LAW, PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA:
ENCAPSULATING CONFLICTS UNDER A CLIMATE OF CULTURAL PLURALISM

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ABSTRACT
The concern with law has been a central question in the history of social thought as it remains a major tool in the creation and maintenance of order, peace and security in human society. There can be no society without law just as law cannot exist outside society. Social order – a situation whereby the interactions of members of social groups become patterned, relatively stable and predictable over time, is a necessity in all societies given the fragility of the human frame. It is therefore an inescapable requirement that norms and laws prohibiting violence except under special circumstances must be contrived to safeguard social order if society is to persist with its members reasonably secured from undue threats or likelihood of death. Discussions of order, peace or security can hardly proceed without the imagination of their opposites (which are social disorder, war, and insecurity respectively), and for this reason, the treatment of one aspect will entail, at least implicitly, the examination of the other. Since the problem of producing and maintaining order is a real one for most countries in Africa and Nigeria in particular, this article will cogitate the underlying sources of the endemic conflicts which manifest within a context of cultural pluralism. A combination of socio-legal and historicist models of analysis will be engaged in this exercise.

Introduction
The conclusion is a very seductive one that most news from the African continent are generally of the sad and disheartening type. We are either talking of wars, coups and counter-coups, protracted deadly inter-group conflicts, state violence unleashed by governments on edge against own citizens, banditry and various forms of cross-border criminality, rising cases of assassination and kidnapping, ritual killings, micro-militant nationalism, or we are trembling over the theme of terror, especially with its current spread in the geography of incidence and cruel intensity. The question of poverty, disease and ignorance are very familiar ones and appears simply like news supplements from this part of the globe. There is a strong temptation to wonder if anything good could ever come out of Africa. But it is equally seriously debatable whether the situation is really as grim as depicted, whether the continent is alone in all these, whether the electronic media giants of the West are having a field-day with deliberate exaggerations and mischievous distortions to suit certain ideological and racist motives, and most critically, whether these tragic shows in Africa are not the scripts written by the capitalist mafia of Europe to ensure their continued domination and exploitation of the people since the collapse of the colonial order.

However, there is no controversy about the challenges of law and order, and peace and security in Africa. There is no illusion about the countries on the continent being historically inundated by the enervating problems of violent internal conflicts issuing mainly from the demonstrated inability and unwillingness of indigenous African leaders to properly handle the ordinary fact of cultural pluralism which is a common feature of most nations the world over. In a sense, the ubiquitous bloody inter-group conflicts prominently visible across Africa is a bitter memento of the Berlin Conference of 1884 which resulted in chunks of the continent being balkanized and the societies arbitrarily divided amongst European powers for purposes of
colonial subjugation and administration, without any recourse to pre-existing social structures, modes of political organization and ties of kinship.

Since nearly all African countries were at a certain point in time subjected to one form of European colonial experience or the other, these states are essentially colonial creations, implying that a profound understanding of the status quo ante must begin with an examination of the past. The first part of this paper will therefore be examining the architecture of the state as fabricated by the colonial powers which appears to have embedded in its foundation certain fundamental defects that ushered in a wave of coups and countercoups in nearly all the newly independent African countries from the 1960’s to the 70’s followed by wars, and different kinds of deadly internal conflicts. The impression is that these post-colonial African states seem to be originally programmed to crash.

In the second part, the concept of law will be critically reviewed both as a special attribute of the state and as an instrument of social control and repression while the third part will be concerned with the exploration of the nexus between peace and security on the one hand and the problem of socio-economic recovery and political maturity of Africa on the other hand. The fourth and final part will be considering ways of encapsulating these endemic conflicts within the context of cultural heterogeneity while at the same time drawing attention to the living conditions of the vast majority of autochthonous populations in Africa whose present state grossly falls below the normal minimum level of existence befitting the ‘human’ person in the 21st century.

The Architecture of the State in Africa

As earlier hinted, the emergence of the state in Africa and the development of the structures of power are directly connected with European colonial activities on the continent. The over-arching aim of this segment is neither to chronicle all that the colonizers did or did not do during that period which Heinz Gollwitzer (1979) rightly labeled as the ‘age of imperialism’ nor to heap the blame for the present fate of Africa on either the peculiar manner of colonial administration of the continent or on the power elites that emerged with the exit of the white-man, but to sift from the relevant aspects of that encounter certain fundamental flaws in the template of the legacies that produced almost identical results in the form of crises in nearly every African nation shortly after the grant of political autonomy.

It is a curious fact of history that irrespective of the conspiracy of archaeological, paleontological and other scientific evidence to the effect that man originated from Africa, and secondly that, Egypt (also found on the same continent) is indubitably acknowledged as the cradle of civilization, Africa is still trudging far behind other continents in the globe in all vital respects. First, it was trans-Atlantic slavery, and then its corollary-colonialism, and now neo-colonialism or what Nobel Laureate Oluwole Soyinka (2010) aptly dubbed “New Imperialisms”. In particular, how is it that the post-colonial state structures that eventually emerged in Africa display a stronger proclivity towards conflicts, insecurity, instability and regression than towards order and development?

Stripped of all abstractions and obscurantist obfuscations, the question of order and security, of stability and development in contemporary Africa stem directly from the economic and political structures planted on the continent in the course of colonization, which, irrespective of whether the policy was that of ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’ rule have produced and continued to reproduce the kinds of problems frequently encountered in these parts of the world. Since African societies have been misperceived as being without history through the racist Eurocentric lenses and the black race equally considered as being only a little better than animals in the opinion of Perham (1951:638), there was no limit to the colonial onslaught of everything Negroid. And since the colonial mission in Africa was principally inspired by the forces of metropolitan capitalism, the state structure on the continent was fashioned, first and foremost, to minister to the economic needs of Europe and the entire colonial enterprise therefore was guided solely by the logic of capitalist expansion, the maximization of profit which implies the intensification of exploitation, and alienation of the workers from the fruits of their labour.

Thus the state structure in colonial Africa was erected in a manner that would guarantee the continued operation of foreign capital at any cost and to the detriment of the continent. The first strategy to achieve total Western hegemony over colonial societies in Africa was the state monopoly and control of the economy through numerous legislations and orders intended to secure terms of trade and other allied transactions in ways that always kept native Africa parties in clearly disadvantageous positions.

In the pursuit of Western capitalist interests, moral considerations were conveniently placed as far as possible especially in confrontation with any real or imagined obstacles. In the same manner, every ‘useful’ instrument (religion, ideology, policies, formal law, force, diplomacy, deceit, etc.) was employed in colonial Africa and still being engaged for the same purposes in post-colonial era which have continued to reproduce
the kind of repercussions experienced on the continent. Earlier, it was noted that the partition of African societies for colonial purposes was arbitrarily done with the result that certain ethnically homogeneous entities became divided thereby forcefully incorporating them into different nations while there were also numerous cases where culturally diverse and thoroughly heterogeneous social groups became forcefully lumped together as constituents of one country by the cartography of colonial Europe. This separation of kith and kin and the coerced wedlock between strangers constitute the origins of the many boundary disputes for which bitter wars have been fought on the continent and also inspired a lot of inter-group conflicts within African nations.

Some examples include the Nigeria-Biafra civil war of 1967, the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the Liberian crises of 1989 which was followed about two years later by another bloody conflict in Sierra Leone and a third overlapping conflict in the same West African region that started in Guinea Bissau in 1998, the Somali civil war which started in the early 1980s, the Democratic Republic of Congo brutal civil wars raging since 1998 with earlier eruptions in the eastern parts starting in 1992, series of internal conflicts in Burundi since the 1960s and the Sudanese North-South conflict which has been on since 1956, abating briefly with the recent splitting of the country into Northern and Southern parts in 2010 only to relapse into violence. The list of the theatre of blood in Africa is certainly longer excluding the notorious Ethiopia-Eritrea historical border conflicts among many others covertly and overtly prosecuted on the continent.

Under the policy of ‘divide and rule’ which was egregiously typified in the case of Nigeria, the British colonial government deliberately sought to ensure that social groups from the predominantly Christian South and the heavily Islamic North were kept at a dangerous physical and social distance from each other despite the 1914 amalgamation of the two protectorates for administrative convenience. The cultural and religious differences between the numerous socio-linguistic groups were exaggerated and mutual suspicion sown by the colonial officials for the reason of preventing the possibility of the emergence of a united polity and also to frustrate the development of a collective resistance against the imperial rule in Nigeria and similar other British colonial territories in West Africa. Okwudiba Nnoli made these useful remarks in this connection:

... the colonialists began to separate these linguistic groups from one another, particularly in residential areas. For example, in Northern Nigeria it was the official British policy to separate the Hausa-Fulani from the Southerners. At first, southern and northern migrants to Northern cities lived together in harmony with their hosts in the native city. This embarrassed the official view that only conflict characterized contact among African tribes. Hence, the migrants were forced to set up abode in Sabongaris. Initially, both the Southern and Northern migrants lived in the Sabongaris and got along well, to the embarrassment of the colonialists. Later, the Northern migrants were separated and compelled to live in another section of the city, Tudun Wada. However, in cities like Katsina and Gwandu, where the Emirs successfully resisted this policy of “Sabongaris”, the migrants have continued to live together with their hosts. In fact, colonial confidential reports on the Emirs contained a section on their attitude to the Southerners. Those who were favourably disposed to the migrants were reported as “not to be trusted on this question” (Nnoli, 1980:3,4).

Literally, “Sabongari” means strangers quarters. This spatial isolation heightened feelings of separateness and when added to the intense competitions for the very scarce socio-economic and political resources tend to generate serious conflicts between groups. Since the colonial order was typified by pervasive scarcity, such conflicts were quite common and with the emergence of post-colonial structures with uneven spread of infrastructure and positions of power, the escalation of inter-group conflicts cannot be said to altogether unexpected. Thus, the first two elements of the colonial foundation of contemporary African crises are to be located in the manner of state territorial constitution which completely ignored every ethnographical, historical and kinship formation in the arbitrary delineation of national boundaries as well as the divisive mechanisms of colonial administration combined with inter-group competitions under a situation of extreme scarcity.

The third structural element which is also mutually associated with the first and second factors pertain to the excessive centralization of the state economy. Starting from the era of nationalist politics till date, the struggle for power among the African indigenous ruling classes has always been characterized by unbridled desperation, given that political power automatically confers on those that wield it unfettered access to state coffers. Since the local dominant classes, unlike their counterparts in Europe, do not possess any solid economic base, political power is therefore turned into a tool of achieving the needed material
security. In Europe where the owners of the means of production constitute the dominant classes, monopolizing the economy and using this oligopolistic monopoly to control the state as well, the situation in Africa is in reverse order. Economic power is pursued through the political in Africa largely because of the overly statist economy so structured by the colonial regime and the peripheral and subservient integration of the continent into the mainstream capitalist network of the metropolis. It is in this sense that the colonial state foundation in Africa originally pre-disposed these countries to political violence since there were no restraints or rules guiding the contest for power.

Nearly all the coups, counter-coups and inter-group violence in Africa are inspired by the corruption of the ruling classes, nepotism, and colonially inflicted structural imbalance in the allocation of power and other vital resources in most countries of the continent. Therefore, the severity of political violence in Africa is directly proportionate to the imagined role of power upon which the ultimate premium is placed with specific reference to the unlimited wealth associated with its possession. Regarding inter-group relations, the cases of Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba), Rwanda (Hutu, Tutsi, Twa), Sierra Leone (Krio and Mende), Liberia (Bassa, Gio, Mano, Kruhn and Kpelle), Niger (Hausa, Djerma, Fulani, Tuareg and Arabs), Ghana (Akan, Ewe, Fante, Ashanti), and Mali (Bambara, Malinke, Sarakole) to mention just a few, reveal that their respective colonial histories woven around the control of political and socio-economic resources have remained at the roots of the crises that surge from time to time in those locations (Faleti, 2009:55). Adam Mohammed’s (2008:33) insightful study of the conflicts currently raving in Sudan traces the origins back to the incorporation of Darfur into Sudan by the British colonial powers in 1916. The British colonial rule left Darfur underdeveloped, focusing instead on the relatively well developed centre and the region around the capital - Khartoum. However, in his opinion, this was not intentional but based on objective macro-economic reasons.

The situation in Sudan is somewhat akin to that of Nigeria where the country is polarized along religious lines, except that in Sudan the Christian South display typical Negroid features while the predominantly Moslem North look more like Arabs (light-skinned, curly hair, etc), thus introducing a biological (racial) aspect to the problem. Religion and ethnicity have been at the heart of most violent conflicts in Nigeria, where the legal abstraction of citizenship do not coincide with the natives’ “real” idea of indigeneity. Steve Abah’s (2005) Geographies of Citizenship in Nigeria and Ogho Alubo’s (2006) Nigeria: Ethnic Conflicts and Citizenship Crises in the Central Region thoroughly explored the theme of identity-associated conflicts in Nigeria while Kabeer Nai’a’s (2005) Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions and Colin Clarke, David Ley and Ceri Pepah’s Geography and Ethnic Pluralism (1984) equally pursued the subject on a wider scale. However, in the South African region and particularly in Zimbabwe, majority of the conflicts are generated from land allocation patterns connected with long histories of white settlements in those places. Native populations have increasingly been pressing for greater control and share of their own soil, often violently, with the white settlers who had earlier driven the indigenous peoples to the most uninhabitable and arid zones. Attention will now be directed to the sociology of formal law in Africa.

**An Enquiry into the Origin, Nature and Operation of Formal Law in Africa**

In the preceding part which examined the structure of the state in Africa as colonially ordained, a majority of the conflicts on the continent were found to bear clear imprints of colonial relations and subsequent Western activities of the type that E.A. Tarabrin (1974) perceived correctly as *The New Scramble for Africa*. We will continue in this second part with the examination of the underlying sources of the endemic conflicts on the continent by looking toward the aspect of formal law which is particularly tied to the emergence of the modern state in Africa. Though law is traditionally viewed as a necessity in human society and as a major instrument of social control, its origin and patterns of application may add the attribute of repression to its credentials. In other words, the motives and operation of the formal law could reveal its service beyond the regulation of conducts for purposes of order in society to include the suppression of the weak by the dominant classes. These deeper and less obvious dimensions of law, particularly the modern legal system in an industrial age have remained one of the central concerns of sociology of law which in the main, often seeks to explore the social context of the concept of law.

As Etannibi Alemika properly notes, laws and legal systems are derivatives of social structure; they are products of society as well as sources of its change. The historical and contemporary problems of the sociology of law are best comprehended by considering the nature of law and society. The need in modern societies to bring together and to control people of diverse origins, cultures, and interests, requires laws and their enforcement. As a society becomes more complex through urbanization and industrialization, the traditional institutions become increasingly disengaged from the process of maintaining law and order. Right from its proposal through enactment and interpretation to its enforcement, law is subject to several and
diverse kinds of manipulations in the hands of different groups in a society. The determination of laws, together with their content and enforcement, is related to the social structure. Laws reflect the nature of social order and societal goals on the one hand, and the nature of social conflicts and sectional interests on the other. Laws derive largely from conflicts of interest as well as from consensus of opinion amongst members of a society. No society has ever existed without some form of rules, customs and law that govern relationships between its individuals and the collectivity. Because of the centrality of norms, customs and laws to social control, there has been an enduring and continuing interest among laymen and various academic disciplines in seeking to understand and to explain the origin, nature, content, function and consequences of law in the society (Alemika, 1994: 285-287).

It will be equally beneficial to subsequent analysis to indicate in the course of these general preliminary observations that the development of formal law in Africa, its machinery of administration and allied institutions of coercion are markedly different from that of Europe. Of course, both the coercive apparatus and the legal systems in Africa are part of the colonial heritage including every other aspect of bureaucratic framework of the modern state on the continent. The critical point to note is that while formal law gradually evolved under peculiar internal historical, socio-economic religious and political circumstances of the originating European societies reflecting the transformations in technology, the mode of social organization of economic life, the processes of class formation and power relations, the law and state in Africa were ‘imported’ and ‘imposed’ to serve purposes of a largely external nature. Since both the state and the law in Africa were neither derived from domestic experience and history, nor were certain core traditional customs and values reflected in their background, nor were the interests of native societies ever really in focus in these colonial creations, the special difficulties of law to establish order, engender peace and security, and guide the pattern of social change and progress cannot be sincerely claimed to be unexpected. In fact, all the conflicts, violence, insecurity and underdevelopment of the continent issue from the structure and operation of the state and the law in Africa from colonial to post-colonial periods.

The fact is most glaring especially in colonial Africa that the state, the law and all instruments of coercion were contrived not merely for the maintenance of order, the protection of citizens or the peaceful resolution of inter-personal or group conflicts but for the over-riding motive of intimidation and suppression of popular resistance to oppressive rule, brutal enforcement of arbitrary ordinances that extract compliance to forced labour and various forms of strange and unjustifiable taxes, destruction of pre-existing traditional institutions and cultural practices designated as either ‘repugnant’, ‘repulsive’ or ‘offensive’ to good conscience, equity and natural justice as defined by the Western mind. The state and the law actually became the problem as the operation of both frequently came into conflict with the ways of autochthonous populations in African colonies. On a number of critical fronts such as the traditional religion, communal life, politics and economic organization, the indigenous peoples had serious clashes with the law as enunciated by the colonial state and this conflict of civilizations was at a time the favourite theme of the pioneers of African Writers Series, one of the most notable of which remains Chinualumogu Achebe’s Things Fall Apart (1958).

Thus, the idyllic existence of the so-called “stateless” pre-industrial societies of Africa stand in contradistinction to the conflict-ridden, tumultuous and extremely unsafe mode of social life in contemporary times on the continent essentially because of the character of the state and the law. Now, it may be necessary to ask why pluralism in industrial Europe does not easily or always translate to violence or conflicts as witnessed in Africa. In other words, why is the phenomenon of cultural pluralism as Crawford Young (1976) identified it such a negatively central issue in practically every nation of the Third World?

The answer lies in the very nature of the industrial capitalist economy of Europe which produced in the process of its development a kind of pluralism in society with the centres of power and influence being more diffuse and less concentrated at the centre. These were not accompanied by violence or conflicts as people simply fell into their respective social stations and those in the same social stratum displayed common attitudes, values, aspirations and patterns of behaviour markedly different from those of other classes. Dowe and Hughes (1972:10) likened the situation to what they described as a somewhat simplified version of Marx’s theory of social class: that position in the economic structure leads the individual to develop interests in common with others in a similar position; which in turn forms the basis of solidarity groupings intent on political action.

The dominant classes that eventually crystallized in industrial Europe through the monopoly of the means of production and by logical extension the economy maintained an oligopolistic control of the state using the law as well as the fearful instruments of coercion at the disposal of the state to further their interests. First, state power as controlled by the superordinate classes is used to safeguard a status quo that guarantees the exploitation and alienation typical of the system and secondly, as Samir Amin (2011:1) quips, to continue
the pursuit of endless accumulation that defines capitalism. European colonization of Africa is part of the overall expansion of capital and in the articulation of the state and formal law in the colonies therefore, it was the calculus of force, not legitimate authority that guided relations with subjects. The conflicts, violence and series of crises in Africa are consequent upon the manner through which European colonial powers sought to realize their capitalist economic targets on the continent using the state and the totally different and incongruent legal, economic and political strategies. The problem of Africa therefore is not all about ‘tribes’ as many scholars are wont to argue, nor the ‘natural’ aversion of the Blackman to order and development.

To properly understand the essence of the colonial state structure, the law and justice system in Africa and the army as the ultimate coercive instrument as well as the ‘guardian’ of sovereignty, and in particular, the police as law enforcers, this passage from Tamuno Tekena’s *The Police in Modern Nigeria 1861-1965: Origins, Development and Role* would be of great service:

> An examination of the origins, development and role of British-inspired police forces in Nigeria reveals that they were shaped by the nature of European interests in the country and the reactions of the indigenous peoples to their activities. One of such long-standing European interests in West Africa was commerce. Before the imperial acts of 1807 and 1833 abolishing the slave trade and slavery, there was not much British interest in establishing a formal police force in this part of West Africa ... (Tamuno, 1970:1).

Concerning the military establishment, C.N. Ubah notes that the present Nigerian Armed Forces are the descendants of the British colonial army in Nigeria. In his *Colonial Army and Society in Northern Nigeria* (1998), Ubah shows how colonial troops made up of Nigerian mercenaries that constituted almost the entire rank and file ruthlessly conquered Northern Nigeria, savagely stabilized it for the imperial power’s exploitative programme and participated in two World Wars in the service of Britain and her allies.

Thus, while there are no controversies about Igbo’s (1999:11) statements that: ‘the need to induce human beings to conform to the lifestyles, standards and expectations of their societies or groups, either by force or reward, is as old as human society’, that ordinarily, ‘social control refers to the processes by which an individual’s conduct or behaviour is regulated, restrained, or constrained in the overall interest of society rather than that of the individual’, and lastly that ‘one of the principal mechanisms for accomplishing the goal of social control is modern society in law’, the structure of the colonial state and the operation of formal law together with its agencies of enforcement and administration indicate a clear bent towards suppression. However, this is not to suggest that the emergence of modern states and the Western legal system did not have some positive aspects such as stopping the killing of twins, human sacrifices and other obnoxious practices in Africa. It is also necessary to note that cannibalism and all manners of barbarism were equally common in Europe during the dark ages and the perception of what is civilized conduct remains a question of socio-historical context and situational attribution.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the internal security problems, intergroup conflicts and the multifarious challenges of development and nation-building confronting most African countries have their roots in the particularly odious form of colonial administration as well as the structural defects of the states on the continent as colonially established. Another critical factor is the nature and operation of the introduced formal law which has persisted in its service mostly as a repressive tool given the circumstances of its origins. The harvest of crises on the continent are therefore the combined effects of the colonially-infected systemic anomalies and the vicious use to which the indigenous ruling classes have continued to put the fact of ethno-religious diversities and not the result of any racial, innate, or ‘natural’ inability of the Blackman to evolve a stable, harmonious, viable, safe and peaceful society as often erroneously suggested by a good number of non-African commentators. We will now proceed to the third part of this discourse in which the connexion between peace and security on the one hand and the problem of socio-economic recovery and political maturity of Africa on the other hand will be thoroughly examined.

**An Exploration of the Nexus Between Peace, Security and the Problem of Socio-Economic Recovery and Political Maturity on the African Continent**

We will start here by taking a closer look at the concept of peace since it is usually misconstrued merely as the obverse of a war situation. Okechukwu Ibeanu’s critical remarks concerning this misconception is relevant to our preliminary musings in this part.

> There is a tendency in peace and conflict studies to conceptualize peace as the converse of war. Thus, we often hear of war and peace being two sides of the same coin. In other
words, peace is defined as the absence of war, and by logical extension, war is the absence of peace. This way of conceptualizing peace though attractive, is inadequate for understanding the nature of peace. In the first place, it is tautological and circular in logic – there is peace because there is no war and there is war because there is no peace. Second, it really tells us nothing about the meaning of peace, which going by the definition, we have to arrive at by first defining war. However, even common sense would suggest that peace does exist independent of war. Thus, there can be peace even when there is war, as in situations when there are peaceful interactions between countries that are engaged in active war. For instance, the Palestinians and Israelis have been able to establish peaceful use of water resources, even as the war between them has raged ... (Ibeanu, 2009:3).

The point is that there are many and different dimensions to this concept of peace which could be broadly categorized into the political, sociological, spiritual, and moral philosophical perspectives, with the idea of justice appearing like a thread that runs through the entire theoretical fabric. Justice too is another amorphous and highly malleable concept, and the pursuit of the question of meaning of peace as well as the associated central idea of justice from any epistemic angle will surely produce a tome of materials. However, the key fact to note is that peace goes deeper than the ordinary absence of violence and secondly, peace manifests or exists under certain ecologies which include the social, economic, political, religious and psychological. Whether at the individual or group level, uneasy calmness or sheer absence of obvious turbulence does not equate with the presence of peace for peace dwells only in particular habitats.

As Francis David correctly notes, peace is of prime value in contemporary Africa, the most valuable ‘public good’ but yet the most elusive. The current eighteen active wars and armed conflicts on the continent are at different levels of intensity and also at different stages of settlement. They are not only fought in some of the poorest countries in the world but have also wreaked devastating consequences in Africa in terms of inculcable loss of human lives and extreme suffering to which people are exposed, state collapse and societal fragmentation, disruption of economic and agricultural activities, the destruction of infrastructural facilities, and the regionalization of these domestic civil wars have affected regional peace and security. Peace is therefore the most pressing challenge faced by Africa in the 21st century (Francis, 2009:16).

John Galtung (1996, 1990, cited in Francis 2009:18) identified three types of violence relevant to the understanding of peace and the conditions that create un-peaceful situations. These are: Direct Violence which is concerned with the physical, emotional and psychological conditions; Structural Violence which refers to deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm; and Cultural Violence which pertain to cultural norms and practices that create discrimination, injustice and hardship. Galtung, in broadening the definition of peace also outlines two dimensions of the concept: (i) Negative Peace which he described as the absence of direct violence, war, fear and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels; and (ii) Positive Peace which is taken to mean the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, justice and inner peace at individual levels (ibid). However, peace is conceived, the unmistakable fact still remains that trouble is hugely present in Africa and insecurity is widespread. Implicit in this claim is the second reality that the conditions for the existence of order, peace and security are yet to be created in most African states and in the absence of social order, socio-economic recovery and political maturity will continue to be elusive. The situation is therefore that of a vicious circle. There is no development in Africa because there is no order and there is no order because there is no development.

Actually, the term socio-economic recovery would have been preferred in this discourse all through since it is less hypocritical and more pellucid than the regular weasel-word ‘development’ which never leaves the lips of every government in Africa, including the most professed anti-people regimes, civilian and military alike. Majid Rahnema’s perception of development as both a myth and an ideal construct coincides with our thoughts on this saturated concept that has been performing very suspicious roles in a variety of contexts as shown in this statement:

*The disintegration of the colonial empires brought about a strange and incongruous convergence of aspirations. The leaders of the independence movements were eager to transform their devastated countries into modern nation-states, while the ‘masses’, who had often paid for their victories with their blood, were hoping to liberate themselves from both the old and the new forms of subjugation. As to the former colonial masters, they were seeking a new system of domination, in the hope that it would allow them to maintain their presence in the ex-colonies, in order to continue to exploit their natural resources, as well as to use them as markets for their expanding economies or as bases for their geopolitical*
Rahnema was almost completely right, except the insertion that ‘the leaders of independence movements (i.e. African nationalist leaders) were eager to transform their devastated countries into modern nation-states’. Peter Worsley (1967) in his *The Third World* was similarly wrong to have concluded that ‘Despite the rifts, the undeveloped countries (of Africa, Asia and Latin America) of whatever political colour still retain a common interest in rapid development’. Worsley’s generalization is quite a risky one for while Asian countries, for instance, appear to be more sincere and vigorous in their development pursuits, most African states are fast on the path of regression.

Back to the question of order and development which has a kind of cyclical relationship, Rahnema’s proposition contains a hint of the aspirations of former colonial masters in the new independent African states and when added to the bequeathed structural complications and the nature of liaisons between indigenous African leaders with metropolitan capitalist powers combine to frustrate the emergence of genuine democracy on the continent. And it is in only under a real democratic environment that peace, security, economic recovery (or development) and the political maturity of Africa can be experienced. The term economic recovery is construed here to mean the conscientiously planned, stage by stage programme designed specifically to extricate African economies from the clutches of the Western capitalist system, firstly, followed by the re-ordering of indigenous economic forces and social relations of production to reflect domestic realities and respond to the needs of local populations. Thus, the ‘pseudo’ status of the liberal (Western) democracy vigorously marketed by the United States of America in Africa together with the imposed capitalist economic system as well as the activities of the Bretton Woods institutions on the continent inherently lack the capability of either establishing peace, justice, security, equality, liberty, or positively transforming these societies.

What is meant by political maturity is the development of the ability of both the indigenous African ruling classes as well as the masses to transcend ethnic, religious and other parochial and primordial cleavages in the confrontation of any national or continental issue. The evidence so far does not betray any serious prospects of developments in this direction and what is rather observable is the revival and intensification of old animosities usually along Christian-Muslim lines and other divisions informed by diversities in culture. Starting from the era of nationalist politics, the religious and ethnic tools have been ruthlessly engaged by the local African elites and they are still being violently used in their selfish class contests for socio-economic and political advancements frequently masked as popular struggles. Since political mobilization and the articulation of protests in most cases bordering on the allocation of scarce resources and values have always revolved around constructed and continually changing identities, conflicts, insecurity, economic and political retardation have remained the lot of nearly all countries in Africa. In the fourth and last segment of this article, we will be considering ways of encapsulating these perennial conflicts in Africa within the context of cultural diversity.

**Encapsulating Conflicts on the African Continent**

In the main, it would appear that most governments on the African continent have reneged on the social contract to which all genuine democracies tacitly enter with the citizens. This theory of social contract Ugwuoke (2005) rightly observes was actually originally postulated by Juan de Mariana in 1599 though it came to be much popularized by Rousseau, Locke and Hobbies, and it is to this trio that many still today erroneously credit with the original postulations (Eke, 2006:12). The central argument of the theory of social contract is that since citizens remit taxes to the state and delegate their authority to the state, the state in return must assume an implicit contractual obligation of providing for their safety and well-being (Doerner and Silverman, 1981). The very first step therefore in the encapsulation of violence is the re-awakening of the respective governments in Africa to the real import of this covenant that binds the people with their leaders, who in the lexicon of democracy simply mean the masses’ representatives.

But there is a problem that has the semblance of the ‘original sin’ in the politics of Africa, which is that, legitimacy and authority were not originally associated with the colonial state on the continent, and state power in post-colonial societies have equally been devoid of these two essential elements as elections in most cases turn out to be a sham, implying that the people never in truth ‘empowered’ the leaders to act on their behalf. The leaders seem to be more acutely conscious of this fact than the masses and under the circumstances, is it proper that one should still seriously expect the indigenous African ruling classes to respect any pact (which was initially absent) assumed to be binding them with the led (who did not actually elect them)? Both the military and civilian regimes on the continent thoroughly understand their respective
routes to power and it is doubtful if the masses on their part also realize that they neither remitted authority nor taxes. It is for this reason that concerns have been repeatedly adumbrated about the urgency of creating the conditions and structures that would make it possible for constitutional democracy to emerge in Africa. All the noise and trouble over pluralism and diversities in culture, religion and region that tend to dominate African politics and constantly over-heat the polity are diversionary and in fact, these differences are often crudely manipulated for political benefits by the indigenous dominant classes who are only interested in the lure of office, using the ‘fight for national unity and emancipation of the masses’ as concealing and deceptive slogans. Ignorance, unemployment and poverty, not heterogeneity, are the real obstacles to the emergence of a stable, safe, peaceful and viable society in Africa.

The argument in this discourse coincides with the position of Mathew Kukah who in his Power Without Authority: Leadership Crisis in Nigeria declared thus concerning the insurgency in the country:

Boko Haram is not an excuse nor should we continue to find enemies from elsewhere by creating imaginary scenarios about religion or regionalism. Nigerians know far better than those who want to hold the President hostage can admit. Did we not live with Buhari and Idiagbon knowing that both of them were Muslims? When we voted for Abiola and Kingibe, did we not know that they were Muslims? Nigerians vilified General Abacha but in Lagos of all places, Col. Marwa (as he then was) was the beloved of the same Lagosians because by his performance, authority was conferred on him. Dr. Ngige became Governor of Anambra State under some dubious circumstances. However, his performance elicited commendations and even the high and the mighty in Anambra conceded that we did not vote for him but he is working for us. Democracy was meant to be a conveyor belt, conferring legitimacy and authority on our elected officials while bringing back to us, the good things that help in our pursuit of happiness and the good life (Kukah, 2012:36).

The above passage in a sense summarizes the Nigerian situation and clearly indicates that the phenomenon of pluralism is not after-all guilty of all that is heaped upon it. Solving the legitimacy and authority problems of governments and the restoration of the social contract are the first necessary tasks that would pave the way for the realization of other objectives associated with genuine societal transformation in Africa.

On the question of ignorance, the suspicion is that knowledge is deliberately denied the vast majority of African masses by the dominant classes given that the mind that knows is most likely to be critical and more difficult to be caged or tricked. Ignorance therefore seems to be a strong weapon used to maintain the status quo ante. In H. Browne’s World History I 1750-1900, mention was made of the tactful avoidance of educating the masses in Europe at some point in this manner:

No population was completely literate. In European countries, literacy was confined to the wealthy, the church and the middle classes – to those, that is, in the learned professions or to those engaged in trade or commerce. There was, indeed, no social need for total literacy, for the literate classes governed. Government itself was a matter of public order and foreign relations and no society had an organization so complex that more literate men than those to be found in the traditional ruling classes were required (Browne, 1974:2).

Mass ignorance has been historically used to keep the people quietly in their stations and equally makes it a lot easier for the vicious manipulation of vast populations in Nigeria particularly and Africa as a whole by the dominant classes for whatever purposes they desire. The evidence for this claim could be seen from the appalling state of public schools obviously destined for gradual extinction with the degree of extreme government neglect. Especially in the case of Nigeria, the preference is currently with elitist private schools at all levels that charge prohibitive fees which are only affordable by the super-rich and the quality of products of these schools is an entirely different matter altogether, indicating that the virtues of honesty, decency and the dignity of labour have eluded the contemporary society. The danger of acquiring certificates without the acquisition of the appropriate skills and knowledge is far worse than the problems associated with ignorance and illiteracy.

Aside of the familiar screams about the need for a self-reliant education by successive regimes on the African continent, Nigeria inclusive, which when closely examined reveal nothing beyond empty political talk, there is a particular kind of education that has a direct bearing on the establishment of peaceful co-existence and the diminution of violent conflicts amongst the diverse groups that constitute society. This is precisely what Donna Gollnick and Philip Chinn extensively discussed in their Multicultural Education...
in a Pluralistic Society. As the duo aptly note, when educators are given the responsibility of a classroom, they need the knowledge and skills for working effectively in a culturally diverse society. An educational concept that addresses cultural diversity and equality in schools is Multicultural Education. This idea is anchored on the following fundamental beliefs and assumptions:

- There is strength and value in promoting cultural diversity.
- Schools should be models for the expression of human rights and respect for cultural differences.
- Social justice and equality for all people should be of paramount importance in the design and delivery of curricula.
- Attitudes and values necessary for the continuation of a democratic society can be promoted in schools.
- Schooling can provide the knowledge, dispositions and skills for the redistribution of power and income among cultural groups.
- Educators working with families and communities can create an environment that is supportive of multiculturalism (Gollnick and Chinn, 1994:29).

In Nigeria, Sudan, Rwanda and elsewhere in Africa that societies are kibbled along ethnic and religious lines, efforts should be intensified in both formal and informal modes of socialization and education to erase ossified memories of hatred and minimize the social distance between groups which tends to heighten suspicion and mutual animosity. The teachers of both Christianity and Islam have a special role to play in the encapsulation of conflicts on the African continent since the content of what they preach have serious implications for the cultivation of understanding and the elimination of prejudice. The message of ‘Salam’ and ‘Shalom’ (the one Arabic and the other Hebrew) meaning ‘Peace’ which is central to Islamic and Christian philosophies should be emphasized rather than the inciting of adherents to embark on futile attempts at mutual annihilation. Each of these two alien but dominant religions in Africa must impress upon their followers the sanctity of human life, the humanity of all and the need to respect whatever is held sacred to the other.

In the same connection, credible traditional leaders and patriotic politicians have a serious obligation regarding the prevention, control and management of inter-group conflicts so that differences in ideology, cultural and religious orientations do not always degenerate into bloody violence. Also, the media have a sacred duty to inform, educate and report events with utmost sense of responsibility and truthfulness, checking, re-checking and confirming facts before making them public, and the presentation of news should be in a manner that is neither partisan nor capable of instigating revolt unduly.

Non-state violence or violence of the masses in Africa is equally directly linked with the question of poverty and absolute disillusionment of an overwhelming majority of the population who barely exist under indescribable conditions. Poverty simply points to the very familiar real situations where the economy of the poor makes it difficult for such a person to meet the minimum basic requirements of a decent human livelihood. The poor feeds, clothes and has shelter too but the quality of these may not be befitting of the human person and the efforts that go into their procurement could be excessively disproportionate. Poverty therefore entails a generalized exposure to socio-economic and psychological insecurity resulting in extreme hardship regarding the satisfaction (or confrontation) of ordinary challenges of daily existence ranging from standard dietary requirements, housing, clothing, health, education, to other forms of material and emotional needs. Without any kind of protection whatsoever, the meaning of democracy is completely lost to the poor who suffer all manner of indignities from the dominant groups and whose dire mode of existence makes the vocation of terror, including suicide bombing a very attractive engagement, given that they are totally disconnected from any legitimate system and have no stake or claims on the present scheme of things.

A more honest way of confronting criminality, violence, conflicts and insecurity in Africa is the re-channeling of the huge annual budgetary allocations that governments traditionally map out for defense and security towards the provision of socio-economic security, infrastructure and people-oriented development projects. Ameliorating the living conditions of the masses, the removal or diminution of the criminogenic and violence–exciting features of the society which are related to extreme hardship, unequal distribution of resources amongst groups, income inequalities that create two parallel classes of the super-rich and the abject poor, and solving the corruption problem in which most African governments are soaked would yield more practical results in restoring law and order and offer democracy and development an opportunity for survival on the continent.

Also, greater transparency must be shown in the expenditure and retirement of the so-called security votes as the entire national security business of governments in Africa (and almost everywhere) is conducted under a cloak of extreme secrecy with the implication that aside of the conduit it creates for the disappearance of large sums of public funds into private pockets, certain internal disturbances are suspected to be
deliberately staged as smoke-screens by the personnel of these government security outfits in order to put up a show of serious hard work, direct attention from burning national issues, and of course, justify the mysterious and sudden spending of frightening volumes of tax payers money within very short periods of time. All these have practically no connection with maintaining law and order, ensuring internal security, or improving the lives of the masses whose material conditions especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America are unfitting for the human person in the 21st century. A greater level of openness in the operation of security-oriented organizations is strongly recommended and this will equally encourage citizens to participate in the prevention of crime, violence and terror through the provision of intelligence information and timely reporting of suspicious movements, activities and gatherings. Such intelligence reports must, after ascertaining the profile of the informants and the accuracy of facts, be shared amongst security agencies and quickly acted upon as most major terror attacks in particular have been somehow foreseen and sometimes even forewarned.

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