

UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY AS AN ARCHETYPE IN RESOLVING CONFLICT IN 21ST CENTURY AFRICA

Paul Terngu Haaga, PhD
Department of Philosophy
Federal University of Lafia,
paul.haaga@arts.fulafia.edu.ng

Introduction

A person is a person through other persons. None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak, or behave as human beings unless we learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human (Tutu, 2004:25).

The above quotation is both key and foundational to the understanding of Ubuntu Philosophy. Ubuntu's theoretical foundation is our belief in and realization of our common humanity; our sense of, or perception of belonging to the entire human family. This is linked to peace because it tries to promote humane, compassionate, and productive interactions and interrelationships amongst people by implementing guiding ideals like cooperation, communication, and compassion. Ubuntu is the notion that a human being is a complete person only to the extent that society recognizes him or her as such and allows him or her to achieve the full potential and advantages of being human. These qualities are important and valued because they enable people to live productive, peaceful, and purposeful lives (Ujomu and Bature 2019: 12).

The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that conflict in 21st century Africa may be resolved utilizing the Ubuntu paradigm. A cursory look at the spate of violent conflicts in African brings to mind such questions as what are the ontological issues that cause conflicts in Africa? To what extent can Ubuntu contribute to the reducing of Africa's multiplicity of conflicts in the 21st century? On the one hand, these looming questions have unveiled the principle of interrogation, while also acknowledging its importance for African states on the other hand. These questions would act as a guide once again and indicate that Ubuntu's ideals, principles, and precepts are sufficient for resolving conflict in 21st century Africa, particularly Nigeria. Ubuntu is indeed a philosophy that respects human dignity, subsidiarity, and natural law, and it is both necessary and sufficient for peoples and civilizations, as demonstrated in this chapter.

Meanwhile, Ubuntu was discovered to be essential to the proper development of the human intellect in this study. As a result, only a healthy mind is capable of resolving difficulties. Ubuntu's philosophical debates have reverberated across Western thought's lengthy history. Though it is insufficient for bringing men to a full understanding of the truth without probing the fundamental causes of conflict, it is nonetheless useful for bringing men to a full understanding of the truth. The argument in this chapter is that the Ubuntu model is a must-have for conflict resolution. This chapter also shows how Ubuntu can trigger peaceful coexistence in Africa as well as its capacity for helping Africans overcome hate, strife, and disagreements in ways that lead to a genuine self and authentic existence.

The Meaning and Nature of Ubuntu Philosophy

The word Ubuntu is derived from a *Nguni* (*isiZulu*) aphorism: *Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*, which can be translated as “a person is a person because of or through others” (Moloketi, 2009:243; Tutu, 2004:25-26). Ubuntu can be described as the capacity in an African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interests of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual care (Tutu, 1999:34-35). The Ubuntu optimizes the African philosophy of respect and human dignity that is fundamental to being able to transcend ethnic divisions by working together and respecting each other (Tutu, 1999:34-35). Ramose submits that the ceaseless motion of “*ubu-* is always oriented towards *-ntu*.” For ‘*-ntu*’ is the nodal end that makes it possible to momentarily associate ‘*ubu*’ with a particular entity or specific mode of existence. At this point, Ramose insists that ‘*-ubu*’ and ‘*-ntu*’ are inherently related: “At the ontological level, there is no strict and literal separation and division between *ubu-* and *-ntu*. *Ubu-* and *-ntu* are not two radically separate and irreconcilable realities” (2002: 36). Although he admits that “as a generalized understanding of be-ing” ‘*ubu-*’ may be said to be “distinctly ontological. Whereas *-ntu* is the point at which be-ing assumes concrete form or a mode of be-ing in the continual unfoldment and may be said to be distinctly epistemological” (2002: 36).

Ramose identifies it with 'becoming' (be-ing). And then proposes that this should be regarded as 'verbal' rather than a verb. Similarly, since ‘*-ntu*’ is responsible for making the ceaseless unfoldment of ‘*ubu*’ in diverse forms or modes possible, he asserts that “*-ntu* is a noun”. He thus, submits that: “The indivisible one-ness and whole-ness of *ubu-ntu* means, therefore, that *ubuntu* is a verbal noun” (2002: 36). But what does Ubuntu as a verbal noun mean? The answer to this question lies in Ramose's analysis of the relationship between ‘*ubu*’ and ‘*umu*’. According to him, the word ‘*umu-*’ has the same ontological meaning with ‘*ubu-*’. The only difference between them is that ‘*umu-*’ inclines towards the particular than ‘*ubu-*’. In other words, while ‘*ubu-*’ belong

to the class of abstract nouns when it is attached to another word such as '-ntu', attaching 'umu-' to another word yields a concrete noun. This is evident in Ramose's translation of 'umuntu': "*Umuntu* means the emergence of *Homo-loquens* who is simultaneously a *Homo sapiens*. In common parlance it means the humanbe-ing: the maker of politics, religion and law" (2002: 36). Ramose explicates:

Although the English language does not exhaust the meaning of this maxim or aphorism, it may be construed to mean that to be a human be-ing is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others, and on that basis, establish humane relations with them. *Ubuntu* understood as be-ing human (human-ness); a humane, respectful and polite attitude towards others constitutes the core meaning of this aphorism [*umuntu ngumuntu nga bantu*]. *Ubu-ntu* then not only describes a condition of be-ing, insofar as it is indissolubly linked to *umuntu* but it is also the recognition of be-ing becoming and not, we wish to emphasise, be-ing and becoming. In this sense, it is simultaneously a gerund and a gerundive since it is implied in the imperative, *nga bantu*. In other words, be-ing human is not enough. One is enjoined, yes, commanded as it were, to actually become a human being. What is decisive then is to prove oneself to be the embodiment of *ubu-ntu* (...) because the fundamental ethical, social and legal judgement of human worth and human conduct is based upon *ubu-ntu* (2002: 37).

Collaborating further, Nweke (2022) agrees with Ramose that,

There are at least three crucial points in the citation on the meaning of Ubuntu. The first is that the most approximate English translation of Ubuntu is *humanness*. Second, Ubuntu as *humanness* is a normative attribute or quality of a human being. An attribute that is made evident in how an individual relates to others. Third, Ubuntu is also a philosophy in the sense that it prescribes the normative attributes that define one as a human being. It is also the base for judging human conduct. Given the linguistic roots, as well as the earlier epistemological and ontological presentation of Ubuntu as an African intellectual heritage, one can submit that Ubuntu refers to a philosophy, ideology or ethic of *humanness* that springs from the intellectual heritage of Africa regarding the characteristic normative qualities of humans (2022: 174).

People who completely embrace Ubuntu are always open and available to others; they corroborate others' abilities and do not feel threatened by others' good intentions. Ubuntu gives people a sense of belonging that derives from the realization that they are all part of a wider community. In practice, ubuntu implies understanding that a group's common links are more essential than individual disagreements and

divides. "People will argue and disagree; it's not like there aren't any tensions," Ogude added. "It is about bringing people together and reaching a consensus on issues that affect the community." And when you have reasoned, you will know what is best for the community, and you will have to believe it. This simply means that conflict is unavoidable, but the method used to resolve it is critical. "Ubuntu is rooted in what I call a relational form of personhood, basically meaning that you are because of the others".

Gade (2011:315) opines that the historical development and definition of Ubuntu in "written sources happened during different historical periods" which he (Gade) divided into the period in which Ubuntu was defined as a human quality; the period in which Ubuntu was defined as something either connected to or identical to a philosophy or an ethic; the period in which Ubuntu was defined as African humanism; the period in which Ubuntu was defined as a worldview; and the period in which Ubuntu was defined as something connected to the proverb '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*'. These historical periods suggest that much of the early material primarily recounted the customs of a specific sub-Saharan people, with a hint of a typical Western approach, as a desperate need for Africans to break free from colonialism and become familiar with African interpretations of the world, particularly those of their own people.

One philosophy that has demonstrated some nearness to Ubuntu Philosophy is *Igwebuike* philosophy. This nearness can be argued for from the perspective of the principle of unity which is one of the four principles of the philosophy. Developed and Popularized by Ikechukwu Kanu (2019), *Igwebuike* is an Igbo word which is literally translated to "there is strength (and unity) in number." Accounting for *Igwebuike* philosophy, Haaga (2013: 36) asserts that,

The philosophy of *Igwebuike* is an ideology that is postulated on the principle of solidarity and complementarity; against the conception that there is a unified African worldview; complementary reflection maintains that traditional African societies are characterized by the dominance of diversities of thought systems of which the complementary trend is one of the most pronounced. Thus, the idea that the universe is constituted of units of mutual complementary interacting forces within the framework of the whole and in a future referential dimension constitutes one of the central insights of traditional Africans.

People who completely embrace Ubuntu are always open and available to others; they corroborate others' abilities and do not feel threatened by others' good intentions. Ubuntu gives people a sense of belonging that derives from the realization that they are all part of a wider community. In practice, ubuntu implies understanding

that a group's common links are more essential than individual disagreements and divides. "People will argue and disagree; it's not like there aren't any tensions," Ogude added. "It is about bringing people together and reaching a consensus on issues that affect the community." And when you have reasoned, you will know what is best for the community, and you will have to believe it. This simply means that conflict is unavoidable, but the method used to resolve it is critical. "Ubuntu is rooted in what I call a relational form of personhood, basically meaning that you are because of the others".

Gade (2011:315) opines that the historical development and definition of Ubuntu in "written sources happened during different historical periods" which he (Gade) divided into the period in which Ubuntu was defined as a human quality; the period in which Ubuntu was defined as something either connected to or identical to a philosophy or an ethic; the period in which Ubuntu was defined as African humanism; the period in which Ubuntu was defined as a worldview; and the period in which Ubuntu was defined as something connected to the proverb '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*'. These historical periods suggest that much of the early material primarily recounted the customs of a specific sub-Saharan people, with a hint of a typical Western approach, as a desperate need for Africans to break free from colonialism and become familiar with African interpretations of the world, particularly those of their own people.

One philosophy that has demonstrated some nearness to Ubuntu Philosophy is *Igwebuike* philosophy. This nearness can be argued for from the perspective of the principle of unity which is one of the four principles of the philosophy. Developed and Popularized by Ikechukwu Kanu (2019), *Igwebuike* is an Igbo word which is literally translated to "there is strength (and unity) in number." Accounting for *Igwebuike* philosophy, Haaga (2013: 36) asserts that,

The philosophy of *Igwebuike* is an ideology that is postulated on the principle of solidarity and complementarity; against the conception that there is a unified African worldview; complementary reflection maintains that traditional African societies are characterized by the dominance of diversities of thought systems of which the complementary trend is one of the most pronounced. Thus, the idea that the universe is constituted of units of mutual complementary interacting forces within the framework of the whole and in a future referential dimension constitutes one of the central insights of traditional Africans.

As a philosophy, Ubuntu embodies fairness, wholeness, and compassion; someone who is warm, friendly, kind, and willing to share. Ubuntu symbolizes a sense of community. The goal of morality is dignity, which is achieved through personal growth and fulfillment. Community participation is the motivation and fulfillment of

the morality process; consequently, community participation is the primary way to human dignity. As a result, anything that promotes human dignity and community engagement is beneficial, whereas anything that hinders it is detrimental. Ubuntu's moral potential is closely related to human happiness and fulfillment within a community, to put it another way. Welfare and pecuniary issues are fundamental components of violent conflict; as welfare and wealth are essential characteristics of Ubuntu. And these are states of the full individual as a communal being (Iyayi, 2017). Therefore, anything that promotes human dignity and community participation is good, whereas anything that prevents it is harmful. In other words, Ubuntu's moral potential is inextricably linked to human happiness and fulfillment within a community. This refers to the desire to be a part of a community, not only for personal fulfillment, but also for the fulfillment of the community, because personal fulfillment is only seen to be achievable in the community. Summarily, the Ubuntu philosophy represents an African conception of human beings and their relationship with the community that embodies the ethics defining Africans and their social behaviours.

A Historical Rendition of Conflict in 21st Century Africa

This section of the chapter examines the question of conflict in the contemporary African society with particular reference to Nigeria. While one will expect a discourse on Africa as the sub title suggests, the discourse here is narrowed to the present existential reality of Nigeria as the most populous black nation which also mirrors the happenings in Africa. This is because a scan of the present realities of Africa, from the western, southern and through the eastern to the central nation states of Africa reveal that the stories of conflicts and crises are no different.

For the purpose of clarification in this chapter, the word conflict as it were, brings to mind scenarios such as antagonism, struggles between parties, opposition processes and threats to cooperation, but not all conflicts come in these forms. There are intra and interpersonal conflicts; nonetheless, the focus of this chapter will be on interpersonal conflict. Conflict is mostly described as situations of disagreements, arguments, clash of interests, loyalties and even emotions. Conflict is evident where there are opposing ideas, opinions, feelings, wishes, and beliefs. It is a condition of incompatible goals. The fact is, where there is conflict, there is a real or apparent disorder. Such state of affairs hampers growth in all its forms, as the truth of entities or humans is either denied or not arrived at. Certainly, there are times when conflict can positively result in healthy competition for growth. But most often, conflict retards growth and brings friction and factions in a situation where there should be progress. In most parts of Africa especially in Nigeria today, the level of conflict is so alarming that it has affected virtually all nooks and crannies of the country and has

permeated all aspects of the national life. Haaga asserts that, “Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of conflict and insecurity, as it is undoubtable to say that insecurity is at the verge of being the identity of our today Nigeria, as no single day passes without cases of acts of insecurity; the gravities of insecurity are now a big issue to chew” (Haaga, 2018: 4).

To further buttress this point, Shettima (2012:7), affirms that, the level of conflict and insecurity in the Nigeria can be seen in many ways; these include wanton and indiscriminate destruction of lives and properties, dislocation of the local economy with serious implications on the living conditions of the inhabitants; closure of schools due to destruction-bombing of educational facilities which has put a lot of stress on existing infrastructures. In the same vein, conflict also created climate of fear among citizens. The psychological trauma conflict and violence has caused to victims and survivors, especially children, women and youths cannot be overemphasized. Periodically, the nation is plunged into conflict and violence either from fresh grievances or reoccurrences. Haaga (2018:3-4) further argued that:

Of recent, many people in Nigeria believe that the major causes of conflict and insecurity, as manifested in insurgency, banditry, militancy, youth restiveness and a call for self-determination is the current structure of Nigeria. As a multi-ethnic nation, many citizens have suffered human right abuses, marginalisation and economic injustice as a result of the unfortunate set of individuals that are ruling this country. Within this chaotic atmosphere of mistrust, insurgents, Boko Haram, killer herdsmen and different armed militia groups with varying nomenclatures operate freely, sometime with impunity within the country. In most parts of the Nigerian states, life is not too different from that in the 'state of nature' which Hobbes described as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short”.

More recently, the terrorist attack in a Catholic church in Owo, Ondo state, the killing of Deborah Francis in Sokoto, Fulani herdsmen and bandit invasion of communities in Benue, Zamfara, Kastina, Niger, Nasarawa, Taraba and Plateau states, electoral violence in Kogi state, the southern Kaduna massacre, the Abuja- Kaduna train attack and kidnap, the IPOB uprising, the EndSARS peaceful protest against police brutality that turned violent etc. are among the examples of conflict in Nigeria.

The brutal murder of Deborah in Sokoto for alleged blasphemy and the arrest of the culprits which in turn led to the irrational and insensitive destruction of properties and looting, have shown that there is no part of Nigeria that is spared of conflict. Every region of the country has had a share of crises and violence. No wonder,

Mbonu maintained that “*conflict is an attendant feature of human interaction and cannot be eliminated*” (2). *All these conflicts lead to scores of deaths of Nigerian citizens.* Among the several factors that may account for conflict are, religious fundamentalism, indigene/settler spectacle, borders or interstate border disputes, ethnicity, poor economic performance etc. Mbonu corroborated that Nigeria today is full of conflicts, violence, wars and man-made disasters, due to the pervasive influences of selfish materialism, ignorance, greed, hatred, corruption and lust for power in our communities. There is peace neither in human hearts, nor in the society, neither in the nation nor in the world (5). Aligning with Mbonu's position, electoral violence for instance could be rightly blamed on greed and selfish materialism.

Consequently, Njoku (2009: 230) believed that conflict in Nigeria is caused by factors that date back to the pre-independence era. He declared that Nigeria was a mal-intended child. In other words, Nigeria was destined to sit on crisis right from the time of amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates by Lord Lugard. Njoku (2009:232) further stated that;

It (amalgamation) was a manipulative conception of the colonial fiat whose philosophy was inspired by the corpuscular philosophy that was the intellectual ancestor of the imperialists/colonial theory of development. Various ethnic groups or autonomous nations, with different cultures and aspirations were dragged and fused together by an occupying power for her selfish interest. And for the same selfish reason for which the coloniser left his country, the British government, under the supervision of Lord Lugard, arbitrarily amalgamated the two protectorates which are collectively known today as Nigeria. There was economic motive to the amalgamation.

What Njoku describes here is that, the fusion of the Southern and Northern protectorates that were before now, independent nations/tribes in the first instance was in error and had laid foundation for the phenomenon of conflict in the country. In a sense “it was destined to conflict”. Dantala (2014: 51) also stressed that the inception of insecurity/conflict/crisis in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial era, as most of the conflicts that the country is experiencing have their origins from that period. Grievances that arose during that period were not handled as expected and were accumulated all through the years. Thus, improper and unprofessional handling of conflict in Nigeria has destroyed communities, organizations, and corporations. Though, Okigbo (cited in Njoku 234) was convinced that the present wave of conflict in Nigeria originated between 1964 and 1965 with “the emergence of violence and thuggery in Nigerian politics, this was shortly followed by the civil war that took place barely after six years of independence which was from 1967 to 1970.

From Njoku and Dantala's submissions, it can be deduced that although the amalgamation of the South and North was foundational and potential to endless conflict, it finally manifested in the later years of the nation specifically in the mid-1960s.

Conflicts in Nigeria are obviously analysed as either religious, political, ethnic or ethno-religious in nature, and usually padded by endemic poverty, bad governance, corruption, nepotism and youth unemployment (joblessness). A situation where millions of employable youths and graduates are jobless makes them prey to the tactics of fundamentalists, fanaticism and strange doctrines like those preached by the Boko Haram, ISWAP and other terror groups.

Resolving Conflict in 21st Century Africa: Ubuntu Philosophy in Perspective

In light of the preceding discussion and Nigeria's current existential situation, it is apparent to stress that one fundamental problem facing Nigeria today springs from disunity, separation, sectionalism that is connected or rooted in religion, our worldviews and conviction about ourselves. Religion as it is currently practiced in Nigeria is a double-edged sword that has killed more people than it has cured. This viewpoint is linked to the intolerance that underpins religious fanaticism, extremism, and fundamentalism. However, considering what philosophical orientation is best suited for, it has the potential to heal these ailments, and expose the importance of complementarity and tolerance philosophy. These are here referred to as the philosophical orientations that Nigeria needs in her bid to surmounting the problems associated with religious fundamentalism, extremism and fanaticism as she tries to leap in the direction of progress and development.

As it were, the symbol of tolerance and togetherness demonstrated in the Ubuntu's framework shows that amongst its fundamental basis, one perceives mutuality and peaceful co-existence. This means that, even within conflict situations, the tenets of Ubuntu can be deployed to resolve challenging issues. Cletus Tanimu Gotan acknowledges the fact that numerous conflicts have been rightly or wrongly attributed to religion in Nigeria, and that the image of religion as the divinely designated link between mankind and God, the Creator of the universe, has been tarnished by fundamentalists. Corroborating the above, Haaga opines that,

This nature of conflicts most often frustrates efforts at resolution, due to sentiments and the inability of most of the religious leaders to harmonize this reality. This has informed the incessant conflicts resulting to loss of lives and properties across the nation. This is because most political leaders have

resorted to the politics of religion and are almost unable to identify any difference between politics and religion. Thus, they employ the weapon of religion in playing politics. Consequently, innocent youth are being deceived into provoking violence and conflicts across the nation through erroneous religious teaching that dissever faith from reason, and the gullible youths become tools of violence (2021: 183).

It is clear that religious crisis has thwarted the development of the polity in Nigeria, affected the democratic norms and values and have consistently presented the country as one big disunited and largely polarized family. Having a nation of many diverse religions and ethnicities has resulted in many problems, and instead of being a strong point of Nigeria it has become many times a weakness. To remedy this situation, Gotan (2006) advocated for dialogue of life in resolving conflict; this is rooted in Ubuntu ideology, To Quote him:

The dialogue of life reflects an attitude or a way of acting, a spirit guiding conduct and building with others for goals of humanitarian, social, economic or political ends, aimed at the common good, peace and harmony. This kind of dialogue sues for a collective responsibility by all the parties involved. Dialogue of life refers to the friendly or fraternal encounters in real life in respective of one's religious and ethnic affiliation. It entails the joint action between all with all which builds trust, confidence and create an environment of mental acceptance and allows each person to approach the worship of God in the best way and manner they prefer (100).

Gotan suggests that, social activities such as traditional marriages or weddings, festive periods for celebrations, etc. are possibly opportunities for a dialogue of life where deliberate efforts could be made to interact and demonstrate genuine friendship with neighbours or friends of other religions and ethnicities. He further noted that, both Christians and Muslims have many things in common as believers and as human beings: they both live in the same society; Nigeria, are both beset by the same socio- economic and political realities; and both religions are supposed to teach peace, harmony, tolerance and forgiveness as their cardinal virtues. As such, Christians and Muslims ought to be people of dialogue in view of the importance of dialogue to our common existential existence (106).

The concept of Ubuntu is crucial to grasping the concept of peaceful coexistence, or "live and let live." Conflict In 21st Century Africa, particularly Nigeria is immoral since it is a humiliating act. It divides a nation's population by weakening

interpersonal and social trust, and, worst of all, by obliterating the social norms, values, and institutions that have regulated and coordinated cooperation and collective action for the common good. It is extremely difficult for both the social group and the state to regain its cohesion as a result of this. Human dignity and humanity are sullied by conflict. Conflict does not enhance human existence; rather, it serves to reduce life and destroy infrastructure (Iyayi, 2017); as such there is a need to propose a model which is Ubuntu to solve this menace.

Drawing from the preceding discourse and the current existential condition in Nigeria, as presented by Gotan, it is crystal clear that misplacement of values in Nigeria constitutes a double-edged sword that has killed more than it has healed. This position is not unconnected with the intolerance that is at the kernel of religious fanaticism, extremism and fundamentalism. However, a reflection from the prism of what philosophical orientation is best suitable for, and does have the propensity of healing these maladies reveals the imperativeness of the *ubuntu* philosophy towards resolving conflict. Nigeria has been, and continues to be, the scene of multiple conflicts at national, local and regional levels for at least a decade. These conflicts have led to the breakdown of Nigeria as a country. Human lives are lost, infrastructure is destroyed, education and health services have suffered, and the environment is damaged. The tie that previously linked Nigerians is broken, social solidarity and cohesion has collapsed, and political tension is generated. In addition, socio-economic development is severely retarded as a result of the consequence of conflict. In conflicts such as these, the influence of *Ubuntu* philosophy plays an imperative role in peacefully resolving conflict in 21st century Nigeria, as this tries to leap in the direction of progress and development.

In a nutshell, the question was whether Ubuntu, in the sense of communal dignity, could aid in the resolution of violence and the establishment of peace in 21st-century Africa, particularly Nigeria. Ubuntu's notion demonstrates that it is possible. The moral principle of Ubuntu inspires a number of concerns for peace and the growth of human life and dignity (Iyayi, 2017). First and foremost, Nigerians must choose to live together in a spirit of brotherhood; a community in which mutual respect and solidarity for the sake of one another's health and success are highly valued. This necessitates a return to a communitarian attitude, which requires respecting and observing social laws for the harmonious adjustment of the community's interests rather than individual interests; this instills a love of country over self-interest. This needs societal agreements that do not exclude anyone; the rule of law should apply to everyone. Individuals are expected to meet this fundamental minimum of ethical behavior.

Iyayi, (2017), further argued that Nigerians should be truthful, kind, hospitable, and unselfish among themselves when it comes to promoting social wealth, natural and economic resources, and education among communities. Everyone, regardless of their social status, should have access to services. Fairness, equity, and justice should be respected because equality is the most essential basis of Ubuntu ethics. Nigerian authorities must recognize that every Nigerian's life is valuable, regardless of religion or race, and that killing innocent people for personal gain is unacceptable. The pursuit of self-interest or advantage is incompatible with Ubuntu. Traditional Ubuntu-aligned dispute resolution models should be investigated. The purpose of such models should be to re-establish Nigerian ties. A holistic approach to the process with participation from the entire community, is essential to assist on the path to peace. Leaders in Nigeria should be in charge of steering conflict resolution processes toward an agreement that reflects the consensus of all parties involved in the conflict, to the extent possible.

In addition, the Nigerian government should foster a sort of communalism in which all ethnic groups are given a collective role and space in society, as well as inclusion and equity. The philosophy of Ubuntu might be introduced into the Nigerian system in this way. The ideals of Ubuntu, which include collective solidarity, cohesion, compassion, care, and communal stewardship, should be upheld by Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups. Nigerians, as a nation, should re-define themselves in a positive and communal manner in accordance with the ubuntu paradigm, as this will encourage peaceful coexistence and tolerance in the 21st century. The emphasis should be on a people's similarities rather than their differences, since this will create a sense of shared identity and fate. Ethnicity, religious affiliations, and tribal propensity should not be used to define good or bad behavior. The use of the phrase "my thief" because of a shared ethnic or religious background should be avoided. After all, what differentiates the Hausa/Fulani from the Tiv, or the Yorubas from the Igbos? To avert strife, Nigerians should be exposed to the fascinating meaning of humanist communitarianism.

Without a doubt, it is the obligation of Nigerian leadership to foster inter-ethnic trust and put an end to the tragedy of ethnic conflict. They should foster among their civilians, an atmosphere of social dignity-a climate of compassionate communitarianism – that is conducive for peaceful negotiation of an end to armed conflict (Iyayi, 2017). As a result, Nigerians must foster the spirit of Ubuntu in their communities by respecting and accepting the values and principles of other cultural and religious groups, which should serve as the foundation for developing a shared communal identity. As it were, the responsibility of Nigerian leadership involves crafting, immortalizing, and allowing the values of Ubuntu, the value of reclaiming traditional African values based on the spirit of humanity manifested in sharing,

caring, and advancing the common good, to work in society, in order to restore the authenticity of the philosophy of communitarianism as it is thought to have existed centuries ago.

Conclusion

The primary ambition of this chapter is to explore the role of *Ubuntu* Philosophy in resolving conflict in 21st century Africa, with Nigeria in perspective and blending the thought of Gotan. *Ubuntu* is based on truth, fairness and oneness. In this chapter, the argument projected is that the ubuntu model is integral to the healthy development of the human mind. Hence, it is only a healthy mind that can alleviate or resolve conflict in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria with diverse religions and ethnicities. The paper argued that *Ubuntu* could contribute to resolving conflict among the people in Nigeria when it is conceived as an ethical system or a moral way of life. This chapter concludes that, as a social and moral system, it seeks to promote the social nature of human beings, with a focus on behaving rightly or properly. Considering the peculiarity of humans as social beings, they need to, and desire to live together. Human beings are also social because, they need to cooperate with each other, in order to attain the common good or purpose. Summarily, pursuing the common good is a central element of the social, ethical or moral life.

References

- Bhengu, J. M. (1996). *Ubuntu: The Essence of Democracy*. Cape Town: Novalis Press.
- Christel, O. (2011). "A Teambuilding Strategy Based on Ubuntu Principles", *Researchgate*, Online: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309260772>. Retrieved on 20:04:2022.
- Dantala, D.P. (2014) "Insecurity and the Challenges of Development in Nigeria" in *Developing Country Studies*., www.iiste.org
- Eze, M. O. *Intellectual History in Contemporary South Africa*
- Gade, N.B. C. (2017). *A Discourse on African Philosophy: A New Perspective on Ubuntu and Transitional Justice in South Africa*. Lanham: Lexington Book, 2017, p. 60-61
- Gotan T. C. (2006), 'Nigeria's Religious Conflicts: A Call for A Dialogue', *Religion Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, Proceedings of 22nd Conference of the Catholic Association of Nigeria (Cathan) Edited by Cyril Obanure.
- Haaga T. P. (2018), "Analysing the Spectre of Insecurity in Nigeria from the

- Perspective of Social Contract Theory” *Or-che Uma African Journal of Existential Philosophy*, Benue State University, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 3-4
- Haaga T. P. (2013), 'Igwebuiké And Polarity of Philosophy of Law' in *AMAMIHE: Journal of Applied Philosophy*. Vol. 11. No. 1. 2013, p. 36.
- Haaga, T. P. (2021). “A Philosophical Reflection on the Spectre of Conflicts in Nigeria and the Fecundity of Faith and Reason” in *Africa And Emerging Trends in Global Politics*, Festschrift in Honour of Innocent Tyomlia Jooji, ed. Sunday Adejoh *et al.*, Kaduna: Pyla-Mak Publishers.
- Kanu, I. A., (2019). 'On the Origin and Principles of Igwebuiké Philosophy', *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, Volume 11 No. 1. pp. 167- 168.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2020). Igwebuiké philosophy of science and technology. *Nnadiebube Journal of Education*. Vol. 5. No. 4, pp. 64-74.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2010). A Discourse on the Romance between Philosophy and Christian Theology. *International Journal of Theology and Reformed Tradition*, Vol. 2. pp. 185-198.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. & Paul Haaga (2012). Philosophy and Good Governance: The Nigerian Experience. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 16. No. 1. pp. 773-783.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu, A. (2014). African Philosophy and the Issue of Development. *Paripex: Indian Journal of Research*. Volume.3. Issue. 7. pp. 1-5.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2018). African Philosophy, Globalization and the Priority of 'Otherness'. *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*. Vol. 1. No. 1. pp. 40-57.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2018). Igwebuiké Philosophy and the Issue of National Development. *SAPIENTIA: Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 9. pp. 8-22.
- Khoza, R. J. (2006). Let Africa lead: African transformational leadership for 21st century business. Johannesburg: Vezubuntu
- Lutz, D. W. (2009). African Ubuntu philosophy and global management. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 84(3), pp. 313-328.
- Moloketi, G. R. (2009). Towards a Common Understanding of Corruption in Africa. *Public Policy and Administration*, 24(3), pp. 331-338.
- Njoku, F.O.C. (2009). “Development, Conflict and Peace in Nigeria” in Ikejiani-

- Clark, M (ed) Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Nweke, V. C. A (2022). 'Ubuntu as a Plausible Ground for a Normative Theory of Justice from the African Place' in *Essays on Contemporary Issues in African Philosophy*, edited by Jonathan O. Chimakonam et al., Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
- Nussbaum, B. (2003). Ubuntu: Reflections of a South African on our common humanity. *Reflections*, 4(4), 21-26.
- Ramose, M. B. (2002). *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu* (Rev. ed.). Harare: Mond Books.
- Rukayya I. I., (2017). 'Nigeria arise, embrace the concept of Ubuntu', retrieved at <https://dailynigerian.com/nigeria-arise-embrace-the-concept-of-ubuntu-by-rukayya-ibrahim-iyayi/22:04:2022>.
- Shettima, K. (2012). "The Imperative of Peace and Development: The Challenges of Insecurity in Borno State". International Security Summit on Terrorism and other related Crimes. Newspapers Limited Holding at Transcorp Hilton, Abuja.
- Tekena N. T., (1993). "Peace and Violence in Nigeria: Conflict Resolution in Society and the State", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 31, No.4, pp 699.
- Tutu, D. (1999). *No future without forgiveness*. London: Rider.
- Tutu, D. (2004). *God has a dream: A vision of hope for our future*. London: Rider.
- Ujomu, P.O and Bature, A. I. (2018). "Conflicting Values, *Ubuntu* Philosophy and Peace Building: An African Experience" in *Culture and Dialogue*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333570692_Conflicting_Values_Ubuntu_Philosophy_and_Peace_Building_An_African_Experience. Retrieved on 24:03:2022