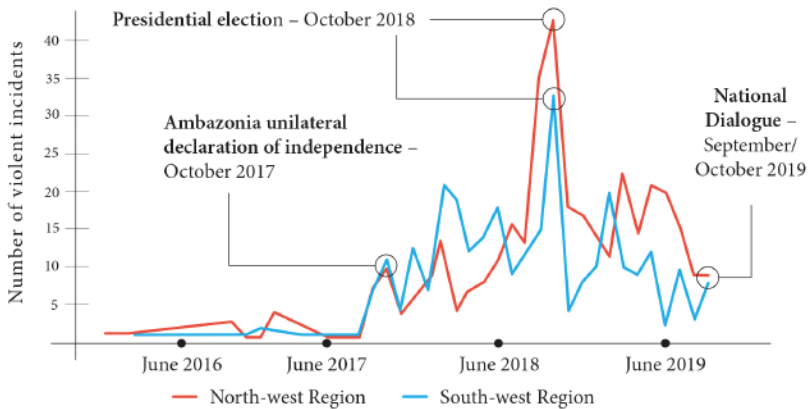
Henceforth, retaliatory attacks on government institutions by armed militias have increased the presence of security apparatus in Anglophone regions. Some of the militia groups include Ambazonia Defence Force which is estimated to have approximately 300–500 fighters, and the Southern Cameroon Defence Forces (SOCADEF) that has approximately 400 militants (International Crisis Group 2019). Others are the Manyu Tigers (approx. 500 fighters); Red Dragons (approx. 400 militants); Seven Karta (approx. 200 fighters); Swords of Ambazonia and Ambaland Quifor (approx. 400 fighters); Ambazonia Restoration Army (few dozen fighters); and the Vipers (few dozen fighters). It is the emergence and activities of armed militia groups that have led to the increase in the number of people displaced internally (over 160 000) and externally (over 50 000) in 2017, that perhaps signified the transition of the Anglophone problem from a crisis into a conflict.

In 2018, clashes continued to escalate in the region after the arrest and forceful repatriation back to Cameroon of 47 Anglophone activists including the 'interim President' of the 'Republic of Ambazonia' and members of his Cabinet who had sought asylum from the government of Nigeria. Their subsequent detention as 'terrorists' triggered retaliations from militia groups who kidnapped over 40 civilian and government employees (Arieff 2018:4). By December 2018, violence between militia groups and the government had resulted in the displacement of

approximately 550 000 people from Anglophone regions. This represents about 10% of the Anglophone population and positioned Cameroon as the sixth largest country with displaced population. Individuals fleeing the conflict, largely due to villages burned down by militia groups and government security agencies, have been forced to take shelter in forests. According to a report released by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, more than 200 villages have either been completely or partially razed.

Often, some groups that are pushing for secession prefer to avoid targeting civilians. Studies such as Fazal (2018:161) argue that this is because such militia groups are concerned about their reputation within the international community and/or because they have no incentive to inflict harm on their surrounding populations – especially when their military capabilities cannot extend beyond their local geographies. However, for other Anglophone Cameroon separatist groups, targeting sections of the civilian population is a means of punishing those who ignore directives on issues such as boycotts and screening government sympathisers. For example, militia groups were identified as using machetes to cut off fingers of workers who did not boycott working on state-owned rubber farms. Several students were also kidnapped by separatist groups for failing to adhere to a school boycott order (Fazal 2018:161).

Militia groups have not only attacked government and civilians defying their orders, but also members of political groups supporting federalism. Ahead of the February 2020 elections, separatist militia groups attacked the party for not supporting the boycott of elections and withdrawing its parliamentary membership. According to Joseph Mbah who is a member of the SDF parliamentary group, '*…SDF did not start its campaign on time in the Anglophone regions, because of the prevailing climate of intimidation and insecurity. Our members are being targeted by armed separatists. They have been kidnapped and threatened*' (Human Rights Watch 2020). In December 2019, more than 100 members of the SDF were kidnapped and all but six were released after a ransom was paid to the party. Generally, since 2016, the conflict has led to the loss of more than 3 000 lives, the displacement of more than 731 000 people and the denial of access to education for more than 600 000 children (Amnesty International 2020).

## 7. What is the way forward?

Resolving the Anglophone conflict in a sustainable manner will first and foremost require building trust between secessionists, government, and federalists and all the parties expressing a genuine desire to communicate through talking and listening. The government should take a lead in this regard because of its status as a legitimate actor with the capacity to convince the other actors in this conflict to engage in a genuine discussion. This does not necessarily mean that the parties will be expressing their unreserved commitment to resolve the conflict, but it may at least be a demonstration of an intent to build trust through actions marked by integrity and credibility.

Building trust can create an environment whereby the destruction of property by both government and armed militias in Anglophone areas can be brought to a halt and a path for constructive dialogue may be opened. The government should consider adopting a conciliatory voice, acknowledging the validity of Anglophone concerns, and considering the developing of a reparations policy for victims affected by the clashes between security officers and armed militia groups. Of great significance, the government should seek to refrain from making open demands and absolute statements about the form of (centralised) government as a pre-condition for dialogue with secessionists, even if it holds that the unity of Cameroon is non-negotiable. It is important to bring opposing groups to dialogue where consensus can be built. As a sign of good faith, Anglophone political activists who have been jailed should also be released.

The separatists on the other hand, should commence with internal negotiations that will persuade its members who have perhaps lost relatives during clashes with the government to understand that armed struggle will not attract international support, and will only serve to stain their image. This should also include urging members to abandon their previous calls for mass actions such as school and work boycotts, as a sign of good faith and of their will to dialogue with the government. Whereas the separatist will likely attempt to push for secession, they should also be willing to listen to other suggestions such as the option to abandon the claim for secession in exchange for more autonomy. It is also imperative that both the separatists and federalists engage in internal reconciliation so that they may develop a unity of purpose and a common stance towards potential solutions for the Anglophone grievances before engaging with the government in negotiations.

More and proactive international support should be mobilised to mediate in negotiations. Separatists do not recognise the legitimacy of the national government while the state does not tolerate any discussions short of a unified state. Getting to talk may therefore prove to be a cumbersome task. Consequently, the influence of the international community is central to negotiations. The African Union, as an active guarantor of African peace and security should take a leading role in attempting to mediate a solution either directly or through supporting the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). There needs to be appreciation of the possibility that volatility in Cameroon can spread and become a larger transnational crisis with ramifications for both Cameroon and the larger central Africa region. The African Union as a continental body must become bold and apply more pressure on the Cameroonian government to respect human rights and freedoms, including frequent fact-finding visits to the Anglophone regions to timeously assess the situation.

External security partners to the continent such as the United States, United Kingdom (UK) and France need to act more decisively on behalf of the international community to bring both sides to dialogue. The UK and the UN are historical actors in this conflict; France has sway over the central government while the US is a significant security partner for Cameroon in the war against Boko Haram. They are therefore in a prime position to keep pressure on both the government and the separatist groups to engage in a genuine conversation and reform to a system of governance that is inclusive. The US, UK and France, being permanent members of the UN Security Council, should petition the UN Human Rights Council to adopt the Anglophone Conflict into its main security agenda as current trends indicate that the conflict can threaten international peace and security since the region also suffers extensively from the Boko Haram threat. Moreover, the UN Human Rights division should actively investigate claims of violations of human rights by both government and the separatist militia groups.

The government of Cameroon must also commit to undertake key institutional reforms in governance. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance adopted by the AU in 2007, presents an ideal referential framework to guide sustainable political reforms in Cameroon. This article has demonstrated that one of the underlying causes of political dissent is the failure for the government to uphold the treaty on

federalism as was envisaged during the unification era. It is therefore appropriate, that the government reconsider a federalism that is supported by institutional frameworks guiding cooperation between national and federal governments. Such a framework ought to be established with provision for equitable revenue allocation, clear separation of powers between the federal states and the national government, as well as a guarantee of a free political ecosystem where grievances can be raised and rights to peaceful dissent are respected.

The various interactions between communities in the Anglophone regions with the police have resulted in several allegations that security forces have demonstrated total disregard of human rights and freedoms and have been involved in the death of several civilians. Such allegations are far-reaching and if proven true, would be in direct contravention of international laws on the protection of human rights and freedoms, particularly with respect to the sacred right to life. Pursuing a course of justice for the victims of police brutality falls within the capabilities of the Cameroon government. As such, it is imperative that the government commit itself to undertaking impartial and speedy investigations so that security officers found culpable of violating these rights are charged under the existing judicial laws that guide the conduct of security officers. Additionally, the central government that has a monopoly over the use of force must ensure that all security operations conducted in the Anglophone region adhere to the provision of international human rights and freedoms. Importantly, there is need for the security operations to uphold the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Firearms. The government can also deploy judicial police officers to monitor such security operations.

For progress to occur, three scenarios, based on the efforts put forward towards resolving the conflict, may be considered. At best: the conflict can be resolved through a politically negotiated settlement that will see the re-establishment of the previously conceived federal system at independence. This will perhaps highlight the utmost commitment of the government to re-establish peace in the country and significantly contribute to other efforts to deal with security threats posed by terrorist groups such as al-Shaabab in the northern regions of Cameroon.

Secondly, the most likely is a reform scenario: radical change to federalism will be suppressed, but there will be some allowance for decentralisation

and promotion of both official languages. The government will then rigidly insist on its mandated power, guaranteed under national, regional, and international laws on self-determination. The issuance of a presidential decree in 2018, establishing the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development indicates a partial reform agenda. Further reforms would include acceleration of decentralisation through implementation of the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities which allocates 'Special Status' to Anglophone regions as well as the Promotion of Official Languages in Cameroon that designates *both* English and French as official languages in all public institutions. These concessionary moves may well succeed in pacifying groups calling for the re-establishment of the federal system, but radical secessionists are likely to continue in the near future.

The third scenario, considered by this article as the worst, would be the failure to achieve any significant progress in the implementation of political, economic, and social reforms by the government and a subsequent outcome would be continuous attacks on government institutions by militia groups or a significant increase in civilian casualties from the conflict between the state and armed groups. This can trigger a much larger possibility of violent unrest in Anglophone regions, thereby leading to violent civil war. This article emphasises that the ideal solution would be a middle-ground reached on concessions from both the government by implementing political, economic, and social reforms, and abstinence from further attacks by armed groups. Equally, we discourage a secessionist agenda because it will not only attract strong opposition from the state, but also because it would set a dangerous precedent, especially for regions already challenged by other secessionist groups, such as Biafra.

## 8. Conclusion

The conflict has for several decades impacted a lot of people either directly or indirectly in Cameroon and it is necessary that a lasting solution be found. Compared with reactions to other conflicts in the continent, such as to the South Sudan conflict (Rolandsen 2015), the Somali conflict (Nyadera, Ahmed and Agwanda 2019) and the Boko Haram conflict (Nyadera and Bincof 2019), international response to the Anglophone conflict remains minimal. A few European countries (the UK, France and Germany) and the US have only from time to time issued

statements calling the government and separatist groups to negotiate. On the multilateral front, the UN is also yet to take concrete measures to resolve the conflict. Attempts by Norway and Netherlands to introduce it as an agenda item in the UN Security Council were shot down(defeated) after failing to garner the minimum 9 out of 15 of the votes. Côte d'Ivoire, China, Ethiopia, France, Russia, and Equatorial Guinea all voted against.

However, while this article places an emphasis on the potential role of external actors in facilitating a solution to the conflict, the authors underline that an internal national dialogue initiated by the government in collaboration with dissenting groups, particularly from Anglophone Cameroon regions, hold the key to finding a sustainable solution. To initiate such a process at a national level, the government must extend a hand and demonstrate goodwill by ensuring that political detainees are released or given access to all the rights of accused persons including the right to legal representation. Separatist groups must also cease from engaging in illegal activities such as targeting government installations and kidnapping individuals suspected to be pro-government. These concessions can provide a good foundation upon which a process of national dialogue can be initiated and advanced.

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# The curbing of the collective voices of workers in Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation: The case of the garment sector

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## Abstract

A state-led industrialisation drive inspired by the East Asian 'developmental state' ideology is at the core of Ethiopia's industrial policymaking. Yet, scholarship on the implications of Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation on the collective voices of local industrial workers is rare. Hence, this article argues that Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation has firmly stood for strong business-state alliances, thereby curbing the collective voices of local industrial workers. Using qualitative empirical data, the article attempts to address the research gap and contribute to the existing debate by examining why and how the country's state-led industrialisation has been operating in this context since 2005. Analysis of the findings indicates that facilitating industrial catch-up is at the centre of the country's industrial development policymaking. Also that,

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the voice of the workers has been considered as a threat to foreign direct investment (FDI). As a result of the policy, the Ethiopian government employs diverse *de facto* or *de jure* labour control mechanisms, exceptionally against the associational rights of workers in the garment exporting industries across the country's industrial parks (IPs). Moreover, employing industries have enforced various forms of administrative and punitive measures to subdue the collective voices of their workers. Hence, Ethiopia's activist industrial policy must navigate a reasonable balance between facilitating industrial catch-up and ensuring labour standards for inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable industrial labour relations.

**Keywords**: State-led industrialisation, collective voices, industrial parks, workers in the garment sector, Ethiopia

## 1. Introduction

Despite the plethora of development and human or labour rights studies on the subject, there is no scholarly unanimity on the meaning of the term 'collective labour rights' (Mehari 2015:40–41). Similarly, there are no consensual explanations among scholars of these fields of study of the implications of state-led industrialisation on the collective labour rights of industrial workers (Anner 2015:152). As a result, labour rights scholars have shifted their intellectual engagement from finding shared conceptions and explanations of collective labour rights and state-led industrialisation to describing the historical track records of countries concerning these two topical development agendas.

Concerning the implication of state-led industrialisation on the collective labour rights of industrial workers, the experiences of those East Asian countries which followed the 'developmental state' model are plausible demonstrations. The model has historically proved potent for achieving rapid industrialisation in East Asian economies. This has been made clear by Herms' (1997:1) unequivocal statement: 'Without a doubt, East Asia's economic expansion during the past twenty years is one of the most remarkable economic changes since the Second World War'. At the heart of their economic success, was state intervention-which has even been recognised by the World Bank's 1993 report on the region (Hardy and Hauge 2019:1). Accordingly, the active industrial policy of governments of the region preferentially subsidised export-oriented and

labour-intensive industries as priority sectors. But, the relationship between the state and the firms was characterised by reciprocity, where the state offered firms a subsidy and the firms were expected to do well in the export market (Wade 2003:621–664).

Yet, the strong business-state alliance at the heart of the state-led industrialisation of East Asian countries was partly aimed at curbing the power of labour. Their approach, which was used to suppress the power and well-being of their local labour force, has been part of their policy priority for facilitating industrial catch-up, particularly in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. It has to be noted that the garment sector had been highly competitive, with the result that global garment manufacturers would hunt for low production destinations with flexible labour regulations (Oya and Schaefer 2019:386). In response to this global demand, countries of the East Asian region negotiated with the incoming firms, particularly in the garment sector, by promising less protective labour practices.

Low wages and a highly disciplined workforce have usually been presented by East Asian countries as investment incentives to these multinational firms. Hence, to maintain the influx of FDI, national governments of the region have employed *de jure* or *de facto* labour control mechanisms to suppress the bargaining power of labour against global capital. In this connection, countries such as Korea and Singapore curtailed their organised labour by repressing or co-opting labour rights institutions. Similarly, in Hong Kong and Taiwan, the governments enforced the policy of intermingling kinship ties and business networks to limit the emergence of working-class militancy (Hardy and Hauge 2019:10). Hence, East Asian countries' suppressive labour practices against the collective labour rights of their workers may be viewed as an example of the external influence of economic globalisation.

In the same vein, as part of the hyper-competitive trend of economic globalisation, the just-in-time production systems in the global garment production networks necessitate the fluid functioning of the supply chain. As a result, the sector requires effective labour control regimes to prevent the production networks from any forms of work stoppage or disruptions such as workers' demonstrations and labour strikes (Staritz and Whitfield 2019). In response to this, countries with state-led industrialisation ideology have employed various formal and informal

techniques to suppress the collective voices of workers (Hardy and Hauge:1–4). For example, the Chinese government has practised an authoritarian state labour control regime by employing both legal and extra-legal instruments to curtail and discipline workers' collective actions including labour strikes (Hardy and Hauge 2919). Similarly, in Bangladesh, the government and employers in the garment industries employed the actual labour market conditions and unemployment to discipline the country's labour force (Oya and Schaefer 2019:388). Likewise, industrial parks in Honduras consistently applied a repressive labour control model whereby employers had direct means of economic and extra-economic coercion over workers (Anner 2015:163).

Furthermore, multinational garment manufacturers and brands have been motivated to relocate their production sites to new destinations where the local labour force was not only cheap but less organised, which has helped avoid any form of disruption to the smooth industrial production process. As such, countries of state-led industrialisation in Asia have appropriated their industrial parks as special export processing cites where exceptionally suppressive labour controls have been enforced both by the governments and the employing firms (Oya and Schaefer 2019:388). Thus, industrial parks of these late-industrialising countries have been industrial workplaces where preferential treatment of global capital over local labour has been enforced.

In contemporary Africa, there have been growing ideological and actual industrial policy commitments towards the East Asian model of state-led industrialisation or the 'developmental state'. As parts of their investment incentives to attract those labour-intensive multinational garment firms to their IPs, many late-industrialising Sub-Saharan African countries follow a cheap and less-protective labour policy (Staritz and Whitfield 2019). For example, Mauritius has promoted management-initiated and 'artificial' workers' councils in various IPs of the country to avoid the formation of and pressures from independent and strong labour unions (Oya and Schaefer 2019:387). Besides, countries such as Mauritius, Lesotho, and Madagascar have followed various *de jure* and *de facto* labour control mechanisms to suppress the associational rights of local industrial workers at those multinational garment exporting firms (Oya and Schaefer 2019:395–399). Despite its repressive reactions to the voices of local industrial workers, this quest for increasing FDI is compelling a policy imperative for countries of Sub-Saharan Africa where unemployment

and underemployment have become critical socio-economic and political challenges.

In Ethiopia, the successful track record of the country's rapid industrialisation seems to resonate with its post-2005 ideological and development policy drives towards the developmental state or state-led industrialisation. With a low-income economy of an Eastern African state, Ethiopia has been remarkable in successfully initiating industrial catch-up to ensure structural socio-economic transformation from a predominantly agrarian economy to a globally integrated industrial economy (Fantu 2014:39–45). In this regard, the country's ideological commitment towards state-led industrialisation to actively craft investment-friendly industrial policymaking has been remarkable (Arkebe 2019:605). Also, the country has invested heavily in industrial infrastructure, human resource developments, and offered tax incentives to attract FDI in the garment and apparel industries as priority sectors.

In 2017, it was ranked as the first recipient of those labour-intensive foreign apparel firms in East Africa and the second in Africa in 2017 (NCTAD 2018:26). Yet, the largely overlooked development in the history of industrialisation is the country's labour rights context. In this regard, leading researchers such as Oya and Schafer (2019:398–399), Hardy and Hauge (2019:1–25) and Mitta (2019) highlighted the challenges of the labour sector in late-industrialising Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation has been based on the overarching ideological premise that the existence of a highly organised labour institution could disrupt the smooth industrial production process and thereby affect the influx of FDI (Oya and Schaefer 2019:381–398). Accordingly, the Ethiopian government has followed various forms of repressive mechanisms to weaken the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU). It has formally prohibited CETU from initiating workers to organise themselves at their respective workplaces. As a result, workers were prevented from being initiated as members of the CETU, and thus take a step towards organising. It has weakened CETU's leadership using administrative and financial manipulations. As a result, the role and power of CETU as an independent representative national labour institution has been significantly limited. What is more, the CETU has even been supportive of the government policies by downsizing workers' legitimate demands for freedom of association. In a similar vein, Ethiopia's

state-led industrialisation has deliberately weakened the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), which is in charge of enforcing labour standards (Hardy and Hauge 2019:13–14). As a result, MoLSA and affiliated labour rights institutions have been silent about what goes on inside the factory gates and reluctant to take protective measures to ensure that investors comply with Ethiopia's labour laws and regulations.

Moreover, the government has usually securitised and militarised the workplaces, particularly across the country's IPs, to put pressure on workers who propagated associational rights. Furthermore, it has frequently blocked all the potential institutional avenues through which labour rights institutions could operate, particularly at the country's IPs (Yirgalem 2019:19). Likewise, multinational apparel manufacturers operating across the country's IPs have employed various mechanisms to suppress the voices of workers. For example, they usually put time pressures on their workers to prevent them from discussing their associational rights.[1] Moreover, they have frequently employed punitive disciplinary measures against workers who initiated unionisations and labour strikes. Additionally, they initiated the establishment of employer-affiliated trade unions to avoid any external drive for the realisation of independent and strong labour unions organised by the free and active participation of workers (Oya and Schaefer 2019:397). Furthermore, weak labour auditing practices of global apparel brand buyers sourcing from Ethiopia's IPs have contributed to the violation of workers' rights.

The above literature review shows the implication of state-led industrialisation on the collective labour rights of industrial workers. Nevertheless, the topic still experiences significant research gaps preventing the comprehensive understanding of the major challenges encountered by collective labour voices from the vantage points of states' development ideology, labour rights institutions, employers, and multinational apparel brands. Moreover, little has been researched concerning the exceptional context of Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation and its implications for the voices of local industrial workers in the country's Industrial Parks.

Towards filling this underlying research gap, this article, therefore, aims to examine the suppressive labour practices applied against the collective labour rights (freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining,

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1    FGD with CETU experts, Addis Ababa, 20 February 2020.

and the right to conduct labour strikes) of workers during Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation since 2005. It also describes and expounds on various labour-control mechanisms employed by both the Ethiopian government and multinational garment industries in the country's IPs to silence the voices of local industrial workers. For this article, the term state-led industrialisation is used to refer to the existence of a strong state which actively and deliberately leads the country's ambition to structural economic transformation through industrialisation. As such, the ideology rests on the underlying purpose that states should focus on attracting FDI, particularly in the labour-intensive garments sector, to create a sizable number of industrial jobs and to easily join the sector's global market. Finally, the ideology propagates a highly disciplined and controlled workforce to attract multinational garment exporters and brands.

## 2. Methodology

The study employed an exploratory research design with a qualitative approach. The study sites were: Eastern Industrial Zone (EIZ) IP in Durum, Bole Lemi I IP in Addis Ababa, and Hawassa IP in Hawassa. These industrial sites are from the first generation of industrial sites. They generated thousands of employment opportunities by hosting several foreign garment firms. Only garment firms were selected because they are a priority sector of the Ethiopian government. This labour-intensive sector is one in which serious violations of associational rights have often been committed across the world (Bangladesh, Vietnam, Mexico, Madagascar, Namibia, Kenya) (Oya and Schaefer 2019:389). Similarly, in Ethiopia, some reports demonstrate repeated labour rights violations, particularly in the garment sector (ILO 2017; Kidist 2019:29–52). For this study, three major foreign garment exporters from America, China and India, operating at Hawassa IP, EIZ IP and Bole Lemi 1 IP, respectively, were chosen to be sources of data.

The qualitative research method was appropriated to generate data that are both flexible and sensitive to the ideological context concerned. International, regional, national and industry level human or labour right norms, investment policies, and strategic national industrial development plans, International Labour Organisation (ILO) reports, and media contents which were relevant data resources were also examined. A main focus has been on industrial, labour, human rights

and investment affiliated institutions. Relevant data have also been gathered from various stakeholders, such as the ILO regional office, the Investment Commission (IC), the Industrial Park Development Cooperation (IPDC), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), the Bureaus of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA), the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), representatives of global brands (buyers) of selected firms, and firm managers of the selected firms.

Various semi-structured interviews were conducted with industrial workers to properly explore their lived experiences, thoughts, expressions, and interpretations of their experience. A particular concern will be with experiences related to their associational rights. Besides, various focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with firm managers and employees. Moreover, secondary sources including relevant published research findings and literature were deliberately consulted. Finally, the data generated from the preceding instruments were analysed using the integration of narrative, thematic, content, and document analysis strategies.

## 3. Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation and co-opted labour institutions

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) assumed political power following the demise of the military regime in 1991. It is noted that the ideological antecedent of EPRDF was one that heavily resonated with Marxism. Also, the party's strong social-political bases stemmed from regional liberation movements and the mobilisation of peasants in the country's rural area. As a result, its ideological and development policy imperatives were predominately focused on the rural population and the country's small-scale agricultural economy (Kassahun 2016:1–22). Accordingly, the industrial sector, urban dwellers, and the industrial proletariats played only marginal roles in Ethiopia's political economy until 2005. As a result, that both the employer element of the industrial sector of the economy and the industrial workers received marginal attention from the government during these years. Similarly, specific to the labour sector, the ideology had significantly affected the number of industrial jobs and suppressed labour standards as well as the aspirations of workers for strong labour rights institutions (Markakis 2011:251–252; Hardy and Hauge 2019:13).

Ethiopia's industrial policies since 2005 could be characterised by centralised and co-opted approaches to associational rights of workers and labour rights institutions. The country's activist industrial policy prioritised an increasing number of employed persons and skills transfers over labour standards.[2] Consequently, Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation supported cheap and less-protected labour policies as part of its investment incentive packages to attract FDI, particularly in the labour-intensive garments and apparel industries (Hardy and Hauge 2019:1). From the vantage point of the global garment manufacturers, the increasingly super-competitive nature of the global apparel sector was forcing them to find new production locations where a cheap and less-organised labour force was found (Oya and Schaefer 2019:387–388).

Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation has implemented various mechanisms towards disciplining and suppressing the collective voices of its local labour force. Weakening the powers and roles of the country's labour rights institutions has been among those repressive measures of the country's active industrial policy. In this regard, the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) has been the primary target institution (Bersoufekad 2003; Hardy and Hauge 2019:13–14).

CETU, which replaced the All-Ethiopia Trade Unions in 1993, was the highest representative of Ethiopian Workers at the national level. Concerning its organisational structure, CETU has been serving at the top of the institutional hierarchy to deliberate on the national labour policy issues with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Ethiopian Employer's Federation. Below CETU, there are currently nine sectoral federations (with different levels of responsibilities), followed by firm-level trade unions. In 2019, of 300 000 workers in factories, only 20 000 (7%) had representative trade unions. This, in turn, shows or illustrates that membership has been extremely low owing to the suppressive industrial traditions towards associational rights (Hardy and Hauge 2019:14). Another devastating problem is that the 45 000 workers who are currently employed across the seven IPs of the country are totally beyond the reach of the CETU, and their rights to

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2    FGD with ILO regional experts, Addis Ababa, 24 February 2020.

freedom of association are categorically denied.[3]

In principle, institutions such as CETU are required to effectively and independently channel workers' voices into improvements in wages and other working conditions by influencing government policies and actions. Unfortunately, the CETU has only had a negligible influence on the overarching developmental plans of Ethiopia and their contributions towards improving the working conditions of workers. As a result, the country's industrial labour force has continued to suffer from the government's cheap and weak labour policies and practices (Yirgalem 2019: XI). As the findings revealed, those global apparel manufacturers across the country's IPs still pay the least basic monthly salary in the world, that ranges from 22 to 34 US$. This has forced local workers to struggle to get by, let alone save any money or send cash home to their families in the countryside (Barrett and Baumann-Pauly 2019:11–12). In practice, the CETU did not object to the wider objectives of the country's state-led industrialisation. It is important to note that in an interview, a senior CETU official described the organisation as a mediator between the developmental objectives of the Ethiopian state and the interests of workers.

One of the government's strategies has also been the formal restrictions against CETU's access to workers at their workplaces such access could create awareness and train workers to improve their class consciousness. In this regard, both the government and the employing firms insist that associational rights shall not be pushed (promoted) by CETU or by any outside actors, but by workers themselves (Hardy and Hauge 2919:14). In coordination with employing firms, the Ethiopian government frequently created negative impressions in the minds of workers, which delegitimised CETU, the sectorial federations, and firm-level labour unions, thereby creating mutual distrust among workers and their representative institutions. Other institutional limitations of CETU and its affiliated labour representative institutions are that they are understaffed, poorly financed, and have limited experience and skills to effectively confront the repressive mechanisms of both the government and employers against the collective voices of workers.

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3   Key informant interview with Mr Angesome Yohannes, President of the Industrial Federation of Textile Leather & Garment Workers Trade Union (IFTLGWTU), Addis Ababa, 26 February 2020.

The other labour protection institutions which have been systematically weakened by Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation are the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and its regional affiliates, Bureaus of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA). MoLSA and BoLSA are government institutions with the power to monitor the enforcement of national as well as international labour rights, including the collective labour rights of workers at workplaces. Nevertheless, as sufficiently testified by workers and CETU experts, effective labour rights standards have not been enforced. Instead, the ideological priorities of Ethiopia's state-led industrial development path (rapid industrialisation and FDI promotion) have been emphasised over labour standards. As a result, the government has deliberately eroded the monitoring activities of these labour inspection institutions and instead has used them to curb the collective voices of workers to attain its industrial development ambitions. On the other hand, according to discussants at the study sites, the government has promoted pro-investment agencies such as the Industrial Park Development Corporation (IPDC), Investment Commission (IC), and Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI).[4]

As the key informants revealed, compared to other law enforcing institutions, MoLSA has been the least-financed and least-organised ministerial office. The government rather empowered its pro-investment government agencies such as IC and IPDC to handle labour relations.[5] For instance, the Industrial Peace Directorate Office, which is responsible for the Deputy-Commissioner of IC, has currently been formed to handle labour matters including labour strikes.[6] It has also been only after 2018 that MoLSA and BoLSA have opened offices across the country's IPs, following the various forms of 'wildcat' strikes at Bole Lemi 1, Hawassa, and Eastern Industrial Zones.

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4    FGD with CETU experts, Addis Ababa, 20 February 2020.

5    Key informant interviews with BoLSA representatives at the EIZ, Hawassa, and Bole Lemi 1 IPs, 29 February, 2 and 4 March 2020.

6    Key informant interview with Ayalew Ahmed, Vice President, Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Union (CETU), Addis Ababa, 20 February 2020.

Moreover, the government co-opted MoLSA and BoLSA, directing their efforts towards sharing and prioritising the country's national vision of facilitating industrial catch-up over social upgrading.[7] Finally, the repressive tactics of Ethiopia's active industrial policy have also extended to restrict other human rights organisations including the media. They prevented the media from visiting industrial workplaces and reporting the actual working conditions at the industrial parks. Reports about the labour conditions at the country's IPs have, therefore, been scant.

## 4. Industrial Parks: Places where associational rights are exceptionally suppressed

Existing literature usually emphasises the economic upgrading benefits of Industrial Parks (IPs), such as industrial upgrading, linkages, skill transfer, and export earnings. As such, the implications of IPs on the social upgrading of workers have been marginal in the industrial policy debate (Gereffi and Frederick 2010:18). This has been demonstrated across those emerging and late-comer economies of South East Asia and a few Sub-Saharan African countries. Likewise, Ethiopia's IP policies have been direct emulations of the South East Asian model. The Ethiopian government has also expanded IP infrastructure to attract foreign investors in the labour-intensive garment industries (Nicolas 2017:4). Currently, seven IPs are operating in the country and creating industrial jobs for 90 000 workers. From this can plausibly be inferred that the Ethiopian government's IP policy concerning the labour sector prioritises facilitating job creation and industrial upgrading over decent work and working conditions. Hence, the quality of employment has not been the policy priority of Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation, particularly concerning the country's IPs.[8]

Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation has managed to promote FDI in the country's IPs and especially their labour-intensive garment sectors.

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7    FGD with CETU experts, Addis Ababa, 20 February 2020.

8    Key informant interview with Mr Kassahun Folo, President of CETU, Addis Ababa, 24 February 2020.

In effect, as experts from both ILO[9] and CETU[10] clearly explained, as part of its ideological commitment to many emerging garment manufacturing destination countries, the government of Ethiopia has held forth its cheap and disciplined labour force to multinational global garment manufacturers and brands as an incentive to invest. Accordingly, the country's IPs have been appropriated in a manner that responded to the demands of these multinational firms to achieve low production costs by offering poverty wages. In addition to cheap labour, multinational companies wanted the Ethiopian government to ensure that the country's IPs would be free from any form of labour strikes or industrial protests which could disrupt their production process (Oya and Schaefer 2019:386). In response, the government employs *de facto* or *de jure* labour control mechanisms across the country's IPs to suppress the collective labour rights of workers such as freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, and the right to industrial action.

As part of its repressive measures, the government has securitised and militarised the country's IPs and thereby put psychological and physical pressures on those workers who claimed their freedom of association. Furthermore, informants, who were former employees at Bole Lemi 1, Hawassa, and Eastern Industrial sites, and victims of police arrests, reported that the government employed its criminal justice system against workers who have allegedly engaged in the country's political protests and 'wildcat' strikes in 2017.[11] To silence their voices, workers were arrested and treated with physical violence by the police and security forces across the country's IPs. These violations of rights have been common mechanism of the Ethiopian government. This, in turn, has prevented workers from freely deliberating to motivate better working conditions including associational rights. Besides, the government blocked all the possible institutional avenues through which workers could share their voices with external stakeholders and human rights organisations about their working conditions at the IPs.[12]

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9   Key Informant Interview with Mr Evans, ILO Regional office Representative, Key informant interview, Addis Ababa, 25 February 2020.

10  Key informant interviews with Kassahun Folo President of CETU, Addis Ababa, 24 February 2020.

11  Key informant interviews with BoLSA representatives at the EIZ, Hawassa, and Bole Lemi 1 IPs, 29 February, 2 and 4 March 2020.

12  Interviews with former employees at Bole Lemi 1, Hawassa, and EIZ, 25, 26 and 29 February 2020.

Following the preceding national measures of Ethiopia's state-led industrialisations imposed upon the labour sector at the country's IPs, workers at these sites have been exceptionally deprived of their basic labour and human rights at work. Most importantly, their associational rights have been completely suppressed across the country's IPs, so it was impossible to find a single formally registered labour union. In this regard, it may be added that such a categorical denial of associational rights of workers at the country's IPs was not experienced by workers outside the IPs. For example, most garment firms operating outside the IPs, such as Kombolcha Textile, Almeda, and AIKAADIS, have already ensured the freedom of association of their employees.[13] As a result, workers of these major garment exporters outside the parks have exercised their rights to collective bargaining and have developed mutually agreed collective agreements governing their employment relations.

The repressive measures against the collective voices of local industrial workers at the country's IPs have also been enforced by making use of multinational apparel industries. First of all, these industries strongly contested all the external efforts either by CETU or by other labour rights initiatives towards unionisation of workers at IPs, claiming that such external drives are unlawful acts of external intrusion into their internal human resource management.[14] Secondly, the government employed firms standing against any external initiatives towards unionisation of workers at the IPs.[15] In this way, the workers' legitimate quest for strong and independent unions that could firmly stand for the improvements of their working conditions was systematically repressed.[16] Accordingly, as Oya and Schaefer (2019:396) and Anner (2015:169) plausibly explained, managers of multinational apparel industries in Ethiopia's IPs have emulated the experiences of their counterparts operating in Bangladesh and Mauritius by forming co-opted and affiliated institutions with artificial 'workers' councils'.

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13  Key informant interview with Mr Angesome Yohannes, President of the Industrial Federation of Textile Leather & Garment Workers Trade Union (IFTLGWTU), Addis Ababa, 26 February 2020.

14  FGDs with employees at Hawassa and Bole Lemi 1 IPs, 26 and 29 February 2020.

15  FGD with an interview with CETU experts, Addis Ababa, 20 February 2020.

16  FGD with ILO regional experts, Addis Ababa, 24 February 2020.

However, to stage such 'workers' councils' as trade unions in some of the apparel industries in Ethiopia's IPs has been in violation of Ethiopia's international commitments, the country's constitution, and the labour proclamation – since the manner of their formation has not been on the bases of free, active, and independent participation of workers.[17] Similarly, workers did not accept the councils' members as their independent representatives, questioning their legality and their poor track records in promoting workers' protection.[18] Accordingly, although the firms' managers claimed that 'workers' councils' can better promote employees' interests than formally institutionalised trade unions, informants from the workers testified otherwise.[19] An additional account about these councils' affiliations was that members of the councils, as informants from the employing firms, projected and blamed the poor treatment of workers at the sites (poverty wages and other non-wage conditions of work) on poor industrial culture, low efficiency of workers, and the limitation of government.[20] From these accounts, it is plausible to infer that the 'workers' councils' stood for the firms' management rather than being the voices of workers.

Global garment manufacturers operating across Ethiopia's IPs employed various repressive measures against the freedom of information, expression, and association of their workers. In this regard, workers' exchanges of ideas with one another and with other third-party stakeholders about employment relations have been treated by employing firms as serious disciplinary offences, for such an attempt breaches the firms' secrets.[21] As a result, workers were required to refrain from exposing their working conditions, including the denial of associational rights, to labour inspectors from human rights organisations, brands' labour auditors, and media. Only affiliated members and co-opted members of the 'workers' councils'

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17   FGD with CETU experts, Addis Ababa, 20 February 2020.

18   FGDs with employees of apparel firms at the EIZ, Hawassa, and Bole Lemi 1 IPs, 25, 26 and 29 February 2020.

19   In-depth Interviews with former employees at Bole Lemi 1, Hawassa, and Eastern Industrial sites, February 25, 26, and 29 2020.

20   Key informant interview with Members of workers' councils of apparel firms at Hawassa and Bole Lemi 1 IPs; 24 and 25 February 2020.

21   Key informant interviews with managers of apparel firms at the EIZ, Hawassa, and Bole Lemi 1 IPs; 24 and 26 February 2020.

have been allowed to communicate with external labour rights organisations and compliance auditors. Hence, firm managers often intimidated workers with wage deductions and termination of employment if they found them discussing problems and solutions for their working conditions.

From a human rights perspective, such a broader and restrictive confidentiality clause imposed on workers by employers in the country's IPs is a gross violation of the human rights of workers as human beings to freely express their ideas, views, and aspirations. Furthermore, from a labour rights perspective, this infringes upon the associational rights of workers, which are protected by the Ethiopian laws, the international human and labour rights standards, and buyer codes.[22] Finally, from the perspective of CSR[23] of buyers, firms' action to prevent workers from providing information to buyers, which is essential to the meaningful enforcement of labour standards, violates brands' codes of conduct. Thus, such a broader restriction to freedom of expression and associational rights of workers seriously hampers the operation of buyers' monitoring programs that necessitate workers' involvement.

Similarly, although the Ethiopian case is not an exception to this context, multinational garment firms across the country's IPs deliberately overloaded workers through overtime work and confined them to tight work schedules. This has put time constraints on workers to discuss their working conditions actively and collectively. Besides, firm managers and supervisors do not allow workers to initiate any moves towards their associational rights at the workplace and inside the IPs. Similarly, they rejected the CETU's initiative to organise workers at IPs, claiming that the right to unionisation shall not be instigated by outside pressures. When workers organised themselves outside the park, they got recognition from the BoLSA office, and finally, their certificate was communicated to their employers. But their employers were not willing to accept it. Instead, they imposed punitive and unlawful disciplinary measures on those employees who had been involved in the unionisation process. Finally, as noted by the

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22 Key informant interviews with BoLSA representatives at the EIZ, Hawassa, and Bole Lemi 1 IPs, 29 February,2 and 4 March 2020.

23 The term CSR infers that employing firms as well as their respective global brand buyers, beyond their conventional thinking to reduce the production cost, are morally bound to ensure ethically sustainable labour relations by observing minimum labour standards (Myers 2014:45).

president of CETU[24], all the above direct and systematic restrictions to the associational rights and bargaining powers of local workers by the firms concerned have been tacitly realised by the Ethiopian government.

In a similar vein, global garment brands, which have been sourcing from Ethiopia's IPs, are participants in these violations of associational rights of local industrial workers. Although they accepted the fundamentals of associational rights of workers, they used to agree with the arguments of the firms. Hence, they also claimed that the drives for freedom of association and the rights to collective bargaining came from outside forces. As discussants unanimously claimed, however, questions of freedom of association must come from the workers themselves.[25]

Discussants from ILO, CETU, MoLSA, and BoLSA added that brands' poor labour auditing practices have been part of the violation. The brands usually employ, among others, third-party labour auditing mechanisms, which enforce short annual visits to the factories to monitor the enforcement of associational rights of workers. The inevitable results are the absence of meaningful consultation mechanisms with workers, a lack of transparency of the audit results, and failures to correct violations.

The above explanations rightfully reflect the compelling argument of Anner (2015:153) and Oya and Schaefer (2019:393) that global brands and their supplier firms did not want to see the enforcement of the associational rights of workers because of two major reasons. First, the existence of strong and independent unions is inevitably meant to consolidate the collective pressures of workers like collective bargaining and various forms of industrial action, including strikes. This will, in turn, necessitate employers to improve the existing poverty wages. Likewise, allowing associational rights of workers legitimises and promotes various forms of industrial actions that may disrupt the flow of firms' and buyers' production networks. Hence, as rightfully explained by Oya and Schaefer (2019:396–397), global garment manufacturers and brands operating across Ethiopia's IPs do not allow the consolidation of the bargaining powers of their workers since the existing trends of the

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24 Key informant interview with Ayalew Ahmed, Vice President, Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Union (CETU), Addis Ababa, 20 February 2020.

25 FGD with CSR and sustainability managers of leading global apparel brands sourcing from manufacturers operating at Ethiopia's IPs, Addis Ababa, 24 February 2020.

global apparel transaction which are hypercompetitive, uninterrupted, and just-in-time production systems could not allow them to do so.

As sufficiently explained by CETU, there has been a common track record across the fast fashion garment industries.[26] After exploiting the environment and the local labour force, multinational garment manufacturers have been widely known for moving their production locations to other destination countries where labour standards are not policy priorities.[27] In this regard, most garment companies operating across Ethiopia's IPs came from Bangladesh, China and India after the recent rises in production costs, particularly of increasing wages, and growing pressures for labour standards there (Staritz, Plank and Morris 2016:7). Reiterating this claim, brand representatives as discussants indicated that low labour cost and weak labour practice have been among their underlying incentives to invest in Ethiopia. [28]

The preceding restrictions to freedom of association have made workers across Ethiopia's IPs voice-less with no formally registered labour unions. However, this has not prevented them from informally organising themselves and conducting various forms of 'wildcat' strikes towards improving their working conditions. For instance, China experienced 127 000 incidents of industrial action making claims for better wages and working conditions (Elfstrom and Kuruvilla 2014; cited in Oya and Schaefer: 2019:398). Similarly, in Vietnam, the number of labour unrest incidents that mostly targeted foreign manufacturers increased from 60 per year in 1995 to over 900 per year in 2011 (Oya and Schaefer 2019:398).

In Ethiopia, various 'wildcat' strikes have been common across the country's IPs, particularly since 2014. These informal labour strikes were fertile ground for the unprecedented wave of popular mobilisations in the country. Accordingly, workers in the industrial parks were active with popular protests from 2014 to 2018, particularly in Oromia Region. According to workers as discussants, the underlying objectives of the popular protests were to contest the Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan

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26 FGD with CETU experts, Addis Ababa, 20 February 2020.

27 FGD with CETU experts, Addis Ababa, 20 February 2020.

28 FGD with CSR and sustainability managers of leading global apparel brands sourcing from manufacturers operating at Ethiopia's IPs, Addis Ababa, 24 February 2020.

and the government's repressive measures against political dissent.[29] Furthermore, opposing the government's policy of expropriation of farmlands to expand IPs without fair payment for compensation and attending to environmental standards has also been among the major demands of protesters. These major demands ranged from better working conditions (better wages, standard meals, measures against sexual harassment, and respect for freedom of association) to broader national political demands including regime change (Kidist 2019:29–52). The class consciousness of the workers at the research sites was improved by the infiltration of opposition political party members and political activists.[30]

The calls for regime change ultimately resulted in the demise of Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)-led EPRDF leadership. Consequently in April 2018, a new administration assumed political power under the political leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. As part of its relatively liberal socio-economic and political reforms, the new administration has started to ease those repressive policies, freed political prisoners, and removed restrictions on freedom of expression and association. Consequently, a series of measures towards political liberation were instituted, and workers were able to protest poverty-inducing wages, suppression of associational rights, substandard meal services, and sexual harassment of female employees.

The new administration under the Prosperity Party (PP) has come up with a more protective labour proclamation (Proclamation No. 1156/19 2019). To promote the collective labour rights of workers, it maintains that the minimum membership level to form a first-level trade union shall be ten (Proclamation No. 1156/19 2019: Art. 114(2)). It still allows employees of small enterprises (whose total numbers are less than ten) to establish a general trade union together with workers in other small undertakings (Proclamation No. 1156/19 2019). Moreover, trade unions are entitled to jointly establish federations and even confederations. Nevertheless, after three years of regime change, few practical improvements have been made concerning the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining of industrial workers, particularly across the country's IPs. For example, the freedom of association and the

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29  FGDs with employees at Hawassa and Bole Lemi 1 IPs, 26 and 29 February 2020.

30  FGDs with employees at Hawassa and Bole Lemi 1 IPs, 26 and 29 February 2020.

right to collective bargaining have not been enforced across the country's IPs. As a result, beyond a few policy reforms and political liberalisations of the current administration, the fundamental ideological assumption of a developmental state and suppressive labour practices continue across the country's IPs.

## 5. Peculiarities of Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation

Concerning the implications of state-led industrialisation on the collective voices of local industrial workers, Ethiopia's experience shares a common culture with the scholarship and actual performances of countries of both the East Asian and the Sub-Saharan African regions. As such, the model has historically proved potent for achieving rapid industrialisation though it has curbed the collective voices of workers. Yet, Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation has its peculiarities in its structural limitations. It has to be clear that the initial conditions, which were instrumental for the successful economic returns of the ideology in the East Asian countries, were not present when Ethiopia launched state-led industrialisation in 2005. These initial conditions (in East Asia) include a relatively high standard of education, a high level of labour efficiency, meritocratic and effective bureaucracy, and well-developed infrastructure (Herms 1997:1). Most importantly, Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation has particularly failed to facilitate technology, skill and knowledge transfers which are critical to the efficiency and productivity of the country's labour force (Startz and Whitfield 2019).

Similarly, while the East Asian states had been going through successful and rapid industrialisation in those labour-intensive garment and apparel industries during the 1970s and 1980s, questions of labour standards were not pressing agendas in the international political economy (Gereffi and Frederick 2010:18). However, since the past two decades, particularly after the disaster at Rana Plaza in April 2013 in Bangladesh, which killed around 1 200 people, the quest for labour and human rights standards have increasingly become compelling reputational and corporate social responsibility requirements for global apparel manufacturers and brands to compete in the global market (Staritz, Plank, and Morris 2016:21–22). As a result, the wages and non-wage conditions have recently been significantly improved even in those leading global apparel supplier countries of South Asian countries. On the contrary, however, the conditions of Ethiopia's local industrial

workers in various global apparel manufacturers have continued to remain exceptionally gloomy (Barrett and Baumann-Pauly 2019:9). Accordingly, Ethiopia's bold ideological appeal to the East Asian model of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s has failed to actively consider the current global initiatives towards labour and human rights standards and sustainable industrialisation.

Ethiopia's suppressive labour practices against the associational rights of its industrial workers have also been accompanied by the country's inability to increase poverty wages. Though the majority of East Asian states such as China, Bangladesh, and Vietnam have still been hostile towards associational rights, they have been significantly improving their minimum living wages (Oya and Schaefer 2019:389). For example, Bangladesh, which is a country with a cost of living comparable to Ethiopia, had been experiencing the lowest pay in the region. However, Bangladesh's average minimum wage (95 USD), which has repeatedly been criticised as inadequate by the country's union leaders, has been more than threefold the average basic salary being paid to Ethiopian industrial workers (26USD) (Barrett and Baumann-Pauly 2019:9). Accordingly, Ethiopia's state-led industrialisation has exceptionally enforced double suppression against the conditions of industrial workers through its poverty wages and its repressive practice against associational rights.

## 6. Conclusion

Since 2005, Ethiopia's industrial policy imperatives for state-led-industrialisation were direct emulations of the experiences of East Asian countries. As a result, the Ethiopian government's adoption of the Plan for Action for Sustainable Development and Eradication of Poverty (PASDEP) at the beginning of 2005 can be taken as a significant policy transformation in the country's development policymaking. It was designed to ensure structural and socio-economic transformation through rapid industrialisation under the guidance of an activist and development-oriented state.

Nevertheless, the ideology has contributed to the predominantly co-opted and suppressive labour practices against the collective voices of workers, particularly in the multinational apparel manufacturers across the country's IPs. Thus, the government and employing firms were used to enforce *de facto* or *de jure* suppressive labour control mechanisms

against labour rights institutions and workers thereby repressing the freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, and the right to industrial actions of local industrial workers.

Unless Ethiopia's bold ideological commitment to the East Asian 'developmental state' model for state-led industrialisation is revisited, the suppressive labour practices against the voices of local apparel industrial workers will continue to be pressing matters in the sector's labour and human rights agendas. This is notto suggest that Ethiopia needs to abandon its state-led industrialisation development path. Most emphatically, it rather provides an insight into the policy spaces through which the country's activist industrial policy could still strike a reasonable balance between facilitating industrial catch-up and ensuring labour standards – leading to inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable industrial labour relations.

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# Does Community Saving Foster Conflict Transformation? The Debate and Evidence from Kenya's ASAL Counties of West Pokot and Turkana

*Caleb M Wafula\**

## Abstract

The worldwide breakthrough of micro-finance has revolutionised lives of traditionally marginalised group; that few will dare dispute. Nowhere are the changes more sweeping than in Kenya, a country where significant adoption of community savings initiatives (*Chamaas)* is being witnessed. *Chamaas* builds on the traditional Rotating Savings and Credit Association (ROSCA) methodology and implemented as a social safety net to support communities address livelihood challenges. Despite the centrality of *Chamaas* in socio-economic strengthening, very little has been studied about their potential to contribute towards social cohesion and conflict transformation. This study sought to examine how *Chamaas* go beyond fostering economic empowerment, to enhance community member's interaction, address communal conflicts and strengthen social bonds. This study is based on qualitative field research, undertaken in Kenya's West Pokot and Turkana counties and focuses on how community

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savings contribute to conflict transformation, with especial attention to women's issues. Importantly, it would be remiss of this study if there was no discussion on challenges that confront members of community savings schemes. Ultimately, the research will focus on how community savings can be strengthened and supported to fully integrate peacebuilding in their processes.

**Keywords**: Community Savings; Conflict Transformation; Women in Peacebuilding

## 1. Introduction

The study interest lies in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), a region highly susceptible to protracted conflicts and general state of fragility. The increasing threats presented by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV), take place at a time when there is a worldwide breakthrough of micro-finance and its associated services, locally, manifested by community savings initiatives (*Chamaas*) that are increasingly being witnessed and revolutionising lives of traditionally marginalised groups – which include women. This begs the question: Does community saving foster conflict transformation? This article sets out to examine this question, with special attention to Kenya's ASAL counties of West Pokot and Turkana.

## 2. Context and Rationale

To say that Kenya's ASAL counties of West Pokot and Turkana, are highly susceptible to protracted conflicts and to a general state of fragility is an understatement. The gravity and intensity of the conflict has persisted over time (Triche, 2014). This poses a deadly threat to not only the thousands of local people, especially women and children, but also threatens to stunt prospects of development – especially the devolution agenda, that is still at nascent stage. This will further entrench poverty and inequality (Elfversson, 2019).

It is not possible to discuss the area's state of fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV), without first referring to what Herskovits (1926:252), calls the 'cattle complex' (Pastoralism). The two arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) or counties, border each other in north-western Kenya and derive their names from two dominant local communities, namely,

Turkana and Pokot, both of whom, practice pastoralism as a source of livelihood. The type of pastoralism is mainly nomadic transhumance, characterised by mobility, communal land ownership and keeping large herd sizes of cattle (Triche, 2014). In terms of size and demography, West Pokot measures 8 418 km² and a population of 621 241 (1.31%); while Turkana measures approximately 77 000 km² and a population of 926 976 (1.95%) of the total population of Kenya (47 564 296) according to 2019 census (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2019).

This article has no pretension to exhaustively discuss all the causes of conflict, but it is safe to state that there has been a long-standing interest in the issue, among scholars and practitioners. Some of the dominant explanatory perspective is illicit proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), (Mkutu, 2008) and the conflict manifests in form of: 'rustling' and 'raiding' depicting the practice as something cultural and thus intrinsic to these societies. Schilling et al (2012:1) intimate that traditionally, various pastoral communities used raiding as a cultural practice for restocking of herds, after periods of drought or disease outbreak.

In the words of Triche (2014: 89), 'One community's hostile action is mimicked on the receiving end, in a never-ending cycle,' thus ethnic intolerance as a causal perspective. Closely related is the long-standing issues of boundary disputes and territorial claims of land, that remain unresolved (Mkutu, 2007:48), where pastoralists routinely cross from one side to the other, while sometimes straddling the border (Mkutu, 2007:48).

Equally important and widely acknowledged, is competition over scarce and diminishing water and pasturelands (Okumu, 2014:224). Yet, other scholars such as Okumu et al (2017) suggest that weakened traditional governance systems, breakdown of intercommunal social contracts, elders' loss of control over the youths, the persistence of *moran* (warrior) culture, and politicisation of peacemaking processes have also gained traction in explaining the increasingly intractable nature of the conflicts. Furthermore, FCV tends to be exacerbated by crippling poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation, and routine displacements (Kaimba et al, 2011), all of which contribute to a heightened level of fragility and elevated risk of conflict relapse. These are not the only causes of conflict to look at of course, but they provide a clear pointer that, conflict causes in the region are extraordinarily complex and multi-layered.

The increasing threats presented by FCV, take place at a time when there is a worldwide breakthrough of micro-finance and its associated services that are revolutionising the lives of traditionally marginalised groups such as women, who in most cases lack alternative sources of income (Kato and Kratzer, 2013). Nowhere are the changes more sweeping than in Kenya, a country that is making headlines and that has recently emerged as a globally recognised leader in financial inclusion, according to the Brookings Financial and Digital Inclusion Project (FDIP) report (Lewis et al, 2017). This is mainly manifested by grassroots community savings groups, popularly known as *Chamaas,* that have been hailed as informal social protection systems by key policy regulatory and institutional frameworks, including the Kenya national economic development blueprint-vision 2030 (Getu et al, 2013; Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2007).

But what are community savings? Community savings remains ambiguous, with differing definitions, parameters, applications, and characteristics. This study adopts one of the best brief attempts in defining *Chamaas* by Johnson and Sharma (2004:4) who note that *Chamaas* builds on the Rotating Savings and Credit Association (ROSCA) methodology, wherein groups of people pool their savings to have a source of lending funds. Members make an agreed minimum amount of savings contributions to the pool and can also borrow from it during regular meetings on a rotational basis. The Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA, 2021); Saving and Internal Lending Communities (SILC, 2021) and Saving for Changes (SfC, 2021), are the best-known models. The members, who vary from a minimum of 15 and maximum of 35 are often linked together informally and tend to include families, friends, and social networks based on common bonds, such as tribe, neighbourhood, or age (Endeley and Thompson 2007).

It is against this background that this article set out to examine how community savings contribute to conflict transformation. Among other development aspirations, the article is consistent with Kenya's economic blueprint vision 2030 (Government of Kenya, 2007) that views sustainable peace and security as a basis for the achievement of the targeted growth of double digits in the economy; the continental silencing of the guns agenda, which aims to promote prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa; the implementation of United National Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on

women and peace and security; and lastly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – in particular, goal 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

## 3. Statement of the Problem

Acknowledging the growing recognition of the cross-sectoral nature of peacebuilding or what Zelizer (2013) terms 'integrated peacebuilding', the question to ask then is: How important is the microfinance revolution to the peace and conflict discourse? This article is devoted to examining these questions, by taking a closer look at community savings in the aforementioned counties of Kenya. It argues that, even though community savings have gained traction as informal social protection systems, there is limited understanding and appreciation of how community saving contributes to conflict transformation. What do exist are fragmented and oversimplified accounts in the literature, that tend to be skewed toward the hype that has accompanied community savings; and little attempt has been made to provide a sustained and systematic analysis of how the community savings contribute to conflict transformation. It is also fair to say that there is a notable paucity of extant literature that deals specifically with the challenges that confront community savings, in a way that advances the conflict transformation agenda while ensuring that the full power of women's talent, creativity and innovation for peace and stability is fully harnessed. Thus, the need for further investigation is underscored, in order to emerge with a more nuanced analysis and appreciation of how community savings contribute to conflict transformation. Ultimately, the article focuses on how community savings can be strengthened and supported to integrate conflict transformation in their processes.

## 4. Research Objective and Questions

The underlying objective of this article is to examine how community savings initiatives, contribute towards conflict transformation in the ASALs of Kenya's Counties of West Pokot and Turkana. In so doing, the study sought to inform changes in policy and practice, at the local, regional, and national levels, so that the largely pastoral communities are better equipped to face the peace and security challenges in the future. Specifically, the article seeks to address the following pertinent questions:

a. How do community savings initiatives contribute to conflict transformation among the ASAL communities of Kenya, with special attention to the incorporation of traditionally marginalised groups, such as women?
b. What are the challenges facing community savings initiatives as an essential tool for conflict transformation?
c. How can community savings be strengthened and supported to integrate conflict transformation in their processes?

## 5. Theoretical Framework

This article takes seriously the conflict transformation theory, ascribed to Lederach (1997), which is drawn from earlier theories of conflict escalation, conflict management and conflict resolution (Galtung, 1995; Väyrynen 1991) and has now become an integral part of the lexicon used within the broader field of peace and conflict management. As posed by Christopher Mitchell: What does conflict transformation actually transform? (Mitchell, 2002:1–23). Lederach (1997) proposes central and guiding conceptual elements of this process as marked by changes in personal, structural, relational, and cultural aspects of conflict.

Personal transformation involves strengthening peoples' capacity to resolve conflict. Transformation is expected to restore individual sense of their ability to handle conflicts and a willingness to search for durable peace Mitchelle, 2002). In our context, how are community savings activities positioning members to search for durable peace?

At the relational level, conflictual relationships between rival groups are expected to be transformed into peaceful relationships, characterised by co-operation and mutual efforts to resolve conflict. In this case, how has enhanced interactions through community savings helped reduce prejudice between the warring parties?

The structural dimension links conflict to the political, economic, and social structures in the community. Transformation of these structures is aimed at fostering the meeting of basic human needs and participation in decision making by community members (Lederach, 1997: Rupesinghe, 1995). This dimension is important in understanding women's incremental participation in decision making at household level, and at communal level, where peacebuilding issues are discussed.

Culturally, transformation involves understanding how culture affects conflict. It involves identification of cultural patterns that contribute to conflict formation and those that can be harnessed to facilitate the cessation of conflict (Lederach. 1997). In this respect, the dimension helps provide answers on how cultural aspects such as intermarriage, tying of the traditional rope (Leketyo) and pastoralism are being harnessed by savings group members to foster conflict transformation.

## 6. Methodology

The study was informed by both secondary and primary data sources. The secondary sources included a review of literature sourced from articles in academic textbooks, popular writings, and journals, which provided the foundation for the argument. Later, primary data sources guided by reputational approach, purposive and snowball sampling methods captured largely qualitative data, including numerous transect walks; 30 semi-structured interviews; six focus group discussions, non-participant observation and six key informant interviews. The study findings were subjected to a rigorous and systematic analysis using NVivo pro software for qualitative data. Based on these methodological underpinning, the triangulation ensured that the study analysis and recommendations are sound and built on diverse perspectives.

Primary data was collected in the period of July 2019 and took place in Alale, Loima and Nauyapong in the North-western tip of West Pokot, on the border with Uganda, and in Kainuk, Lorogon and Turkwell border areas of Turkana County. The small number of interviews conducted may impose limitations on the generalisability and reliability of the conclusions drawn, however, the research aimed to capitalise on the benefits of obtaining rich, in-depth qualitative data on perceptions and experiences of community savings as a tool for conflict transformation. Future research should seek to expand the scope of the perspectives gathered.

The study remained cognisant of the various ethical considerations associated with conducting research in such fragile contexts. Supervised and guided by his mentor (Dr Martha Mutisi, Senior Programme Officer at IDRC); the researcher observed ethical research standards and requirements of IDRC's Advisory Committee on Research Ethics (ACRE). Importantly, the researcher submitted an ethics clearance application to a local Ethics Review Board in Kenya, namely Daystar

University for clearance. The researcher also applied for and received a research permit from the Kenya National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI).

## 7. Study Findings

From the women who have organised themselves into Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) to Saving and Internal Lending Communities (SILC), Saving for Changes (SfC) and all models of community savings; a range of strategies have been devised, developed, and adopted in ways to foster conflict transformation. Meeting and interacting with some of the community savings groups, one can realise how groups are harnessing the transformative power of their local social networks to proactively create innovative and localised solutions that are progressively transforming the conflict. This section shares the study findings and discussions guided by the specific research questions and conceptual elements of change in conflict transformation: personal, structural, relational, and cultural aspects of conflict (Lederach, 1997).

## 8. Personal Transformation

Several views regarding the extent to which the community savings have transformed community members at personal level were noted. Evidently, the routine meetings are both business and festive occasions to aggregate savings, celebrate members' successes, collect loan repayments, and immediately lend the money to one or some willing members. Sometimes it also involves solving disputes among members, as explained by one of the NGO representatives supporting peace and women empowerment projects in the study area.

The study results strongly demonstrate the personal values that community savings promotes. The elements of leadership, respect, freedom of expression and solidarity developed among members indicate a very significant level of transformation. During my non-participant observation of the group meetings, members under the leadership of the group leader, interacted and communicated with respect as they tried to chat about the best way to go about their savings initiatives. This interaction sometimes produced disagreements among members, especially on issues surrounding joint investments. Luckily, the group leader/chairperson would quickly address any verbal altercations. Additionally, the well-established unwritten

constitution forces members to exhibit respect so that they avoid being suspended from the group or pay a fine.

Overall, one aspect of the personal transformation component worth mentioning is that it requires a great deal of time and effort (Botes 2003). Many respondents stressed that women join community savings for the long haul, clearly speaking to the idea propagated by some of the transformationalist scholarship – that conflict transformation is an ongoing, never-ending process (Galtung, 1995 Lederach, 1997). In this regard, group meetings serve as a session for training, as evidenced by my interactions with the *Chesa* women group in *Alale* area. Central to the group's approach is the integration of community savings with a structured informal learning program, so that by the time members borrow money from the group to venture into business, they have, at least, mastered some basic reading, writing, and mathematics so as to cope with the business operating requirements.

> Most of our members are illiterate, so we have a special component of adult literacy to equip such participating members with basic and financial literacy skills. These trainings are carried out on every Wednesday and Friday afternoons.[1]

From the field sources, it was clear that literacy training is without doubt a key pathway that has empowered members to make their small-scale businesses more productive, as interviewees reported making profits and harbouring plans to expand their businesses.

But again, women's own articulations of their *Chamaa* experiences are in themselves part of the implications for personal change. Experts acknowledge that the literacy training plays a critical role in many social change efforts, including fostering peace and conflict transformation as shown below:

> Through training, the once disadvantaged and despondent women turn out to feel capable of serving society and contributing to their socio-economic emancipation as well as participating effectively in societal community's development.[2]

From this perspective, the words of Edward Schwerin (1995), one of the

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1    Non-attributable comment, July 2019, Alale.

2    Non-attributable comment, July 2019, Lodwar.

transformational theorists, are pertinent and reinforcing in noting that empowerment is the 'core concept or value of transformational politics,' (1995:6) and furthermore, that 'empowerment is central to the theoretical and ideological concerns of most transformationalist groups and movements,' (Schwerin 1995:6).

Equally important, during semi-structured interviews, a handful of respondents alluded to increased self-esteem and self-confidence in activities such as marketing their produce. Thus they do not have to rely on costly middlemen. Further reinforcing this idea, many respondents talked about having been shy and soft-spoken, but through the demands of active participation in group meetings they have learned to express themselves and know their rights.

Consistent with this notion of rights, it was quite noticeable that some women's general frame of reference was beyond personal transformation. They emphasised how they leverage their lived experience and resources to support girls to stay in school, overcome unwanted pregnancy, and delay early child marriage – informed by the knowledge gathered from their group interactions.

Such endeavours have the potential of being catalysts for change as respondents reported greater knowledge of saving and business management and how to diversify into more profitable products and value chains. Demonstrating their understanding of their business ventures, respondents talked about how they invest in small livestock when prices are low, keep them until the prices rise, at which point they sell to make profit. Especially relevant is the fact that women members learned new social and leadership skills in these groups – as individuals interacted with the rest of the members, took up leadership positions, or just participated as active members of their groups.

On the flipside, physical records on actual profits and business performance were not available. This may call into question the type of trainings that group members undergo. Though on further probing, study participants were quick to point out that there was no need of keeping records and that all their business transactions were based on mutual trust and transparency, it is important to keep in mind that community savings and the values it promotes is highly dependent on the particular personalities involved. Therefore, one cannot assume that the core values championed are consistent in all the groups, or even on everyone in each group.

Whilst women have been able to organise themselves through the community savings, the unanswered question, is why their ability to organise has also not translated into political influence? To cut to the point, Nordstrom (1995) while highlighting some of the sophisticated work by local-level citizen groups in fomenting conflict cessation and transformation, regrets that much of the work often 'goes unrecognized and unsupported…' and in this respect terms it as one of the 'saddest barriers to conflict transformation' (1995:110). In fact, there remain mixed opinion on the issue of women taking up leadership positions. Some scholars have argued that those elected to the management committee of group savings are often already leaders in other domains such as church or community groups which calls into question whether, if indeed community savings specifically nurture women leadership capability (Gash et al., 2017).

While community savings may be viewed to be resting on a linear approach, in practice it can be far messier, especially during active conflict. Women reported being harassed by police during security operations, to the extent that they could not access the market centre or even undertake their merry-go-round visits. Climate-induced displacement, particularly because of drought, also leads to disruption of saving activities as members migrate to far off places in search of water and pasture for their livestock.

Thus far, the above information on personal transformation, could be deemed relevant to the larger body of literature on community savings, especially in explaining how community savings contribute to conflict transformation. To reach an accurate understanding of its contribution, it is important to examine this claim in further detail under the relational transformation and conceptual element of conflict transformation, in the next section.

## 9. Relational Transformation

Relationship building is at the heart of the conflict transformation process. Community savings have been used as a magnet, a tool that brings people from the two warring communities together, and in the process fostering relational transformation. For instance, this was exemplified in an interview with one of the oldest members of *Ayuno* women group, who had this to say:

> In the past, when we were growing up, we were told all the bad things against the Pokot: That the Pokot are bad people, they killed our great grandparents. However, through the merry-go rounds and our continued interactions during market days, we have come to learn good things about our neighbours and now appreciate that they are just humans like us.[3]

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants were also in broad agreement that they had become closer to and less prejudiced towards their neighbouring community, thanks to participating in the merry go round model of community savings, as they spoke in near unison about how their regular interactions provided them with a platform to share their experiences of the conflict.

> We have no hard feelings for our neighbours, we interact during merry go rounds. We invite them to come to our side and we also visit their side. That togetherness enables us to travel far and wide in the locality, and in so doing enhance chances of peace. There was a time we travelled up to *Chepareria* and *Sigor* in West Pokot.[4]

From this relationship-building context, Kriesberg (1998) argues that the precise point at which intractable, never-ending, conflicts – for example linked to ethnic and other identity-based issues – become tractable or can be transformed is often only visible years after the process has been concluded. A conversation with one of the area chiefs, further confirms that community savings have contributed to peace and stability:

> Communities within the corridor have become almost like a family. The Pokot's freely come here to buy camel and goats while our women go to buy cereals on the Pokot side. We have seen populations increase; market centres are growing without fear unlike in the past when they risked being displaced by conflict.[5]

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3    Non-attributable comment[1], July 2019, Lorengipi.

4    Non-attributable comment[1], July 2019, Turkwel Gorg.

5    Non-attributable comment[1], July 2019, Lorogon.

What is even more fascinating is the fact that, thanks to income from community savings and related entrepreneurial activities, women can support their children in school. Here, the close communal relations are cultivating a culture of peace among children as pointed out by one of the transect walk participants, while pointing to a nearby school. As such, there is no doubt that the school going children, have a close and extended opportunity to deepen community relations.

> The income from the groups have helped many of us to take our children to school, where they not only study and interact with other children from other communities, but they are also being taught not to hate. I am sure they will be good future leaders to our community.[6]

The relational dimension of conflict transformation brings us closer to decades long of research on the role of intergroup contact in reducing intergroup prejudices. For example, Amir (1969) through his contact hypothesis, suggests that 'changes in ethnic relations will occur following intergroup contact' (1969:319). Further examination of the study findings shows that in the course of their involvement in the community savings, women are using their newly gained knowledge to improve their relationships at household level. They spoke strongly of increased love, respect, and cooperation, including shared responsibility of household expenses, from their husbands. These observations were corroborated by some of the study participants at the *Kainuk* area during the Focus Group Discussion, who noted that a majority of the women were engaged in small scale business activities to make themselves more economically empowered, more independent from their husbands, and more in control over their lives and livelihoods.

The key words here are 'economically empowered', in the sense that, women gain the dignity of no longer having to rely solely on their husbands for subsistence, as explained by one of the study experts[7]

Reflecting on the casual conversations with one of the women group leaders, as I criss-crossed the villages (transect walk), one could get the feeling that vertical relationships, are also slowly being strengthened:

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6    Non-attributable comment$_2$, July 2019, Lorengipi.

7    Non-attributable comment, July 2019, Kapenguria.

> Recently, one person was killed in the *Kalapata* area. We brought it to the attention of the elders, area chief and the police and took them to the scene of the incident.[8]

Essentially, this account illuminates that by locating women at the centre of the community savings process, space is created for a cadre of women leaders to evolve and participate more actively in other development issues, including conflicts. As in the case above, these actions seem to suggest that the women had managed to envisage possible counter attacks and defuse a potentially violent incident.

Local chiefs do acknowledge that the voice and knowledge of women in their various groups was key to cultivating peace in the area. One of the area chiefs noted that there is mutual consensus across the communities through the '*Nyumba Kumi* initiatives' and community policing committees where some of the *Chamaas* group leaders had been co-opted:

> We celebrate the power and strength of our women leaders, who are creating change around our communities and whom we continue to work together towards a shared goal of peace and prosperity of our region.[9]

Attributing the changes to participation in community savings, one key informant noted:

> Women are increasingly participating in peace forum meetings, measured in speaking up, sharing opinions, by challenging the local administrators and elders during community meetings.[10]

Complementing local authorities' efforts at enhancing peace and stability, was the observation that many local chiefs used public resources to support *Chamaas* in practical ways, including availing their offices as *Chamaas* meeting points. Group expenses were thereby defrayed. It must be stressed at this point that some of the local leaders were members of *Chamaas* in their own individual capacity. The point is that *Chamaas* can inspire and create opportunities even for those in positions of power, a perspective that appear to be advanced by one of the key informants:

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8   Non-attributable comment$_2$, July 2019, Alale.

9   Non-attributable comment$_3$, July 2019, Lorengipi.

10   Non-attributable comment$_4$, July 2019, Lorengipi.

> Unlike the past where women had been immersed in a 'culture of silence,' they are no longer the 'Unheard Voices'. Instead, beyond conglomerating in their community savings, they have come out strongly to advocate for peace, considering recurrent conflicts. They are popularly referred to as the women crusaders and have been exemplary in pushing men (elders and youth-warriors) into committing themselves to resolutions reached during peace dialogues.[11]

In line with transformationalist's Botes' (2003) facilitated dialogues, where third parties encourage the conflicting parties to deal with the concerns of the opposing party, such dialogues can create moments of transition or become vehicles for transformative insights and actions by the participants. However, what Matt Warner terms 'the outsider's dilemma' (Warner, 2017) calls into question the collaboration with external supporters including NGOs involved in facilitating the merry-go-round visits. In this regard, although it is not the objective of this study to focus on the NGOs and other externally driven support, but it is worth noting that more powerful collaborators may undermine community initiatives by meddling, co-opting them, drawing them into inappropriate activities meant to advance their own selfish agendas or providing them with forms of support on which they become over reliant – thus harming their sustainability and effectiveness. This, in turn, leaves us with the question: Is there a way to support the community savings without 'interfering'?

Other shortcomings include some female respondents claiming that, in many cases, their men either misappropriate the meagre resources through drinking or have reduced their contributions to household needs. Put another way, traditional gender norms that promote men's roles as heads of households and economic providers undermine women's ability to fully benefit from participation in community savings because decision-making power is still in men's hands. This assertion is in line with a growing body of literature that indicates that access to financial services does not necessarily translate to control over financial resources, or other forms of empowerment (Taylor and Boubakri, 2013; Vaessen et al., 2014).

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11   Non-attributable comment$_2$, July 2019, Kapenguria.

More troubling than this is the increasing concern that there is a 'double burden' on women, who are taking greater responsibility for managing financial services and investments in income-generating activities, with no reduction in the workload associated with caring for children and managing the household (Slegh et al 2013). This assertion is supported by Hanak (2000:313) who also explains an important truth about the disproportionate burden that local women bear in repaying heavy loans over which they may not have had full control. On the same note, in the context of pastoral communities, Ayuko and Chopra (2008) note that women still lack support from their male counterparts. They and further note that some men view women's peace groups as places for mere gossip and do not perceive them as useful.

To further discuss community savings, it is imperative to examine the structural conceptual element, in order to understand how community savings, contribute to conflict transformation in the study area.

## 10. Structural Transformation

Taking their cue from the previous relational transformation, respondents shared their experiences on how they started small businesses with a single product. A turning point came when they joined the group savings and for the first time began to stock various kinds of merchandise, or even diversify into new businesses.

> I was sceptical about how the community savings could improve my life. To test the waters, I started borrowing small loans from my group. One small loan led to another. I invested the loans in small income-generating projects such as buying and selling household items such as sugar, salt, soap and so on. The small businesses gradually grew. Now I am a cross-border trader, buying cereals from Uganda and selling them in Kenya.[12]

In the same vein:

> I saw it as a chance for me to expand my business. *Chamaa* proceeds helps me to buy materials for my tailoring business. And with the proceeds I buy food and clothing for my children and take them to school.[13]

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12   Non-attributable comment[3], July 2019, Alale.

13   Non-attributable comment[2], July 2019, Lorogon.

From the foregoing, the inescapable finding is that women's activities are going beyond the quest for peace and security to foster regional economic integration. It was also notable that group members were slowly shifting their mind-set from 'if I can' to increasingly talk of 'how I can' scale or diversify their commodities. For similar reasons Gasper (2004) asserts that by facilitating savings and access to small loans, community savings groups enable members to plan, cope with household emergencies, develop their livelihoods and invest in the health and education of their children. In the words of Schwerin (1998:116), 'major structural transformations are necessary to obtain greater social justice, more participatory democracy, environmentally sustainable economic development, peace, and prosperity.' Closely related is Lederach (1998), who in augmenting his conflict transformation framework, envisions peacebuilding as a web of interdependent activities and people. On the same note Väyrynen (1999:151) notes that 'a normative approach to conflict transformation runs the risk of becoming a movement for the general improvement of society rather than just mitigating and redefining the conflict.'

It is worth noting that stories like the above were frequent, and a clear indication that women were leading the way with their informal economic model that enables them to not only meet their household needs but also grow their own businesses without relying on men or formal banks. Conversations from the FGDs only hint at the community savings transformational effect, one would likely hear a common refrain: 'The group has helped us … do this and that …'. These suggest and underscore economic and social developments which can act as prerequisites for the success of the conflict transformation process. Further to this, and probably one of the most striking narratives, was how women have become involved in small livestock trade, travelling in small groups to other villages to buy small livestock for resale.

Some women in *Kainuk* area, for example, were running a bakery business and producing handicrafts, such as embroidery. These were bought and resold by middlemen in nearby towns, earning a good profit. Visiting and interacting with some of the women in their market stalls revealed one aspect of the conflict transformation that warrants mentioning: While relying heavily on this sector, the women demonstrate a remarkable entrepreneurial spirit and perseverance. In the words of one of the key informants:

The logic behind engaging in petty trade is that, in principle, it is open to everybody: not so much capital is required, they can be carried out at any time and for any length of time, and, finally, the lapse of time between investment and income is considerably shorter.[14]

A further subtle example, which highlights the idea of how community savings contributes to conflict transformation, is the message from one of the study experts, who noted that community savings is more than just borrowing money and engaging in small scale business to meet household needs.[15]

This is quite telling, as it demonstrates that women not only establish social connections within and outside the market space, but also use these networks to maintain a chain of customers and trust building, ensuring they stay in business. In particular, they gather early warning/ intelligence information on threats and opportunities for their communities.

These critical perspectives notwithstanding, it remains to be seen why a woman who borrows a significant amount of money cannot invest in a big business. This brings us to the issue of poverty. There is no doubt that overcoming poverty is one of the main challenges facing community savings. Interviews showed that often group members live from hand to mouth, and would redirect their borrowed money into meeting basic needs instead of using it as capital for their entrepreneurial activities – leading to an ever-increasing default rate. The consequences become dire for women who belong to several groups.

There are some who fail to repay the loans or submit their monthly contributions or general lack of commitment to the group activities, which is against the group rules. For instance, at start, we were 50 members. However, some were not able to make timely contributions, so much so that we had to offload them. We are now only 30 of us.[16]

Here, we draw on the work of Stuart Rutherford's essay on, 'The Poor and their Money' that argued against promoting access to credit for the specific purposes of microenterprise development. Instead, his position

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14   Non-attributable comment$_1$, July 2019, Nairobi.

15   Non-attributable comment$_3$, July 2019, Kapenguria.

16   Non-attributable comment$_1$, July 2019, Kainuk.

is that what poor people need is access to amounts of money greater than their usual (small) income streams which he termed 'usefully large lump sums' (Rutherford 2000:1). The needs for such lump sums emanate from three main sources: life-cycle events such as births, deaths, marriages, and education; to protect oneself against risk, i.e. emergencies such as ill-health, death, or loss of assets; and to respond to investment opportunities, such as being able to purchase an asset or start/expand a business. He further argued that savings is the most beneficial way for poor people to gain access to such 'usefully large lump sums' (Rutherford 2000:1).

Renowned economist Kabeer (1999) while reflecting on the measurement of women's empowerment, avers that for poorer women who are struggling to make their enterprises viable, financial services on their own are unlikely to be enough, and may even end up plunging them into debt. These women would need financial services as part of a larger package of supportive measures which address: their human capital deficits, their unpaid domestic responsibilities, and perhaps also their lack of self-confidence and fear of taking risks.

Closely related is the issue of seasonality and lack of diversity. The argument, of course, is that while women are involved in various entrepreneurial activities, it conceals the fact that many of their various entrepreneurial activities are seasonal. Furthermore, women often work under dire conditions, such as selling their wares under the hot sun.

The next section will therefore highlight the contributory role of community savings to conflict transformation from the cultural element.

## 11. Cultural Transformation

The study highlights the fact that women have used their positions as matriarchs to negotiate for space and agency in a way that allows them to be consulted and to be participants in community affairs. One FGD participant had this to say:

> As mothers, we strive to preach the message of peace, we go deep into the bushes to persuade the warriors to stop cattle raiding and committing revenge killings.[17]

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17  Non-attributable comment$_1$, July 2019, Loima.

For example, Pokot, women are at least implicitly involved in peace processes, as reflected in the *Leketyo/Leketio* belt tradition. *Leketyo* is a kind of belt with cultural attachment, worn by women to protect their sons from external harm. In close connection, one aspect of the field process that deserves mention was having an impressive conversation with women group leaders, who talked about how they trained young mothers within their groups, on how to tie the *Leketyo* as a way of protecting their children (sons). They explained that before warriors set out for a raid, each of them informs their mothers to tie the belts when they are going out for the raids. But what are the implications of a mother refusing to tie the belt? Would the warrior still go raiding? For some of the FGD participants, the answer is clear:

> They cannot afford to defy their mothers.[18]

Writing on the same subject, Hamasi (2017) observes that, *Leketyo* is tied around the stomach on top of a *khanga,* which makes it a public ornament that would be significant and communicate its meaning to large crowds. In this context, women disseminate their information on the need for everyone to maintain peace with each other. The belt is, therefore, used by the Pokot women as an instrument for imposing peace. This shows women's involvement in peace processes (or conflict escalation) as embedded in cultural practices. Corroborating the above view is Schilling et al (2012) who notes that women are found to have an influence on the raiding activity of their men. They either encourage their men, preparing meals after a successful raid, or play a discouraging role, for example, by expressing their fear to lose their man.

Among the pastoralists, ties of kinship, friendship and mainly marriage often bind people in communities and their neighbours. For instance, in reference to a response from one of the elderly woman group leaders in the area, her short answer is that women play a critical role in bridging intercommunal divides through marriage.[19]

From the above, we can infer that when woman marry out of their clan, they provide inter-clan networks which in turn serve as crucial communication channels between warring parties. Underlining the important role played by community savings, the elderly woman noted

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18   Non-attributable comment$_1$, July 2019, Nauyapong.

19   Non-attributable comment$_2$, July 2019, Loima.

that the intermarriages are a by-product of the mutual friendship and routine merry-go-round visits. This finding is similar to Gordon and Gordon (1996:235) observation that, 'when people of different descent groups must marry, live among, and cooperate with one another, their cross-cutting ties together with the pervasive fear of feud constitute an important mechanism for the maintenance of social order.'

Furthermore, it emerged that the culture of women singing, and dancing helps foster peace. One of the study respondents indicated that in their group, women have composed songs to raise awareness on the need for peace, persuaded warriors to refrain from violence, and created merry-go-rounds with other women in neighbouring communities.[20] We discuss peace and we drive the point home using songs. A good example is:

> ….*Amani Amani Amani*
>
> *Amani ni muhimu kwa wanadamu*
>
> *Vita huleta, umaskini bila amani tutabaki nyuma.*

Loosely translated as:

> ….*Peace peace peace*
>
> *Peace is important for human beings*
>
> *Conflict leads to poverty, without peace, we will be left behind.*

Moreover, the songs are sung during peace forums, where they engage their neighbouring communities as they sing along. In connection to this, Jama (2010), writing in the context of Somali women, notes that women in organised groups have used their traditional skills in poetry, singing and dancing to appeal to community elders and negotiators to enter into a truce for the sake of peace.

Noting that one of the strongest strands among pastoral communities is the culture of pastoralism, women have also not been left behind, especially investing their savings proceeds in small livestock and resale to neighbouring communities at a profit:

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20   Non-attributable comment[2], July 2019, Kainuk.

> Personally, I belong to a group of 10 women and with our borrowed money, we jointly buy small livestock such as goats at lower prices and sell them in far off markets, at a profit.[21]

Broadly speaking, the above findings are shared by Augsberger (1992), who addresses the need for 'cultural relevance' in transforming conflict by suggesting that these 'cultural modalities and resources for handling conflict in a given setting are not only important to identify but should be seen as foundational for building a comprehensive transformative framework' (1992:213). This view is reinforced by Burton and Dukes (1990), who affirm that indigenous societies were more inclined toward rituals that led to co-operative problem solving than to the type of confrontation and power bargaining advocated by the western world.

## 12. Conclusion and Recommendations

This section brings us back to the question Do community savings initiatives contribute towards conflict transformation in the Kenya's ASAL counties of West Pokot and Turkana? Specifically, how can community savings be strengthened and supported to integrate conflict transformation in their processes? It remains impossible to say with absolute certainty that community savings significantly contribute to conflict transformation in the study area. On one hand, members seem to be determined to bring an end to the protracted conflicts. They proactively engage in pragmatic long-term practices that facilitate wide scale social change in diverse social economic sectors. In the process, they are uniquely harnessing the transformative power of their different local and social networks to progressively transform the protracted conflicts at personal, relational, structural, and cultural levels which are the central and guiding conceptual elements of conflict transformation.

On the other hand, the contribution of these initiatives to long-term and sustainable conflict transformation is questionable. This is due to the manifold challenges facing community savings – ranging from the fragile context, harassment from the security agencies, climate induced displacement, poverty, capacity issues, patriarchy, and gender related challenges among many others. This creates an urgent and daunting collective task for state and non-state actors to not only ensure that

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21   Non-attributable comment[3], July 2019, Lorogon.

community savings thrive, but that the vision of sustainable peace is also realised.

In addressing the 'outsider's dilemma' challenge, there is need for an appropriate level of external assistance by relooking at the 'do no harm,' principle. This clearly states that outsiders including government agencies must be sensitive when supporting *Chamaas,* including facilitating merry-go-rounds, lest they risk imposing their values of what conflict transformation, in the words of Kabeer (1999) 'ought to be' or 'look like'.

As the success of community savings is paramount, there is the need to strengthen and support the capacities of *Chamaas* members – providing them with both soft skills and technical know-how on how to start and run innovative, diversified and profit oriented entrepreneurial practices successfully. Additionally, support should be offered for value chain development away from the rudimentary, trial and error, and one size-fit-all approach to running their small-scale businesses.

There is need to strengthen horizontal relationships and create collaborative environments by engaging men in deliberate questioning of gender norms and power dynamics, so that they can better embrace co-operation and sharing of community savings activities at the household level.

Staying with collaboration, there is need for greater partnership between community savings groups and other community stakeholders, including: local government agencies; public actors; development aid donors; private sector players and academia. These can further unlock new opportunities and spur policy and legislative changes for enhanced functioning of community savings – contributing, in turn, to enhanced conflict transformation.

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# Situating the role of youth in indigenous African Peacebuilding interventions: The question of spoilers versus menders

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## Abstract

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) acknowledges that the world cannot attain meaningful peace without including the youth. This is critical in Africa where the youth who constitute the bulk of the continent's population are involved in armed conflicts as perpetrators, victims and witnesses. Consequently, the youth suffer

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physical, cognitive and psychosocial impact of conflict, blurring their meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes. This article discusses indigenous African interventions aimed at conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration of youth involved in and affected by armed conflicts. Four areas are addressed, namely: introduction, youth, indigenous methods, and finally conclusion and recommendations. It was found that scholars frame youth involvement in armed conflicts as perpetrators, triggers and victims. However, there is an emerging trend which frames youth as peace-builders. Africans have a rich indigenous knowledge reservoir for conflict resolution, peacebuilding and psychosocial interventions. However, the application of these interventions is marginalised. This article therefore advocates for the revitalisation of these interventions in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and encourages psychological healing and social restoration for the youth amid ever increasing conflicts in Africa. The researcher recommends, as a way forward, the following: greater involvement of youth in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration through indigenous African interventions; research on and inclusion of indigenous African knowledge in our educational system; and integration of indigenous African interventions into police, legal, justice and psychosocial support systems and practices.

**Keywords**: Adjudication, African conflicts, indigenous conflict resolution, youth, peacebuilding, reconciliation, marginalisation, social problem-solving, social capital theory

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Overview and context

In peacebuilding assignments, various actors are involved depending on the complexity of the situation. Among these key actors are the youth who constitute the main subject of interest addressed in this article. Hereinafter, the definition of youth is based upon age grouping which is the most common criterion for categorising young people among many key international community stakeholders (Marzo 2017). UNSCR 2250 (2015), which considers youth as persons aged 18–29 years, recognises variations in the definition of this population segment in different national and international areas.

Underpinning this article are the concepts of *armed conflicts*, *peacebuilding*, and *indigenous African peacebuilding interventions* as they affect the *youth*. An armed conflict refers to any organised dispute that involves the use of weapons, violence, or force, whether within national borders or beyond them, and whether involving state actors or nongovernment entities (Kadir et al. 2018:2). Rebel groups and state forces are historically the most common actors, but increasingly, political and communal militias and unidentified armed groups dominate in Africa (Bello-Schünemann et al. 2017:134). Taking cognisance of the preceding, it is evident that armed conflicts are gruesome, borderless and involve several actors who have to be involved if peacebuilding and healing are to be achieved.

This article is premised on the view that conflict resolution and psychosocial support mechanisms in traditional African society still have a place in peacebuilding and healing efforts involving the youth. This article, therefore, contributes to knowledge in these areas in three major ways. First, it situates youth in Africa as a key stakeholder in armed conflict situations, whether as perpetrator[1] or peace-builder[2]. It is therefore crucial that policy makers should understand the significance of involving the youth in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. This involvement is useful for developing and implementing youth-friendly policies and strategies for peacebuilding in Africa. Furthermore, it is relevant in the implementation, design and application of indigenous African psychosocial support systems for the youth involved in and affected by armed conflict – whether as perpetrators, victims or witnesses. Secondly, the article discusses the role of indigenous African interventions in peacebuilding and psychosocial therapy. Extrapolating from this, stakeholders involved in peacebuilding in Africa could (may) learn how to apply these interventions to the rapidly growing youth population on the continent. Finally, this article is useful to the youth in coming to understand their rightful role in peacebuilding and psychosocial interventions for healing and restoration within the contexts of African indigenous systems. This is useful not only for conflict resolution but also for using and sustaining relevant African cultural practices in peacebuilding and psychosocial support for those involved and affected by armed conflicts on the continent.

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1   Denotes youth as spoilers to peace and peacebuilding.

2   Represents youth as menders in the peacebuilding process.

## 1.2 Background

Youth forms an important population segment that needs to be involved in peacebuilding efforts. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16 advocates for peace by acknowledging the need to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels' (UN General Assembly 2015:14). The participation of youth in peace processes helps achieve sustainable conflict resolution (Pratley 2011). This underpins the United Nations Security Council Resolution's (UNSCR) 2250 on youth, peace and security (UN General Assembly 2015) which was unanimously adopted on 9th December 2015 and advocates for meaningful participation of youth in peace processes and dispute resolution.

The term *indigenous,* as posited by Twikirize and Spitzer (2019:8), refers to 'distinct knowledge, practices and ways of living and doing that have their majority origin within specific local communities'. In this paper, the term reflects Africans' deeply rooted cultural traditions and customs. Baya (2009) acknowledges that there are various indigenous African peacebuilding traditions. The indigenous African peacebuilding interventions[3] are rooted within the customs and traditions of Africa's peoples (Alemie and Mandefro 2018). This paper adopted Baya's (2009:27) definition of indigenous conflict management and resolution mechanisms as 'community based, traditional or local, indigenous mediation, community based, conflict mitigation; grassroots approaches to peace.' These conflict mechanisms have been used in traditional African societies over a considerable period of time dating back to the pre-colonial era (Ajayi and Buhari 2014). This is a reflection of the rich reservoir of African indigenous knowledge of resolving conflicts and peacebuilding.

Following the cue from UNSCR 2250, the African Union Commission (AUC) also adopted the African Youth Charter during its seventh ordinary session of the Assembly which was held in Banjul, The Gambia, on 2 July 2006. Article 17 of this charter recognises the important role of

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3    Used synonymously with local and traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution and peacebuilding as well as indigenous conflict management and resolution mechanisms.

youth in promoting peace and the healing of physical and psychological scars that result from involvement in violence, armed conflict and war (AUC 2006). Article 17(g) advocates for member states to 'take appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of young victims of armed conflict and war by providing access to education and skills development such as vocational training to resume social and economic life' (AUC 2006:31).

Indigenous African conflict resolution and peacebuilding resources and institutions have existed for a long time, dating back centuries (Alemie and Mandefro 2018; Kpae 2018; Murithi 2009; Werner 2010). Despite this, they remain underutilised in Africa. This rationalises rethinking the use of indigenous African conflict resolution and peacebuilding approaches (Adhiambo 2014; Kpae 2018) at a time when conflicts are occurring in various African countries. Africans have indigenous peacebuilding traditions which are important in healing and reconciling the people (Murithi 2009). One of the objectives of The Nairobi Declaration on 'Pan-African Youth Strategy on Learning for Sustainability' by UNESCO (2013), was 'to ensure that youth have a voice in policy and decision making from formulation to implementation so as to improve governance and leadership across all sectors and all levels and to empower youth by facilitating an enabling environment that fosters innovation, learning and knowledge-building for sustainable development'. This article, which is drawn from desk-based research of literature, argues that there is need to involve youth in conflict resolution within the framework of indigenous African interventions in peacebuilding. This paper seeks to explore the framing of youth in armed conflicts and peacebuilding in the literature reviewed; assess the relevance and mechanisms of indigenous African interventions in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration; and draw lessons so as to propose recommendations on the way forward.

The term 'peacebuilding' was introduced by former United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his 1992 report entitled *An Agenda for Peace*. A supplement to this report defines peacebuilding as a range of activities meant to identify, and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace and avoid relapse into conflict (Boutros-Ghali 1995). Contributing to this, Amisi (2008:14) adds that when peace is defined in terms of healing, then peace represents 'a dynamic process of being healed and healing rather than the absence

of perpetual crisis and poverty.' The foregoing point to the goal of peacebuilding as one of preventing and reducing the occurrence of a conflict, and the transformation and healing of all those involved in and affected by conflicts. This article is anchored within this framework and aims to act as a means for involving the youth in peacebuilding and recovery.

## 2. Theoretical frameworks

### 2.1 Social problem-solving theory

This study makes use of social problem-solving theory as this theory accepts that humans always encounter and experience problems and challenges and look for ways to solve those problems. This theory creates and makes use of systems and structures that can contribute and play a role in solving problems or conflicts within communities and individuals (Chang, Zurilla and Sanna 2004). Social problem-solving theory is a self-directed cognitive process in which a group tries to identify possible solutions to certain problems in every life.

According to Chang, Zurilla and Sanna (2004), social problem-solving is a two-stage process involving problem-solving and solution-implementation. Problem-solving focuses on ways of getting a solution to a specific problem whilst solution implementation relates to carrying out the solutions in real problematic situations. According to Dostál (2015), people who encounter a problem should (must) also be motivated to work towards a solution and be ready to solve it. This is a situation where persons try to evaluate the problem and what causes the problem to find solutions.

### 2.2 Social capital theory

Social capital is the relational resource embedded in personal ties that are useful for the development of individual communities. Social capital stands for a sense of goodwill that represents sympathy, trust, and forgiveness that engendered the fabric of social relations (Ahmed 2020). The theory of social capital is based on the notion of trust, norms and informal networks of social relations that are used to build on social norms, values, beliefs, trusts, obligations, relationships, networks, friends, memberships, civic engagement, information flows and institutions. These will further foster cooperation and collective activities

for the shared welfares of the communities as well as contribute to their socioeconomic developments. It can be regarded as collective action in the base of social relations and shared norms, and trust that facilitates the relationship and cooperation of mutual benefits (Bhandari and Yasunobu 2009).

Bhandari and Yasunobu (2009) as cited from Coleman (1990) stated that social capital theory can be defined as a group of individuals sharing common features that are the aspect of social structure that enable certain actions of such individuals within that structure. The common features include obligations, expectations, trust, and information flow among the individuals. It is a production resource that facilitates the production and makes it possible to achieve certain ends that would be impossible in its absence. Social capital focuses on the structural relationship among the actors and it facilitates individual actions taken by the actors that form the basis of social capital. The efforts taken by the group members can be perceived as rational investments in social capital.

## 3. Youth

Africa has the youngest, largest and fastest growing population in the world. Although public perceptions of youth are a mix of opportunities and threats, it is almost always the case that popular narratives see them more as threats by virtue of the risk factors associated with the violent actions of a handful of youth. Such perceptions presume that young people are easily lured into participating in violent actions in contexts where widespread unemployment and socioeconomic vulnerabilities are on the rise. At different moments and in various circumstances, youth are victims, perpetrators and peace-builders (Del Felice and Wisler 2007). This article posits that this framing of youth portrays them as both spoilers and menders in peacebuilding. But Del Felice and Wisler (2007:2) emphasise that 'youth are underestimated as positive agents of change and key actors in peace- building, both by policy-makers and academics.' This points to inadequate inclusion of youth in peacebuilding efforts. As earlier elucidated, Africa continues to experience violent conflicts. This state of affairs implies that the application of modern conflict resolution mechanisms on the continent has not been successful in peacebuilding. Further, this suggests marginalisation of indigenous African conflict resolution mechanisms. Indeed, Adibo (2017) argues that, to some extent, the marginalisation of African indigenous conflict resolution practices

contributes to unending violent conflicts experienced on the continent.

Citing Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), Bello-Schünemann et al. (2017) notes that in 2016, Africa accounted for more than a third of global conflicts. A majority of current armed conflicts on the continent occur in North Africa and the Sahel, West Africa, the Horn, and the Great Lakes region. This demonstrates the need for armed conflict resolution and peacebuilding in most regions in Africa. The youth are a majority and a vital resource in the population in Africa and should not be ignored in peacebuilding, healing and restoration efforts. Marzo (2017) reiterates this by arguing that due to their large numbers in the population, the youth need to be considered when planning for peacebuilding processes.

Perovic's study investigated the understanding of youth across European countries in terms of the age definition. The author observed that youth is mostly defined as 'the passage from a dependent childhood to independent adulthood' (Perovic 2016:7) when young people are in transition between a world of rather secure development to a world of choice and risk. Referring to social status, the author describes youth as the group which is in a specific social position, and are not entitled to child benefits and protection anymore. But they do need additional care since they do not yet enjoy all the opportunities available to adults. The outcome of the study was that 'common to all observed countries is that the period of youth is marked with the important life changes: milestone in education to job market transition, maintaining residential independence from the parental home, from being financially dependent to managing its own money' Perovic 2016:7). The author correctly observes that age could be a useful definition, but is an insufficient indication to characterise the transition to adulthood. Even though age distinction has been considered as the prevailing approach in defining youth, the author suggests that social status and life situations should not be neglected as playing roles in the definition. For the purposes of this article, youth[4] represents persons aged 15–35 years, as considered in the AUC Youth Charter (2006).

Table 1 illustrates the variations in age brackets for youth from select countries in Africa.

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4    This article uses youth and young people synonymously.

## Table 1: Variations in age brackets for youth

| Age (years) | Countries |
|---|---|
| 12–30 | Nigeria and Swaziland |
| 14–25 | Botswana and Mauritius |
| 14–35 | Rwanda |
| 15–35 | Burundi, Ghana, South Africa and Tanzania |
| 18–30 | Uganda |
| 18– – | Kenya* |

\*   The age bracket considered in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya (Kenya Law Reports 2010).

Source: Researcher's compilation from various sources, 2019.

According to Nkurunziza (2015:15), youth are an essential constituency in all phases of peacebuilding. In most conflict situations, young people are both perpetrators and victims of violence and conflict. According to the 'youth bulge theory' this has implications for explaining the link between youth and conflict in Africa. Tsuma (2012:127) points out that youth bulge theory 'is founded on the premise that there exists a strong correlation between countries prone to civil conflicts and those with burgeoning youthful populations.' What really makes the situation worse is the high number of unemployed youths. With the existence of high numbers of youth in Africa, it is paramount for governments to sincerely engage youth not only in conflict resolution, but also in other gainful endeavours. In this regard, African countries cannot assume the unconditional support of youth in their peacebuilding efforts, whether they use traditional and/or modern approaches.

### 3.1 Youth as perpetrators and triggers of conflict and spoilers to peace

The framing of youth in armed conflicts assumes various dimensions. In this section, the article takes the view of 'youth-in-conflict as perpetrators and triggers-of-conflict and 'spoilers' to peace processes' (Pratley 2011: 30). Corroborating this, the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development

Working Group on Youth and Peace-building asserts that in conflict situations, young men are largely perceived as perpetrators while young women are assumed to be primary victims of sexual and gender-based violence (Rogan 2016).

Therefore, this article discusses the concept of youth as perpetrators in armed conflicts in Africa. UNSCR 2250 (2015) also acknowledges that there is an increase in the radicalisation of youth in the direction of violence and violent extremism[5] and this threatens peacebuilding efforts. Youth involvement in conflicts in Africa's violent wars and armed conflicts is evident. For instance, in the South Sudan conflict, youth have been involved as perpetrators through their membership as militia, armed groups and rebel leaders (Oluoch 2019). The militias, The Sudan Armed Forces started a serious crackdown against rebel groups that were opposed to the government and were supported by the Janjaweed, a militia armed group. This caused more than 300 000 deaths and three million forced displacements.

A review of the Rwanda 1994 genocide by the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1994) reported the killing of more than 800 000 civilians, primarily Tutsi. The militia whose composition included youth, the *Interahamwe* (those who attack together) and *Impuzamugambi (*those who have the same goal), played a central role in the genocide. The genocide was further fuelled by radio broadcasts which encouraged Hutu civilians to kill their Tutsi neighbours, who were referred to as 'cockroaches' that needed to be exterminated. As many as 2 000 000 Rwandans, both Tutsi and Hutu fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) but returned to Rwanda in 1997 after the genocide.

In Sierra Leone, youth were engaged as armed combatants in civil war (Pratley 2011). Jang (2012) states that there is no clear explanation about why of the 8 466 children documented as missing between 1991 and 2002, 4 448 were reported missing in 1999 alone. Jang (2012) further states that this could be attributed to the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) 'Operation No Living Thing' when thousands of civilians in Freetown were raped and murdered. Jang (2012) attributes insurgence of majority of the RUF militia who were made up of uneducated and unemployed youth, which saw as many as 300 civilians executed.

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5   Some of the violent extremist groups include Al-Shabaab based in Somalia and Nigeria's Boko Haram.

During the last decade, Kenya has witnessed an increase in various conflicts pertaining to 'political and election-related violence, radicalisation and violent extremism, inter-ethnic and inter-communal clashes, pastoralist violence, and state-led violence (Ismail, 2017:2). In the 2007/2008 Post-Election Violence (PEV) in Kenya, youth formed part of the tribal militia and equipped gangs that engaged in violent raids in various parts of the country (Forti and Maina, 2012). Militia groups were formed for tribal protection in Kenya included, *inter alia*, the Kisii tribe (*Sungusungu*), *Kikuyu (Mungiki*), Sabaot (*Land Defense Forces* (SLDF) and the Kaya (*Bombo Raiders*). The violence saw over 1 000 dead and up to 500 000 internally displaced persons (Truth, Justice and Reconciliation commission of Kenya 2013).

The above examples illustrate the participation of youth in armed conflicts as perpetrators of violence. Pratley (2011:36) explains that the youth as triggers-of-conflict dimension 'differs from youth-as-perpetrators constructions as it is typically situated outside armed conflict.' Youth as triggers-of-conflict dimension is supported by youth bulge theory which considers youth as contributors to social and economic instability in their communities. At the heart of this theory are extraordinarily large numbers of youth in proportion to the adult population in a country or region. However, it is not just that these numbers cause trouble. The causes derive rather from underpinning factors/issues such as increasing unemployment, alienation and discontentment with the political system. These factors make youth easy targets for recruits to armed violence (Pratley 2011).

Youth-as-spoilers to peace is a recent construction in conflict literature (Pratley 2011). It is anchored in the spoiler theory which regard 'spoilers' to peace as 'elites who are party to conflict and decide whether to cooperate with peace processes or contribute to conflict based on cost-benefit analyses that consider structural and situational capacities' (Pratley 2011: 43). Thus, the author considers youth as latent spoilers to peace. This is based on Greenhill and Major's (2006:9–10) argument that youth are 'determined but weak actors who would oppose the implementation of a peace accord, if only they had the material wherewithal to do so.' Therefore, youth-as-spoilers may thwart peace processes as 'they may be incentivised to disrupt peace-making processes when low opportunity costs issues remain, such as lack of access to political and economic structures' (Pratley 2011:43).

From the foregoing, it is evident that the youth played a role in conflict fuelled by either not being gainfully engaged, over inequitable resources distribution, or being recruited by already established militias for support of a particular cause. It is not shown, however, empirically, how many youths are involved in conflict but instead, the studies concentrated on the roles the youth played in conflict situations.

## 3.2 Youth as victims in armed conflicts

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD (2011:16) acknowledges that 'young people are frequently the victims of violence – boys and young men are most at risk of conflict-related death and homicide; girls and young women are increasingly at risk of sexual violence, especially in situations of armed conflict.' This is a view supported by Pratley (2011) who recognises 'youth-as-victims' construction in conflict situations. As victims, the youth in conflict situations suffer a great deal as they are traumatised, can lose their lives and even that of kin and friends (OECD 2011; Pratley 2011). Ultimately this affects the personal and social development of the youth (Marzo 2017). Focusing on children, Kadir et al. (2018:142) summarised the impact of armed conflicts as follows:

> The direct effects of conflict include death, physical and psychological trauma, and displacement. Indirect effects are related to a large number of factors, including inadequate and unsafe living conditions, environmental hazards, caregiver mental health, separation from family, displacement-related health risks, and the destruction of health, public health, education, and economic infrastructure.

Although the work by Kadir et al. (2018) focuses on children, youth too are likely to suffer from the same effects of armed conflicts. This calls for psychosocial support mechanisms to help cope with the suffering of those involved in armed conflicts.

## 3.3 'Youth-as-peace-builders' construct in conflict situations

The previous sections have demonstrated the framing of youth from a negative and suffering perspectives. As Pratley (2011) acknowledges, the discourse on youth can also be constructed positively as peace-builders. In constructing 'youth-as-peace-builders', we recognise youth as 'agents who contribute positively during and after periods of conflict' (Pratley 2011:45).

Del Felice and Wisler (2007) posit that youth are peace-builders and therefore an important demographic in peacebuilding.

Youth need to be considered when planning for peacebuilding processes due to their large numbers in the population (Marzo 2017) and a sizeable number out of school. Such processes could provide learners with useful experiences for peacebuilding (Chakraborty 2016). In addition, youth could easily be mobilised by traditional/tribal leaders to engage in conflict and violent actions as noted in some African countries (personal observation). These assertions further underpin the unquestionable role of youth in peacebuilding (Del Felice and Wisler 2007). Young people's ample (or noteworthy or impressive) courage is useful in peacebuilding processes as it can propel them towards fulfilling what they believe in, that is, a belief that peace is necessary (Del Felice and Wisler 2007). In view of the preceding viewpoints, there is need for involving youth in indigenous African interventions in peacebuilding and healing.

## 4. Indigenous methods

### 4.1 Overview

This section presents a critical review of the literature about indigenous African interventions. The section describes the mechanisms and relevance of such interventions, and their roles in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration – with a focus on youth as stakeholders. The section draws on discussions from past studies on indigenous African conflict resolution mechanisms which are geared towards not only peacebuilding with youth involvement, but also healing and reconciliation of others involved in and affected by conflict. This is pertinent for psychological healing and social restoration among the youth who are involved in and affected by armed conflict. Communal fights in Africa can be resolved through indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. Baya (2009) posits that:

For a successful conflict resolution, resources should be targeted at mobilising home-grown solutions to home-felt conflict. A more focused appreciation of the existence of indigenous conflict resolution resources and mechanisms in African countries could help in saving lives and reduce social strife.

## 4.2 Mechanisms of indigenous African interventions in conflict resolutions

Africans have a rich indigenous reservoir that can be utilised in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and psychosocial interventions for healing and restoration of resiliency among the youth affected by armed conflict. The need for such local interventions emanates from the recognition that proposals from the West are based on contexts that may not be similar to those in Africa (Twikirize and Spitzer 2019). To these authors, there are noticeable differences between Africa and the Western world in terms of culture, social, economic, political and spiritual realities. But African youth can be important local drivers and agents of change in their societies. For instance, in Kenya communal conflicts arise from contestation over access to resources, ranging from pastoral land, livestock raiding to water which trigger inter-communal violence. (Ritchie and Ord 2017). Ritchie and Ord (2017) opine that developing a youth space recognised by the community gives the youth a sense of belonging. They advise recognition of the youth through financial and technical support and, most importantly, recognition of the youth as peace agents of the State with support from their communities. Another example of involving the youth in peacebuilding is found with the Pokot and the Marakwet tribes of Kenya. The youth are engaged in activities that symbolise peace (Elfversson 2016). The youth compose songs on the benefits of education after which the parents allow them to go to school as a way of maintaining peace. Therefore, what may work in the West may not necessarily yield the same results in Africa. This situation demands 'home grown' or local solutions for the conflict situations in Africa.

Muigua (2017), Adhiambo (2014) and Ajayi and Buhari (2014) explored indigenous approaches to peacebuilding, ,some of which are methods of indigenous African interventions for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Some of these methods resemble modern day alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that include negotiation, mediation and reconciliation (Muigua 2017). For example, in Northern Somalia, also known as Somaliland, traditional leadership institutions and methods for resolving disputes were used to bring together the clans and create a legislature and government. By drawing upon Somali tradition and combining these traditional structures with modern institutions of governance like the parliament, Somaliland, with its capital in Hergesia,

has succeeded in maintaining a degree of relative peace and stability. Some writers have argued that Somaliland might be the first genuine African nation state because it was created using indigenous cultural norms of governance. In this sense, it emerged from the efforts and desire of Somali clans to unify into a state.

Ajayi and Buhari (2014:151) and Muigua (2017) acknowledge that indigenous African conflict resolution mechanisms include among others: negotiation, adjudication, reconciliation and mediation. The authors add that these mechanisms which pre-exist the advent of colonialism in Africa were geared towards peaceful coexistence within communities. Focusing on Kenya's nearly 42 tribes, Muigua (2017) states that each one of them had its own conflict management mechanisms which were considered effective and are recognised by the present government. This recognition makes these conflict resolution mechanisms legitimate in Kenya. Indigenous African peacebuilding mechanisms are increasingly being applied in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda[6], Somaliland, and Uganda.[7] Another example of a strategy of reconciliation is the conflict between the Pokot and the Turkana of Kenya. Kibe's (2020) study revealed that lack of equitable distribution of natural resources was the 'missing link', … hence the cause of the conflict between the two tribes. To bridge the gap, the Shalom-SCCRR (Shalom Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation) implemented a multi-stakeholder approach. The approach involved the natural resource management committees, opinions of grass-root leaders, local chiefs, village elders, women and youth leaders, religious leaders and national police reservists. The stakeholders are implementing the structures; and the stakes are high that this will solve the long-standing conflict for long-term benefits of the communities. Consequent to the above information, this article focuses on negotiation, mediation and arbitration. Negotiation refers to the 'process in which parties in a conflict agree to talk it out and manage the conflict jointly. Negotiation combines conflicting positions into joint agreements and is a voluntary process where the parties do map out the future of their relationships' (Adhiambo 2014:39). Negotiation as a

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6    *Gacaca* refers to 'an informal conflict settlement arrangement at the grassroots level in Rwanda' (Spitzer and Twikirize 2019:257).

7    *Mato Oput* denotes 'a conflict resolution and reconciliation ritual among the ethnic group of the Acholi in Northern Uganda' (Spitzer and Twikirize 2019:257). *Mato Oput* in Acholi vernacular means 'drinking the herb of the Oput tree'.

peacebuilding mechanism is pervasive in African societies and is based on traditional belief systems (Adibo 2017). According to Ajayi and Buhari (2014:151), negotiation seeks to 'harmonize the interests of the parties concerned.' For instance, Ajayi and Buhari (2014) note that in the traditional Yoruba[8] society, peace negotiation involved individuals who had done a wrong to others apologising to the entire community. The apology was channelled through elders, compound heads, and chiefs of high calibre in the Yoruba society.

Indigenous Africans handled conflict in a rather fascinating manner. They applied negotiation, bargaining, dialogue, mediation, conciliation, collective personhood, adjudication, etc. (Ademowo 2016). Modern day United States-championed Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is regarded by many scholars as 'African Dispute Resolution', as they are initiatives based on African experiences. A very good example is the Ubuntu conflict resolution style of the Bantu family among South Africans. Its philosophy is based on a collective responsibility among human beings to live for common benefit. Among other examples are the Adzo, Cofono and the House of Palaver (Ademowo 2016). The Luo, Kipsigis and the Kisii of Kenya, live in Sondu area, a cosmopolitan region with Sondu town as their business center. The main bone of contention among these tribes is competition for political gains in Sondu area because politics has been along ethnic lines. To mitigate the conflict, the trio organise sporting tournaments as a coping strategy in promoting coexistence among the youths and to restore peace and bring about reconciliation. Intermarriages, and intercultural activities like attending funerals, weddings and circumcision ceremonies strengthen their interaction and relationships (Odongo 2009).

To a large extent, these intercultural activities lead to groups becoming indistinguishable from one another – which creates a sense of belonging. Kariuki's (2009) study on the mechanisms used by the Giriama of the Coastal region of Kenya revealed that they had two strategies of solving disputes, especially when they wanted to establish the truth where a conflict of accounts occurred. Psychological and physical methods were used, involving fire and poison ordeals as coercive approaches to distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. First (the psychological phase) the suspects were allowed to see the fire and poison in order to

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8    One of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria.

frighten them into confession without being taken through the entire process. Second, (the physical) the litigants were asked to choose to go through the whole process and be burnt and/or take the poison (physical). The ordeal by poison made the individual sick while the ordeal by fire made the blistered the guilty individual. The accuser and the accused often went to the ordeal function together; but at times the accused, in order to prove innocence, went alone. Disputants were not forced to attend, but non-attendance was viewed as an admission of guilt. The council of elders often operated as one judicial body, prescribing ordeals and oracles to determine who to blame, and then imposing and enforcing penalties. This approach seemed helpful to the elders considering that they were not paid, it was therefore not costly. Adhiambo (2014) argues that mediation is a continuation of negotiation and involves a third party (mediator) who comes into play when negotiating partners reach a deadlock. Corroborating this, Ajayi and Buhari (2014:149) add that 'mediation is an old method of conflict management surrounded by secrecy. It involves non-coercive intervention of the mediator(s), called third party either to reduce or … go beyond or bring conflict to peaceful settlement.'

Perovic (2016) carried out an analytical study whose objective was to serve as a mapping document and evidence- based support to the Working Group of the Council of Europe aimed at preparing the recommendations on youth work. Based on desk research, the country reports on youth policies deposited with the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP) were examined. The outcome of this study was that all the covered countries except Cyprus have national youth policies in the form of strategic or other programme documents, or in the form of laws. This finding supports the notion that the youth are included in the national policy agenda. For instance, Perovic's (2016) study revealed that 'out of 198 countries, 122 countries (62%) in 2014 had a national youth policy, compared to 99 (50%) in 2013' (Youth Policy Press 2014:8). Based in his findings and a comparative perspective, the author attempts to provide evidence-based comprehensive facts and policy figures on youth across all Europe.

Similarly, in Rwanda, the government is making use of the traditional justice and reconciliation system known as *gacaca,* which might enable it to try and judge some of those who are accused of having been among the perpetrators of the genocide in 1994. The interesting lesson to learn

from this *gacaca* system is that it is largely organised on the basis of local youth involvement. The local youth is involved in encouraging the perpetrators to acknowledge what they have done; and the victims are involved in determining what reparations need to be made so that the perpetrator can be re-integrated into the Rwandese Youth. There have been criticisms of the way that *gacaca* tribunals have been implemented. This is bound to happen because the use of indigenous traditional approaches to administer justice in a modern nation state is uncharted ground.

Njeru's (2010) study discusses the delicate place of youth in Southern Sudan and argues that war and peace benefit the youth in many ways. In peacetime, the youth provide the reservoir of any country's energy to grapple with its present circumstances and future challenges. On the contrary and to the disadvantage of the youth, in times of conflict, they are disadvantaged. A case in point, the Janjaweed militiamen of Darfur, comprised mainly of youth, was revamped with support from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Over the last 16 years, the Janjaweed have occupied the lands of some of the ethnic members who have been chased from their homeland. They rape and kill with impunity due to a lack of political will by authorities to prosecute them for these crimes committed (Oluoch, 2019). This, benefits the authorities who have the youth at their beckoning but the youth have no autonomy (personal opinion).

Apart from the forceful conscription into conflicts, young people are also forced into conflict by circumstances emanating from the government's failure to create enabling environments for empowerment of the young people. Njeru (2010) notes that Africa has excess youths without access to schooling or gainful employment, ready to heed the call to bear arms for spurious ideological or ethnic reasons. Such youths are easily off-loaded on any viable militia or government for use in violence.

In South Africa, Olowu (2018) carried out an assessment of Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Africa. The main purpose of the study was to do an assessment on the role of indigenous conflict resolution initiatives and their significance in cases where state machinery is inadequate, inaccessible or unavailable. The study revealed that practices among the Barolong people have often constructively dealt with conflicts so that social life, livelihoods and communal harmony can continue or be restored. The study results revealed that though the

Barolong customary conflict resolution models may have some limitations, it nonetheless has the potential to productively resolve local conflicts, especially in remote areas where state machinery is inadequate, inaccessible or unavailable. Ndegwa (2018) also emphasises the role of youth in achieving sustainable peace and development in South Africa. Ndegwa (2018) states that the youth voiced their frustrations in the '#rhodesmustfall, #feesmustfall campaigns' and is a clear example of the youth-led movements' ability to change the current status quo. The inclusion of youth in decision-making processes is critical for sustainable peace and development.

In West Africa Sub region, Enaifoghe (2018) sought to find out what intervention and peacebuilding mechanisms the states used in mediating peace, peacebuilding, resolving states conflicts and how to strengthen democracy in West Africa, apart from ECOWAS – AU interventions mechanisms in peacebuilding and resolving states conflicts. This aimed at strengthening democracy in Côte d'Ivoire, as a case study in West Africa. The study findings showed that the implementation of the Contrivance and the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance by ECOWAS were better prepared to meet challenges related to peace and security in the region. Enaifoghe (2018) concluded and recommended that organisations who mediate peace in any conflict zone must first understand the cause of the conflict, involve the youth and thereafter timely intervene, and take common positions in applying different mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts with active participation of the youth.

In Nigeria, Ademowo and Nuhu (2017) did a study on *Indigenous Knowledge and Conflict Management in Africa: A Study of Proverb Use in Conflict Management among Hausas of Northern Nigeria.* This case study examined the place of indigenous knowledge in conflict management and peacebuilding, focussing on the Hausa speaking people of Northern Nigeria. The paper argues that traditional knowledge is intrinsically valuable as they are veritable tools in maintaining peace and peaceful coexistence among the people. Nigeria has implemented the UNSCR 2250 (2015) by establishing an inter-agency working group on youth and peacebuilding. In Kenya, Oriedo, Ntamushobara and Renne (2018) carried out a study on The role of the youth in peacebuilding between the Maasai community and the in-migrant communities in Kajiado North Sub-County. The purpose of the study was to uncover reasons

preventing youth from spearheading peacebuilding. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research design. The study findings revealed that there were no trainings carried out on the conflict management with the youth. The findings of the study pinpoint a clear depiction of failed attempts by both community leaders and political leaders to solve conflicts especially in the pastoralists' communities.

In traditional African societies, the mediators who are respected and trustworthy elders were drawn from the communities or societies of the parties involved in the conflict (Ajayi and Buhari 2014). The roles of the mediators included 'pressurizing, making recommendations, giving assessments, conveying suggestions on behalf of the parties, emphasizing relevant norms and rules, envisaging the situation if an agreement is not reached, or repeating of the agreement already attained' (Brock-Utne 2001:11). According to Muigua (2017), a majority of Kenyan communities have practiced mediation over time Kpae (2018) notes that traditional leaders are involved in conflicts between communities especially when conflicts occur. They undertake mediation and appeal to all to maintain peace. Those who violate this call are cautioned by the paramount rule (ruler or chief) of the community, or asked to pay a fine required by the particular community. Once the mediation process is completed, the chiefs of the communities in conflict ask their gods to help them maintain the peace. In addition, peace consultative committees would be set up under the headship of the community paramount ruler to help mediate conflicts in warring communities. For instance, the Sierra Leone Parliament has twelve seats reserved for the paramount chiefs, who represent traditional regional issues such as local conflict management of those regions not represented by political parties.

Arbitration is another traditional means of resolving conflicts. According to Adhiambo (2014:40), arbitration 'involves an adjudication procedure by which disputants agree to submit a dispute to Judges or arbitrators of their choice who render a legally binding decision in the form of a majority vote.' In African societies, arbitration can involve parties to a conflict taking their matter before a local chief's court. In such courts, the arbitration may be done directly by the chief himself, or through his elders or arbitrators selected by the warring parties (Okrah 2003). The decision of the arbitrator is considered final and binding to the parties involved in the conflict and failure to abide by it leads to sanctions (Adhiambo 2014; Okrah 2003).

Adjudication of conflicts in the indigenous African society involves inviting parties concerned to a meeting usually held in the compound or house of the family head or other head or palace court (Ajayi and Buhari 2014). The traditional adjudicatory processes emphasise reconciliation aimed at restoring peace. In these adjudication processes, the principle of 'give and take' is applied so that concessions are made. And once the warring parties were ready to reach comprise, a feast was organised as a confirmation. This shows the essence of adjudication as a mutual agreement and a means of healing for those involved in conflicts.

It is therefore evident that traditional African conflict resolution and peacebuilding mechanisms have a place in today's world. However, youth on the continent are not fully aware of these traditional solutions to peacebuilding. Forti and Maina (2012:62) point out that 'in Kenya, it is evident that modernisation has watered down this relationship: many Kenyan youth are unaware of traditional social structures but are instead conversant with, and faithful to, modern trends.' There exist many reasons that justify the need to consider and use indigenous African conflict resolution and peacebuilding mechanisms on the continent. Such peacebuilding interventions can reduce the thrust of drivers that fuel conflicts at the local level and provide long term local solutions to such conflicts.

## 4.3 Relevance of indigenous African interventions in conflict resolution and problems for implementation.

Indigenous African interventions to conflicts and peacebuilding have several advantages. These interventions cater for inclusion and participation as solutions to conflicts and are arrived at through consensus (Baya 2009; Kpae 2018). Indeed, the indigenous African interventions advocate for the principles of reciprocity, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny between people in conflict and peace-making (Alemie and Mandefro 2018; Amisi 2008). The interventions involve the locals at communities and this creates legitimacy for the resultant solutions (Alemie and Mandefro 2018). The indigenous African conflict resolution and peacebuilding interventions are rooted within the cultural systems of the people, hence are more easily understood than the Western court system (Alemie and Mandefro 2018).

Furthermore, traditional African mechanisms speed up and cost less in resolving conflicts and in peacebuilding (Alemie and Mandefro 2018;

Kpae, 2018). Lastly, traditional African conflict resolution and peacebuilding methods overcome the illiteracy barriers and afford accessibility to those rural locations where courts are not easily accessible (Alemie and Mandefro 2018). This is of relevance in Africa where access to justice through the court system is hampered by high poverty levels, and the fact that the majority of the people reside in those rural areas.

Whether as perpetrators and triggers of conflict and spoilers to peace or as victims or witnesses to conflicts, the youth undergo psychosocial challenges. The relevance of indigenous African psychosocial interventions to healing are reiterated by Adibo (2017:5) who argues that 'importing wholesale Euro-American counselling practices to be used in African settings, while ignoring healing counselling practices that originate from the continent, does not constitute holistic healing.' Using the case of the ethnic group of Acholi in Uganda, Adibo (2017) advocates for indigenous African interventions for healing and reintegration. Such indigenous psychologies take the local priorities into consideration, for instance how young people perceive psychosocial problems.

East Africa youth consulted for this present study identified some factors that they consider to be militating against their effective contributions to peace and security. These were broadly categorised into internal and external factors (UNDP 2019). The internal challenges included limited motivation, gender inequality, age difference and limited technical capacities and skills. With regard to limited motivation, many young people get involved in activism purposefully, and tend to be manipulated by politicians and community leaders – especially when their activities have gained them significant levels of public recognition and influence. Invariably, their sense of purpose becomes diluted as they become more politicised and politically oriented. This reason was highlighted as a critical factor in explaining why many youth groups are dissolved due to excessive politicisation.

It has been proven that countries with high levels of gender inequality are more likely to be involved in intra and interstate conflict and resort to violence to resolve conflict (UNDP 2019). Some female members of youth groups testified that when a female officer is promoted in the organisation, jealousy starts building up and accusations of sexual relationship/affairs become rampant, especially from the male group members. Such internal dynamics do not augur well for the sustainability of youth organisations (Cursi 2017). With regard to age difference, the

majority of youth in regions in Africa which are prone to conflicts suffer setbacks in education and social life. This is in regard to delayed completion of diplomas and entry and acquiring of university degrees. Lastly, youth groups consulted and identified their limited capacities and skills in peacebuilding as an impediment to the programmatic design of impactful and sustainable peace and security interventions but also access to financial support from donor agencies.

The common external challenges youth groups in Africa identify relate to the lack of critical positive momentum; the ever-changing nature and focus of normative frameworks or institutional policies; limited involvement of youth in mediation process and the excessive politicisation of the same process; and growing mistrust between the state and youth, especially by those who consider youth interventions as threats to their supremacy; excessive fixation with 'celebrity' peace advocacy; the existence of a plethora of 'youth brokers' without any clear constituency; youth apathy in advocacy processes; competition over limited resources; the paucity of trauma-sensitive components in on-going interventions; tribal profiling and targeting of youth; resistance by stakeholders especially national/community authorities and disputing parties; and limited outreach to targeted population.

The lack of critical positive momentum manifests in what youth groups describe as the limited or outright lack of political and financial interventions by government on issues that directly concern young people. Many youth initiatives in Africa are not only low-keyed in terms of their budget and spread, but they also take place infrequently because of funding constraints and limited political buy-in from government and other critical stakeholders in the region. This invariably makes youth groups function below optimum level and also diminish their exposure to the kind of transformative leadership opportunities they require to contribute meaningfully to society. The absence of such opportunities is also partly responsible for why young people are less inclined to join peace and solidarity movements and would rather join street gangs and engage in riots and demonstrations that threaten law and order.

Another challenge is the impact of stereotypes which are fuelling mistrust among youth and youth-led groups in the region. There are several levels of such mistrust: between youth groups and government; between youth groups and development actors, including intergovernmental organisations; and between youth and national or

international CSOs/NGOs. By the very nature of their mandate, youth groups working on human rights, accountability and democracy are particularly vulnerable to the authoritarian excesses of the state and state institutions since they tend to engage in activities that call out or put governments on the spot. This partly explains why government sometimes labels them as collaborators or traitors if they work with certain NGOs accused of working or spying for foreign governments. Either way, the dilemma is that certain youth groups have to navigate and are constrained by complex relationships with government and non-governmental development actors that are central in delivering a wide range of services such as humanitarian assistance.

Closely linked to the above is mistrust that exists within the rank-and-file of youth groups, mostly fuelled by stiff competition over funding and technical support. As in the case with other groups, especially within the civil society and NGO field, unhealthy rivalry and competition between and among youth groups could easily become a stumbling block in the quest for effective coordination and collaboration in delivering a common agenda and activities linked to peace and security. Further, young Africans have identified current gaps in the strategies for peace advocacy, wherein substantial attention and resources are committed to engage influential stakeholders and celebrities to raise awareness on specific or broad peacebuilding issues.

The approach of engaging international celebrities as peace advocates is becoming more popular and expensive, especially since doing so only brings momentary excitement for young people attending the mega concerts. They insist that local change can only come when such opportunities are created and channelled to harness and showcase the talent and creativity of local/national celebrities who are themselves popular national icons worthy of emulation by the youth, and who understand the peculiarities of their country and the region. Finally, the youth frown upon the proliferation of 'youth brokers,' that is, people who claim to be credible interlocutors on behalf of youth but are in reality only furthering their individual narrow and self-interests. The existence of too many intermediaries when it comes to youth affairs, according to them, often meant that the roles and contributions of legitimate youth groups are routinely side-lined and ignored.

## 5. Critique of theoretical frameworks

Human beings are prone to conflicts because it is a product of co-existence of individuals of different personalities. Conflict also indicates differences of opinion, misrepresentations, discrepancies, and bitterness prevailing in a particular 'organisation/society or between individuals. But this is different from 'armed conflict,' which 'is the resort to use of force and armed violence in pursuit of incompatible and particular interest and goals' (Francis 2012b).

When analysing dispute/conflict one should approach it through the 'categories of conflicts', because no single solution would fix all disagreements. Social scientists, practitioners and analysts have espoused myriad theories as the root causes of conflicts/disputes. This means that there is no single, unified and complete explanation to the causes of conflicts. Theories on the causes of conflicts/disputes are said to fall into five categories (Sacramento 2013). These include data disputes which perceive conflict as revolving around or being created by information (or misinformation, lack of information or unfamiliar information); structural disputes that occur within or between institutions and or bureaucracies (the struggle of social factions hostile to each other); Value disputes which are caused by a clash of ideas or belief systems, for instance, issues arising from values tied to communism and capitalism or entrenched moral belief; Relationship disputes which are very common among human beings or organisations where there are clashes in behaviour or commercial relationships; and Behavioural disputes that are caused by clashes in habits, behaviour, custom and or culture (Sacramento 2013).

Other theories about the causes of conflicts include unbearable long-lasting moral difference, such as fundamental moral, religious and personal values that cannot be changed easily (Pearce and Littlejohn 1997), and issues of justice such as when people believe that they are being treated unjustly or unfairly. Yet, others include rights-based grievances such as when one person or group of people makes a demand on another group and it is rejected particularly when they advance their claim as rights (Glendon 1993). For others, the causes of conflict are unmet or unfulfilled human needs such as basic needs for food, water, and shelter as well as complex needs such as safety, security, self-esteem, and personal fulfilment (Burton 1990). There are also identity issues

such as when a group feels that their sense of self is under threat (Fiol et al. 2009). The grievance theory (Collier and Hoeffler 2000) also offers explanations as to the causes of conflict between groups. They identify three types of causes: hatred between groups; political exclusion; and vengeance (Maphosa et al. 2014).

Another theory on conflict is economic theory, which states that poverty and unemployment could lead to political protest, civil unrest or rebellion (Collier 2006). However, rebellion, like 'armed conflict', is a different matter as it requires financial backing, and thus, a more serious conflict. Another theory which identifies itself as Relative Deprivation Theory focuses on economic inequality (Ojendal, Leonardsson, and Lundqvist 2017). This type of conflict occurs when people perceive that there is a huge gap in what they are getting now and what they used to get; and that may fuel tensions among people and lead to discontent (Connolly and Powers 2018). This review on the causes of conflict may not be complete without mentioning Marxist theory of rebellion. This theory hinges on the proposition that market crises could create revolts among the peasant and their masters (employers of labour) who exploit them (Hove and Harris 2019). This is a kind of class conflict because the poor youth working class is being exploited by the factory owners (employers of labour). The fact remains that prolonged exploitation may lead to revolution or violence.

Some scholars seem to agree that youth groups of people fight together because they perceive themselves as being members of a common culture, ethnic or religious group. And they may be in conflict with others to preserve their cultural identity (Tamai 2017).

## 6. Critical review

Reviewing the general literature about indigenous African interventions in youth peacebuilding reveals a lack of research about the active role of youths in peacebuilding processes – with a dearth of empirical results. However, a large body of empirical evidence reveals psychological impacts of war and violence on youth in terms of, among others, anxiety, depression, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), aggression and hostility (Betancourt, Borisova and Rubin-Smith 2008). Supporting this, Betancourt et al. (2013) acknowledge that people exposed to armed conflicts experience social and psychological challenges long after the

conflicts are over. These challenges occur during and after conflicts, also appearing during peacebuilding. Given that Africa has a rich indigenous knowledge reservoir, this knowledge needs to be used in providing psychosocial interventions for healing and restoration of resiliency among youth affected by armed conflict in Africa. The chances and capacities of indigenous methods in peacebuilding are yet to be explored in many different conflict settings.

The attempts to conceptualise indigenous African interventions in youth conflict resolutions clearly lack empirical evidence as researchers' ideas about youth peacebuilding are based on a very limited number of peace programs. Also, international research shows a regional bias: the reviewed literature does not focus on indigenous interventions in Africa. It is questionable if such research can be applied to other contexts, such as the ethno- political conflict in Africa. Another main weakness is that the literature mostly ignores programs in which youth re integrated and act together with adults or elders. The researchers mostly assess peace programs in which youth are the only actors (e.g. youth organisations, youth clubs). They therefore neglect the question of how young people can be involved in adult-led peace programs, in which they work side by side with adults and elders.

Use of indigenous mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflicts have a long history in societies the world over (Alemie and Mandefro 2018; Spitzer and Twikirize 2019). Mechanisms for indigenous African conflict resolution have a place in today's conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts on the continent. Ajayi and Buhari (2014:153) state that 'each people, race, or identity group have their own ways of doing things especially as they concern conflict resolution.' Indigenous mechanisms for conflict resolution, peacebuilding and psychosocial support mechanisms are grounded in the cultural norms and values of the various ethnic groups in Africa (Alemie and Mandefro 2018).

When colonialists came to Africa they adulterated and, in some cases, wiped out the traditional African methods of conflict resolution (Forti and Maina 2012; Spitzer and Twikirize 2019). This suggests that there is need to revitalise the application of indigenous African interventions for conflict resolution, peacebuilding and psychosocial support for youth involved in and affected by armed conflicts on the continent. In this article, it is argued that the youth, though the majority in Africa, are not

fully aware of their local indigenous knowledge. In addition, the youth have been influenced by modern conflict resolution, peacebuilding and psychosocial therapy strategies. This has alienated them from the indigenous African interventions which are in line with our cultures.

# 7. Lessons, recommendations and conclusion

## 7.1 Lessons

Our indigenous African interventions of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration have been marginalised. The marginalisation is due to the importation of Western-based mechanisms which have not been successful on the continent

Youth are not aware of indigenous African peacebuilding interventions and this calls upon a rethink of how they can be educated on these interventions.

Peacebuilding is key in the attainment of sustainable development and peace world over and in Africa in particular as it is widely prone to wars and armed conflicts.

African societies have rich approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication. All these approaches are people-centred and in sync with modern peacebuilding methods. Therefore, they should be integrated within our African conflict resolution and peacebuilding approaches.

In formulating and implementing, indigenous African interventions for peacebuilding and healing for those involved and affected by armed conflicts, we must appreciate that there are cultural differences. Therefore, these interventions cannot be applied across the entire continent of Africa, but rather we must consider interventions tailored to various countries and communities within each African state.

Youth are a majority in our population in Africa. Africa cannot ignore them in peacebuilding, healing and restoration efforts. Youth are considered as victims and witnesses to conflicts, perpetrators, triggers, spoilers and menders in peacebuilding processes. It is high time we rethink, after long- term exclusion, their place in our societies.

As we endeavour to resolve conflicts on the African continent and seek to attain peace, we must strive to heal and restore those involved in and

affected by armed conflicts. As Africans we must not wait for the West to prescribe solutions to our own conflict situations. We must be proactive in promoting and using our own cultural practices towards peacebuilding, healing and restoration. These must work alongside the Western approaches to peacebuilding.

## 7.2 Recommendations

As a way forward, this article proposes and discusses several recommendations towards youth integration in our indigenous African interventions for conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration.

Research on indigenous African interventions for conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration should be enhanced. Once research on these indigenous interventions is effected, then the findings should be disseminated – using approaches that befit our African circumstances where the majority are illiterate, economically deprived, and reside in rural areas From the research, the documentation should highlight the positive attributes of our indigenous African knowledge for conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration. The research should identify those persons who can best engage as peace-builders. Therefore, through research, Africans must endeavour to formulate their own home-grown solutions anchored in indigenous African interventions. For success, it is imperative that a bottom-up approach involve the class of people considered disadvantaged. The implication of this first recommendation is that we must have a research agenda geared toward indigenous African knowledge systems.

This article recommends that the youth be given opportunities in peacebuilding as a means of achieving a sustainable resolution to the unending conflicts. Strategies should be formulated to economically empower the youth by providing employment opportunities. Without economic empowerment and independence, youth in Africa will continue to be exploited and easily recruited into armed groups.

This researcher recommends a re-evaluation of the potential contribution of indigenous African mechanisms to conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration. African mechanisms should incorporate indigenous knowledge into its formal and informal educational curricula. Building on the foregoing information, there is also an urgent need to

address and discard African cultural practices, such as cattle rustling that perpetuate armed conflicts. There is a great urgency to implement innovative indigenous knowledge mechanisms for the present and future generations. Indeed, documentation of the indigenous oral knowledge is a must. Efforts should be made towards creating youth awareness of conflict and peacebuilding mechanisms. Further, there is need to use cultural diversity as Africans to resolve conflicts, build peace, heal and restore those involved in and affected by armed conflicts. Education must motivate the desire and tolerance necessary to accommodate African cultural diversity. Besides the formal education in schools, colleges and universities, there is a need to conduct workshops that focus on processes of empowering local groups in managing conflict.

In this regard, integration of indigenous African interventions to conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration within the formal police, legal and justice systems[9] as well as psychosocial support systems should be given priority. This suggests operating a hybrid system. This calls for training elders on modern judicial systems and human rights as well as psychosocial therapies so that they can incorporate them in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration. It also involves training the police, formal legal and justice practitioners on traditional interventions for conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing, restoration as well as psychosocial work.

As we endeavour to implement the foregoing proposals, we should adopt a holistic approach to conflict resolution, peacebuilding, healing and restoration involving concerted efforts by state and non-state actors in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth-focused conflict resolution and peacebuilding programs. The external actors to peacebuilding in Africa should acknowledge the significance of the indigenous conflict resolution, healing and restoration interventions by incorporating them in the interventions.

Peacebuilding policies and conflict resolution must be sensitive to local and regional conflict dynamics, particularly when intervention measures and strategies are designed and implemented. Meaningful conflict

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9    For instance, the Constitution of Kenya (Kenya Law Reports 2010) in Article 67(2) provides for use of traditional mechanisms in land conflicts. Arbitration Act, Cap.49 and Civil Procedure Act, Laws of Kenya have provisions dealing with both mediation and arbitration.

transformation requires 'bottom-up' approaches that give prominence to traditional peacebuilding processes. Cultural resources and spaces such as the arts, sports, education, literature, shrines, and creative technological evolutions work directly to change relationships and alter negative stereotypes, beliefs, and attitudes. Indigenous communities are best placed to identify conflict causes, risks and potential solutions, and to provide feedback on the impact of peacebuilding interventions on conflict dynamics. The development of policy on conflict intervention strategies should therefore be informed by community grassroots-level consultations. Indigenous communities must be involved in both the drafting and implementation of these intervention strategies. Failure to do so implies that intervention strategies risk aggravating tensions and increasing the prospect of violent conflict.

## 7.3 Conclusion

This article demonstrates the relevance of and need to revitalise indigenous African interventions for conflict resolution, peacebuilding, psychological healing and social restoration among the youth affected by armed conflict. We need to have a hybrid intervention approach integrating both indigenous African and Western- style mechanisms for peacebuilding and healing for the youth affected. Interventions targeting youth on the continent should be practical, home-grown and conceptualised in ways that will fit into our indigenous African knowledge systems and culture. Africa should decide what works for it and strike a balance between our traditional peace- building, healing and restoration mechanisms and modern-age interventions from the West. As a people we need to understand and overturn popular framing of youth as perpetrators, triggers of conflict and spoilers to peace to reconstruct them as peace-builders without whom we cannot have peace. The youth need to be educated, mentored and involved in using indigenous African knowledge systems which do offer peacebuilding through negotiation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication.

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# State Legitimation Crisis and Violent Extremism among Young People in Nigeria

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## Abstract:

This article assessed the perceptions of youth towards perceived failures of the Nigerian State and their resulting disposition towards violent extremism as a response. The subjects for the study were drawn from, and representative of Lagos, Delta and Plateau States of the Country. The article adopted an eclectic theoretical approach and utilised a cross-sectional survey design to generate quantitative data from 2 106 young people aged 18 and 35 years. The chi square statistical test was used to analyse the quantitative data. The results indicated among others, that although most young people feel disenchanted by the failure of the state to fulfil its contractual mandate of delivering the public good, they are

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however, unwilling to personally accept acts of extremism/terrorism as legitimate means of pursuing desired goals, and are not positively disposed towards the use of violence or terrorism as a means of actualising their goals. However, the study revealed a positive relationship between young people's belief that it is incumbent on citizens to use violence to oppose underperforming government and their willingness to adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals at P-value of 0.000. The article, recommends a re-doubling of efforts by the political state to fulfil her contractual obligations of improving the socio-economic well-being of her citizens, among others.

**Keywords**: The state, legitimation crisis, violent extremism, young people, false consciousness, Nigeria.

## 1. Introduction

Extremism of the violent hue is fast becoming a major part of Nigeria's internal security nightmare. Though not entirely new, the phenomenon has continued to experience a crescendo since the country's return to civil rule in 1999. From the South-South through to the North-East, the North-Central, the South-West and then to the South-East of the country, groups have sprung up which have challenged the State's monopoly over the use of violence, attacked state targets, and instilled fear in the minds of citizens. A few of such radicalised non-state actors are: the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), Niger Delta Liberation Front (NDLF), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), and Egbesu Boys, in the South-South; the Boko Haram, Ansaru, and 'Kala-Kato' in the North and the O'Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the South-West. Others are the Ombatse in the North Central state of Nasarawa; the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the Biafra Zionist Movement, and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), among others, in the South East. The groups in the Niger Delta are resource-based, and use the demand for the control of oil found in their domain as their platform, knowing that about 90 per cent of Nigeria's revenue comes from that natural resource; while those in the North such as the Boko Haram, use religion as their platform, employing such tactics as suicide bombing, organised attacks on police and military installations, terrorising rural communities, etc. (Dambazau 2014). In the North Central, the issues are identity based. In the South East, the cry is that of marginalisation and exclusion.

The emergence and continued ossification of these mostly violent non-state actors have continued to define and redefine Nigeria's internal security landscape, stretching the country's intelligence community to their wits end, and creating a regime of fear and uncertainty among the citizenry. Besides, they represent grave threats to the social, economic and political stability of the country. The newest form of violent extremism in the country, marked by suicide bombings involving Nigerians (males and females inclusive), is particularly perturbing – and it puts the lie to the thesis that the average Nigerian is too cowardly and in love with life to wilfully surrender to death in pursuit of change, no matter how well deserved. The development also indicates that rather than being people- or culture-specific, suicide bombing and, indeed, inclination for terrorism, are products of wide ranging elements that bear no link to skin colour and geographical location. Anybody can become radicalised to become a terrorist given certain conditions, including the supposedly happy and pleasure loving Nigerians.

While the different militant non-state actors have evolved and transformed over time, and have engaged equally in different forms of violent activity, what is common among them is the role of the youth as critical actors. The contention in literature is that many of these groups leverage the vulnerability of the Nigerian youth to drive recruitment and radicalisation. There is also the belief that the sympathisers of these various groups are mostly disaffected and unemployed youths who live in this hostile environment, with challenges spanning economic, social, and political deprivations (Onuoha 2014:14).

The government of Nigeria very well acknowledges the threat posed by youth radicalisation and terrorism to the country's development and even continued survival as a corporate entity. Accordingly, it has adopted various strategies to contain the various groups, including appeasement, dialogue and – what is essentially – repression. Unfortunately, rather than abatement, extremist ideologies and violence appear to be worsening. In the Niger Delta region for example, over a decade long implementation of a federal government amnesty programme that was developed to placate the restive youths has not succeeded in curbing militancy in the region. Instead, we have more virulent militant groups periodically springing up-whose aim is to cripple the nation's economy by threatening and actually blowing up oil infrastructure. In the North East, a full scale war has been ongoing against the Boko Haram insurgents

for years, while in the rest of the country, various military operations are ongoing against militants and extremist groups. It is on record that the Nigerian military are currently in active deployment in no fewer than 30 states of the federation to tackle various internal security threats currently plaguing the country. Many of these deployments are against non-state actors while in some other cases, the deployment deals with organized crime. In others, military forces are in ongoing battles to reclaim Nigerian territories or to pacify reclaimed territories (Mac-Leva, Mutum and Bivan 2016).

There are different perspectives on the growing problem of radicalisation and disposition to violence in the country. However, there is a commonality of views that the country's descent into violence and extremist tendencies is largely because the Nigerian state consistently erodes its own legitimacy – by failing to fulfil the most rudimentary obligations of a modern government. This failure opens the door for malcontents across the political, ethnic and religious spectrums to challenge the state's juridical, territorial, and constitutional authority, hence the tendency by groups in both the North and the South to portray the state as illegitimate in order to justify their efforts to undermine it (Ochonu 2017). In other words, the various groups unleashing terror and deaths, whether in the Niger Delta, in the East, in the South West, or in the North of Nigeria, are bound by a common factor of deep dissatisfaction with the Nigerian State, even though these groups may have emerged under different historical circumstances.

This article reports on the outcome of a study which was conducted in three states of Nigeria, to validate the supposed nexus between the perceived performance of the Nigerian state and the disposition of young people to terrorism and extremist ideologies. The study covered the three states of Lagos, Delta and Plateau in the South-West, South-South and North-Central geopolitical zones of the country, respectively. The article is divided into six sections. The following second and third sections engage the *problématique* of the study and provide a theoretical explanatory framework of the study. The fourth section discusses the method of the study, while the fifth section reports and discusses the results of the work. The last section concludes the article and draws out the policy implications of the study.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Nigeria currently ranks as the third most terrorised country out of a total of 135 countries, coming behind only Afghanistan and Iraq – who are first and second respectively (Institute for Economics and Peace 2020) . This comes after a mere twelve years (2008–2020) when the country was ranked 16th by the same body (Institute for Economics and Peace 2008). Interestingly, the bulk of these attacks wore the signature of domestic terrorism and involved the youth as critical actors. Onuoha (2014:13–14) argues that non-state actors who are bent on undermining the country's internal security environment, recruit and use young men and women as foot soldiers because of their hostile social, economic and political realities and vulnerabilities. Young people's vulnerability is further heightened by content found on the internet which in recent years has become a hub for exposing them to radical ideas. Terrorist groups rely on mass communication, and due to the autonomy of the internet and its relative anonymity, it is easy for terrorist groups to engage mass audiences (Yörükoğlu 1993). Many young people are also in a search for meaning, which may leave them open to making big changes in their lives, including potentially sacrificing themselves for a cause.

Nigeria has a young population with more children and youth than adults (National Population Commission 2006). While this could have easily become an opportunity for economic development, successive governments have not been able to harness and unleash the potential of the country's youth. According to available statistics, youth unemployment stood at 42% in 2016 (National Bureau of Statistics 2018). Over 10 million children of school age are out of school with no knowledge and skills (UNICEF 2018). Of the 188 countries that were considered for the 2016 Human Development Index, Nigeria was ranked a distant 152 globally; it was ranked 22 out of 53 countries in Africa, behind Libya (5th), South Africa (9th), and Ghana (15th). The Human Development Index is a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education, and standards of living for countries worldwide. It is a standard means of measuring well-being. On the specific issue of poverty, the country was ranked the third poorest in the world in 2014 by the World Bank, coming only after India and China as the first and second poorest nations on earth (Omoh Vanguard April 11 2014 ) During the same period, a total of 112 47 million Nigerians (about 70%) were reported to be living with income below $1.00 per day, suggesting that

they could barely afford the minimal standards of food, clothing, health care and shelter (National Bureau of Statistics 2014). This gloomy outlook of the economy, speaks directly to the precarious realities of the Nigerian youth who, expectedly, are among the worst affected.

It was perhaps in this light that Yoroms (2007:3–15), regards the [Nigerian] state as an agent provocateur because it provokes frustration, discontent and disenchantment for the gullible majority, who are readily waiting to be recruited and trained to fight the 'enemy state'. The failure of the state provides opportunities for the emergence of parallel alternative groups – ethnic self-help unions, non-governmental organisations, religious movements, black market networks, secret cults, and the like, to whom citizens turn for survival, refuge, reproduction and empowerment. Jegede et al (2015:3) observe that many of these parallel social, cultural, economic and political groups, including faith-based organisations, are involved in good work within their communities, filling the gaps created by the state's retreat or inability to perform its essential social functions to her citizens. But some sinister groups among them capitalise on any ethnic, religious or tribal conflict to fuel group grievances.

This article examines the influence of this crisis of legitimation on the disposition of the youth in the country towards violent extremism and terrorism. It sets out to describe the nature and extent of the legitimation crisis of the Nigerian state, the effect of this crisis on the perceptions of the Nigerian youth about extremism/terrorism, and the overall impact of all these on the disposition of the youth to terrorism in Nigeria. It arose against the backdrop of the persisting wave of disenchantment and violence in parts of the country and the seeming crisis of legitimacy of the Nigerian state. The study interrogates the situation in the three states of Lagos, Delta and Plateau in the South-West, South-South and North-Central geopolitical zones of the country respectively.

## 3. Theoretical Explanation of Youth Disposition towards Violent Extremism in Nigeria

This study adopted an eclectic theoretical approach. First, it relied on the social contract theory of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau, among others (Laskar 2013). The theory contends that the state is a conscious creation of a people who willingly surrender part of

their sovereign rights to a government or other authority that would serve their collective interests and guarantee their liberty. This agreement imposes on the state both direct and indirect responsibility for enhancing the socio-economic well-being of the citizenry by delivering those tangible but hard-to-quantify services such as security, physical infrastructures – medical and health care, education, communications, roads, electricity; and a beneficent fiscal and institutional context within which citizens can pursue personal entrepreneurial goals and potentially prosper. The state should promote civil society, provide predictable, systematised methods of adjudicating disputes and regulate both the norms and the prevailing mores of a particular society or polity. On their part, the citizenry under the terms of the agreement, becomes obligated to reciprocate the gestures of the state by paying taxes, levies and discharging other national or communal obligations. A legitimation crisis occurs when there is a breach of the terms of this contract by the political state, as has become true of Nigeria. This often results in the withdrawal of loyalty and allegiance by the citizenry.

Within the premise of the Marxian theory of social class, it is argued that these situations would naturally engender contestations and conflicts, including violent extremism and terrorism that would ultimately bring about the overthrow of the bourgeois class and of capitalism. Marx recognised, however, that this may not come to be if the oppressed class lives in false consciousness. False consciousness is a concept derived from the Marxist theory of social class (Allahar 2004:95–123). The concept refers to the systematic misrepresentation of dominant social relations in the consciousness of subordinate classes. While Marx did not use the term "false consciousness," he paid extensive attention to the related concepts of ideology and commodity fetishism. Members of a subordinate class, including workers and peasants, suffer from false consciousness as their perceptions of the social relations around them systematically conceal or obscure the realities of subordination, exploitation, and domination. False consciousness entails the blindness of members of a subordinate class to their own interests. It is an instance of people being bound and blind to their own oppression. Meyerson (1991:124) notes that genuine consciousness depends on the proper assessment of one's position within the class system by members of the different members of the social class. The false consciousness of the subordinate class is compounded by religion, culture and protracted

military rule – all of which have combined to engender a culture of silence among Nigerians. This position is further strengthened by the muted group theory of social anthropologists Edwin and Shirley Ardener where they argue that language is primarily a creation of the dominant group in society and serves to maintain and perpetuate their specified worldview, which is then established as the correct and proper language for all of society's remaining members (Ardener 1975:1–27). They add that the views of minority groups are often muted because of their inability to fully and properly articulate themselves or designate their unique experiences due to the difficulty of translating their individual views and opinions into what is essentially a language of the dominant group (Wood 2008, as cited in Turner & West 2009). In other words, subordinate groups are rendered mute as the mainstream structures of communication echo the dominant groups' perceptions.

Within the prisms of the aforementioned theories, the feeling of being let down by the state would naturally provoke withdrawal of loyalty to the state, and even a possible recourse to violent extremism by young people, depending on their level of consciousness and comprehension of their realities of subordination, exploitation and domination. Young people's responses, as espoused by Ardener (1975:1–27), will also depend on their ability to fully and properly articulate themselves or designate their unique experiences., In between the extreme options of violence and total surrender to conditions of deprivation, however, are the options of democratic elections and the building of social movements as vehicles for engendering whole scale social change (including regime change). Unfortunately, the prospects of the former in Nigeria is undermined by a disconcerting level of youth apathy towards the political process. In a 2019 report, the International Centre for Investigative Reporting revealed that Nigeria had only a 34.75 per cent rate of voter turnout in the 2019 elections, the lowest rate in Africa (International Centre for Investigative Reporting, 2019). The figure is even more depressing when we understand that this low voter turnout is particularly lowest among young people. Their reasons for lack of participation are diverse, but often include, their lack of faith in the integrity of the electoral process and a general absence of (in Marxian parlance) genuine consciousness. With respect to the latter, there had been attempts by young people to leverage on the opportunities offered by the social media to build and mobilise for social movements. One of these attempts culminated in the recent nationwide

protests under the hash tag "ENDSARS" that saw to the near total burning down of the entire country in late 2020. Although the protests which were organised to bring an end to police brutality and to catalyse a holistic reform of the police was mismanaged by the organisers and subsequently hijacked by the state and street urchins, the national spread and intensity of the protests may also have spoken to a growing level of consciousness among the subordinate class. This phenomenon, however, is still being undermined by ethnic, religious and related primordial considerations.

## 4. Method of the study

This is a descriptive study and utilises the survey method to collect quantitative data from young people aged 18–35 years in three Nigerian states. The states are Lagos, Delta and Plateau in the South-West, South-South and North-Central geopolitical zones of the country respectively. Lagos was purposively (intentionally) sampled because of its strategic economic importance to the country. It is also a cultural and linguistic melting pot, representing virtually all Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups. Delta and Plateau states were also purposively sampled because of their histories of conflict and violence. The three states also provided a semblance of geographical balance, cutting across South West, South-South and North-Central or half of Nigeria's six geo-political zones. A total of 2106 respondents were sampled through the multi- stage sampling technique across Lagos, Delta and Plateau states of Nigeria, with funding support from the Central Research Committee of the University of Lagos, Nigeria.

# 5. Results

## Table 1: Socio Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| | | Total | Per cent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 18–22 | 681 | 32.3 |
| | 23–27 | 595 | 28.3 |
| | 28–32 | 510 | 24.2 |
| | 33–35 | 237 | 11.3 |
| | No Response | 83 | 3.9 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100.0 |
| Sex | Male | 1330 | 63.2 |
| | Female | 776 | 36.2 |
| | Total | 2106 | 100.0 |
| Marital Status | Single | 1 597 | 75.8 |
| | Married | 476 | 22.6 |
| | Separated | 9 | 0.4 |
| | Divorced | 7 | 0.3 |
| | Widowed | 8 | 0.4 |
| | No Response | 9 | 0.4 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100.0 |
| Religion | Christianity | 1 634 | 77.6 |
| | Islam | 429 | 20.4 |
| | Traditional | 17 | 0.8 |
| | Others | 5 | 0.2 |
| | No Religion | 21 | 1.0 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100.0 |
| Level of Education | No Formal Education | 26 | 1.2 |
| | Less than Primary Education | 26 | 1.2 |
| | Primary School Certificate | 170 | 8.1 |
| | Secondary School education | 940 | 44 |
| | Post-Secondary School education | 640 | 6 |
| | Post Graduate education | 258 | 12.3 |
| | Quranic school | 9 | 0.4 |
| | No Response | 37 | 1.8 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100.0 |
| Employment Status | Employed | 950 | 45.1 |
| | Unemployed | 414 | 19.7 |
| | Student/Apprentice | 652 | 31.0 |
| | House wife | 53 | 2.5 |
| | No Response | 37 | 1.8 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100.0 |

Table 1 shows that a total of 2 106 respondents, aged between 18–35 years, were studied. The respondents were made up of 1 330 or 63% males and 776 (37%) females.

## Table 2: Respondents' Assessment of Government's Performance

|  | Option | Frequency | Per cent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Performance of Nigeria's federal /central government | High | 365 | 17.5 |
|  | Average | 658 | 31.5 |
|  | Poor | 1 063 | 51.0 |
|  | Total | 2 086 | 100.0 |
| Performance of state governments in Nigeria | High | 400 | 19.2 |
|  | Average | 742 | 35.7 |
|  | Poor | 939 | 45.1 |
|  | Total | 2 081 | 100.0 |
| Performance of Local governments in Nigeria | High | 173 | 8.4 |
|  | Average | 680 | 32.9 |
|  | Poor | 1 215 | 58.8 |
|  | Total | 2 068 | 100.0 |
| Performance of security agencies in Nigeria | High | 295 | 14.3 |
|  | Average | 607 | 29.5 |
|  | Poor | 1 154 | 56.1 |
|  | Total | 2 056 | 100.0 |

Table 2 shows respondents' assessment of the performance of the various tiers of government and related institutions in Nigeria. As seen, more than half (51%) of the respondents adjudged the performance of the federal government to be poor while another 32% rated the federal government's performance as average. Only about 18% of the respondents believed the government at the centre has performed in the high category. Similarly, over 45% of the respondents thought that governments at the state level have performed poorly; about 36% adjudged the state governments' performance to be average, while the remaining 19% thought the performance of the state governments was high. The governments at the grassroots level (local governments) received the poorest ratings with majority (59%) of the respondents adjudging their performance to be poor; 33% thought their performance was average; while 8% gave their performance a high rating. About 56% of the respondents gave poor ratings to the country's security agencies; about 30% thought their performance was only average; while only 14% thought their performance deserved a high rating.

## Table 3: Respondents' Assessment of the Government and allied Institutions

| Assessment | Response | Total | Per cent |
|---|---|---|---|
| How well respondents believe Nigeria is functioning | Very well | 374 | 18.0 |
| | Not very well | 1 705 | 82.0 |
| | Total | 2 079 | 100.0 |
| How much respondents believe the government is serving their interests or that of their parents. | Very well | 214 | 10.3 |
| | Not very well | 1 873 | 89.7 |
| | Total | 2 087 | 100.0 |
| How satisfied respondents are with the way Nigeria is being managed | Very well | 210 | 10.0 |
| | Not very well | 1 880 | 90.0 |
| | Total | 2 087 | 100.0 |
| How well respondents believe the states where they reside are functioning | Very well | 529 | 25.4 |
| | Not very well | 1 554 | 74.6 |
| | Total | 2 083 | 100.0 |
| How satisfied respondents are with the management of their states of residence | Very satisfied | 434 | 20.8 |
| | Not very satisfied | 1 653 | 79.2 |
| | Total | 2 087 | 100.0 |
| Respondents' assessment of the economic situation of Nigeria | Good | 264 | 12.6 |
| | Not good | 1 825 | 87.4 |
| | Total | 2 089 | 100.0 |

Table 3 shows a further assessment of the Nigerian government by the respondents. As is seen, over 80% of them thought that Nigeria was not working well while only 18% believed that Nigeria was working well. About 90% of them believed that the government was neither representing their interests nor those of their parents. Ninety per cent of the respondents were not satisfied with the way the country was being managed; 76% thought that their states of residence were not working well while 79% expressed dissatisfaction with the management of those states. Over 80% of the respondents considered the country's economic situation not good.

**Table 4: Respondents' opinions regarding the use of violence or terrorism by some people to achieve desired goals**

| Assessment | Response | Frequency | Per cent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Some people in Nigeria using violence, in the name of religion, to protest or to achieve their goal | Always right | 135 | 6.4 |
| | Sometimes right, sometimes wrong | 406 | 19.3 |
| | Always wrong | 1 399 | 66.4 |
| | Don't know | 135 | 6.4 |
| | No response | 31 | 1.5 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100 |
| Some people in Nigeria using violence, in the name of resource control, to protest or to achieve their goal | Always right | 176 | 8.4 |
| | Sometimes right, sometimes wrong | 661 | 31.4 |
| | Always wrong | 1 070 | 50.8 |
| | Don't know | 156 | 7.4 |
| | No response | 43 | 2.0 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100 |
| Some separatist groups in Nigeria advocating or using violence to protest or to achieve their goal | Always right | 132 | 6.3 |
| | Sometimes right, sometimes wrong | 481 | 22.8 |
| | Always wrong | 1 227 | 58.3 |
| | Don't know | 205 | 9.7 |
| | No response | 61 | 2.9 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100 |
| Some political campaigners in Nigeria writing and making hate speeches that encourage violence towards different ethnic groups | Always right | 127 | 6.0 |
| | Sometimes right, sometimes wrong | 343 | 16.3 |
| | Always wrong | 1 413 | 67.1 |
| | Don't know | 191 | 9.1 |
| | No response | 32 | 1.5 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100 |
| How right or wrong is it for people to use violence to protest against things they think are very unfair or unjust in Nigeria? | Always right | 120 | 5.7 |
| | Sometimes right, sometimes wrong | 508 | 24.1 |
| | Always wrong | 1 180 | 56.0 |
| | Don't know | 223 | 10.6 |
| | No response | 75 | 3.6 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100 |

Table 4 shows respondents' opinions, acceptance or endorsement of the legitimacy of extremist/terrorist acts. As shown by the survey, most of the respondents do not consider or accept acts of extremism/terrorism as legitimate means of pursuing or trying to achieve desired goals.

## Table 5: Respondents' Personal Disposition towards the use of extremism/terrorism to achieve desired goals

| Assessment | Response | Frequency | Per cent |
|---|---|---|---|
| To what extent do you believe it is incumbent upon citizens to use violence or terrorism to oppose the government if they believe it is not performing its duties to the people? | Very much | 289 | 14.0 |
| | Not very much | 708 | 34.3 |
| | Not at all | 1 070 | 51.8 |
| | Total | 2 067 | 100 |
| Considering the situation of your ethnic group in Nigeria, would you personally consider the use of violence or terrorism to achieve your goal? | Yes | 90 | 4.3 |
| | No | 1 993 | 94.6 |
| | No response | 23 | 1.1 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100 |
| Considering the situation of Nigeria, would you personally consider the use of violence or terrorism to achieve your goal? | Yes | 106 | 5.0 |
| | No | 1 966 | 93.4 |
| | No response | 34 | 1.6 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100 |
| If opportunity presented itself now, would you employ violence or terrorism to pursue your goal? | Yes | 109 | 5.2 |
| | No | 1 714 | 81.4 |
| | No response | 249 | 11.8 |
| | Not applicable | 34 | 1.6 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100 |
| Whether or not you think that using violence or terrorism for religious or political reasons is justified, do you personally have any sympathy for people who adopt this means? | Yes, a lot | 238 | 11.3 |
| | Yes, a little | 210 | 10.0 |
| | No, not at all | 1 044 | 49.6 |
| | No, not much | 252 | 12.0 |
| | Indifferent | 303 | 14.4 |
| | No response | 59 | 2.8 |
| | Total | 2 106 | 100 |

Table 5 shows respondents' personal dispositions towards extremism/ terrorism. The table shows that most of the respondents are not positively disposed towards the use of extremist/terrorist means to pursue goals.

## 6. Test of Hypothesis

Data were subjected to the chi square statistical test to establish the relationship between young people's belief that it is incumbent upon citizens to use violence to oppose an underperforming government and their actual willingness to personally adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals. Young people's belief that it is incumbent upon citizens to use violence to oppose an underperforming government is the independent variable while their actual willingness to personally adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals is the dependent variable. The results are presented in table 6 below.

$H_0$: There is no relationship between young people's belief that it is incumbent on citizens to use of violence to oppose underperforming government and their willingness to adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals?

$H_1$: There is a relationship between young people's belief that it is incumbent on citizens to use violence to oppose underperforming government and their willingness to adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals?

**Table 6: Relationship between young people's belief that it is incumbent upon citizens to use violence to oppose under-performing government and their willingness to adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals**

| Young people's belief that it is incumbent upon citizens to use violence to oppose an underperforming government | Young people's willingness to personally adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No | Total | $\chi^2$ | P. value | Df |
| | Very much | 49 (17.1) | 238 (82.9) | 287 (100) | | | |
| | Not very much | 43 (6.1) | 658 (93.9) | 701 (100) | 93.604 | .000 | 2 |
| | Not at all | 24 (2.3) | 1 041 (97.7) | 1 065 (100) | | | |

With a calculated value (χ2) of 93.604 and a 'p' value of 0.000, much below 0.05 level of significance, table 6 above reveals a clear association between young people's belief that it is incumbent on citizens to use violence to oppose underperforming government and their willingness to personally adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals. That is, the more young people believe that citizens have the right to remove underperforming governments through violence, the higher the likelihood that they would subscribe to personally taking to violence or acts of terrorism to achieve their goals.

## 7. Discussion

As are evident from tables 2 and 3 above, there exists an overwhelming feeling of disenchantment among respondents over the evident inability of the various tiers of government in the three of the states that were covered by this study, to fulfil the terms of the social contract by way of promoting or enhancing the quality of life of the citizenry through improved security and the provision of the good things of life. Kukah (2012:36) captures the failure of the Nigerian state in this regard thus:

> *[…] after over 50 years [of independence], we are unable to generate and distribute electricity, supply water to our people, reverse the ugly and avoidably high infant mortality, set up and run an effective educational system, agree on rules of engagement of getting into power, reverse the circle of violence that attends our elections, contain corruption, instill national discipline and create a more humane and caring society.*

It is also this failure of the Nigerian state vis-à-vis the delivery of the terms of the social contract that explains the countries poor global development indices. For instance, the country was ranked a distant 152 out of 188 countries in the 2016 Human Development Index (UNDP 2016). In Africa, it stands as the 22nd out of 53 countries.

Interestingly, the study found that despite the foregoing, most of the respondents would not personally advocate the use violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals nor are they personally disposed towards the use of extremist/ terrorist means to pursue goals (see tables 4 and 5).

However, a chi square statistical test as seen on Table 6 suggested that a clear association does exist between young people's belief that it is

incumbent on citizens to use violence to oppose underperforming governments and their willingness to personally adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals. In other words, young people's likely recourse to extremism or terrorism to achieve desired goals can be influenced or predicted by the extent of their belief that citizens reserve the right to violently remove underperforming governments. Extremism and terrorism will most likely fester where belief in the use of violence to overthrow incumbent regimes is high.

The result of this study finds robust support in literature. As Ninalowo (2010) argues, the failure of the government or the political state to fulfil its part of the social contract potentially engenders a legitimation crisis, marked usually by loss of legitimacy or loss of authority by the state or the ruling class to command the loyalty and allegiance of the citizens. Rotberg (2002:86) argues further that once the state's capacity to secure itself or to perform in an expected manner recedes, there is every reason to expect disloyalty to the state on the part of the disenchanted and aggrieved citizens. This perhaps explains the palpable feeling of disenchantment and protestations across the country. It may also be the reason for the clear association between young people's belief that it is incumbent on citizens to use violence to oppose underperforming governments and the willingness to adopt violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals.

The seeming reluctance of the young people who took part in this study to personally accede to the adoption of acts of extremism/terrorism as legitimate means of pursuing desired goals is also not entirely surprising. First, terrorism is a criminal act in Nigeria and this may have hindered the open admission by respondents of a willingness to use extreme violence to pursue personal goals. Furthermore, from the Marxian thesis of false class consciousness earlier alluded to, it may just be that as typical of marginalised groups – many Nigerians suffer from false consciousness. Thus, their perceptions of the social relations around them systematically conceal or obscure the realities of their subordination, exploitation, and domination. Meyerson (1991:124) had observed that false consciousness entails the blindness of members of a subordinate class to their own interests. For most of Nigeria's marginalised groups, false consciousness is heightened by religion, culture and protracted years of military rule, all of which have combined to engender a culture of silence. In his work on *The Nature of Mass Poverty,* John K. Galbraith had earlier argued that

culture encourages the poor and marginalised to accept their situation as God given (Mcintosh 1979). He adds that for the marginalised in most developing nations, culture allows little or no room for risks or mistakes.

The above positions find support in the muted group theory (of Edwin Ardener (1975:1–27) in which he tried to explain the muteness of women and all marginalised groups, including the poor. Because their languages are subordinate and not recognised by the dominant group, the marginalised live with a negative attitude towards their own abilities to voice opinions. They remain mute and mostly choose to adapt to the situation. The negative disposition of the respondents in this study, most of whom are marginalised, towards violence and terrorism may simply be indicative of the characteristic attitude of the subordinate class to adapt to their realities, sometimes or often with only the hope that their salvation will come through some divine orchestration. Importantly, this study may just be a confirmation of the new thinking in the security sector that weak and failed states are not in themselves sufficient conditions for the incubation of terror. Indeed, as Newman (2007:463–464) argues, terrorist organisations operate in weak and failed states, but it is not necessarily the condition of weak or failed statehood which explains their presence. As a matter of fact, it is not necessarily the weakest states which do host terrorist groups, as some more relatively stable and prosperous states including those in the Middle East have been seen to do. As is seen here, recourse to terrorism may depend on some other variables.

## 8. Conclusion

The key conclusion from this study is the fact that young people are palpably unhappy with the poor performance of the three tiers of government in Nigeria. They may not personally endorse the use of violence or terrorism to achieve desired goals for some of the reasons discussed above. However, the chi square test establishing a clear association between belief in the right of citizens to violently remove underperforming governments and young people's willingness to adopt extreme violence or terrorism to oppose such governments is noteworthy. This is because even though the relationship between state failure, weak states, and terrorism is inconclusive, there is no lack of literature indicating that situations of weak or failed statehood – in conjunction with other factors – may form an enabling environment within which

terrorist groups can operate. Indeed, studies suggest that the existence of other vulnerabilities such as horizontal inequalities and intergroup conflict, as are common in Nigeria, may lay the foundation for broader conflict which would likely employ terrorism as a tactic (Newman 2007). The popularity and spread of the ENDSARS protests and the crystallising orgy of violence across the country may as well be clear pointers to this.

## 9. Recommendations

Against the backdrop of the clear disenchantment of the young people who took part in this study with the Nigerian state, this article makes the following recommendations.

- Government at all levels must double efforts at fulfilling their constitutional responsibilities towards their citizens, especially the young people, many of whom feel neglected and abandoned.
- Citizens, on their part, must wake up to the necessity of constantly keeping their governments at all levels, on their toes. Until now, most citizens have been passive on issues of governance. This has only enabled the government to run roughshod over the people, and to act as if the people do not matter.
- A new relationship between the government and the people must be cultivated, whereby the people pay their taxes and other supports as required, and at the same time, monitor the government to ensure that the government is doing what is required of it by the people.
- Importantly, further studies should be undertaken by researchers on the influence of Nigeria's multicultural character on young people's willingness to personally adopt terrorism as a tactic to change the status-quo.

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# The nexus between *shimglina* as ADR and the formal criminal justice system: The case of the Amhara regional state, Ethiopia

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## Abstract:

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms have been the common practice to resolve various conflicts in general and blood feuds in particular in the Amhara national regional state. As such, the central objective of this study is to assess the interface between ADR and the formal criminal justice system when addressing blood feuds. To achieve this, an ethnographic research approach was used. As the finding reveals, *shimglina* as the common indigenous resolution mechanism of blood feuds has been widely used. In this reconciliation process, we identified diagnosis, initiation, forgiveness and the oath as essential phases. Concerning the previous interfaces between *shimglina* and the formal adjudication system, the reconciliation decisions made by *shimglina* had been accepted and taken for granted by the formal adjudications.

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But now this trend has been changed due to interference by formal adjudication on the process and implementation of ADR decision-making.

**Keywords**: ADR, Formal adjudication, *shimglina*, Reconciliation, Nexus

## 1. Introduction

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms are in general understood by many as the desired system of solving disputes and arranging social relations. The process of legitimating alternative conventions as law differs from the way the state's rule of law is legitimised. State law is legitimised via state power and its political authority. Confucius differentiated the two:

> If one leads by means of decrees, and makes order by means of penalties, the people become evasive and have no conscience. If one leads through strength of being and makes order by means of customs, the people achieve a conscience. Consequently, when viewed as an anthropologist might, state law can and must be legitimated by custom, but customary law need not and perhaps cannot be legitimated by the state (Beru and Junker 2018:45).

As the quotation indicates, there is a wider and actually more essential acknowledgement of ADR as custom and as the foundation stone of law. In attempting to resolve a conflict, one might consider this wider aspect and ask, 'what would be the sources of principles, rules, or even a sense of right and wrong that are used in resolving a conflict' (Beru and Junker 2018: 46). Nowadays, we apprehend custom as the 'other,' and as complementary to national law, however, anthropologists of law inform us that all law originates in custom. Therefore, one must emphasise that a society's custom is a foundation or base for the formal law. In this sense, customary law reflects society's sense of the rules of organised living and its features are more socially widespread than the law of states. Customary law relies upon conserving established values of a society and are known through social means, rather than through technical legal means (Ibid).

Individuals in a society acknowledge the importance of behaving in accordance with others' expectations, given that others also behave as he or she expects. It is with this logic that customary law is recognised, and described as the 'language of interaction'. Customary law requires less

force than the formal law to maintain social order since it has been developed at grass root levels through mutual recognition and acceptance (Ayalew 2012:18). In another vein, customary law, not formal law, would endure if the 'state could not function', as the state provides the necessary enforcement of the formal laws

Since 1991 ADR mechanisms in the rural part of Ethiopia have been broadly reinvigorated. ADR is a common practice that has been used to resolve disagreements amicably. With no or little adjudicative nature, ADR is a common phenomenon in Ethiopian societies. *Shimglina* as alternative conflict resolution mechanism is undertaken by a group of elders (*shimagile*) (Bamlak, 2013). However, in the growing urban areas, the formal laws and institutions are more pertinent and are applied rather than the alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms. As a result, it is unrealistic to resolve serious cases, mainly criminal, matters through customary law in the urban areas (Wourji 2012: 281).

Compared to the formal criminal justice system, ADR mechanisms take less time to deal with an issue. This time-saving aspect is not only valuable in cases of blood feuds, but also in resolving disagreements connected with rural cultivated land. Such disagreements often occur in the highland part of the Amhara region. ADR mechanisms are a well-structured social arrangement which is essential for conflict resolution, and for enhancement of social interactions. The approaches, courses and codes of practice are profoundly entrenched in the customs and traditions of the people (Haftom, 2011; Bamlak, 2013).

In the Ethiopian context, most of the literature dealing with ADR contains little or no reference to its use in cases of criminal justice. This situation has occurred for two reasons. First, ADR is generally recognised as a technique of making peace between parties without resorting to formal court-based judgment. Second, communities tend to view a case of an aberrant criminal as mainly an issue between the delinquent and the government (Jetu, 2011). The Ethiopian criminal justice system views crime primarily as an offense against the state and a violation of its criminal laws. Hence, it excludes 'the community from participation; and if the community is said to be participating in the process, it is only in the form of providing information about the commission of the crime and appearing as a witness in the criminal proceedings' (Endale 2013:iii). On the contrary, the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms of

Ethiopia are serving a significant role in resolving conflict and preserving harmony and stability in society, even if they are not acknowledged by formal law. The indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are led by elders who can participate in settling disputes using different rituals to restore and maintain the previous peaceful relationship (Ibid).

On the other hand, in spite of the fact that 'indigenous knowledge on customary justice practice is an enormous advantage to implement the ideals of restorative justice in the Ethiopian criminal justice system, restorative justice has not yet taken root in the criminal justice system of Ethiopia' (Endalew, 2013:iii). The idea of restorative justice is virtually absent in the present Ethiopian criminal justice system. It is also evident that the Ethiopian indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms appear to fit in rather well with the standards and doctrines of restorative justice; nevertheless they are not lawfully acknowledged and structurally addressed. Recently an agreement has been reached which recognises the significance of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms as a foundation from which to apply restorative justice to the Ethiopian criminal justice system (Gemechu, 2011; Endalew, 2013).

The attributes of dispute resolution institutions are, 'easy to get; use the native language; and naturally, their dealings are simple and do not necessitate the amenities of a lawyer. Their sanctions emphasise reconciliation, compensation, rehabilitation and restoration (Wourji 2012:273)'. The indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms involve all groups and afford a frank opinion to all: sufferers, criminals, and the community concerned. Their methods assist to avert the intensification of conflicts that summon state involvement. Furthermore, they are commonly less costly, and prompt in resolution. These attributes recommend them as desirable to the formal system, which is strained by 'delay, prison, and court overcrowding, among others' (Sullivan, 2012; Wourji, 2012).

When one sufficiently analyses the two systems, it becomes clear that the one's strong suits are the other's weaknesses. Consequently, still, the formal system is acclaimed for its conviction, forcible sanctions, looking after of human rights standards, among others. But it is as soundly criticised for being distant to the individual user, expensive, blemished by deferment, etc. Furthermore, it avails to note that the two schemes vary in their methods of finally solving a disagreement. Whereas the

indigenous conflict resolution mechanism endeavours principally to settle the disagreeing parties; the formal system considers this as an alternative but not a final resolution on its own. The indigenous system depends on attaining 'a win-win end and the latter focuses on a zero-sum game wherein the winner takes all' (Wourji, 2012:274). But this does not mean that they are completely different, for they share many common features. Furthermore, 'the differences are a question of degree rather than substance' (Wourji, 2012:274; Beru and Junker, 2018). Thus, the use of the two systems as alternatives or in collaboration is essential for overcoming the shortcomings of each approach.

*Shimglina*, which plainly means elderliness, symbolises dispute solution by elderly persons. It is the utmost entrenched ADR mechanism than the rest in Ethiopia. Amazingly most Ethiopian nationalities have dispute resolution mechanisms which have attributes, such as names, composition and functions, which are similar to *shimglina.* They relate to *shimglina* in their own languages and contexts. *Shimglina* literally means 'elderly', but it does not only indicate age; it also implies the wisdom and social status of a person as valued by the community (Fekadu 2009).

Another essential advantage among most of these *shimglina* as reconciliation mechanisms is their adaptability. The mechanism is able to contribute what in modern terms would be identified as arbitration, conciliation, mediation, compromise etc. This is affirmed by various well-known Ethiopian researchers. In almost all examples of *shimglina,* the elders can initiate the dispute resolution process. There is inquiry and party (social gathering) demonstration of some sort of interpretation of a morally binding decision, compromise, and there is no payment of fee for the services of the dispute resolution (Ibid).

The existing literature in Ethiopia about ADR in general and *shimglina* in particular has been used to address conflicts of various kinds. But it does not address the interface between *shimglina* and the criminal justice system in alleviating blood feuds – which are current and crucial in Amhara National Regional State. The consulted literatures fail to address the knowledge lacuna of the interface between *shimglina* and criminal justice system in addressing blood feud. To address this gap, the study tries to assess the roles and practices played by *shimglina* in resolving blood feud; the interface and dynamics between *shimglina* and formal

adjudication; the necessary attributes that the community expects from the *shimagile* (conciliators) and formal adjudication.

## 2. Methodology

This study provides an in-depth and contextual understanding of the practices that constitute knowledge about *shimglina* as an ADR mechanism used in cases of blood feud in the Amhara Region. We adopted an ethnographic approach that is predicated upon attention to the everyday, and produces an intimate knowledge of communities and groups in face to face situations (Yelemtu, 2014; Hanson, 2020). Ethnography is an important source of new knowledge, often referred to by modern anthropologists in their fieldwork. Ethnographic fieldwork enables us to know more about people, providing us with a range of information through a number of informants with different backgrounds and statuses within the communities. This situation, coupled with the extended period of involvement with the informants, gradually built our confidence to discuss cultural issues and relationships surrounding cases of blood feud and other socio-cultural issues (Eriksen, 2001; Gray, 2002). A range of qualitative methods was used, such as participant and non-participant observation, focus group discussions (FGDs), semi-structured interviews and other relevant tools.

### 2.1 The study area

The Amhara Regional State is located in north-western Ethiopia. The region has an estimated land area of about 170, 000 square kilometres. The region borders Tigray in the north, Afar in the east, Oromia in the south, Benishangul-Gumiz in the southwest and the Sudan to the west (Aynalem, 2018).

Amhara region is divided into eleven zones, and 140 *woredas* (districts). There are about 3 429 *kebeles* or neighbourhoods, the smallest administrative units in Ethiopia. 'Decision-making power has recently been decentralised to *woreda* and thus *woredas* are responsible for all development activities in their areas. The 11 administrative zones are: North *Gondar*, South *Gondar*, West *Gojjam*, East *Gojjam*, *Awie*, *Wag Hemra*, North *Wollo*, South *Wollo*, Oromia special Zone, North *Shewa* and Bahir Dar City Special Zone (Central Statistical Agency, 2007).

The population of the Amhara Region was estimated to be 28 million in mid-2018. The total population estimate for the Amhara Region for mid-2008 was 20 136 000 with a 50–50 numerical split between the sexes. Of these 2 408 000 (12 per cent) were urban residents. The percentage of the urban population is below the national average. A sub-regional analysis for the 105 *woreda*s shows the unevenness of population distribution in the Amhara Region, where ten *woreda*s are the most populous (CSA, 2013).

Amhara culture is in several aspects similar to the Ethiopian culture, which is regarded as heir to the ancient Semitic and Kushitic (African) patterns (Levine, 1965). The Amhara as a whole do not give much attention to aesthetic concerns. 'They are practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors'. Their interests and achievements as a nation are mainly in the spheres of the military and government. In relation to outsiders, the Amhara are identified strongly with their religion, language and racial characteristics, though not so fanatically as to preclude their toleration of other groups as part of common nationality. However, the Amhara place great stress on the region of their origin. Deeply sentimental about their home-lands, they regard those people whose families have long dwelt in the same area almost as kinsmen vis-à-vis Amhara from other regions (Levine, 1965).

## 2.2 Data sources and sampling technique

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for this research. We conducted sixteen in-depth and key informant interviews. Elders, community leaders, government officials, and families of prisoners who were presumed to have a better understanding of the issue of *shimglina* and blood feud were interviewed. With the consent of the participants, all interviews were tape recorded. Each interview lasted between one and a half and two hours. Besides, twelve focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with eight to twelve participants for each discussion. Participants for discussion were selected purposefully by taking into consideration variables such as social responsibilities, gender, and age. As a secondary source of data we also used the online and print research journals and policy documents closely associated with blood feud.

In the course of applying such qualitative methods, we used non-probability sampling in which we have focused on targeted sampling in particular. Generally, we employed snowball sampling and purposive sampling techniques to identify the knowledgeable and appropriate informants in the study areas. These strategies provided us with the flexibility to meet people (of all age groups and gender) with a range of experiential knowledge and to explore their views and interests.

## 2.3 Data collection and analysis

Though there are no clear-cut distinctions of different phases of fieldwork, the steps of getting to know farmers and familiarising ourselves with the different sets of local lifestyles in houses, fields and social events represent the first phase of the fieldwork (Eriksen 2001). Hence, we started to participate in a range of socio-cultural activities and events which helped us to understand how people lead their lives, how they think, speak and act, and how they describe and explain their worldviews and motivations. In the course of our entire ethnographic fieldwork, we had a number of opportunities to participate in activities like cultural festivals, weddings, *shimglina* processes and other social gatherings. This, in turn, provided us with an opportunity to bridge the gap between community members and ourselves as researchers. This approach helped us to create opportunities for discussion with the members of the community individually and in groups. This, in turn, enabled us to obtain first-hand accounts of the community's understandings of *shimglina* and its role in resolving blood feud.

Informed by observations of participants and informal conversations, we developed a list of guiding questions for semi-structured interviews. We carried out such interviews with elders, young farmers, women, government officials and families of prisoners. The interview guide was designed with open-ended questions so that we had space for flexibility to pose further questions based on the conversations. We had some listed questions ready for cases where the guiding questions were already answered during a discussion. The guiding questions were also continuously amended according to themes that emerged from interviews or observations. This allowed us to refine our understanding of the ideologies and beliefs expressed, and to realise the importance and significance of these ideologies and beliefs from the participants' own perspectives and feelings.

Most of the interviews were undertaken over an extended period of time and in situations where taking notes was not sufficient. With the consent of the informants we used tape recording. The recorded interviews were then transcribed, translated and organised for further analysis (Yelemtu, 2014). Following such qualitative approaches and semi-structured interviews, we conducted FGDs (each group consisting of 8–12 members) with elders, farmers, councils of elders, judges and prisoners. The aim of each FGD was to seek further information and to enable triangulation with the semi-structured interviews. The focus was on the views of discussants about the roles of *shimglina* in resolving blood feud.

With regard to data analysis, partial analysis of data started even when the process of data collection was under way. During the fieldwork, we summarised our annotated fieldwork diary to describe and record activities. We made a first-hand analysis on a daily basis and systematically analysed the data to identify key themes and issues. In other words, we reorganised, semi-analysed, and summarised the material in order to identify the initial patterns of data (Yelemtu, 2014; Hansen, 2020). We also engaged in transcribing unfinished data, categorising and coding to understand the general form of the entire body of data. We then employed indexing, according to the predefined codes and sub-codes. Audio records were also transcribed, themed and coded to enrich other qualitative data collected through interviews and field notes. The complete set of reorganised and coded field notes, as well as summarised reports were re-read and the necessary sections were highlighted according to the emerging themes. The interpreted and summarised field notes were typed and analysed in the form of a report so that it was manageable for the final write up. During the collection and analysis of the data, we took ethical issues into consideration – before the interviews, during the time spent in the field, during the analysis of the data and while reporting these data. Thus, before the interviews, it was made sure that the informants were well informed on the purpose of the study, and on the publishing of the results. They were guaranteed that the data collected from them would be used under strict confidentiality and they would remain anonymous. However, the names and pictures of some informants and participants were directly used based on their informed consent.

## 3. The process of reconciliation and its nexus with Formal Criminal Justice

Under this section, the major issues to be addressed are: the parties who are entitled to initiate the conciliation process and their motives, the major phases and procedures of reconciliation, the reciprocal rights and obligations of the feuding parties, the role of the conciliators, the effects of conciliation upon disputing parties, and the nexus of the process with the formal criminal justice system.

### 3.1 Initiation and post-initiation phases of the conciliation

As it has been understood from the informants at all the study sites, and with regard to the situations under all the regime types, the parties who are entitled to initiate the reconciliation are: the transgressors' family or relatives, the local elders, and the local government administrators. They initiate the reconciliation with the view of averting the potential vicious cycle of blood feud. Once the process has been initiated, however, the procedures and activities have been found to be slightly different across the study sites, as summarised in the following paragraphs.

In *Dega Damot Wereda*, the process of reconciliation during the Imperial and Dergue regimes was different from the process under the EPRDF government. During the previous regimes, reconciliation between the feuding parties was accomplished by a conciliator/*shimagile*, and the reconciliation process was used as an alternative to the formal judicial system. During that time, the initiation of the reconciliation process came from the offender's family and relatives. In some cases, elders or *shimagile* were entitled to initiate the reconciliation. When the reconciliation started, both parties were expected to present their case to the conciliators. Then, the conciliators could evaluate the case and they were able to let the offender's family give a certain amount of blood money (Yedem Kassa[1]) to the victim's family. Once the two parties were mediated by *shimagile*, the killer would not be detained by the government since the decision of elders was considered to be final.

In the EPRDF government, *shimglina* can be initiated either by elders or police officers. Elders may initiate *shimglina* during the early stages of the conflict to stop blood feud before it brings severe consequences.

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1    Restitution for blood feud.

If the killer hides in the jungle and becomes a bandit, then the elders will let the killer 'give his hands' (surrender) to the police and punished for the crime he committed. Then, the relatives from both feuding parties 'sit' for reconciliation. In another vein, *shimglina* can be initiated by police officers who are responsible for handling such cases. After the killer has been in jail for some time, the police officers ask him whether he is ready to reconcile with the victim's family or not. If he is willing to reconcile, the offender initiates the reconciliation process via the police officers and administrative officials in the prison. Then, police officers can write a letter to the *Wereda*'s administrative and security affairs bureau so publishing the killer's initiation for reconciliation. The first person preferred to represent the prisoner in the reconciliation is his son or daughter. If he does not have a child, his father or mother can represent him. In general, the prisoner can be represented by his/her offspring, parents, spouse, siblings, grandparents, or uncle/aunt accordingly.

Then, the *Wereda*'s security and administrative affair bureau is required to send a letter to members of *Dem Adraki* to reconcile the feuding parties. The members of *Dem Adraki* [2] together with government officials discuss how to resolve the conflict. Then, they meet representatives of each feuding parties separately. If the victim's families are open to reconciliation, members of the *Dem Adraki* fix the date and place where the reconciliation is made. At the date of reconciliation, both parties present their case to members of the *Dem Adraki*. After they hear the case, from each in turn, the *Dem Adraki* committee declares its decision and the transgressor's family has the responsibility to pay blood money to the victim's family. The amount of compensation is usually initiated by the victim's family, which may be open to negotiation.

After the reconciliation is made, both parties sign an agreement prepared by the *Dem Adraki* committee. The Committee is expected to report this agreement to the *Wereda*'s Administrative and Security Affairs Bureau. Then, the Bureau sends this report to the prison administration where the killer is detained. The prison administration, in coordination with concerned judicial institutions, evaluates the report. If they believe that the reconciliation was negotiated or concluded in a proper manner and will not lead to another homicide, they release the prisoner. But sometimes, the victim's family may not agree to *shimglina* and the offender's family may not agree to pay the blood money. In this case, the transgressor remains in prison for the specified period.

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2    *Shimglina* which is coined by the current government.

Concerning the experience of study sites, once *shimglina* has been initiated, the process continues through discussion to assess the situation by the committee before both parties agree to meet face to face and discuss their issues. After a thorough and lengthy discussion has been carried out among committee members, that help the conciliators settle the blood feud, both parties (the family of the victim and representatives of the transgressor) meet face to face to discuss reconciliation. They present their cases turn by turn to the conciliators. Finally, after hearing the cases of feuding parties, the conciliators pass their decision and the transgressor's family is duty-bound to pay blood money (*Yedem Kassa*). As the focus group discussants and key informant affirmed, the amount of blood money varies from community to community and across time within the community. In some communities, there is a fixed amount of blood money payment even if it also varies across time. In other communities, the blood payment is determined through negotiation between the two belligerent parties with the help of the conciliators. Even if there is slight variation in the process of *shimglina*, the major phases of *shimglina* across the study sites can be categorised into four; diagnostics, initiation, forgiveness and oath phases.

### 3.1.1 Diagnostics phase

In this phase, the *shimagile* try to ascertain the real causes of killing and the intention of each party. The conciliators explore or evaluate whether the murder was intentional or accidental. There is a long and thorough diagnosis and scrutiny of cases, which include independent discussion with the two belligerent parties. And then, an agreement can be arrived at to ensure reconciliation.

### 3.1.2 Initiation phase

In this phase, the ceremonial and phenomenal activities are performed by all parties involved (the victim's family, the transgressor's family, and conciliators). Accordingly, a fire holding pot is presented and the incense is added to it. Then, the leader of the reconciliation (*Sheik Bedru*) gives a kind of religious and ceremonial initiation. The initiation could take place by all parties by moving around the pot. In the meantime, a kind of religious and cultural prayer has to be performed by the *Sheik*.

### 3.1.3 Forgiveness phase

After the initiation phase is over, the forgiveness phase follows. In this phase, the transgressor's family and relatives carry a stone on their shoulder and then approach the victim's family to ask forgiveness. In response to this offer, the victim's family picks up the stone from their rivals' family shoulder and throws it away, which indicates their acceptance of forgiveness.

### 3.1.4 Oath phase

After the forgiveness phase has been completed, the oath phase follows. The forgiveness phase helps to forget what had been done in the past and to create harmony within the two groups/families. And the oath phase and practice are performed to avoid any future dispute or conflict based on the past grievance. To perform an oath, there are steps to be followed. A traditional cloth can be stretched on the ground and then a prepared '*fendisha*'[3] is sprayed on the traditional cloth. Another ingredient called '*misir*' (lentils) is also mixed into the *fendisha*. Then, the transgressor's family picks up the mixed item with their hands. First, they have to put it in their mouth and then feed the victim's family. In the local language (Amharic) they called it '*mekoretatem*'[4]. This is a kind of oath performed between the two belligerent parties to prevent further escalation or occurrence of feuds. *Sheik Bedru* and other members of the reconciliation committee affirmed that if someone takes an oath in such a way and breaks it, there has to be a punishment from the supernatural power. Both the Christian and Muslim communities accept this established norm which helps to sustain the reconciliation.

## 4. The legality and legitimacy of reconciliation

The legality of reconciliation implies a compatibility of ADR mechanisms with the existing formal criminal justice system, whereas the legitimacy of reconciliation connotes the acceptance of the indigenous reconciliation mechanisms by the society. The state of legality and legitimacy of reconciliation as an indigenous blood feud resolution mechanism is discussed in the following paragraphs.

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3    A kind of cereal commonly consumed in a coffee drinking ceremony.

4    *Mekoretatem* literally means shared eating.

During the imperial government, once the two parties were reconciled by the conciliators, then, '…the transgressor freed from detention by the government. As such, the decision of conciliators was considered to be final. However, during the *Dergue* regime, conciliators were not totally recognised by the government so that it was legally and practically forbidden by the socialist military administration (the *Dergue* regime). During the current EPRDF government, though the two feuding parties may be reconciled by conciliators, the transgressor cannot avoid criminal liability and he ultimately faces criminal punishment. Therefore, the legality of reconciliation in the study sites varied across regimes.

Concerning the legitimacy of reconciliation, it also varied across regimes. As such, during the imperial period, its legitimacy had been incommensurable. This was basically because of the values, norms and customs of the society and the government had recognised and validated the indigenous mechanisms. During the *Dergue* regime, though the reconciliation had not been supported by the public policy makings, the indigenous systems had a broad popular legitimacy. Accordingly, it had been impliedly and informally functional. However, in the current EPRDF administration, though the indigenous blood feud resolution mechanism has partial constitutional recognition, the wider younger and educated sections of the society do not accept its legitimacy. This is basically because of the influences of modern education, religious extremism, and formal litigation systems of the government, and the penetration of alien cultural values as a result of globalisation.

Furthermore, procedural irregularities and complexities of the formal criminal justice system and the existing security, including the administrative structures of the study sites, have become existential challenges to the effective and efficient intervention of conciliators to terminate the vicious circle of blood feud. The absence of assistance of any kind and other capacity building training from the government and other concerned bodies have also been additional challenges to the full functioning of indigenous institutions of conciliation. Our finding reveals that lack of financial and administrative support from the government has been curtailing the effective implementation of *shimgilina*. In this context, Mr X, member of *Dem Adraki*, reiterated:

> *Dem Adraki* committee contributes a lot to minimise feuds. We work hard to reconcile the feuding parties but nothing is given to us. We did not get any training, per diem [payments], or any kind of incentive from

the government. Peace and security of the *Woreda* is in the hands of elders. Therefore, the government should treat elders in a better way. If not, I am afraid that we are losing this culture and elders will stop serving for free.[5]

Similarly, Mr Y, a member of *Dem Adraki* elders, also stated:

The only thing I get from the government is one certificate. This certificate is nothing for me. We should get other incentives from the government. The trend should be changed for the future generation of *Dem Adraki* elders. They should get clothes, per diem [payments] or other rewards. The reconciliation process takes many days (more than two weeks). This has a negative impact on the livelihoods of *Dem Adraki* elders. Therefore, it is difficult for elders to lead their life unless they get some kind of reward from the government.[6]

In line with this, the head of the security and administrative affairs bureau of the Wereda reveals that "the absence of clear and detailed criminal policy to encourage and assist customary and religious institutions to mitigate blood feud is the major challenge to the effective implementation of indigenous blood feud reconciliation mechanisms. Furthermore, the lack of clearly defined and institutionalised capacity building and financing system from the government and the absence of an enabling working environment (offices, basic office equipment and secretary) to indigenous institutions are the major existing challenges.

The above challenges in turn cause disagreements within the family of the conciliators who are engaged in the reconciliation process. Mr X2, a member of *Dem Adraki,* affirmed this:

My livelihood depends on agriculture. During the harvesting time, a letter from the *Wereda's* Administrative and Security affairs Bureau was sent to me. The letter indicated that I was elected to reconcile a blood feud in *Dekul Kana kebele*. I spent two weeks to reconcile the feuding parties. When I go back home, the first thing my wife asked me is that 'Where is the money you get for your work?' I didn't answer because she knew that I work for free. She was annoyed and said: 'If you do not harvest this time, we will not have anything to eat in the next year.'[7]

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5    Non-attributable comment, *Dega Damot Wereda, Dekul Kana Kebele*, July 2017.

6    Non-attributable comment, *Dega Damot Wereda, Feres Bet Michael Kebele*, July 2017.

7    Non-attributable comment, *Dega Damot Wereda, Dekul Kana Kebele*. July 2017.

The above case clearly shows that lack of support from the government affects the conciliators negatively. The other challenge facing conciliators in the study sites is related to the formal judicial system. The data collected from key informants show that conciliators go through many steps to resolve blood feud. With many ups and downs, they negotiate with the feuding parties. However, the formal judicial system interferes after the elders settle the blood feuds. This discourages conciliators; and some of them decide to stop participating in any kind of reconciliation. Besides, instead of resorting to reconciliation, the police exaggerate the seriousness of minor and accidental disputes and subject people to physical and verbal abuse and even assault. Thus, the police discourage conciliators' desire to engage in reconciliation of blood feuds. Ayalew (2012) further illustrates that indigenous non-state laws and courts have jurisdiction only with respect to family and personal matters. Criminal jurisdictions are unequivocally denied to customary and religious laws and courts.

In our introduction, there had been some discussion of the advantages and limitations of both the legal judiciary and ADR in Ethiopia. These have also been addressed by previous researchers. The attributes of dispute resolution institutions are as follows: 'easily available; use the native language; and naturally, their dealings are simple and do not necessitate the amenities of a lawyer. Their sanctions accentuate reconciliation, compensation, rehabilitation and restoration'. The indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms need the involvement of all groups and should afford a frank opinion to all: sufferers, criminals, and people in general. Their methods assist to avert the intensification of conflicts that requires state involvement. Furthermore, they are commonly less costly, and prompt in resolution. These attributes brand them desirable to the formal system, which is stained by 'delay, prison, and court overcrowding, among others' (Sullivan, 2012; Wourji, 2012:273).

When one assesses the two systems sufficiently, the assessment indicates that one's strong suits are the other's weaknesses. Consequently, the formal system is still acclaimed for its conviction, forcible sanctions, upholding human rights standards, among others. It is criticised for being distant to the individual user, expensive and blemished by deferment. Furthermore, it avails to note that the two schemes vary in their methods to solve a disagreement. Therefore, whereas the indigenous conflict resolution mechanism endeavours principally to settle the

disagreeing parties, the formal system considers this as an alternative but not a last resolution in its own. The first one depends on attaining "a win-win end and the latter focuses on a zero-sum game wherein the winner takes all". But this does not mean that they are completely different for they share many common features as well, as a result of which "the differences are a question of degree rather than substance". But this does not mean that they are completely contradictory since they have a lot of mutual attributes. Therefore, "the differences are a question of degree rather than substance (Wourji, 2012:274). Thus, the use of the two systems as alternatives or in collaboration is essential to overcome the shortcoming of each approach.

## 5. Conclusion

The study reveals that *shimglina* has been used as an alternative to the formal criminal justice system. Its implementation is common in the rural areas where the access and effective utilisation of the criminal justice system becomes very difficult. Even if there is no existing legal framework that establishes the roles and duties of the *shimagile*, the rural people of Amhara Regional State heavily rely on them to handle blood feud. *Shimglina* as an ADR mechanism is a viable tool to minimise blood feud. But its implementation is not well organised and varies according to the norms and values of the society as well as the extent to which the communities concerned have access to the formal criminal justice system. The procedural irregularities and complexities of the current criminal justice system and the existing security as well as administrative structure of the study sites have become existential challenges to the effective and efficient intervention of conciliators to terminate the vicious circle of blood feud. Even if *shimglina* is not lawfully acknowledged and structurally addressed, there is evidence that it appears to fit well with the principles and standards of restorative justice.

Thus, the current government of Ethiopia has to take the initiative to create synergy between *shimglina* and the formal criminal justice system so as to handle the currently acute social problem of blood feuds. Before creating synergy a further practical scheme has to be investigating how the current judicial system of Ethiopia can create a partnership between the formal criminal justice system and *shimglina* depending on the strength and weakness of the two systems in addressing blood feuds.

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# Book review

# *Regional economic communities and peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons from ECOWAS and IGAD*

*Victor Adetula, Redie Bereketeab, and Cyril Obi (eds.) 2021*

*New York: Routledge, 247 pp.*
*ISBN: 978-0-367-55463-7*

*Reviewed by Darlington Tshuma* *

The book is an edited volume by three of Africa's leading scholars and analysts – Victor Adetula, Redie Bereketeab and Cyril Obi. The many contributors to the work are experts in their own right, with depths of knowledge and experience in various areas relevant to the theme of the book. The book is not only timely but a compelling piece that offers careful and incisive analyses of peace and security developments in Africa, intended to challenge our thinking on how to intervene in conflict situations. While the African Union (AU) officially recognises eight sub-regional communities, namely Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD); Common Market for Eastern and

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Southern Africa (COMESA); East African Community (EAC); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and Southern African Development Community (SADC), this book deals with ECOWAS and IGAD.

The introductory chapter by Victor Adetula, Redie Bereketeab and Cyril Obi offers an overview of conflict and peacebuilding dynamics in Africa. They note that the complexity of contemporary conflict dynamics and emerging security threats require greater cooperation and coordination among state and non-state actors. This they argue is because regional conflict systems often generate consequences that have security implications for regions beyond those in which they occur. For instance, instability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to pose security challenges to its neighbours. Similarly, growing security challenges, including pandemics, climate change, droughts, terrorism, smuggling and human trafficking, continue to negatively impact on development. The authors conclude that the transnational nature and regional consequences of conflicts have reaffirmed the need to build capacity to deal with conflicts of a transnational character.

In chapter two, Olugbemi Jaiyebo and Victor Adetula provide analyses of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) within the context of international law. They argue that although RECs were initially conceived as primary drivers of economic development and integration, over the years RECs have expanded their mandates to tackle issues of governance, peace and security. As a result, RECs now function as part of the continent-wide peace and security architecture that is managed essentially by the AU within the United Nations' mandate to promote global peace and security (pp. 20–21). This has created both opportunities and challenges for RECs as seen with peacekeeping missions in Somalia, South Sudan and Mali.

In the third chapter, Redie Bereketeab examines two approaches to the theoretical framing of peacebuilding and its implications for Africa – popular progressive versus neo-liberal peacebuilding. He makes a strong case for progressive peacebuilding as an alternative to neo-liberal

peacebuilding. Like Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013)[1], Bereketeab argues that the persistence of neo-colonialism has maintained conditions of coloniality that have made it almost impossible for peace and development to thrive. He concludes by highlighting how popular progressive peacebuilding is superior to neo-liberal peacebuilding; arguing that unlike neo-liberal peacebuilding, popular progressive peacebuilding is domestic, helping it go beyond just post-conflict reconstruction. Second, popular progressive peacebuilding makes use of domestic resources and infrastructures found in African cosmologies. Lastly, popular progressive peacebuilding does not seek short-term gains but is a long-term process spread over generations.

Chapter four, by Aderemi Ajibewa and Jubril Shittu, provides an overview of ECOWAS' peacebuilding experience, in particular its shift from a state security to a human security-centred approach. This is in line with ECOWAS' strategy of transforming ECOWAS from an 'ECOWAS of states to an ECOWAS of peoples' (pp. 55), where civil society plays a prominent role in peace processes. In chapter five, Chukwuemeka Eze enunciates the role of civil society in peace and security within ECOWAS. Eze shows how involvement of civil society organisations like the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) has been beneficial to both ECOWAS and West Africa. Through experience sharing and peer learning, civil society in the region is helping to shape transitional justice processes although engagements are sometimes fraught with challenges emanating from resource constraints and capture by political interests.

In chapter six, Amadu Sesay provides an assessment of ECOWAS and demonstrates how its formation in 1975 transformed the governance, peace and security landscape of the region. ECOWAS has facilitated political transitions and mediated very complex situations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Mali, Ivory Coast and Guinea-Bissau. Despite its relative success in peace-making, Sesay raises concern about ECOWAS' inability to drive regional development and economic integration. He argues that the majority of ECOWAS member states rank poorly on the Human Development Index, raising concern about the link between peace-making and development (pp. 87). Chapter seven, by Kehinde Olayode, builds on the previous chapter by offering incisive analyses of

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1   Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo J. 2003. *Coloniality of power in postcolonial Africa: Myths of decolonization*. Dakar, CODESRIA Book Series.

challenges faced by ECOWAS when it intervened in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In chapter eight, Oshita Oshita and Warisu Alli scrutinise Nigeria and its role in ECOWAS' peace processes. They argue that Nigeria's status as a regional hegemon makes the country a 'kingmaker' in the region. Previously, Nigeria had single-handedly funded ECOWAS peacekeeping operations in the region although this came at a cost to the Nigerian economy. Economic stagnation, domestic politics and rising youth unemployment in Nigeria cast doubt on the country's future influence in regional peace operations.

Chapters by Senai Andemariam, Nureldin Satti and Jacob Chol highlight emerging peace trends in the Horn of Africa on the back of recent developments in the region. Notable developments include the ascension to power in Ethiopia of Abiy Ahmed in 2018, the Ethiopia-Eritrea rapprochement deal in 2018, transitional processes in Sudan following the departure of long-time ruler Al-Bashir, and the recently concluded Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in South Sudan following years of disagreements over its implementation. Still, violent conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region and the 'constitutional crisis' in Somalia threaten to reverse progress achieved in recent years. The chapter by Kizito Sabala discusses the role and contributions of Kenya on matters of peace and security within IGAD. Sabala notes that Kenya has played a crucial role in influencing development of relevant norms and institutions at IGAD, such as the IGAD Security Sector Program, the 2002 Protocol on the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), and the Mediation Support Unit. In the past, Kenya has facilitated high-level negotiations to end violent conflict in the region.

Chapters by Kasaija Apuuli, Kassahun Berhanu and Mohamed Ingiriis examine Uganda and Ethiopia's engagement with IGAD. Apuuli notes that Uganda's reluctance to effectively engage in IGAD peace processes is in part driven by Museveni's ambitions to revive the East African Community (EAC) where he is likely to exert greater influence. Another source of motivation was his disappointment with IGAD's failure to intervene in Uganda when the country faced attacks from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Berhanu notes that the vacuum created by the subsiding superpower rivalry between the 'West' and 'East' spurred intense competition between IGAD member states, particularly Ethiopia and Kenya, who each pursued divergent and sometimes contradictory

aspirations that threatened to paralyse IGAD. Fancying itself as a regional hegemon, Ethiopia has sought to exert its influence on IGAD, sometimes unilaterally intervening in member states without the express authorisation of IGAD. These dynamics have led critics to believe that IGAD is incapable of reining-in Ethiopia.

In conclusion, the book is an authoritative piece that provokes us to think deeply and reflect not only on the continent's diverse and rich history but also on how this diversity and richness can be marshalled to entrench peace and stability needed to realise Agenda 2063. Achieving Agenda 2063 will undoubtedly be a multi-dimensional, multi-level and multi-stakeholder process, involving multiple processes and actors working across different levels. A common message reverberating throughout the text is that African re-birth and regeneration is an idea whose time has come; and while we may wish it away, we simply cannot avoid dealing with the consequences of our inaction. I recommend the book to a wide audience: donor countries and agencies, politicians, policymakers, academics and researchers, students, traditional and religious leaders.

While the book is thoroughly and well researched, it would be surprising if work of this magnitude left no room for further research. For this reason, researchers from regions that have not been adequately covered may be interested in pursuing their own research to understand conflict and peacebuilding dynamics which pertain to their own particular contexts, particularly in the light of the formal adoption and launch of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) in February 2019. More research will be welcome as it appears that AU member states and RECs have not sufficiently engaged with the AUTJP to guide and design transitional justice, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes and that the majority of RECs still do not have definitive policies to support and guide implementation of AUTJP at regional level despite AUTJP expressly stating that RECs play a key role in helping to address the regional and trans-boundary dimensions of violent conflict. This is an area that future researchers may wish to explore and unpack.

# Book review

# *Whose peace are we building: Leadership for peace in Africa*

*Youssef Mahmoud (with Albert Mbiatem) 2021*

*Reviewed by Andrea Prah*

As multilateral organisations working for peace adapt to complex security landscapes, exacerbated by compound threats like insurgent violence, climate change induced conflict, transnational crime and the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, the importance of strategic leadership in directing interventions becomes increasingly important. With approximately 75% of United Nations (UN) Peace Operations deployed in Africa, a key option for developing and encouraging effective leadership for peace in this context is to draw on the experiences and wisdom of long-serving peace practitioners. It is this perspective that is so generously offered by Professor Youssef Mahmoud in the book, *Whose peace are we Building: Leadership for peace in Africa.*

This publication forms part of a series on peacebuilding and leadership run by the African Leadership Centre (ALC), based at Kings College, London. The series looks to bring together a diverse group, from leaders of peace missions to UN special envoys to document their work and perspectives on peacebuilding and leadership.

The 464-page book is divided into seven chapters, introduced by a thought-provoking foreword from Nobel Peace Laureate and former President of Timor-Leste, J. Ramos-Horta. Each chapter deals with a different aspect of Professor Mahmoud's leadership path during his career at the UN, including his role at the helm of two UN peace operations in Burundi and Chad/Central African Republic. The value of this publication, therefore, lies in its ability to bring together a detailed 'insider's account' of peacebuilding which speaks to institutional challenges and practical considerations, combined with a discussion of serious theoretical problems with the current peacebuilding paradigms. It is therefore a valuable source of information to scholars, researchers, government officials, diplomats, donor communities, peace practitioners located within multilateral organisations and think tanks and, most importantly, local community members involved in peacebuilding processes.

'Peacebuilding' and 'leadership' are two topics that have been well-covered in the international relations and peace studies literature, specifically in relation to African contexts. It is therefore important to not only situate this publication within the existing body of literature, but to look at the new contributions that it makes. As Professor Mahmoud argues, 'relatively little attention has been given to the nexus between the two – leadership and peace'– and the paradigm shift needed in the nature and practice of leadership in order to bring about strong, global diplomacy for peace' (pg 36). Such a contribution is strengthened by the fact that Professor Mahmoud combines a theoretical discussion of the peacebuilding paradigm and leadership with rich and detailed anecdotal evidence, that one would be hard-pressed to find in any international relations textbook. This balance therefore makes it easy to digest some of the book's more technical information regarding the operational mandates and implementation with regards to the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT).

Another important contribution of the book is that it challenges readers to rethink the existing, more prescriptive peacebuilding paradigms which are rooted in liberalism – by focussing on locally-driven approaches to peacebuilding. In arguing this point, Professor Mahmoud explains that peacebuilding has largely failed to empower and strengthen local capacities for peace. The importance of this approach for leadership are foreshadowed earlier on in the book when he asserts that 'leadership is not what one does *to* others, but what one does *with* them' (pg 22), or later on in an apt metaphor that 'peace is like a tree, growing from the bottom up, and that it is individuals and communities that are the custodians of peace.' (pg 87). However, while this is a central argument made throughout the book, Professor Mahmoud does not make the mistake of romanticising this priority. He provides a sober reflection on the difficulties of promoting a localised and multi-stakeholder approach to peacebuilding while trying to balance good relations with the host state, which in some cases may present itself as the main peace actor. This particular discussion is fleshed out in Chapter 4, 'Leading BINUB in a Fragile Context', when Professor Mahmoud's initiatives to promote more inclusive peace processes in Burundi were not always received well by the government.

This is related to another important discussion of the book on the maintenance of cordial relations between the UN and the host nation. Through Professor Mahmoud's accounts, it was clear that attempting to understand the local needs of the population, avoiding elitist policy priorities without alienating the government, was a significant challenge. The quandary of respecting state sovereignty while promoting a sustainable peace is not unique to the UN, but also appears to hinder sub-regional, regional and continental interventions in Africa. Professor Mahmoud's experiences and lessons learned in this regard are therefore increasingly relevant and valuable in an increasingly complex peace-building space.

Inserted into the different chapters are excerpts of anonymously collected testimonies from colleagues who worked closely with Professor Mahmoud. The inclusion of these excerpts works well. It provides an objective perspective of his leadership style and offers additional context in support of Professor Mahmoud's accounts. It would however have been interesting to the reader to know how and why specific testimonies were included, assuming there is a larger sample that these were drawn from. Such methodological detail is not clear in the book.

Altogether, Professor Mahmoud has done an excellent job to share his vast experience in Burundi, Central African Republic and Chad. His work will help readers to better understand what kind of leadership is most effective for navigating the increasingly challenging peacebuilding environment now developing alongside the global COVID-19 health crisis.

It is an inspiring read which leaves room to continue the conversation on the relationship between leadership and working for peace.