



Peacefulness Enhanced by Informal Peace Education

Akintayo Sunday Olayinka^{1,2*}

¹Department of Intercultural Studies, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomosho, Ogbomosho, Nigeria; ²Virtual Visiting Research, Global Affairs and Sustainable Development Institute (GASDI), and Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the southwest Nigerian Yorùbá and their recognized tolerance or peacefulness in the context of Nigeria as a country. It addresses the peacefulness amidst the Nigeria unstable political and social circumstances, and in comparison, with the established Peaceful Societies (PS) in the global context. It provides a concise discussion about peace and conflict studies as it developed in the West followed by an outline of conflicts in Nigeria and amongst the Yorùbá to identify a gap for this inquiry.

The paper provides ways that informal peace education could support people of different beliefs to retain their harmony. Yet, there is a challenge to move the study of Peaceful Societies beyond the agrarian and rural communities to investigate modern societies for what it takes to live in harmony.

Keywords: Peace education; Peaceful Societies; Conflict transformation; Religion; Yoruba; ọmọlúàbí; African Studies; anthropology; Values; Culture; Numbering system/mathematics; Development studies; Policing

INTRODUCTION

Peace studies developed through the activities of scholars and peace practitioners from the 1900s and became academic study around the late 1950s [1-3]. During its early stage, professional bodies emerged like the Committee on Psychology of War and Peace, and the Peace Research Movement between the First and Second World Wars [4]. This is followed by many theories ranging from conflict resolution, non-violence protest, civil disobedience, conflict transformation and the realist approach, mostly from the West [5-9]. More works are still ongoing to bring a lasting peace to human society. As peace research continues to advance, it keeps seeking innovative approaches for in-depth studies to ameliorate any identified deficiencies. While Harris, et al., [3], and Montiel, et al., [10] argue for a multidisciplinary approach to research peace, Galtung suggests a trans-disciplinary approach for the study [11]. The contributions from different fields further enhanced the relevance of peace studies, both locally and internationally and have expanded peace studies to oil and gas industry, mining, arms struggle, and peacemaking to mention but a few.

To this end, lately, Mulimbi and Dryden-Peterson suggest a need for a multi-culturalist approach across about 20 ethnic groups in Botswana (southern part of Africa), where an assimilation approach (around the dominant ethnic group, culture, and language) has been used in the education policies and curriculum to foster unity and avoid armed conflicts [12]. While assimilation approach helped somewhat, the minority ethnic groups experienced low education benefits, a type of "negative peace", to secure unity with dreadful structural problems in their minority group. A multi-culturalism approach could help better sustain the "condition of positive peace" in the region, both scholars argued. Groves and others write on the United Nations peacekeepers' failure to address the gender violence prevalent in the Timor-Leste new state [13]. Marriage [14], discusses the contributions of multinational aid providers and the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to the economic hardship of the deprived people they were meant to help. Marriage further opposes the lukewarm attitude in investigating the agencies' failures to reach out to the Sierra Leone interior, and poor support to Congo and South Sudan. Providing solutions to conflicts and transforming societies for peacefulness is still an unfinished task.

Correspondence to: Akintayo Sunday Olayinka, Department of Intercultural Studies, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomosho, Ogbomosho, Nigeria, E-mail: tolayinka@gmail.com

Received: 18-Sep-2023, Manuscript No. GJISS-23-23077; **Editor assigned:** 20-Sep-2023, PreQC No. GJISS-23-23077 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 04-Oct-2023, QC No. GJISS-23-23077; **Revised:** 11-Oct-2023, Manuscript No. GJISS-23-23077 (R); **Published:** 18-Oct-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2319-8834.23.12.068

Citation: Olayinka AS (2023) Peacefulness Enhanced by Informal Peace Education. Global J Interdiscipl Soc Sci. 12:068.

Copyright: © 2023 Olayinka AS. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

According to Rodríguez-Martínez, “all types of violence have their origins in inequalities that have become embedded in the customs and traditions of our culture and society” [15]. Thus, what must be considered as an acceptable peace culture should promote opportunity for the wholeness of being; that is: “development which ensures the maximum well-being of societies, and which are fully consistent with the proposals of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Human Rights”. The idea of peace culture in relation to sustainable peace, not necessarily as an aftermath of war should be considered to further peace initiatives and education.

Religions are being made part of the debate. Peace studies in association with religion have become inevitable and a religious approach to peace research has begun to expand. Scholars in religion have made contributions with the rise in terrorism, violent propaganda, and heavy losses to human life and property [16-18]. Abu-Nimer focuses on peace in Islam and interreligious conflict resolution, dialogue and peacebuilding. Azumah [19], and Huff [20], write on Christian-Muslim relations and dialogue while Griggs [21], writes on Christian-Muslim relations with a focus on religious polemics and dialogue. Montiel, et al., [10], researched Christian-Muslim relations in Marawi in the Philippines. Research on religions such as these has the potential to serve a purpose in peace and conflict studies [11]. These are part of the areas of multidisciplinary study the earlier researchers have suggested.

The Problematic of the paper

The goal of the peace and conflict research pioneers, according to Galtung [22], was "to draft a research programme in the field of peace studies", suggesting a need to achieve peace, which involves the wholeness of life otherwise called positive peace [7, 8]. Peace must ensure a violence free life, be it physical, psychological, economical, and structural. Many communities have been identified as Peaceful Societies (PS) across the globe but with no examples from West Africa. However, the Yorùbá of southwest Nigeria have been identified by a group of scholars [23-25], as being peaceful, although not included among the PS in the wider peace and conflict studies. Another study also mentions the Senegalese [26,27] as peaceful people but not listed among the PS.

This study wants to join the debate to find out or at least open a discussion on: To what extent the Yorùbá's peacefulness could be generalized or recognized by scholars in peace and anthropological studies as an example of Peaceful Societies (PS)? In this paper, I examine the multi religious Yorùbá rooted in only one Yorùbá ethnic host culture, and how they manage religious related crises and reduce the effect of structural violence to retain their peace. What contributions could the Yorùbá studies bring to the idea of peacefulness in human societies?

METHODOLOGY

This study involves twenty-seven participants in an electronic qualitative survey designed to obtain qualitative answers where participants freely expressed their mind about the research questions. Seventy-two participated in three Focus Group

discussions sites and twenty-seven in-depth interviews. The inquiry was conducted among the Yorùbá people of southwest Nigeria. It focuses on peacefulness among the people; and one of the questions raised discussed in this paper is on how the Yorùbá manage their disputes and conflicts whilst sustaining the peace.

A recent study among the Yorùbá called, 'Knowing Each Other' (KEO) did several surveys in Lagos, Ogun, Ekiti and Ondo States [28]. KEO discovered the slow growth of Christianity in southwest Nigeria Yorùbáland, yet there is much work to be done in this region to examine how the Yorùbá manage conflicts and retain their peace. KEO had surveyed Osun, Ọyọ (Ibadan North) and the Kwara States (Offa), while I used separate locations within Ọyọ, Osun and Kwara States, namely Ọgbóniṣọ, Ibadan (a radio station); Seṣereṣi in Ọyọ; Ilorin in Kwara; and Ejigbo, Iwo and Ila-Orangun in Osun (states). While I recognize KEO's landmark and extensive survey, this study dwells on the qualitative method and use of thick description to obtain its findings with a focus on peacefulness. The following section is the literature review to contextualise the study as a Nigeria peace discourse.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been repeated occurrences of violent conflicts in Nigeria since its independence in 1960, from ethno-economic and ethno-political to ethnoreligious, and presently to terrorism and banditry, [29-41]. On religious grounds, Islamic Shari'ah is another point of dispute, while Adegoke [35], Oba [42], and Ibrahim [36], argue for Shari'ah implementation, Akinade [43], and Lateju [25] oppose it as having potential to infringe on non-Muslim Nigerians. A lot has been written on conflict and violence along with some outlawed gruesome activities like ritual homicides [44,45], which traditional followers of Isele Yorùbá religion have sought to disassociate themselves from, rituals considered unaccepted by the larger Yorùbá community, a deviant from the acceptable ọmọluàbí societal norm. There is a wide gap between what is obtainable in some societies, and what is taught and promoted as responsible culture. How do we establish a peaceful society in such cases?

A case for southwest Nigeria Yorùbá peacefulness

My focus is to seek how a peaceful community works to retain its serenity. How the Yorùbá community interact across religions to maintain harmony could, therefore, be explored here. Fabbro lists some criteria for assessing a community for its peacefulness like:

- (1) The society has no wars fought on its territory;
- (2) The society is not involved in any external wars;
- (3) There are no civil wars or internal collective violence;
- (4) There is no standing military-police organization;
- (5) There is little or no inter-personal physical violence;
- (6) There is little or no structural violence;
- (7) The society has the capacity to undergo change peacefully; and,
- (8) There is opportunity for idiosyncratic development.

The Peaceful Societies [46], do not necessarily meet all the criteria but must have displayed many on the list. While Fabbro

critiqued Melko for using only the first criteria for his study of the Semai, Fabbro used the first five in his work. This implies the study of PS is in progress and scholars are forward looking in their research. So, which of these criteria do the Yorùbá meet?

I suggest the Yorùbá met the criterial 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8 to be considered as a peaceful society when placed by the PS criteria. For instance, the Yorùbá have not fought a collective war since the end of their civil war in the mid-1800s, signing their treaty in 1886 [47,48]. A hundred years after a major war is recommended before a community can be reconsidered as a peaceful society [49]. The Nigeria federal government control both the police and army, whist, recently, the Yorùbá southwest

governors constituted a local Àmòtẹ̀kùn security unit to complement the efforts of the police in protecting their people [50]. In response to criterion three, although the Yorùbá have not had internal collective wars on its territory since the 1800s;

two towns, however, Ilé-Ifẹ̀ and Modákẹ́kẹ́ fought for some years in the 1990s which was resolved without the involvement of the nation, international military or United Nations' intervention. Some communities sometimes have disputes over land and leadership tussles but often settle their grievances locally.

Reports indicate that armed individuals identified as nomadic Fulani herders have been grazing their cattle on Yorùbá farmers' crops, and engaging in the abduction, assault, and homicide of residents in certain regions of Yorùbáland, including Oyo, Ekiti, Ondo, and Ogun states. Consequently, some Yorùbá villagers from Ogun State have fled the conflict, seeking refuge in the neighboring Benin Republic [51-53]. The Yorùbá's century long peacefulness has been tried to begin to exercise self-defense where possible and/or sometimes migrate from their own land instead of becoming warriors again as they were known for, with their own Empire in the past. However, they are becoming more vigilant because of the violence meted on their region and some rising to self-defense wherever possible as seen in some form of activism demonstrated recently by Chief Sunday Adeyemo Igboho (Sunday Igboho) and the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) [54-56].

Criteria 5 and 6 disturb the Yorùbá most. Instances of physical confrontations, including occasional domestic disputes within households, spousal disagreements, and the illegal use of occultism practices, which are prohibited by society, are at times brought to the attention of law enforcement through reports. Also, a protest about the police brutality tagged ENDSARS movement came to limelight in the region [57]. Many commended the protest's rapid pace and the mature way the demonstrators conveyed their messages. However, the situation took an aggressive turn when a group of thugs, in collusion with state authorities became involved, [58,59]. Another kind of physical violence observed among the Yorùbá is associated with national politics during elections. These occur periodically during the political campaigns and at election time. Similarly, structural violence is common but when its cause is beyond the control of an individual, the community meet to socialize and help one another to ameliorate the negative effects of such violence. Examples are the use of co-operative societies to cater for one another's needs like giving loans for part payment of

their children's education cost, trading support and provision of social amenities in their communities.

Positive peace is difficult to attain in any human society globally, including Nigeria where political actors contribute to the structural violence among their people through corruption. However, where do we place a community like the Yorùbá that met some of the PS's criteria, a people within West Africa without a representation among the PS but seem to cope under structural violence and retain some level of harmony despite all odds?

Looking at the complex nature of Nigeria, it is not free of conflicts, however, religious-related conflicts with fully blown violence are less common among the Yorùbá as some scholars have testified, [36,60,61]. This is not to exaggerate the Yorùbá's peacefulness but to identify a harmonious sample to explore how they manage their concerns and are often able to retain their peace. In the following section, I want to provide a survey of Yorùbá history covering from the last half of the 1800s onwards before peace studies emerged in the West, and prior to the Nigeria independence.

A Yorùbá history in context

The Yorùbá are a large ethnic group with a distinctive language and culture that are found in southwest Nigeria, some other parts of West Africa, Cuba, and South America. Many scholars have written about this [48,62-71]. The idea of peacefulness in connection with southwest Nigeria where the Yorùbá are densely populated began to come to limelight by late 19th and early 20th century. The British abolished the slave trade and established other forms of trade around 1861 noticeable at their base in Lagos in Yorùbáland [41], while the Yorùbá ended their civil war with a treaty in 1886.

However, peace studies began to take root in America as well as Europe during the twentieth century [4,72], and some states in West Africa began to struggle for self-determination and independence from colonialism. Around the same time in the 1900s, Nigeria was born as a nation [73], described as the amalgamation of the northern and southern areas of the Niger in 1914, headed by Lord Lugard [29,41]. By the mid-1900s, some eminent Nigerians began to form nationalist movements, calling for the independence of Nigeria and forming political parties. Sklar suggests that this started in 1946 [41], Coleman claims it began in 1952 [73], while Peel puts the events between 1945 and 1951 [74]. The identity of Nigeria as a nation, could have evolved over a period and was defined by ethnicity, culture, and language before independence [75,76]. On the struggle for national identity, Coleman further suggests a call for independence from colonialism around 1920s in Asia as well as the Arab world. All these began to raise human dignity in those contexts.

In as much as works on PS have focused mostly agrarian societies, I want more variant communities examined for peacefulness and the Yorùbá fall into this category. According to Falola [77], the Yorùbá are among the best-educated Africans and include those whom Falola described as "prominent Yorùbá intelligentsia outside of the academy". Olupona [66], and

Abiodun [70], describe the Yorùbá as the most studied ethnic group in Africa as Olupona reiterates the Yorùbá's developed "arts, music, religion and oral literature". The Yorùbá were enthusiastic about literacy, translation, mathematics, and publications in their language, even in resistance to the British colonial authority by winning the support of the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) for their publications [67,78,79]. Ajiboye [80], suggests that, although many languages including the Yorùbá have additive and multiplicative methods, Yorùbá's subtractive mechanism is a unique contribution to the numeral system. What Abioye means is this; while eleven is called *mókànlá*, it literally means (10 add 1), *méjilá* means (10 add 2). However, sixteen is called *mérindínlógún* meaning twenty minus 4, and seventeen is *métàdínlógún* (20 minus 3). This counting goes on to multiple of tens and hundreds. With their wealth of history, enthusiasm, and exposure to the outside world, how have the Yorùbá kept their harmony or managed disputes over the years? The claim of good interpersonal relationships and tolerance mentioned by scholars is taken further in this paper as it sounds distinct from the religious violence often reported in other parts of Nigeria and globally. A study about the Yorùbá could offer a viewpoint about conflict management strategies among non-offensive value cherished communities.

Yorùbáland compared with other regions of Nigeria using peace index.

There are published data on the global peace index, Nigerian mineral resources, population, and Nigerian policing that I want to engage with in this discourse. The sources speak on the Nigerian situation regarding peacefulness, violence, and their natural resources.

The Global Peace Index (GPI) "measures peacefulness across the domains of safety and security, ongoing conflict, and militarisation". Nigeria ranks 148th out of the 163 countries in the GPI indicators in 2019. In the GPI where 5 is the worst score, Nigeria is rated worst-5 in the perception of criminality, 5 in political terror, 4.4 in terrorism impact, 4.5 in death from internal conflict, 5 in internal conflicts fought, 4.6 in United Nations peacekeeping funding, 3.1 in external conflicts fought, 2 in militarization, 3.3 in Safety and Security, and 3.1 in domestic and international conflict, (Global-Peace-Index) [103, 104]. At least two points came up clearly here:

- The militarization that has a score of two can rise higher in the future if the security situation continues as it is, and the citizens are presented with no options other than to defend themselves.
- Nigeria is not a peaceful nation when compared with many other countries globally. For example, Senegal-another West African country, although smaller in size and population was more peaceful in ranking 58th while Nigeria ranks 148th out of the 163 countries on the list from the same above reference, (GPI). Iceland in another continent has been the most peaceful country in the entire universe since 2008 followed by New Zealand, Austria, Portugal, and Denmark.

It has been observed, "over the last ten years, the average level of global peacefulness has deteriorated by 3.78%" (Statistic-Times). A Newspaper editorial argues that many farmers stopped farming due to the fear of armed bandit attackers. The general situation of Nigeria security is alarming as it has begun to affect the local agricultural productivity when people fear going to farm due to insecurity. Of recent, over forty fishers were slaughtered in Borno State by Boko Haram terrorist group [81]. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports, "7.1 million people in Nigeria need urgent, life-saving humanitarian assistance in 2019 and 6.2 million are targeted to receive aid" (OCHA). Going by the intensity of the violence and instability in Nigeria, the situation does not seem to be abating as 1.8 million are internally displaced, (OCHA) [107]. The three Nigeria regions are subjected to kidnappers, while the south in addition has armed agitators for resources control.

The peace associated with the Yorùbá by some academics is not absolute but the strength to keep the peace is notable. The region has experienced distressing circumstances of abductions on roads leading to some parts of Ìbàdàn, Ifẹ̀, Ondó, and Èkítì, the reason for the establishment of the Àmòṣékùn security outfit in the region. The editorial proposes that Nigeria is being categorized among the nations facing state failure. Nigeria as a country, therefore, is far from being grouped among the global PS. However, can Yorùbá community that is working to keep the peace be enlisted as a PS? I further examine the claim of a lack of resources the Yorùbá could fight to protect as a cause of their relative peace.

Southwest Nigeria mineral resources

The scholarly debate on violence and insecurity in Nigeria has a soft spot for the Yorùbá. They found some level of peacefulness, and implying a lack of mineral resources like petroleum that the Nigeria Federal government can exploit as a reason for the absence of serious agitation and community generated violence among the Yorùbá. Such arguments do not go far as Yorùbáland has many natural resources. Going by the major mineral resources in Nigeria southwest, Oyo State is listed as having "Aquamarine, cassiterite, clay, dolomite, gemstone, gold, kaolin, marble, silimonite, talc and tantalite" [105]. The state also has tantalum, quartz, iron ore and laterite, [109]. Some States including Èkítì has extra in addition to the above list. Ogun has Bitumen, Ondó has bitumen, limestone and oil/gas etc., and Osun has Columbite, Gold, and etc, [105]. All the southwestern states have families raising livestock and growing both food and cash crops like yam, beans, soya-bean, kolanut, cocoa etc., [108], although sometimes under the attack of non-settled Fulani herdsmen. Arguments for a lack of mineral resources the Yorùbá could have agitated to protect and thereby lose their serenity cannot be sustained.

Structural infrastructure and related violence

The infrastructural development that has slowed down for many decades in Nigeria is attributed to uncoordinated military and

political leadership of the country, which has led to serious structural violence on its citizens. The world population review puts the percentage of people having access to clean water at 68.5% Nigeria-Population, while the Federal Ministry of Water Resource put access to basic water at 67.9% in 2018 [82]. The first put the figure of those struggling to get clean drinking water at 31.5%, while the latter put it at 26.7% (but I think is more than that). However, I agree with the data that as much as 71% are struggling to have “improved sanitation” [83]. Only about 42% have personal household sanitation not shared with non-residents or outsiders, 19.2% used safely managed sanitation services and 24.4% do not have toilet facilities but practice open defecation, and it is estimated that half of the Northern Central Nigeria zone practice open defecation, [83-85].

There have been continuous agitations in the country on the need to increase the minimum wage from 18,000 naira (£15) to 30,000 naira (£25) a month, when a British pound was about 1180 naira. One can imagine the level of structural violence as citizens struggle for basic life necessities like food, social amenities and good health for themselves and their families in such conditions. Thus, structural violence in Nigeria does not exclude the Yorùbá, but they often manage the situation to reduce its effects on their lives through social interaction, family connections and cooperative ventures.

Policing

Police records obtained from the Nigeria crime statistics on reported offences in 2017 shows a little lower level of crimes among the Yorùbá when compared with those in the north, but significantly lower when compared with the south/east. I examine here, the level of violence recorded by the police in six states from southwest Nigeria (excluding Lagos) [1], and six states from each of the other two regions, north and south/east Nigeria. The crime in Lagos state alone amounts to 37.85% of the national record, so, for a better examination of the crime distribution as reported within the regions, I dwell on the selected eighteen (6 × 3) states below, with reference to the National bureau of statistics [86]:

- **Yorùbá southwestern Nigeria:** Ondo 2.76%, Òyó 2.2%, Ogun 1.19%, Ekiti 1.02%, Osun 0.66%, and Kwara 0.62% (Total=8.45%).
- **Northern region of Nigeria:** Kano 4.24%, Niger 1.98%, Plateau 1.94%, Borno 1.18%, Kaduna 0.8% and Zamfara 0.39% (Total=10.53%).
- **South/eastern Nigeria:** Abia 9.21% Cross Rivers 9.17%, Delta 5.31%, Ebonyi 3.13%, Anambra 1.4% and Rivers 1.17% (Total=29.39%).

Some states which are projected by the media as experiencing violence, arson, murder, retaliatory attacks, and displacement of people in the north such as Kaduna, Borno and Zamfara invariably have lower police crime reports documented for that year, which poses the question of what reportable conflicts to the police are in Nigeria. Regardless, the cumulative records for each six selected states among the Yorùbá (8.45%) show a lower crime rate than the Hausa/Fulani north (10.53%), while the south/east has the highest reported crimes (29.39%) in the

nation. The weakness of these figures, however, is based on the States, not the population of the residents, and the Federal government’s stance against some Southeast region’ militant groups, which might increase both the violence rate and the reportable offences in the South/east region. The weakness notwithstanding, the crime records in each state provide material to make a representation for an informed discussion on the spread of violence within the selected states and Nigeria as a whole.

Going by serious violence leading to death, Campbell, through the Nigeria Security Tracker (NST), presents research suggesting a higher death record in the northeast, while the least occurrences are in southwestern Nigeria:

The Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) tracks violence that is both causal and symptomatic of Nigeria’s political instability and citizen alienation. The data are based on weekly surveys of Nigerian and international media [87].

The cumulative death records from 2011 to 2020 are classified as originating from Boko Haram (17,115), Boko Haram and the State Actor (19, 096), Sectarian Actor (10, 591), State Actor (9,173) and other Armed Actor (5,489) [87]. I decided to add up the number of recorded deaths in Campbell’s research from the six states per region already used listed above. The cumulative number of deaths in the north (while excluding Borno known for terrorists’ violence, which is exceptionally high 30, 269) is 10, 410. The number of recorded deaths in the southeast within the same period is 2, 849, while the death record in the southwest is 1,152. If Lagos that has the highest police recorded of violence is added to the death record in the southwest, the total will be 1,816 that is still the lowest of all the three regions mapped out here. The southwest Yorùbá still appears more peaceful than the rest of the country. However, could evidence from the published literature on disputes and conflicts provide further clues for this investigation?

Some local religious disputes

There are reports of occasional religious disputes among the Yorùbá that have been resolved amicably. Mu’azzam, et al., [37] attest to Christians and Muslims managing their disputes, while Makinde [88], and Olarinoye [89] reported the roles community and political regional leaders play in promoting peace, and in managing crises. Keeping the existing harmony with evidence of dispute resolution on display among the Yorùbá form basis for their local alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

The Yorùbá intra-ethnic religious conflicts and the way they are handled, provide a contribution to conflict management and the conflict de-escalation process within their community. In that light, how peace is sustained in the Yorùbá community is worth studying further as well as any other peaceful communities as a contribution to peace and conflict studies. In this kind of interaction, (outside of regional and national politics) the Yorùbá often manage their crises to keep it from escalating. They do this especially in the religious and structural spheres to provide a guide for peace sustenance within their religious and cultural settings.

DISCUSSION

The findings regarding the inquiry on how the Yorùbá regardless of their religions manage disputes and conflicts to retain their peace as much as possible show that there is an amiable commitment among many Yorùbá Christians and Muslims who display theological similarities for peacefulness [90]. A continuous appraisal of this strength is a credible contribution to their peacefulness. I refer to Wiberg's concepts of detribalization and retribalization [91], and whether they offer clues to the question on how the Yorùbá Christians and Muslims sustain the peace in their communities. Some values within the Yorùbá culture enhance the peacefulness between Christians and Muslims. While Christians strive for tolerance and kindness, Muslims often reciprocate with the same gesture in many instances, a quality that is lacking in some conflict-prone societies. There are situations in which Christian families care for their Muslim cousins through the idea of *fúnmi lómọ wò* (children looked after by an extended family member). There are examples of Yorùbá Muslims showing kindness to their Yorùbá Christian cousins and neighbours. Significant to note is that while the source of peacefulness in Christianity is traced to their approach to the Bible, with a central emphasis on friendliness, the Muslims reciprocate this with *Kòḍà-Doruuri* a local transliteration for *al-Qai'dah-Muamalat-Darar*, the act of practicing Islamic rights in a sociable way without making life difficult for neighbors, the qualities not strange to the Yorùbá culture. The Yorùbá are known for being accommodating on religious and cultural grounds, as their kings generously offered land to the two new religions (of Christianity and Islam) to build places of worship, schools, and hospitals since around 1800.

Some non-Yorùbá cultures like foreign languages and dressing, have influenced the Yorùbá over the years and remain in competition with other Nigerian cultures. While English is used as the official language, it has not been seen to threaten the peace enjoyed by the people. The use of Yorùbá is strong in markets, social functions, music, on the radio and television, and this is known to promote the Yorùbá virtues as a medium of dissemination of information. As a result, the Yorùbá have not been 'detribalised' so fast in the sense of completely losing the values of their language, sayings, drumming and music. The culture is still supported and promoted by the local media, albeit in competition with other languages and cultures from their neighborhood and the social media. The virtues expressed in the Yorùbá language translate into harmonizing the Yorùbá's interpretation of their religions by stressing the contexts of love, harmony, and care for one another. This supports Laitin's description of the Yorùbá's "unnatural toleration", which is ideally known to many Yorùbá Christians and Muslims as "natural", although currently under the threat of structural violence experienced across the country. Wiberg, considering "peaceful cultures", asks:

What characteristics do they have in common that seem to make for their peaceful qualities? On what dimensions do they differ, hence demonstrating that a given variable value is not a necessary condition for peace? To what extent do they contain what forms of structural violence? [91].

As I consider a religiously tolerant community like the Yorùbá, Wiberg [91], further comes to mind calling for a multi-layered inquiry on peaceful cultures.

This study provides an answer to Wiberg's questions. One, the Yorùbá culture, as expressed in their tolerance and use of language, the way the culture is communicated through music, sayings and interpersonal relationships and their understanding and respect, all work together to harmonize the Yorùbá. Regarding Wiberg's second question, the Yorùbá are a mono-ethnic language group considered to live in harmony. Even though the common language has made contributions to community harmony, the way the Yorùbá use their language, sayings, stories, and music have all been found helpful in educating and promoting harmony and virtues among the people, irrespective of religion. It is the richness of the language that is profound – that is, its dynamics, usage, and structure – which makes it unique. The Senegalese in a separate study [27,92], have many languages and found to live harmoniously. The harmony is produced by the way the Senegalese languages utilize the common values of hospitality (*teranga*) in the Senegalese communities. It is the use of the language and contents that matter to peacefulness.

On Wiberg's question of structural violence, this study reveals both physical and structural violence among the Yorùbá. This is not strange as one form of violence or the other are found among the acclaimed PS [93], although often being able to manage it as the Yorùbá also often do. This study, as well unveils the Yorùbá's coping strategies and maintenance of peace, especially between Christians and Muslims within the Yorùbá host culture. The way the Yorùbá manage their occasional religious conflicts is seen in their consciousness and references to eternal judgment and other aspects of their valued culture. This study, therefore, like PS, presents the need for appraisals of the positive values in peaceful communities to enhance positive peace and de-escalate conflicts. Empirical inquiries among peaceful communities have the potential to provide further findings that can move conflict transformation and peace studies forward into the ideals of positive peace.

Togetherhness

Features like social interactions found among the PS are prominent among the Yorùbá [2]. The PS maintain their peacefulness through a closed community interaction and returning to their local areas to maintain their harmony whenever they had reasons to contact the outside world. Conversely, the Yorùbá have travelled far and wide, and often interact with people of other religions and cultures. Many Yorùbá communities have been identified making efforts to retain their cherished peaceful values despite their exposure to modern civilization while the PS often retain a closed community. While the currently recognised PS comprise mostly of the agrarian communities that socialize through their culture, utilizing a controlled access to the modern world, the Yorùbá mingle with other cultures and civilizations, even in their homeland. So, by comparison, the Yorùbá are well educated and more exposed to modern civilization with their first university established in Ibadan in 1948, television in 1959, and have

contributed to numbering technics in mathematics as Ajiboye has suggested [80], before the British colonialism. Yorùbá's example of peaceful features is an indication that the idea of peacefulness should not be restricted to the agrarian community (as in the case of most of the identified PS) but can be further explored among modern societies.

With the similar peaceful features identified among the PS and the Yorùbá like social interactions and leadership roles in sustaining peace at the community level, the idea of humans, being helplessly violent, as often presented in the urban Western cities requires a reassessment. In support of human potential for peacefulness, Sponsel's extensive reviews became useful, probing the works on conflict and war with little attention to peace or nonviolence, which Sponsel describes as reducing peace to the avoidance of war or violence [94]. From the study, Sponsel suggests humans are not just historically predisposed to violence contrary to ideas often projected by the West. This provides a clue to the query of the sustainability of peace in the human community. Peace is sustainable in human society, although requires a hard work.

The harmony in human society has to do with many features promoted by the community, mostly supported by their local leadership (cultural and religious). Education, both formal and informal as promoted in the community, thus plays a significant role in societal peacefulness. Continuity in the form of education plays a significant role in the sustainability of any special value.

Informal peace education.

A long-term peace advocacy or education, not necessarily as an aftermath of war or conflict, but embedded within the social, religious, and cultural milieu, often delivered informally *via* a daily engagement using music, idioms, stories, literature, and legends have helped to sustain the peace among the Yorùbá. The make-up of the culture, leadership, social interaction, religious understanding, family unity, and the media all communicate values and comprise features that support the Yorùbá to sustain their peace. A person who displays the expected virtues in the community is referred to as *omólúábí*. The virtues are mostly unwritten but cherished expectations of the family and community, which are passed on informally, embedded in the Yorùbá practices, focusing harmony or peacefulness. The people, informal process/education, and the virtues do not necessarily have to be assembled as an aftermath of a war, often no war ever envisaged in this context, which I describe as an informal peace education.

On peace education, Harris, et al. [95], suggest: "Educators influence the important values and beliefs of their students who are taught about peaceful responses to complex conflicts in the post-modern world". The important words in that definition are "influence", "values", "beliefs" and "taught". Other ideas of peace education both authors mention include the goal that future conflicts "are resolved non-violently and build a sustainable environment", followed by attributes of "love, compassion and reverence for all life". In this study, values and beliefs are found in various contexts, seeking to resolve disputes before it escalates through communal efforts

with the goal of sustaining the existing harmony. This type of intervention is informal but enhances peacefulness as also found among the PS like the Paliyans, Semai, Ifaluk, Chewong [96-98]. This idea of maintenance of harmony re-affirms Bond's suggestion describing peace, not as an end, but rather as a continuing process. Similarly, the PS are described, not as utopian in themselves but displaying abilities to defuse tension [99]. The Yorùbá practise an informal peace education in an informal setting, with known but often unwritten curricula embedded in their daily activities. This education does not have to be an aftermath of a serious conflict but a continuous learning process to sustain harmony in their community.

This study provides the Yorùbá's proactive support for peace through features within their culture, social setting, and religious milieu. Even though both formal and informal peace education can have written curricula, the informal peace education does not often produce one; the method of delivery could also differ: The formal in a structured setting following a war or conflict situation, whilst the informal is provided within the structures of the society such as homes, communities and through the media to maintain peace not necessarily as an aftermath of a conflict.

Harris, et al., [95], have suggested the benefit of peace education as its "potential for inner transformation" and "social change", which is taught in different settings. They add a pertinent feature, "its commitment to the way of peace". The maintenance of peace among the Yorùbá involves constant learning in different settings: homes, community areas, and townships through the radio, immediate family, friends, in-laws, elders, and responsible older people in the vicinity. This takes place informally but is potent for educating their community. This is a venture in which everyone learns, and all learners subsequently train others. This provides an insight into a harmonious society to sustain its peace through features they know to have the credibility to resolve disputes, de-escalate conflicts and retain their harmony towards positive peacefulness. This resembles the communal life among the PS [100-111]. There is a need for proactive support for informal peace education, a lifestyle of learning during peacetime. So, Yorùbá communities are found to manage their conflicts and retain their peace through a lifelong informal education utilizing various features of their culture, religions, and social values as they reject aberrant intrusions [110].

CONCLUSION

The Yorùbá under normal circumstances present certain aspects of their values and religions as qualities to strengthen their harmony just as scholars have identified the essence of peacefulness among the PS and the Senegalese's Teranga (hospitality). Complimentary values are found to harmonise communities when given a chance to do the work. Most globally identified Peaceful Societies (PS) are not exposed to modern education and civilization, and where they do, often seek to return to their communities to keep their peace culture. However, this paper presents the southwest Nigerian Yorùbá that are well educated and/or exposed to modern civilization along

with their peace conservation features. Could this be their journey towards becoming a globally recognized peaceful society?

This paper has taken the study of peaceful societies to modern and developed society, from agrarian to developing nation in search of elements of peacefulness, to contribute to peaceful societies rather than retaining the study among the agrarian communities. In case of the violent bandits and terrorists' activities against a peaceful society where their existence is threatened, could self-defence be considered as nonviolence? This question is relevant for consideration in further study on peace in a global context.

DECLARATIONS

Funding statement

No funding from anyone or institutions.

Conflict of interest statement

There are no conflicts of interest.

Ethics statement

The research followed the ethics statements and policy of Middlesex University London, and Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, United Kingdom.

REFERENCES

- Alkana LK, Amy S. Women strike for peace: Traditional motherhood and radical politics in the 1960s' history: Reviews of new books. 1984;23(1).
- Dungen P, Wittner LS. Peace History: An Introduction. *J Peace Res.* 2003;40(4):363-375.
- Harris IM, Fisk LJ, Rank C. A portrait of university peace studies in North America and Western Europe at the end of the millennium. *Int J Peace Stu.* 1998;3(1).
- Kelman HC. Reflections on the history and status of peace research. *Conflict management and peace science.* Sage. 1981;5(2):95-110.
- Barash DP, Webel CP. *Peace and conflict studies.* Los Angeles Sage. 2009.
- Barsky AE. *Conflict resolution for the helping professions.* Oxford University Press. 2014.
- Galtung J. *Conflict transformation by peaceful means (the transcend method).* Participants' Manual. 2000.
- Galtung J. *Peace by peaceful conflict transformation-the transcend approach.* Routledge. 2007.
- Sriram CL, Martin-Ortega O, Herman J. *War, conflict and human rights: Theory and Practice.* Routledge. 2010.
- Montiel CJ, Macapagal MEJ. Effects of social position on societal attributions of an asymmetric conflict. *J Peace Res.* 43;(2006):219.
- Galtung J. Do peace studies reach out, including others? *Dilemata.* 2010;3:129-132.
- Mulimbi B, Dryden-Peterson S. There is still peace. There are no wars: Prioritizing unity over diversity in Botswana's social studies policies and practices and the implications for positive peace. *Int J Educ Dev.* 2018;61:142-154.
- Groves GE, Resurrection CBP, Doneys P. Keeping the peace is not enough: Human security and gender-based violence during the transitional period of Timor-Leste. *J Soc Iss Southeast Asia.* 2009;24(2):186-210.
- Marriage Z. *Not breaking the rules, not playing the game: International assistance to countries at war.* Hurst. 2006.
- Rodríguez-Martínez C, Calvo G. Gender and positive social interaction at school: A proposal based on the culture of peace and the capability approach. *Procedia Soc Behav Sci.* 2014;132:107-113.
- Abu-Nimer M. Conflict resolution, culture, and religion: Toward a training model of interreligious peacebuilding. *J Peace Res.* 2001;38(6):685-704.
- Abu-Nimer M. A framework for nonviolence and peacebuilding in Islam. *J Law Relig.* 2015;15:217-265.
- Paden JN. *Muslim civic cultures and conflict resolution: the challenge of democratic federalism in Nigeria.* Brookings Institution Press. 2006.
- Azumah J. Evangelical Christian views and attitude towards Christian-Muslim dialogue. *Transformation: Int J Holistic Mission Stud.* 2012;29(2).
- Huff LM. The crusades and colonial imperialism: Some historical consideration concerning Christian-Muslim interaction and dialogue. *Missiology.* 2014;32(2):141.
- Griggs J. Beyond the polemics of Christian-Muslim relations: Exploring a dialogical approach. *Int J Holistic Mission Stud.* 2013;30(2):128-140.
- Galtung J. Twenty five years of peace research: Ten challenges and some responses. *J Peace Res.* 1985;22(2):141-158.
- Akinade AE. *Christian-Muslim dialogue in Yorubaland: An ecumenical (sic) study (Ondo-Yoruba Nigeria, African people) Union theological seminary.* 1996.
- Akinjogbin IA. The Oyo empire in the 18th century-A reassessment. *JHSN.* 1966;3(3):449-460.
- Lateju FT. Religious conflict and peace building initiatives in a multi-religious Nigeria. *Christian-Muslim relations in West Africa. WAATI.* 2012.
- Wisconsin. *Senegal: An imam in saint louis', regions and themes: Africa.* 2009.
- Ugucconil C. *Senegal, where Christians and Muslims live together in peace.* Herald Malaysia Online. 2018.
- Nolte I, Rebecca J, Occhiali G. Exploring survey data for historical and anthropological Research: Muslim-Christian relations in Southwest Nigeria. *African Affairs.* 2016;115 (460).
- Adamolekun T. A historical perspective in the Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria since 1914. *J Arts Humanit.* 2013;2(5):59-66.
- Adele BJ, Oloruntele A. Ethnic Agitation and Conflicts in Nigeria, 1999-2000. *Development Policy Management Network Bulletin.* 2001;13(3):35-36.
- Alabi DT. Religious conflicts in northern Nigeria: A critical analysis. *India Quarterly.* 2002;58(3/4):273-302.
- Alemika EEO, Chukwuma IC. *Police-community violence in Nigeria. Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN) and the national human rights commission Abuja, Nigeria.* 2000.
- Lyons S, Reinermann D. *Nigeria strategic conflict assessment methodology, key findings and lessons learnt.* 2003.
- Osaghae EE, Suberu RT. *A history of identities, violence, and stability in Nigeria. Centre for research on inequality. Hum Sec Ethnicity.* 2005.
- Adegoke KA. Issues of co-existence among the faiths and faithfuls in Nigeria: An Islamic perspective. In *Christian-Muslim relations in West Africa. WAATI.* 2012.
- Ibrahim J. Religion and political turbulence in Nigeria. *J Modern African Stud.* 1991;29(1):115-136.

37. Mu'azzam I, Ibrahim J. Religious identity in the context of structural adjustment in Nigeria. Identity transformation and identity politics under structural adjustment in Nigeria. Nordiska African institute and center for research and documentation. 2000.
38. Sodipo MO. Mitigating radicalism in northern Nigeria. 2013.
39. Nbeta AD. Ogoni as an international colony: A critique of imperialism. *Int J Hum Social Sci.* 2012;2(10).
40. Osaghae EE. The Ogoni uprising: Oil politics, minority agitation and the future of the Nigerian state. *African Affairs.* 1995;94(376): 325-344.
41. Sklar RL. Nigerian political parties: Power in an emergent African nation. Africa World Press. 2004.
42. Oba AA. Islamic law as customary law: The changing perspective in Nigeria. *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly.* 2002;51(4):817-850.
43. Akinade AE. The precarious agenda: Christian-Muslims relations in contemporary Nigeria professor jane smiths' "Essentials of Christian-Muslim Relations" Summer Class. 2002.
44. Ogunnaike J. Police arrest 15 suspected cultists in Ogun. Agency-Report. 2020.
45. BBC News. Nigeria: Police Probe Ibadan 'House of Horror'. 2014.
46. Peaceful Societies. Peaceful societies. Birmingham. 2019.
47. Balogun K. Government in old Oyo empire. Apapa, lagos, Nigeria. Africanus publishers. 1985.
48. Law R. The Oyo empire: A West African imperialism in the era of the Atlantic slave trade. Aldershot: Gregg Revivals. 1991.
49. Melko M, Hord JK, Weigel RD. Peaceful societies revisited. *J Peace Res.* 1983;15(3):39-42.
50. Agboluaje R. Makinde Declares Amotekun Operational with 1, 500 Officers in oyo. *The Guardian Nigeria.* 2020.
51. Oludare I. Fulani herdsmen killings: Ogun begins recruitment of Amotekun operatives. *Daily Post.* 2021.
52. Oludare I. Herdsmen crisis: Scores of Ogun indigenes now refugees in benin republic. *Daily Post.* 2021.
53. Olatunji D. ICYMI: Ogun residents displaced by herdsmen's attacks flood Benin republic refugees camp. *Punch.* 2021.
54. Badru A. Don't demonize Sunday Igboho, Akintola warns Makinde. *Vanguard.* 2021.
55. Omofoye T. OPC gives Fulani herders ultimatum to expose criminals among them. *The Guardian.* 2019.
56. Agboluaje R. Jubilation as herdsmen warlord, wakili, is arrested in oyo (Police deny arrest of OPC members, say warlord in hospital). *The Guardian.* 2021.
57. Ramon O. Soldiers went to Lekki toll gate with both live and blank bullets-general. *Nigeria Punch.* 2020.
58. Afejuku T. Nigeria's weakest government. *The guardian newspaper.* 2020.
59. Full speech: Buhari's address on#EndSARS protests. *Nigeria Punch Newspaper.* 2020.
60. Goddard H. Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria and Malaysia. Islamic interpretations of Christianity. Routledge. 2001.
61. Laitin DD. Hegemony and culture: Politics and change among the Yoruba. University of Chicago. 1986.
62. Falola T, Heaton MM. A history of Nigeria. Cambridge University Press. 2008.
63. Falola T. The Yoruba nation. Yoruba identity and power politics, boydell and brewer. 2006;22:29-48.
64. Eltis D. The diaspora of Yoruba speakers, 1650-1865 dimensions and implications. *The Yoruba diaspora in the Atlantic world.* Indiana University Press. 2004.
65. Roberts K. Yoruba family, gender, and kinship roles in new world slavery. *The Yoruba diaspora in the Atlantic world.* Indiana University Press. 2004.
66. Olupona JK. The study of Yoruba religious tradition in historical perspective. *Numen.* 1993;40(3):240-273.
67. Atanda A. The Yoruba people: Their origin, culture and civilization. *The Yoruba history, culture and language.* Ibadan University Press. 1996.
68. Parrinder G. Yoruba-speaking peoples in Dahomey. *J Int African Ins.* 1947;17(2):122-129.
69. Parrinder E. Islam and West African indigenous religion. *Numen.* 1959;6(2):130-141.
70. Abiodun R. African aesthetics. *J Aesthet Educ.* 2001;35(4):15-23.
71. Ogen O. Exploring the potential of praise poems for historical reconstruction among the Idepe-Ikale in Southeastern Yorubaland. *History in Africa.* 2007;34:255-271.
72. Boulding KE. Future directions in conflict and peace studies. *J Conflict Resol.* 1978;22(2):342-354.
73. Coleman JS. Nigeria: Background to nationalism university of California press. 1958.
74. Peel JDY. The cultural work of Yoruba ethnogenesis. *Critical Conc Political Sci.* 2000;3;964.
75. Otite O. Marriage and family systems in Nigeria. *Int J Sociol Family.* 1991;21(2):15-54.
76. Falola T. Violence in Nigeria: The crisis of religious politics and secular ideologies. University of Rochester Press. 1998.
77. Falola T. The Yoruba wars of the nineteenth century. African Studies Program. 1991.
78. Adetunji LA. The glory of Yoruba nation. Lagos: Lichfield Nigeria limited. 1999.
79. Akinjogbin IA. The growth of Yoruba studies in the western region of Nigeria 1955-1965. Ibadan University Press. 1996.
80. Ajiboye O. The Yoruba numeral system. The numeral systems of Nigerian languages. M and J Grand Orbit Comm. 2016.
81. Marama N. How Boko haram slaughtered our people-survivors. *The Vanguard.* 2020.
82. Federal-Ministry. Federal ministry of water resources in collaboration with national bureau of statistics: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. 2018.
83. Nigeria-Population. Nigeria Population. *World Population Review.* 2019.
84. Federal-Ministry. The federal ministry of water resources. making Nigeria open-defecation-free by 2025: A national road map. 2019.
85. Obiezu T. Nigerian authorities launch campaign against open defecation. *Voice of America (VOA).* 2019.
86. National-Bureau-of-Statistics. Nigeria crime statistic reported offences by type and state. *The National Bureau of Statistics.* 2018.
87. Campbell J. The council on foreign relations: The Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) in Africa studies. 2020.
88. Makinde F. Tinubu meets CAN over Osun schools' crisis. *Punch.* 2014.
89. Olarinoye G. Tension as masquerades storm troubled Osun school. *Vanguard.* 2014.
90. Niyi. Tension in Osun as religious crisis looms in secondary school. *Information Nigeria.* 2014.
91. Wiberg H. What have we learnt about peace? *J Peace Res.* 1981.
92. Senegal. Senegal: Conversation in a university, regions and themes: Africa. 2009.
93. Kemp G. The concept of peaceful societies. Keeping the peace: Conflict resolution and peaceful societies around the world. Routledge. 2004.

94. Sponsel LE. The natural history of peace: A positive view of human nature and its potential. *A natural history of peace*. Vanderbilt University Press. 1996:95-125.
95. Harris IM, Morrison ML. *Peace education* (Third edition/foreword by Tony Jenkins. ed.). McFarland and Company. 2013.
96. Gardner PM. Respect and nonviolence among recently sedentary paliyan foragers. *J Royal Anthropol Inst*. 2000;6:215-236.
97. Dentan RK. Ambivalences in child training by the Semai of peninsular Malaysia and other peoples. *J Southeast Asian Stud*. 2001;15(1):89-129.
98. Howell S. To be angry is not to be human, but to be fearful is: Chewong concepts of human nature. In *anthropological perspectives*, edited by signe Howell and Roy Willis. London: Routledge. 1989:45-59.
99. Bond CJ. Positive peace and sustainability in the mining context: Beyond the triple bottom line. *J Clean Prod*. 2014;84:164-173.
100. Fabbro D. Peaceful societies: An introduction. *J Peace Res*. 1978;15(1):67-83.
101. Briggs JL. Conflict management in a modern Inuit community. In *hunters and gatherers in the modern world: Conflict, resistance, and self-determination*. Schweitzer. 2000:110-124.
102. Cole GR. Liberated slaves and Islam in nineteenth-century West Africa. *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World*. Indiana University Press. 2004.
103. Nigeria and the global peace index. 2019.
104. Global Peace Index. *Vision and humanity: Global peace index*. 2023.
105. Government-Agency. *Nigeria natural resources: Nigerian states and their natural resources*. Nigeria Natural Resources. 2016.
106. O'Reilly M. Inclusive security and peaceful societies exploring the evidence. *PRISM*. 2016;6(1):20-33.
107. OCHA. *About OCHA Nigeria: United nations office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs*. 2023.
108. Osun-State. *Osun state of federal republic of Nigeria*. 2016.
109. Oyo-State. *Oyo state of the federal republic of Nigeria*. Nigeria Government. 2016.
110. Peel JDY. *Religious encounter and the making of the Yoruba*. Indiana University Press. 2003.
111. Olayinka AS. *Peace research in Non-violence contexts: A case study among the Southwest Nigerian Yorùbá* (Doctoral Dissertation, Middlesex University/Oxford Centre for Mission Studies). 2020.