

PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: A PARADIGM FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, conflict has been a recurring phenomenon in many nations of this planet earth. This is incumbent on the fact that the human nature is not devoid of conflict due to various biological, psychological and social factors. For instance, from the perspective of evolution, conflict is necessary for survival because humans competed for food, territory and mates which likely contributed to the development of conflict as a natural aspect of life. Also, human beings are social beings with complex emotional and cognitive needs, conflict often arise among them owing to differences in values, beliefs and goals. Humans equally have an inherent tendency towards aggression or competition as a way to secure resources and ensure survival, and tend to interpret the world through their own biases, leading to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of others' actions. These biases, such as in-group bias can fuel conflicts, as people may be more prone to perceiving threats or insults based on their pre-existing beliefs. This paper points out that even though there are many attempts made, and methods employed to resolve conflict, and great efforts have been made in our climes regarding global peace, world peace, conflict avoidance, conflict management and conflict resolutions, we still experience disasters, mayhem, acrimony, wars which have taken a toll on many nations' development. There is therefore, the need to explore more avenues to fight the course of conflict to enhance national development. This paper advances the position of a philosopher with particular interest in the philosophy of Ibuanyidanda noetic propaedeutic to address the issue of conflict for national development.

Keywords: Peace, Conflict resolution, Ibuanyidanda noetic propaedeutic, National development.

INTRODUCTION

According to Wonah, the state through its government formulates and implements development policies and programmes. In line with this, he sees national development, as the effort made by the people through their government to improve their quality of life and ensure free and egalitarian society within the national boundary (3). Lawal and Oluwatoyin also Jaja Nwanegbo, and Odigboas cited in (Wonah, 3), see national development as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. National development, therefore, is a multidimensional concept encompassing the economic, political, and social progress of a country. It goes beyond mere economic growth, encompassing the overall well-being of a nation's citizens and the structural transformation of its institutions. As nations strive for sustainable development, key areas such as education, infrastructure, and governance have emerged as foundational pillars that support long-term national prosperity. National development is a complex but achievable objective when approached through a multifaceted lens. Education empowers individuals and strengthens the human capital necessary for economic growth. Infrastructure facilitates

connectivity and supports industry. Governance ensures that the benefits of development are equitably distributed and sustainably managed. Together, these pillars form the foundation of a nation's progress. Future strategies must emphasize the synergies among these domains to ensure holistic, inclusive, and sustainable development. All these can be achieved if there is peace and conflicts are resolved as and when due.

According to Naboth and Nwafor, the concept of peace lends itself to several interpretations and definitions, which cannot be exhaustively discussed here. Ordinarily, peace means the absence of conflict or violence at a particular time and place. It evokes the climate of freedom from fear, intimidation and harassment, oppression and brutalisation by external forces or agents (1). There is no gain saying the fact that our nations need peace, the human nature needs peace both in daily activities of life and in thoughts and culminate in actions.

There is no nation in this terrestrial existence that grows successfully without the entrenchment of peace, tranquility and harmonious coexistence among the citizens. Looking at the vital role of Peace in the society, some analysts often times describe peace as an organic foundation for any significant development across all levels of human endeavors. In spite of the robust nature or how viral policies of any nation's government might be, without peace such policies will not achieve the desired goal or objective. This is what makes this research work very central and apt especially in an era where we need peace most particularly in our homes and nation at large bearing in mind the high levels of agitations and insecurity among the citizens partly for self-secession and economic control. It is however imperative to state that human development and economic diversification all over the world hinges exclusively on the existing peaceful coexistence among the citizens of such country to galvanize support for full actualization of government economic and political policies for the best interest of her citizens. Furthermore, Peace which remains an essential need of the people has always been among the humans highest values right from time immemorial. In fact, an unjust peace is better than a just war.

PEACE: A NECESSITY

Peace is more important than all justice. It is on this cline to state that humanity prefer the most unjust peace to the most just war that was ever waged as there never was a good war or a had peace. However, economic prosperity and socio-cultural development of any nation is the function of the peaceful, harmonious relationship and tranquility that prevailed among the citizens over time. Ultimately, this is viewed as a peace of the mind or favorable serenity for people hearts desired to strife in the areas of domicile. The task before any citizen of any a nation is to proactively work assiduously for the sustenance and build peace constituency within the individual family, traditional institutions, pressure groups, interfaith organization, schools, market places, civil society organization. NGOS and peer groups to champion the course of national unity and peaceful coexistence which undoubtedly is the most essential need of any nation.

Many people, scholars, tourists, businessmen and well-meaning citizens of a nation hold tenaciously to the fact that the greatest resources any government can bequeath to her citizens is a sustainable peace to enhance growth and meaningful development among the people. There is a compelling need for government at all levels to create effective and efficient peacebuilding mechanism to holistically address visible conflict as a greater concern among the citizens to adequately in cooperate the yearnings of the people in the policy formulation of government with a view to address the roots causes of sectional, political agitations or grievances, religious and civil wars coming from the citizens to allow peace to reign particularly at the time when

the economy of nations of the world is trying to exist from the Covid-19 pandemic which had ravaged world. It is therefore crucial to mitigate conflict than to allow it to escalate. It is much better and economical to address conflict at the early stages hence the urgent need to step up a holistic approach for effective service delivery and formulations of people-oriented policies that have direct impacts on the lives of the concerned citizens than to provide relief materials to victims of conflicts. There is a need to inculcate the right behaviour that engenders peace to eschew conflict that will make a nation suffer underdevelopment, inter/inter-ethnic and religious crisis that brings about untold hardship to the people, loss of lives, rendering people homeless, displaced and scattered in refugee camps, destruction of economic activities, vandalization of properties which may cost government money to repair them.

Peace is a pre-requisite for development as a whole because it creates an enabling environment for the fundamentals of a society's progress: human capital formation, infrastructure development, markets subject to the rule of law, and so on. In the absence of peace, education and health structures break down, systems to provide infrastructure disintegrate, and legal commerce is crippled. Critically, peace also frees up resources, both financial and human, that would otherwise be diverted to controlling (or creating) violence. Intuitively, it is already in our subconscious that peace and development go hand in hand. Generally speaking, the more peaceful a society, the more prosperous and stable. But there is a need for us to understand the economic costs of violent conflict because if the economy of a nation is not stable and growing it will be tantamount to underdevelopment.

TOWARDS THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF CONFLICT IN HUMAN SOCIETY

Conflict refers to a disagreement or clash between two or more opposing individuals, groups, parties or even ideas as a result of different values, goals, beliefs, interests and so on. Conflict is an inherent part of human existence. It is woven into the fabric of history, literature, and everyday life; be it internal or external, individual or collective. While conflict is often viewed negatively due to its association with war, violence, and division, it also serves as a catalyst for growth, self-discovery, and social change. Conflict manifests in various forms, namely, personal, interpersonal, and societal. At its core, it arises from opposing interests, desires, or values. Sigmund Freud described internal conflict as a psychological struggle between different components of the mind, particularly the id, ego, and superego (Freud, 34). On a broader level, societal conflicts such as class struggles, racial discrimination, and political disputes have historically driven revolutions and reforms. As Hegel posited, "progress is the result of the dialectical process, a conflict between thesis and antithesis leading to a synthesis" (qtd. in Singer, 107). In this sense, conflict is not only inevitable but necessary for evolution and change. Some scholars, in their works, often mirror societal struggles and internal dilemmas, using conflict as a central device to develop characters and advance the plot. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare presents the destructive consequences of familial conflict, where the feud between the Montagues and Capulets leads to tragic outcomes (Shakespeare, 1.1.85–90). Similarly, in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the cultural conflict between traditional Igbo society and British colonialism results in the disintegration of individual identity and societal cohesion (Achebe, 176). These narratives highlight how conflict can expose underlying truths about human nature and societal norms.

Psychologically, conflict can lead to anxiety, stress, and emotional turmoil. However, it can also foster resilience, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. According to Carl Jung,

confronting one's shadow which is in other words known as inner conflict is essential for personal development (Jung, 145). On a societal level, conflict can bring attention to injustice and inequality, prompting activism and policy change. The American Civil Rights Movement, for example, was born out of racial conflict but ultimately led to significant legal and cultural advancements (Branch, 211). While conflict is often unavoidable, the way it is managed determines its outcome. Constructive conflict resolution involves communication, empathy, and compromise. In contrast, unresolved or poorly managed conflict can lead to prolonged suffering and division. As noted by conflict resolution expert John Burton, "Conflict should not be seen as a failure but as an opportunity to understand and address human needs" (Burton, 92). Educational and community-based programs focused on dialogue and mediation have shown promising results in fostering peaceful coexistence. Conflict, though often uncomfortable, is a powerful force in shaping individuals and societies. Its history underscores its complexity and necessity. By understanding the sources and consequences of conflict, and by embracing strategies for its constructive resolution, individuals and societies can harness its transformative potential. In doing so, conflict becomes not merely a challenge, but a gateway to growth, understanding, and progress.

Cultural and societal structures can amplify or mitigate conflict. Different societies have different norms, values, and systems of governance that can either promote cooperation or exacerbate competition and conflict. Group identities, such as ethnicity, nationality, or religion, can create in-group favoritism and out-group hostility, fueling conflicts between different groups. Some sociologists argue that conflict is not necessarily an innate human trait but a result of the structures and systems within society. Inequality, power struggles, and competition for resources can create tensions and conflict, even in otherwise peaceful societies. Conflict may arise when individuals or groups are placed in positions of inequality or when their interests clash. Humans also tend to interpret the world through their own biases, leading to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of others' actions. These biases, such as in-group bias or confirmation bias, can fuel conflicts, as people may be more prone to perceiving threats or insults based on their pre-existing beliefs (Burton, 93).

CAUSES OF CONFLICT

The ontological principle of causality which is also rendered as the principle of Sufficient Reason or Intelligibility states: *Omins effesus causam habet* - 'every effect has cause'. This metaphysical dictum hinges on the fact that conflict does not occur in a vacuum. Therefore, there are root causes of conflict in a nation's existence. We shall now look at such causes; some of which are pointed out by Eyo *et al.*, (32-34).

1. **Economic resources:** Resources which include human resources and material resources constitute conflict if they are scarce. A nation that does not get the required resources to meet up with the allocation of its people and if there is no proper role played by the government in the allocation of the nation's resources, it will cause political disputes and the likes. Citizens of the country, Nigeria for instance should be fair in dealing with natural resources endowed by God (Ushie *et al.*, 95)
2. **Power:** this has to do with the ability or capacity to act or do something in a particular way. Also, the ability to achieve a desired effect whether in the face of opposition or not. Such power is gotten either through consent or to coercion, as a result of delegation, conferment etc. when it becomes toxic, whereby those at the corridors of power becomes rather tyrant, it will cause conflict. Where there is inability to exert influence and control over people for in any way if it causes conflicts.

3. **Leadership:** this may be considered as an art of motivating a group of people towards achieving a common goal. It can also be seen as an ability to influence and guide followers in a group, When those in leadership positions lacks the ability to inspire confidence in the right direction of a group or nation purpose. It brings out crisis. On the other hand, when about 2million people have interest direct or indirectly in few leadership position, it constitute conflict especially when it's not properly handle. We have had cases of electoral violence before, during and after elections. This is as a result of those to be at leadership positioning.
4. **Human Nature:** According to Eyo et al, conflict is engaged in human nation, and as quoted, "there is an irrational" human nature embedded in the human personality characterized by anger aggression, cruelty, hostility. These negative values, tendencies or sensitivities, together produce a violent behavior. The proclivity of the human persons to shine out in different areas of endeavors always causes conflict if pride, wealth, power, fame, etc are managed well.
5. **Religion:** This has to do with the belief and activities regarding to transcendent deity. In view of the religious dogmatism and fanaticism occasioned by religious activities crises and violence break out.
6. **Ideology:** As quoted by Eyo et al, ideology refers "the body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspiration of an individual group, clan or culture". Most time due to the ideological difference and different ideological orientations of some people and nations conflict arises, A case to note here is that of VSSR and USA who are seen on having a cold war because of their different ideologies eastern communism and western democracy respectively.

The above causes have their theoretical explanatory backgrounds or models which are considered as framework for the taxonomy of causes of conflict.

There is the **structural conflict theory** which derived its generic contents and orientation from two main sources: (i) The radical structural theory of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and V.I.Lenin. (ii) The liberal structuralism by Johan Galtung. The main idea of structural conflict is that conflict is inherent in the very way societies are structured or organized. This so conflict occurs as a result of the unjust structures in the society. There is the **biological theory**, whose proponent is least Thomas Hobbes. This holds that nature has endured many which the instinct of self-preservation such that "if two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy. They become enemies, and in a way to their end, which is principally their own self-preservation endeavor to destroy or subdue one another". This brings about violence which according to Hobbes harasses man in the state of nature, which is a state of war against every man. It is a state of "solitary, poor, nothing, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 409). There is the **realist theory** by Machiavelli which is seen in his pessimistic view of the human nature. This theory' holds that the combination of possessive and aggressive nature of the human person, compiled with restricted resources give use to conflicts especially in politics. There is the **frustration/aggression or human needs theory** by Abraham Maslow, who holds that the instruction which comes as a result of the Jack of expected needs satisfaction of the human persons causes conflicts. There is the **relational psycho-cultural theory** which deals with conflict emanating from the different sociological, political, historical and economic relationships and that of cultural ethnocentrism or cultural chauvinism.

IBUANYIDANDA NEOTIC PREPAEDUETIC AS A MODEL FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN RELATION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Noetic: The etymology of the term noetic comes from the Greek word *noétikos*, ultimately from *noéōs* meaning “I see or I understand” or from the word *nous* meaning intuitive knowing. The adjectival form of the word noetic means pertaining to the mind or intellect, or originating, or apprehended by reason. The noun form of the word noetic refers to the science of the intellect or a purely intellectual entity. Noetic philosophy is therefore a philosophy dealing with the mind, intellect or consciousness.

Propaedeutic: Propaedeutic, (etymologically: *propaideuin*) means to teach beforehand. It can be seen as a historical term for an introductory course into a discipline such as art, science, etc. It may be defined as knowledge, but not for proficiency (Richardson, 82). It can also be referred to as the nature of preliminary instruction.

Noetic Propaedeutic

Noetic Propaedeutic is seen as the training of the mind to acquire a mind-set that understands reality as being in mutual complementation.

Asouzu’s Noetic Propaedeutic

Noetic propaedeutic is a pedagogical and psycho-therapeutic dimension of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy. The philosophy of *Ibuanyidanda* is a philosophy founded by Prof Innocent I. Asouzu of the Philosophy department, University of Calabar, Calabar. Nigeria. The term *ibuanyidanda*, with its English equivalent “complementarity” is a concept that has its roots in the observational statement *ibuanyidanda*. (Asouzu, 10). Most Igbo, and most especially, traditional Igbo philosophers of the complementary system of thought, allude with the statement *ibuanyidanda* form of mutual dependence observable in nature. This statement is derived from the observation based on a colony of ants called *danda*. This is indicative of the fact that *danda*, in mutual dependence, ants have the capacity to carry loads that appear bigger and heavier than them. This implication portrays the fact that human beings and even communities just like the species of ant have the capacity to handle difficult challenges by complementary efforts. From the concept of *ibuanyidanda* comes the articulation of the new complementary’ ontology as its horizon and where the expression complementary reflection (*ibuanyidanda* philosophy) is derived. The point that stands out clear here is that anything that exists has to fulfill a minimum condition, which survives in its commitment to a mutual complementary relationship between it and the other units with which it shares a common framework. This is what makes existence meaningful. Little wonder the central thesis of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy: “anything that exists serves a missing link of reality”. (Asouzu 10). Serving as a missing link is the capacity for existent realities to be in mutual complementary relationship, as not being alone.

There are two principles of philosophy, namely, *the Principle of integration and the principle of progressive transformation*. The principle of integration which Asouzu calls the metaphysical variant of *ibuanyidanda* principle states: “Anything that exists serves a missing link of reality”. And the principle of progressive transformation which serves as the practical variant of *ibuanyidanda* states: “All human actions are geared towards the joy of being” (Asouzu, 44). It is through these principles, coupled with the imperative, truth and authenticity criterion that *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy seeks to harmonize theory and practice. In this case they emphasis more on the human insufficiency not forgetting the human determination to absoluteness and comprehensiveness in his future reference (Asouzu, 45).

The basic tools of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy are method, principles, imperative and truth and authenticity criterion of *ibuanyidanda philosophy*.

- i. **Method of *ibuanyidanda*:** it is the fundamental disposition needed for the missing link to think and act in an *ibuanyidanda mode*.
- ii. **Principles of *Ibuanyidanda*:** it is the principle of progressive transformation which claims that “All human actions are geared towards the joy of being”.
- iii. **Imperative of *Ibuanyidanda*:** *this* demands that limitations of beings should be allowed to be the cause of one’s joy.
- iv. **Truth and Authenticity Criterion of *Ibuanyidanda*:** it states that a world-immanent missing link should never be elevated to an absolute instance.

Ibuanyidanda philosophy relies on its method, principles, imperative and its truth and authenticity criterion as its tools to address the broken unity often sensed in human consciousness and the existential challenges and constraints imposed by our tension-laden existential experience.

The term noetic propaedeutic is attributed to Asouzu Innocent. It is a process of preparing the mind before it enters any discourse. It can also be seen as pedagogy of the mind. That is to say it is a process whereby the mind is trained to view reality as being in mutual complement. One of his proponents of *Ibuanyidanda*, Edet Mesembe, sees noetic propaedeutic as the kernel of *Ibuanyidanda*, philosophy. Thus, he says:

It refers to the need for training the mind to learn to view the units composing of any reality as complements. It is a process where the mind is educated to see beyond its narrow enclaves. It is an education of the mind towards renouncing a non-conciliatory, conceited, polarizing and discriminative type of mindset acquired through education, socialization and indoctrination (167).

This notion of Mesembe regarding noetic propaedeutic underscores the training of the mind toward approaching reality. It takes care of issues of factions, tribalism, nepotism and the likes. It takes care of the situation of one-sided approach to human interest. Thus, Asouzu avows: “one sided approach to human interests would lead to tension, confusion ...” (92). For Bisong, noetic propaedeutic is a “form of positive personal awareness of the capacity of the constraining mechanism to inject fear in an individual regarding the dangers we are facing and thus instigating the instinct of self-preservation to lead the mind in a one-directional and polarized manner” (181).

In the words of Oti Friday, noetic propaedeutic “refers to the process of training the mind and human reason, with the view to overcome the broken unity in human consciousness” (11). In the process of noetic propaedeutic (pre-education of the mind) the human subject learns to convert the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy into practical action. In this process of noetic propaedeutic. method of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy, which is the fundamental disposition needed to think and act in an *ibuanyidanda*, is co-intended and consummated, both formally and materially in all given instances. “Based on this method” as Asouzu avers, “*ibuanyidanda*, seeks to show why judgments concerning given empirical conditions are not necessarily objective statements of fact as they occur in our consciousness, but judgments can be preconditioned by mechanisms and phenomena that influence the way we perceive reality” (22). The understanding of this assertion is that the method of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy is an imperative venture in dealing with the world so that

theoreticians and actors can always search beyond mere sensations in order to ascertain some phenomena and mechanisms of rational, non-rational and quasi-rational nature in our experience of reality. The method of *Ibuanyidanda*, therefore, indicates why pedagogy in the sense of noetic propaedeutic is indispensable for addressing the challenges that threaten terrestrial existence in its fundamental tension-laden constitution.

There is a need for a mind-set that plunges into effective communication. The indispensable precondition of this is the training of the mind. Thus Asouzu avers that “the mind turns out to be that faculty on which all seeking meaning and understanding within contexts of communication can reliably build. In this way, the mind turns out to be that faculty through whose activities human beings can be distinguished from other lower beings and missing links” (Asouzu, 83). Noetic propaedeutic brings about the self-consciousness that reactivates the innate transcendent categories of the mind. Asouzu considers this as the highest act of self-consciousness or the state of *imaonweonye* in Igbo language. Through reactivation in innate categories of the mind to transcendent categories the subject will be able to supersede the impositions of the senses and the prevalent constraints as a result of the phenomenon of concealment and human tension-laden ambivalent existential situations. It therefore becomes sacrosanct for the mind to be sensitized in the act of positive self-awareness and affirmation in view of dangerous, insecure and unstable human situations. In a general existential relationship with reality, noetic propaedeutic gives a personalistic awareness regarding factors that posed existential challenges. Therefore the capacity of instilling positive fear in missing links against danger, insecurity and instability is typical of the process of noetic propaedeutic. It also brings to fore the proactive spirit of letting the missing links know that their efforts subsist in the fact that to be is to be in mutual complementary relationship with all existent realities. Noetic propaedeutic aims at disclosing the difficulties indulging in acts of excessive selfishness that is geared towards overturning of the interest of others. There is therefore a need for a kind of mindset that enters into a continuous type of noetic propaedeutic, “there is a need as Asouzu opines’ to trained the mind towards the acquisition of such a mindset” (81). “The main objective of such a noetic propaedeutic” therefore “is to make the acting subject adaptable and receptive towards understanding and sharing meaning in a way that transcends artificial boundaries it creates around itself” (18).

This can be achieved by designing peace building and conflicts resolution modules to educate and sensitize the members of the public agitating for one thing or the others from the government. Similarly, there are various ways to attempt to coordinate peace building process. One way is to develop a peace building at the individual level by training the minds to undergo a process of healings thereby x-ray all the various components inherent in peaceful coexistence looking at the economy, political and socio-cultural repercussion and the attendant destructions of lives and social devastations of a conflict. Though, no nation can attain greatness without conflict but we should be mindful of the twine consequences that conflict might pose if allowed. Therefore it must be done in a manner that it will not and does not affect the corporate existence of the country or threatening the security of the Nation. Extreme conflict over a status quo erupts basically to achieve or draw government attentions to just governance by underlying the goals and beliefs inherent in the agitation.

Consequently, conflict itself is a process of Communication, an engagement in a well-defined area of expression, passion and beliefs become evident of a hidden interest towards achieving a new structure of expectations if it is well articulated and managed from escalation. This is a clarion call on the citizens of nations of the world to use this which this paper offered to genuinely, fairly and justly come together on a round table to passionately address our common

problems in a more pragmatic and holistic manner. Where all segments of the aggrieved population can come together to embrace each other mutually through dialogue rather than extreme confrontations. It is pertinent at this junction to draw attentions of all nations irrespective of their position, cultural beliefs, political associations and affiliations to warn those fanning the embers of disintegration, hate speech, animosity to have a change of mind as the unity and diversity of the country is the strength of every nations. No body or groups of individuals can bring division and separate citizens from achieving the labours of the heroes past through deep rooted offensive language of disintegration or secession and other kinds of conflict.

CONCLUSION

There is need to develop a mindset that will in turn train people to come up with new ideas to solve intractable social problems and work relentlessly to execute them in order to achieve lasting social impact. In this case, of preparing society to overcome the effects of violent conflict All hands must be on deck to build a lasting peaceful society so critical for economic and social development which geared towards national development. Peace is more than the absence of war; it entails the presence of conditions that foster social justice, equitable resource distribution, and participatory governance. National development—defined as the capacity of a nation to improve the economic, political, and social well-being of its people—is deeply rooted in the presence of peace. Infrastructural development, education, healthcare, and investment suffer in the absence of peace.

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