



‘The Male-Goat That Stops Fighting’: The Pyem Philosophy of Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution

Chammah J Kaunda
Human Development Science
Human Sciences Research Council—(HDS-HSRC)
University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)
Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
pastorchammah@gmail.com
ckaunda@hsrc.ac.za

Luxman Yusuf Jactu
University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)
South Africa
luxmanyusuf@yahoo.com

and

Roderick R Hewitt
University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)
South Africa

Abstract

The ongoing quest towards the realization of reconciliation and conflict resolution in the context of contentious religious pluralism in contemporary Africa demands a pluriverse perspective which give preferential option to indigenous epistemology, which is often-times, undermined and termed as mere myth. The pluriverse argues that contemporary realities in Africa can better be understood within indigenous religio-cultural experience. This article employs the Pyem notion of *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* [The male-goat that stops fight(ing)] as an option to engender reconciliation and conflict resolution in the context of religious conflict in Jos, Nigeria.

Keywords: Jos, Nigeria, pluriverse, reconciliation, conflict

Introduction

The Pyem people constitute one of the ethnic groups in Jos, Nigeria. One of the integral parts of the notion upon which this article is based is the dialogue between two conflicting communities. It is a system of thought that is based on the understanding of God in relation to the community and individual contributions to resolving conflict situations. This concept has capacity to engender reconciliation and conflict resolution because of its appreciation of religio-cultural pluralism. *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* is presented as distinctive options within indigenous ontology that can contribute towards identifying contemporary challenges that are threat to life and seeks to offer fullness of life within the context of religious conflict.



The forgoing raises a question of the ways in which *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* could be understood as an indigenous resource for resolving conflict and promoting reconciliation in the context of religious pluralism in areas such as for example, Jos, in Nigeria. In response to this question, the first section of the article provides a literature review to demonstrate that scholars have engaged with indigenous notions of reconciliation and conflict resolution. The second section, foregrounds the article within the pluriverse theory as an analytic lens used to examine the data that the researchers collected through an ethnographic study approach. This is followed by a section on Pyem ontology with a specific focus on their notion of reconciliation and conflict resolution. The fourth section situates the study within the Jos context of religious pluralism and religious conflict, especially between the major religions of Christianity and Islam. This section also presents the limitation of Christianity and Islamic philosophy for driving reconciliation and conflict resolution as the both still shelter exclusive commitments to interpretation and understanding of reality. The fifth section presents the findings and discusses the key tenets of 'pluriverse' in Pyem's philosophy of reconciliation .

Research Methodology

This article is a qualitative study of *Ngwakin Darsai Daal*. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with some key informants from the Pyem ethnic group. The viability and validity of this method is attributed to its flexibility and how it creates space for participants to freely contribute based on their experience of a giving phenomenon. In order to generate relevant information on the subject matter, the selection of participants among the Pyem people was heterogeneous. This allowed participants to contribute in accordance with their experiences and on the basis of their diverse religious affiliations. The results were interpreted through a pluriverse analytical tool with the aim to demonstrate how *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* has the capacity to contribute in resolving religious conflicts and promoting reconciliation and thus peace.

Indigenous Epistemology on Conflict Resolution

Scholars studying African realities are increasingly emphasizing polarization of life worlds and modification and fragmentation of meanings and ethical values (Mbiti, 1969; Sindima, 1995; Magesa, 1997). These scholars have argued that a lack of intentional contextualization of Islamic and African beliefs and practices within African worldviews promoted dysfunctional interaction between these religious systems and the traditional African system of thought. The result is that those Africans who have adopted Islam or Christianity have become more and more disembodied from indigenous systems of thought and ideas of reconciliation and conflict resolution (Sindima, 1995; Magesa, 1997; Magobe, 2012; Tafese, 2016). The majority of adherents of Islam and Christianity perceive African indigenous epistemologies for reconciliation and conflict resolution as backward and dysfunctional in contemporary society (Gifford, 2015; Donford, 2017). Scholars have warned that a failure to take cognizance of indigenous perspectives on reconciliation and conflict resolution has the unfortunate potential to perpetuate conflict as culture functions as a "control box" (Tafese, 2016). They stress that in the traditional African system of thought there is a locus for unification of the African people's thoughts and ideas of life. Tafese (2016) highlights that indigenous knowledge for reconciliation and conflict resolution as an accumulated knowledge emerged within indigenous religio-cultural experience for maintaining harmonious relationships in the community. According to Magobe (2012), indigenous knowledge for conflict resolution takes root in the understanding of humanity as being ultimate in the quest for reconciliation in the African polity.



This knowledge advances beyond the shore of judicial and theological perspectives in resolving conflicts (Magobe, 2012: 20). Thus, conflict resolution is often conceptualized within the notion of Ubuntu which takes into account human dignity by embracing and giving a sense of belonging to all (Dani, 2005; Ramose, 2012). This affirms Tutu's (1999: 27) adage, "A person belongs to a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished when others are tortured and oppressed." Therefore, indigenous knowledge offers a resource that can be harnessed for reconciliation and conflict resolution as it prioritizes Ubuntu dialogues between conflicting communities. Ubuntu dialogues form of resolving conflict space for interaction, negotiation and mutual reclamation of humanness between conflicting communities which helps, not only in promoting reconciliation, but also in restoring social relationships and achieving desired social reconstruction (Choudere, 1999; Bukari, 2013; Theresa, 2014). Thus, in an African indigenous approach to conflict resolution there are no winners, no vanquished, all seek to find a humane solution to problems and challenges leading to conflict (Abdul, 2015).

Scholars have also demonstrated that African approaches to reconciliation and conflict resolution are not monolithic, but rather dynamic and highly adaptive to the ever-changing social-political landscape of the world. Mary and Ndimbwa (2013) argue that causes of conflict are not static, and that indigenous knowledge has consistently adapted to new realities and has already incorporated some elements of the modern way of resolving conflicts. One other attribute for the dynamism within indigenous knowledge is the role of women in conflict resolution. Isike and Okeke (2011) argue that there has been an emphasis within a traditional approach to reconciliation and conflict resolution to include women in resolving conflict. They argue that an African religious worldview as always, is attributed femaleness to sacredness, peacemaking, persuasiveness, humility and tolerance. This gender sensitivity is described as part of what invariably constitutes the Ubuntu philosophy (Mwadkwon, 2001).

Yet, many of the scholars who have reflected on indigenous approaches to reconciliation and conflict resolution, have done so without demonstrating how such approaches could function in religious pluralistic contexts such as is the case of Jos, in Nigeria. The pluriverse perspective as utilized in this article creates the enabling environment for understanding indigenous approaches in relation to other perspectives, with similar quests for promoting reconciled social relationality. Indigenous epistemology is not perceived as an alternative perspective but rather as an option that can function independently or concurrently, or with already existing universally favored perspectives and/or is inculturatively integrated within Christianity and or Islamic notions of reconciliation and conflict resolution.

Pluriverse Theory

The Pluriverse approach has evolved within the field of social sciences. This theory acknowledges diversity or multiple ways in which reality can be understood and interpreted in connection with other perspectives. This perspective advocates a paradigm shift from the western familiarized ontology and methods of discovering human realities, in favor of distinctive indigenous concepts for understanding reality. It is a perspective that interconnects with other ways of understanding and interpreting reality (Escobar, 2010: 9). While the pluriverse perspective frowns at the hegemonic tendencies of maintaining a status quo by theories of knowledge and methods generally accepted from the west, and it shows how indigenous and culturally oriented ways of interpreting reality are not only undermined but rejected (Tickner and Blaney, 2012). The rejection is attributed to the western perception which depicts indigenous epistemological contribution as primitive, fantastical and completely elusory (Querejazu, 2016:1). However, from the trajectory of De-colonial global ethics, western ontology and methods of understanding reality are perceived



as situated knowledge which highlights western individualistic experiences which has failed to create an equal space for knowledge contribution from other socio-cultural contexts. In favor of indigenous inter-religio-cultural oriented epistemology, de-colonial ethics promotes a pluriverse approach to human realities which are perceived as pluralistic in nature. This denotes that pluriverse, as a form of understanding reality functions within multiple communities thereby making *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* a distinctive approach to religious conflict instead of being an alternative.

The Pyem notion *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* which means “The male goat that stops fighting” is a cultural practice for reconciliation and resolving conflicts. As spelled in the pluriverse perspective, religious conflicts and how they can be resolved within the context of Jos is a reality that needs to be discovered and interpreted. Within the context of Jos, the conflicting religions are Christianity and Islam. Scholars argue that conflict is perpetuated due to the triumphalist, competitiveness tendencies and claims to exclusive truth projected within these two religions (Mwadkwon, 2001: 61). The Pyem notion becomes distinctive since it offers a trans-religio-cultural dialogue which advances beyond mere religious contributions to fostering reconciliation and religious conflict resolution in Jos. The pluralistic nature of the Pyem notion is attributed to the coming together of multiple warring communities with the aim of resolving conflict through a religio-cultural experience that takes root in the understanding of God in relation to humanity and creation.

To apply pluriverse perspective to analyze the Pyem notion becomes relevant in the ongoing quest for an optional epistemology within indigenous ability for understanding and interpreting reality. Furthermore, the theory is highlighted within the Pyem notion through dialogue that involves multiple worldviews which are in the process of resolving conflict. Much of the relevance of this perspective is demonstrated in the result and discussion on how it relates to the Pyem notion towards contributing to fostering reconciliation and conflict resolution in the context of religious conflict in Jos and indeed elsewhere.

The Pyem System of Thought

The word “Pyem” came from the root word “Pya” which means “Earth”. Pyem stands for “the people of the land”. It also stands for the language of the people. The word Pyem also represents “Ba-Pyem” for the people and Di-Pyem for language. Di-Pyem is a way the people communicate ideas, feelings, request and knowledge (Daspan, 2002: 1). The Pyem ethnic group is an African ethnic group which expresses ideas, requests and knowledge through its own distinctive language and culture. The language of the Pyem People and other ethnic groups within Jos and particularly in the African context, serves as medium for expressing matters that concern social, religious and cultural aspects of the of the whole community (Blench, 2010: 1). The language constitutes an integral part of their cultural experiences especially in times of prosperity and adversity. As migrants from the far Northern part of Nigeria consequent to the Islamic Jihad by Othman Dan Fodio, they have experienced the tragedy of systemic and symbolic violence (Blench, 2010: 1). The Pyem ethnic group migrated from the Gobir ethnic group, one of the Hausa ethnic groups in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The people of Gobir were known as those who expanded their territories through the waging of wars (Daspan, 2002: 3). In that period of history, Othman Dan Fodio an Islamic fundamentalist threatened Gobir with war, but the general of the Gobir army who was not ready to engage in war, armed himself and with other people from Gobir, journeyed through Bauchi. They subsequently settled in the rocky areas and caves in a village known as *Pyemdere* in the present Gindiri of Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria (Daspan, 2002: 3). The choice of settling at the rocky areas, caves and edges of the hills was borne out of the consciousness of their past experience of the Othman Dan Fodio’s Jihad that ultimately led to their migration and their need to be proactive against possible threats from neighboring ethnic



groupings. An effort was made to promote Ngwakin Darsai Daal as a distinctive peace vision and program a result of the myriad of experiences of past conflict groups (Daspan, 2002: 3).

The Pyem ethnic group is popularly known for their hospitality and tolerance. This is evident in the way they accommodated many other ethnic groups within plateau state of Nigeria (Temple, 1965: 120). Machunga (1964) noted that due to their hospitality, tolerance and love, they welcomed and received Christian western missionaries especially under the Sudan United Mission (SUM) and Islam adherents from the far Northern part of Nigeria. Consequently, Christianity and Islam become predominantly the two religions practiced among the Pyem ethnic group. Gilbert Diche (1991) has noted that despite the religious differences among the Pyem ethnic group for more than a hundred years they have lived in harmony. This could be attributed to their beliefs and practices which focus more on their understanding of God in relation to life and humanity.

The welcome and hospitality offered to adherents of the two religions stemmed from the Pyem African religious and cultural *adage do ta chalai ram* which means “land must give way to humanity” (Kallamu, 2016). Harvey Sindima (1995) describes this cultural practice as ‘social bondedness’ enshrined in respect for human dignity and worth. The cultural experience of the Pyem people seems to have empowered them to resist threats that deny the fullness of life. It is in the light of this that Laurent Magesa delineates that the African religio-cultural experience like the Pyem people, perceives religion in functionalist terms as being at the service of humanity to help realize abundant life (Magesa, 1997). It is evident that the Pyem African cosmology presupposes a distinctive way of understanding and interpreting reality. It is unique in the sense that their ethnic disposition seems to advance beyond the triumphalist and competitive tendencies noticed within the practices of Christianity and Islam in Jos that has led to a colossal loss of life and property.

Although more of this religio-cultural representation of the Pyem people is reflected in the section that explained the Pyem notion of *Ngwakin Darsai Daal*, it can be argued that the hospitality and love expressed within the African religio-cultural experience of the people even before the coming of Christianity and Islam in the locality connotes that the Pyem communities are peace-loving. Therefore, the hospitality and love expressed within the cosmology of the Pyem becomes favorable when applying the de-colonial ethics of conflict resolution through pluriverse perspective. This approach can contribute towards understanding, interpreting and resolving religious conflict in Jos.

Religious Diversity in Jos

Jos is the state capital of Plateau state of Nigeria. The religio-cultural nature of Jos, is that there are Muslims from the Northern part of Nigeria, and Orthodox Islamic sects were attracted to Jos (Higazi, 2011:6). One of these is the *Izala: Jama'atu Izalat al-Bidi'a wa Iqamat al-sunna* which means ‘the Association for Suppressing Innovations and Restoring the ‘Sunna’. This sect ensures the practice of Islam that goes back to the roots by force. Alongside the practice of Islam, Christianity found a strong base because the missionaries made Jos their Headquarters to evangelize surrounding parts of the central North. Because most people in the Central plateau who practiced African Traditional Religion were resistant to other modern religions, became Christians and Muslims this gave Jos a plurireligious context (Higazi, 2011:6). Higazi (2011:6) observes that religious competition and fundamentalism emerged amongst both religions and this was seen and heard in their triumphalist utterances during open air preaching. Mwadkwon has stated that,



Giving the pluralistic nature of Jos, members of the two main religions in the city, Christianity and Islam, have intimidated each other's adherents as well other citizens of the town. Practical examples are the blocking of major roads during the Sunday services of the Christians and the Friday prayers of the Muslims. The mounting of loudspeakers to proclaim religious teachings and in the process make provocative statements in order to oppose or antagonize the religion of other community is a common phenomenon (2001:60).

From the undergoing, it is clear that the attitude of the Christians and the Muslims towards each other are being shaped by their beliefs and practices, which are based strongly on their claims to absolute truth and both religions claim exclusivity. This calls to question how reconciliation and conflict resolution can be attained in such a scenario which is characterized by rancor and bitterness. The religious conflict in Jos therefore demands that other ways of interpreting the reality be explored as a matter of urgency to prevent spilling of blood. The pluriverse perspective in this work becomes relevant since it legitimatizes other ways of interpreting reality to function alongside and enrich other perspectives in order to ensure a fullness of life.

The Pyem Notion of Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution

In this section the information is presented and discussed based on the result as guided by the pluriverse perspective. *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* emerged from the religio-cultural experience of the Pyem people which symbolically means "The male-goat that stops fighting". Therefore, the expression *Ngwakin Darsai daal* in Pyem language means a male-goat that symbolically serves as means to end fighting, animosity, enmity and hatred. The used of the male-goat was based on the understanding that it is known for its predatory act on food-stuff in the Pyem compound (Bida, 12 January, 2017). The participants argue that the notion presupposes dialogue, forgiveness, resolution and reconciliation between conflicting parties from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds and calls for collective participation of all members towards the common good of the community and for the benefit of all future generations (Bida, 12 January, 2017). *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* is perceived as a symbolic religious and cultural practice for promoting reconciliation and conflict resolution between warring communities. It is a symbolic ceremony where two warring parties anchored by their reconciliatory team, initiates and carries out modalities for dialogue of the equals (Kallamu, 26 November, 2017).

The male-goat of *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* represents the ugly nature of the fight that caused the destruction of lives, properties and the very essence of what it means to being human (Tafida, 16 November, 2017). Conflict robs the warring communities of their humanity. The male-goat is known for it is strengthen and destructiveness. Among the Pyem, it is a symbol aggressive and unruly masculine power. Its violent nature is expressed in the Pyem maxim *Nyen sai Ngwakin Darsai Daala* which means "see his or her forehead as the male-goat that stops fighting". Among the Pyem people it was used to describe children, women, men and slaves who were disobedient and arrogant within the Pyem community.

Members of the reconciliatory team were honest men and women with ability to lay aside all prejudice, enmity and ideological hierarchy, and engage in dialogue based on the principles of humanness. These men and women are believed to be selected by the Supreme God through the ancestors and empowered with words of wisdom to carry out such functions and roles. From their traditional dress they were recognized during war and cannot be harmed by warring communities at battlefields.



After everything is set for the ceremony, the warring communities gather their members at the boundary between them or draw arbitrary lines between them. A representative of each of the warring community carries a male-goat on his or her shoulder as a symbol of mutual guilt. The carrying of the he-goat on their shoulders is symbolic of accepting the burden of guilty that the communities prioritized their own ideology or beliefs at the expense of affirmation of the humanity of the others. The process of crossing each other border with a he-goat on the shoulders also symbolizes an acknowledgement that we have no humanity without yours. In other words, 'we are human because you are us'. The two warring parties exchange the male-goats to demonstrate that both communities have failed to promote humanness. The exchange affirms that 'you are us, we are you.' In this ceremony, there is no form of violence (Kallamu, 26 November, 2016).

Following the exchange of the male-goats, the representatives of the warring communities each walk with the male-goat in the presence of their community members (Tafida, 12 January, 2017). Each community slaughters the received male-goat and it is then shared among the community as symbol of their perpetration or compliance to end violence. The act of eating is essentially ingesting and discussing each others grievances, prejudices, hatred and enmity. Your suffering and pain are now mine to bear. It is an incarnational process that takes place in the presence of God who holds every member of community responsible for the wellbeing not only for their community, but also the entire community including others. Hence, the reconciliatory ceremony is embedded in the belief that *Wu-Tidye* "God in Heaven" is concern about the welfare of the community and every member of the community makes the welfare of the community his or her top priority (Sokale, 12 January, 2017). This cultural experience functions irrespective of ones religion, ethnic grouping, culture and gender orientation. Every member of the community denies himself or herself of all privileges for the good of their community and others .

The Pyem maxim as stated above was applied when finally, each warring community sacrificed the male-goat and participated in the communal meal. The male-goat was eaten based on the understanding that the animosity, hatred, anger, domination loosed grip upon every member of the community. It symbolized the end of fighting by forgiveness, reconciliation, love and restoration of peace between the warring communities. The reconciliation was justified by their social interaction during all religious and cultural festivals.

The Pluriverse in Pyem *Ngwakin Darsai Daal*

This section gives attention to the key tenets of the Pyem notion of *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* and its relevance in discovering a distinctive indigenous epistemology that can contribute to reconciliation and conflict resolution in the religious pluralistic context of Jos . The tenets are not divorced from the key elements that constitutes the notion which symbolically express the creation of a safe place of dialogue between warring communities.

The Necessity of Authentic Dialogue

The perspective employed in this study stemmed from the ongoing quest for multiple ways of engaging the process of reconciliation and conflict resolution. Though the supporting concept of pluriverse favors indigenous inter-religio-cultural dialogue among multiple peoples, the Pyem notion of reconciliation and conflict is relevant because of its dialogical undertone. This is in keeping with the argument that human beings are essentially dialogical creatures. They exist and develop through symbols of communication, they create and nurture each other through social interaction and communal living (Hargreaves, Macdonald and Miell, 2005). Humanity as dialogical creatures means that humanity is created with power to choose either self-destruction or the fullness of life. In short, to live in conflict or in sustainable reconciliation depends on human beings



themselves. As pointed out earlier, the notion of *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* was characterized by a process of dialogue which was initiated by *Bate Ya* (middlepersons) in consultation with *Bwalbwang*, the chief priest. The meeting of the warring communities, the exchange and the eating of the male-goat is in itself then, a radical process of dialogue. It is a process of reclaiming humanity and sharing it with others.

There is a strong multi-dialogue in *Ngwakin Darsai Daal*. Every aspect of the ceremony is dialogical in nature, the gathering of the community members, sitting facing each other, the carrying of he-goats on the shoulders, the crossing of borders/artificial, the killing, the roasting and the eating of the he-goat leading to mutual re-entrenchment of their humanity into each other. All these segments are what constitute dialogue in the Pyem notion.

Although Christianity and Islam have tendencies of dialogue within their religious beliefs and practices, their weakness is the tendency to undermine each other. The Pyem dialogue is a dialogue of the 'guilty'. It is believed that the warring communities stand with acknowledged guilt in the dialogue. This is based on their understanding of what it means to human. Conflict dehumanizes, and in fact robs the community of its humanity. John Mbiti (1969), Harvey Sindima (1995) and Flora Strozenberg (2015) have recognized that the African worldview embodies humanity as resource for dialogue and peaceful co-existence. In African systems of thought, what affects one, affects all. Scholars in various human inquiries focusing on Africa have underlined the role of dialogue as the social and humanistic source for an African moral and ethical vision of peaceable, equitable and just communities (Mbiti, 1969; Sindima, 1995). Dialogue within the Pyem notion is therefore not optional because every member of the warring community is guilty (Bida, 16 November, 2016). In the light of pluriverse perspective, the relevance of multi-dialogue embedded within the Pyem notion cannot be underestimated. This is because it offers an *inter alia* radical option by which religious conflict in Jos can be interpreted and resolved. The supposition is expressed in the choice of sacrificing and communal eating of the male-goat as engaging in violence itself.

Humanity before Religion: Engaging Violence itself

The utilization of the male-goat within the Pyem notion *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* postures the tendency of violence. The Pyem perceive all forms of violence (such as domestic violence, sexism, verbal etc.) as being injurious to the humanity of others. The selection of the male-goat as already argued, is due to its unruly and aggressive power. It is a symbolic assault against a fellow human being. The killing of the male-goat is a symbol of confronting violence itself - anger, animosity and hatred of the warring communities were symbolically led upon it at the sacrifice. By taking the male-goat, the communities had resolved to confront violence itself rather than one another. It is also believed that most violence is perpetrated by male quest for power. The killing of the male-goat is search to address the roots of male violence. It is about expressing animosity and hatred that caused human violence and injustices. The death of he-goat is understood as removing enagement in order for peace and reconciliation to be realized (Kaunda 2015: 9). The death of the he-goat is a dialogical space of transference of human aggression, hatred, animosity and guilt. The male-goat and its 'ugliness' is a symbol that describes the effects of conflict and how during the dialogue all members of the warring communities become guilty parties. Within the context of religious pluralism such as Jos, this form of African epistemology gives attention to humanity far above religious ideologies.



The Two Male Goats

Within the notion of *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* the use of two male goats is understood as a symbolic cultural experience that calls for participation of warring communities in resolving conflict. This practice stems from the religio-cultural understanding that every member of the community finds his or her essence and meaning of life by contributing to the wellbeing of the community (Nel., 2008: 33). The two male goats are symbolic of the two communities which are forced to face each other through dialogue as a way of resolving the conflict and reclaim their humanity. The participation is evident in what was presented by the two communities. Each of the community gave the same kind of animal with the same characteristics. Although they were two goats yet the same type of animal which symbolically functions as the medium to reconcile them. Exchanging the same kind of animal denotes that no member of the warring communities could claim innocent. It means all are guilty – guilty in various ways, perpetrating, compliance, by keeping silence etc. The two male goats symbolically bear all the differences, the anger, ideological basis of conflict, animosity and enmity of the two warring communities. It was highlighted in the interviews that all members of the two conflicting communities are guilty and are called to take responsibility for conflict and this is demonstrated through the exchange of the male goats between the two communities (Kallamu 16, November, 2017). The exchange also means that the two communities also seek to take responsibility in rebuilding each other's community.

For the warring communities, the sacrifice of the two male goats is seen as a substitute (scapegoat) that ends the fighting and at the same time fosters reconciliation. If this approach was to be applied in addressing a religious contentious atmosphere in Jos, the symbolic expression of the male-goat would emphasise acknowledging that all are guilty of undermining human dignity and human value, either psychologically or physiologically. For the fullness of life in the community, the grievances, animosity, anger and enmity are laid upon themselves as the guilty goats. According to Bujo this form of resolving conflict means that the community is held responsible for violating customary and traditional laws (Bujo, 2015: 82).

The Pyem pluriverse approach to reconciliation and conflict resolution is compared to Christianity and Islam which take dispositions which are characterized by competitiveness, retaliatory tendencies, and claims to exclusive and holding absolute truth. The Pyem notion presents every member guilty and responsible for the wellbeing of humanity. This challenges every human idea which fails to promote humanistic values and ethics of an abundant life for all. This African indigenous approach to reconciliation and which is neglected and termed as primitive, can be utilized to foster reconciliation and resolve the religious conflict in Jos.

The Ethic of Eating Each Other's Guiltiness

The ritual of eating each other's guiltiness (male-goats) is embedded in contemplating each community's contribution to the pain of the other so that violence becomes the common enemy not human beings (Tafida., 16 November, 2016). The notion of *Ngwakin Darsai Daal* (the male-goat that stops the fighting) according to the Pyem ethnic group demands that after slaughtering the goats by each of the warring communities, the meat be eaten communally and finished before end of the ceremony. It is not only about exchanging guilty but becoming guilty oneself. Although members who eat the meat are representatives of the two communities it serves as a symbol that represents, eating of the grievances, hatred, anger, animosity within the aggrieved communities. In this notion, those whose relatives and family members died during the violence no longer hold grievances against the perpetrators.



The chewing and digestion of the he-goat, is aimed at destroying conflicts and promoting relationality between the warring communities. This presupposes that the cause of conflict was due to a wrong understanding and interpretation of reality (Bujo, 2015). Any understanding and interpretation of reality that is not centered on the value of all humanity bleeds nothing but conflict which may take different shapes such as symbolic war, sexism, homophobia, racism, and the like. Thus, the necessity of multiple ways of interpreting reality especially the indigenous concepts, have value to promote inclusive human-centered options. Although this concept might have evolved from a different ethnic group it nonetheless offers a contextual element that creates space for other options to function alongside a giving context.

Conclusion

This article utilizes pluriverse theory to demonstrate how the Pyem notion of reconciliation and conflict resolution could be applied as a critical option in the process of searching for peace and reconciliation in the context of religious conflict in Jos. Pluriverse rejects epistemologies universalization of western oriented knowledge in favor of promoting multiplicity of creation in which indigenous knowledge is perceived a critical option for interpreting and understanding reality. The pluriverse perspective as applied to Pyem notion, demonstrates its capacity to help re-conceptualize the religious conflict in Jos. In the context of religious pluralism such as Jos the Pyem notion offers a resource that could contribute in engendering reconciliation and resolving religious conflicts. The contribution is radical because it is advanced beyond the triumphalist, competitive, retaliatory connotations and exclusive truth claim of Christianity and the Islamic worldview. The capacity of the African Pyem notion is attributed to its dialogical practice where every member who participates is 'guilty' and that protecting humanity of all is the key priority in the process of conflict resolution.

References

Primary

- Bida, Audu. 16 November, 2017: Tongzong, Jos Nigeria
Tafida, Lori. 16 November, 2017: Tongzong, Jos Nigeria
Sokole, Mary, 16 November, 2017: Tongzong, Jos Nigeri
Kalamu, Samuel, 16 November, 2017: Tongzong, Jos Nigeria
Tafida, Zaka. 16 November, 2017: Tongzong, Jos Nigeria
Bukar, Abuku. 16 November, 2017: Tonzong, Jos Nigeria
Moko, Toni. 16 November, 2017. Tongzong, Jos, Nigeria.
Suna, Chanwat. 16 November, 2017. Tongzong, Jos Nigeria.

Secondary

Ajayi, A.T. & Buhari. L.O. (2014). Methods of conflict resolution in African traditional society. *African Research Review* 8 (2), (138-157.

Blench, R. (n.d.) "The Pyem Language of the Central Nigeria and its affinities." <http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/BC/Plateau/Southeast/Fyem/Fyem%20wordlist.pdf> [Accessed on 30 April 2018].



- Bujo, B. (2015). Distinctiveness of African Ethics, in *African Theology on the Way: current conversation* eds. Stinton, D. B. London: SPCK, 74- 89.
- Bukari, K.N. (2013). "Exploring indigenous approaches to conflict resolution: The Case of the Bawku Conflict in Ghana." *Journal of Sociological Research* 4(2), 86-104.
- Choudree, R. B. G.(1999). Traditions of Conflict Resolution in South Africa. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 1 . <http://www.accord.org.sa/publications/;choudree.htm>. [Accessed 20th August 2010]
- Daspan, A. A. (2012). *The Pyam Precolonial History*. Anglo Jos: Sele Printing and Publishing House .
- Donford, R. (2017). Towards a Decolonial Global Ethics. *Journal of Global Ethics* 13(3), 380- 397.
- Emanuel, M. & Ndimbwa, T. (2013).. Traditional Mechanisms of Resolving Conflicts over Land Resource: A Case of Gorowa Community in Northern Tanzania. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 3 (11), 214-224.
- Escobar, A. (2010). Latin America at a Crossroads. *Cultural Studies*. 24,1–65).
- Gilbert, A. D. (1991). *Gindiri: A Study of the Town and its Environs*. Jos: NBTT Printing Press.
- Hargreaves, DJ., Miell, D. & MacDonald, R. (2005). *Musical Communication*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Higazi, A. (2011). The Jos Crisis: A recurrent Nigerian Tragedy.1 – 34, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/nigeria/07812.pdf> [accessed 30 April 30, 2018]
- Isike, C. & Uzodike, U.O (2011). Towards an Indigenous model of Conflict resolution: Reinventing Women's role as traditional peacebuilders in neo-colonial Africa. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 11, 32- 58.
- Issifu, A.K. (2015).An analysis of conflicts in Ghana: The Case of Dagbon chieftaincy. *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 8, 6, 28-44.
- Kaunda, C.J. & Hewitt, R.R. (2015).Towards Epistemic Decolonial Turn in Missio-Formation in African Christianity. in *World Council of Churches*,104:2
- Kaunda, C.J. (2016). Enabling Liminality Prophetic Witness to Xenophobia: Proposing a Missiological Spirit Response for the Church in South Africa. *Koers- Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*. 81(1), 221, 1-9.
- Machunga, A. (1962). *Pyem- Gindiri Tarihi*. Jos: Gindiri Press .
- Magesa, L. (2004). *Anatomy of inculturation: transforming the church in Africa*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books.
- Mbiti, J.S. (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy*. London, Ibadan, Nairobi: Heinemann.



- Mwadkwom, S.D. (2001). Religion, the settler Question and the Emergence of Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria: A survey of Jos. *Swedish Missiological Themes* 89(1), 55-73.
- Nabudere, D.W.(2005). Ubuntu philosophy: memory and reconciliation. *Texas Scholar Works*, 1-20.
- Nel, P.J. (2008). Morality and religion in African thought. *Acta Theologica*, 28(2), 33-47.
- Okrah, KA-Ag. (2003). Toward Global Conflict Resolution. Lessons from the Akan Traditional Judicial System. *Journal of Social Studies Research* 4(13).
- Querejazu, A. (2016). Encountering the Pluriverse: Looking for Alternative in other Worlds. *Political international Journal* 59(2) 1-16.
- Ramose, M.B. (2012). Reconciliation and reconciliation in South Africa. *Journal on African Philosophy* 1(5).
- Sindima, H.J. (1995). *Africa's Agenda: Legacy of Liberalism and Colonialism in the Crisis of African Values*. London: Greenwood Press.
- Strozenberg, F. (2015). Ubuntu: Alterity as Perspective for Peace. *Sociology Study* 5(1), 1 54 – 59
- Tafese, T. (2016). Conflict Management through African Indigenous Institutions: A Study of the Anyuaa Community. *World Journal of Social Science* 3(1), 22-32.
- Tickner, A.B. & Blaney, D.L. (eds.). (2012). *Thinking International Relations Differently*. London: Routledge.
- Tutu, D. (1999). *No Future without Forgiveness*. New York, London: Doubleday