

Ojemba Enwe Iro: An Igbo Indigenous Philosophy of Non-Hostility, Migration, and Everyday Peacebuilding

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Abstract

This article examines Ojemba Enwe Iro as an indigenous Igbo philosophical concept that articulates an ethic of non-hostility, adaptability, and peaceful coexistence in contexts of mobility and cultural plurality. The study aims to demonstrate how this moral principle functions as a culturally grounded framework for everyday peacebuilding, particularly among Igbo migrants and diasporic communities. Methodologically, the article employs a narrative review combined with hermeneutical analysis to synthesize scholarly literature on Igbo philosophy, African indigenous ethics, migration, and peacebuilding, allowing for an interpretive engagement with culturally embedded concepts. The findings reveal that Ojemba Enwe Iro operates at multiple levels as a moral guideline, a pragmatic survival strategy, and a communal expectation that governs interpersonal conduct beyond kinship and ethnic boundaries. Rooted in Igbo conceptions of personhood and communal ethics, the philosophy emphasizes restraint, relational responsibility, and adaptability as essential conditions for social harmony. The discussion further shows that this ethic is institutionalized through diaspora associations and informal governance structures, enabling conflict prevention and social integration within host communities. In dialogue with broader African philosophies such as Ubuntu, the study highlights both conceptual affinities and distinctive contributions, particularly its explicit engagement with migration and everyday peace. Overall, the article contributes to peace and conflict studies by foregrounding indigenous philosophy as a legitimate theoretical and practical resource, offering culturally



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responsive insights for peacebuilding, migration governance, and community relations in increasingly diverse societies.

Keywords: *everyday peacebuilding; Igbo indigenous philosophy; migration ethics; non-hostility; peace and conflict studies; relational personhood; Ubuntu*

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous philosophies and cultural worldviews have increasingly attracted scholarly attention as viable resources for peacebuilding, social cohesion, and conflict resolution in plural and multicultural societies. Over the past decade, researchers have emphasized that indigenous knowledge systems offer normative frameworks grounded in lived experience, communal ethics, and contextual understandings of conflict that often differ from universalist or technocratic approaches. Studies highlight how indigenous philosophies articulate relational ontologies that prioritize harmony, reciprocity, and collective well-being, thereby contributing to sustainable peace (K. E. Amaechi, 2020; Mackay, 2022). Within African contexts, such philosophies are not merely symbolic but actively inform social practices, dispute mediation, and moral reasoning. This growing body of literature underscores the importance of culturally embedded perspectives in addressing contemporary conflicts.

Recent scholarship further demonstrates that indigenous worldviews function as repositories of moral knowledge transmitted through narratives, rituals, and proverbs. These cultural expressions serve as mechanisms for reinforcing identity, fostering intergenerational continuity, and guiding social behavior in times of tension (Hansen & Antsanen, 2018; Phukan, 2023). Research in education and community studies shows that when indigenous philosophies are integrated into social institutions, they promote

values of mutual respect and coexistence (Lephoto & Machekele, 2024). Moreover, studies on gender, ecology, and identity illustrate how indigenous frameworks broaden peacebuilding discourse by incorporating marginalized voices and holistic conceptions of human-environment relations (Guernsey, 2023; Presta, 2024). Together, these studies establish a compelling case for examining indigenous philosophies as substantive contributors to peace studies.

Despite this growing recognition, dominant peacebuilding frameworks remain largely shaped by Western epistemological assumptions that prioritize liberal institutionalism, legalism, and individual rights. Scholars have repeatedly noted that such approaches often fail to resonate with the socio-cultural realities of post-conflict and culturally diverse societies, particularly in Africa. Western-centric models may inadvertently marginalize local knowledge systems, resulting in what has been described as epistemic violence (Heleta, 2016). Evaluative methodologies rooted in Eurocentric paradigms frequently overlook indigenous norms, moral vocabularies, and governance structures that shape everyday conflict resolution (Chambers et al., 2018). This misalignment raises critical questions about the effectiveness and legitimacy of externally imposed peacebuilding strategies.

The limitations of liberal peacebuilding are further evident in their tendency to adopt universal templates that inadequately account for communal values and historical contexts. Scholars argue that peacebuilding initiatives grounded solely in democratization, economic liberalization, or legal reform risk undermining local social fabrics (Tanabe, 2017). In African societies, where communal belonging and relational ethics are central, such frameworks may appear abstract or culturally incongruent. Empirical studies reveal that development and environmental governance projects based on Western ideals often fail due to their disregard for local socio-

economic realities and cultural practices ([Acharibasam, 2022](#); [Evert et al., 2021](#)). These critiques collectively point to the need for peacebuilding approaches that are culturally grounded and epistemologically inclusive.

In response to these challenges, scholars have increasingly turned to African indigenous values and moral philosophies as alternative or complementary solutions for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. One of the most extensively discussed frameworks is Ubuntu, which emphasizes interconnectedness, mutual recognition, and collective responsibility. Researchers argue that Ubuntu provides ethical foundations for reconciliation and social healing by foregrounding communal dialogue and consensus ([Adewale, 2023](#); [Akinola & Uzodike, 2018](#)). Beyond Ubuntu, African proverbs and oral traditions have been identified as practical tools for mediating disputes, transmitting moral lessons, and reinforcing norms of forgiveness and reciprocity ([Aju & Beddewela, 2020](#)). These cultural resources offer context-sensitive mechanisms for fostering peace at the grassroots level.

Further studies highlight the importance of integrating indigenous institutions and cultural mechanisms into contemporary conflict resolution processes. Traditional councils of elders, communal rituals, and storytelling practices have been shown to play pivotal roles in restoring social harmony and legitimacy in conflict mediation ([Ellsberg et al., 2020](#); [Mengstie, 2022](#)). Rituals, in particular, function as collective healing practices that reaffirm social bonds and shared values during periods of crisis ([Ateng et al., 2022](#)). Dialogical spaces rooted in indigenous narratives enable community members to articulate grievances and rebuild trust, thereby enhancing social cohesion ([Omodan & Makena, 2022](#)). These findings collectively demonstrate that indigenous philosophies are not relics of the past but dynamic resources for contemporary peacebuilding.

However, while African indigenous philosophies have gained visibility in peace studies, significant gaps remain concerning Igbo indigenous thought, especially in relation to migration, coexistence, and non-hostility. Existing literature on Igbo culture often focuses on identity, ritual societies, or historical transformations without systematically examining how specific philosophical concepts inform peaceful intercultural relations (Aniga, 2024). Migration is frequently treated as a socio-economic phenomenon, with limited attention to the ethical frameworks that guide Igbo interactions with host communities (Potash & Kalmanowitz, 2023). Moreover, analyses of non-violence and conflict prevention rarely engage Igbo moral philosophies that emphasize restraint, adaptability, and relational prudence (Islam, 2021). These omissions indicate a clear research gap.

One such underexplored concept is *Ojemba Enwe Iro*, an Igbo philosophical expression that encapsulates the ethic of non-hostility and harmonious coexistence in contexts of mobility and encounter. Although referenced implicitly in discussions of Igbo adaptability and diaspora resilience, the concept has not been subjected to focused hermeneutical analysis within peacebuilding scholarship. Unlike more widely studied African philosophies such as Ubuntu, *Ojemba Enwe Iro* remains marginal in academic discourse (Akinola & Uzodike, 2018). This absence limits a fuller understanding of how Igbo indigenous wisdom can contribute to debates on intercultural relations, migration ethics, and conflict prevention in an increasingly globalized world.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to address this gap by offering a hermeneutical analysis of *Ojemba Enwe Iro* as an indigenous Igbo philosophy of peace. Drawing on hermeneutical theory, which emphasizes context, historicity, and meaning-making (Frechette et al., 2020; Ho et al., 2017), the study seeks to elucidate the conceptual foundations and practical implications of this philosophy.

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The article argues that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* provides a distinctive contribution to peace and conflict studies by foregrounding adaptability, relational ethics, and non-hostility in migratory contexts. By situating this concept within broader scholarly debates, the study contributes to theoretical enrichment and offers culturally grounded insights relevant to contemporary peacebuilding challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indigenous Philosophies and Theoretical Frameworks in Peacebuilding

Contemporary peacebuilding scholarship has increasingly acknowledged indigenous philosophies as critical theoretical resources for understanding conflict resolution and social cohesion. Scholars argue that indigenous philosophies offer normative systems grounded in lived experience, communal ethics, and historically embedded practices that differ fundamentally from universalist Western frameworks. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), for instance, emphasize local traditions, rituals, and moral values as effective mechanisms for managing conflict and restoring harmony within communities ([Bedigen, 2022](#)). This framework challenges the dominance of Eurocentric peace theories by foregrounding contextual relevance and cultural legitimacy ([Mitchell, 2021](#)). By centering indigenous epistemologies, peacebuilding is reframed as a culturally situated process rather than a standardized intervention.

The strengths of indigenous-centered theoretical frameworks lie in their emphasis on community participation, social embeddedness, and local governance structures. Scholars contend that such frameworks foster ownership and trust, thereby enhancing the sustainability of peace initiatives ([Mahmuluddin, 2024](#)). However, limitations persist. Critics caution against the romanticization or homogenization of indigenous practices, noting that they vary

significantly across contexts and may be vulnerable to co-optation by external actors (Conforti, 2019; Eke & Byrne, 2023; Oluyemi & Akinwunmi, 2025; Paffenholz, 2015). Additionally, indigenous knowledge systems often struggle for recognition within formal academic and policy arenas, limiting their broader application (Mitchell, 2021). These tensions highlight the need for careful, critical engagement with indigenous philosophies.

Post-liberal peacebuilding has emerged as a complementary framework that seeks to reconcile indigenous approaches with contemporary peace practices. This perspective critiques liberal peace models for their normative assumptions and advocates for pluralistic understandings of peace that accommodate multiple cultural logics (Rachman, 2022). While post-liberal peacebuilding promotes inclusivity and adaptability, its practical implementation remains complex due to institutional constraints and political interests (Lwamba et al., 2021). Together, these theoretical debates establish a foundation for examining indigenous philosophies – such as those of the Igbo – as viable yet underexplored contributions to peace studies.

African Indigenous Philosophies as Mechanisms for Peace and Conflict Prevention

African indigenous philosophies have been widely discussed in the literature as foundational mechanisms for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Among these, Ubuntu has received substantial scholarly attention for its emphasis on interconnectedness, collective responsibility, and shared humanity. Akinola & Uzodike (2018) argue that Ubuntu provides an ethical counterpoint to individualistic paradigms by framing peace as relational and communal. This philosophy situates personal well-being within the broader social fabric, thereby encouraging dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual care (Mokhutso, 2021). As such, Ubuntu has been applied across diverse

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contexts to address social fragmentation and post-conflict reconciliation.

Beyond Ubuntu, scholars emphasize the role of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms rooted in African moral traditions. A study highlights the efficacy of indigenous rituals, communal deliberation, and customary norms in mediating disputes and addressing root causes of conflict (C. M. Amaechi, 2017). These mechanisms are often holistic, involving spiritual, social, and moral dimensions that formal legal systems may overlook (Bedigen, 2022). Their participatory nature empowers local actors and reinforces social cohesion (Dixon, 2024). Nevertheless, tensions arise when traditional practices conflict with modern legal frameworks or fail to address systemic inequalities (C. M. Amaechi, 2017).

Education has also emerged as a critical site for integrating African indigenous philosophies into peacebuilding. Scholars argue that curricula grounded in indigenous values foster ethical reasoning, empathy, and communal responsibility among younger generations (Muyonga, 2024; Nxumalo & Mncube, 2018). While such approaches promote social cohesion, their implementation faces challenges related to institutional resistance and power asymmetries within educational systems (Ngubane & Makua, 2021). Collectively, this literature situates African indigenous philosophies as dynamic, context-sensitive resources for peace, while also revealing their limitations and complexities.

Migration, Indigenous Cultural Ethics, and Peaceful Coexistence

Migration has intensified intercultural encounters, making indigenous cultural ethics increasingly relevant for understanding peaceful coexistence in host communities. Scholars note that migration often generates social tensions, requiring ethical frameworks that facilitate integration and mutual recognition. Indigenous cultural ethics, such as communal responsibility and

restorative justice, offer moral guidelines for managing these interactions (Olowu, 2018). In African and Global South contexts, such ethics help migrants and host communities negotiate belonging and difference, fostering social cohesion amid diversity.

Ubuntu and related communal values have been identified as central to promoting peaceful coexistence in migratory settings. These ethics encourage migrants to engage constructively with host communities while affirming shared humanity (C. M. Amaechi, 2017). Psychological studies further suggest that indigenous ethics can mitigate cultural stress experienced by migrants by fostering inclusive community environments (Meca & Schwartz, 2024). Empirical research demonstrates that traditional dialogue practices and reconciliation ceremonies rooted in indigenous ethics effectively reduce tensions arising from migration pressures (Dramani et al., 2023; Nyadera & Mohamed, 2020).

Diaspora studies further illustrate how indigenous ethics shape transnational identities and peacebuilding initiatives. Diasporic communities often preserve cultural values while contributing to host societies through economic, social, and cultural exchanges (Carver et al., 2024; Vuković et al., 2024). These dynamics underscore the relevance of indigenous philosophies for understanding migration not merely as movement but as a relational process. Such insights provide an important theoretical foundation for examining Igbo concepts like *Ojemba Enwe Iro* in contexts of mobility and coexistence.

Hermeneutical and Interpretive Approaches in Peace and Conflict Research

Hermeneutical and interpretive methodologies have gained prominence in peace and conflict research for analyzing indigenous concepts, proverbs, and oral traditions. Rooted in philosophical hermeneutics, this approach emphasizes understanding meaning through historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts (Hovey et al.,

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2022). Gadamerian hermeneutics, in particular, underscores that interpretation is shaped by tradition and dialogue, making it especially suitable for studying indigenous philosophies embedded in communal life.

Several studies demonstrate the utility of hermeneutical approaches in interpreting indigenous wisdom for peacebuilding. Aniga (2024), for example, employs hermeneutical analysis to examine Igbo proverbs and the practices of the Ọkọnkọ Society, revealing how language and ritual inform conflict mediation. Similarly, Vaiphei (2022) analyzes Zo oral narratives to uncover indigenous ontologies that foster identity and belonging, challenging ethnocentric interpretations. Olajuyin (2019) further illustrates how proverbs function as moral guides in conflict resolution when interpreted within their cultural contexts.

Methodologically, hermeneutics bridges theory and practice by legitimizing indigenous knowledge as a source of analytical insight. Qualitative techniques such as narrative analysis, ethnography, and interviews enable researchers to engage with lived experiences and local meanings (Hovey et al., 2022). This approach enhances methodological rigor while centering indigenous voices, reinforcing the relevance of interpretive frameworks in peace and conflict studies.

Research Gap and the Significance of the Study

Despite advances in scholarship on African indigenous philosophies, significant gaps remain in the literature on Igbo indigenous thought, particularly regarding non-hostility, mobility, and peacebuilding. Existing studies often emphasize communalism and cultural identity without systematically examining how these values translate into explicit principles of conflict prevention and peaceful coexistence (Onwuatuuegwu, 2023). Moreover, migration and diaspora are frequently treated as socio-economic phenomena, with limited attention to the ethical frameworks guiding Igbo interactions

in host communities ([Onwuatuwegwu, 2024](#)). This gap constrains a deeper understanding of Igbo philosophy's relevance to contemporary peace challenges.

Additionally, much of the existing literature remains either highly theoretical or fragmented across disciplines, lacking empirical grounding and methodological coherence ([Zahid, 2021](#)). Interdisciplinary connections between philosophy, migration studies, and peace research are underdeveloped, resulting in missed opportunities to contextualize Igbo wisdom within broader debates ([Akinrinlola, 2021](#)). Addressing these gaps, the present study offers a focused hermeneutical analysis of *Ojemba Enwe Iro*, positioning it as a distinctive Igbo philosophy of non-hostility and coexistence. By doing so, the study contributes original theoretical and methodological insights to peace and conflict studies while foregrounding indigenous African epistemologies.

METHOD

Research Design and Methodological Approach

This study adopts a narrative review as its primary methodological approach. A narrative review is defined as an interpretive and thematic synthesis of existing literature that aims to develop conceptual understanding rather than statistical aggregation ([Faggion et al., 2017](#); [Naderbagi et al., 2024](#)). Unlike systematic reviews or meta-analyses, which prioritize protocol-driven inclusion and quantitative comparison, narrative reviews allow for analytical flexibility and contextual depth. This makes them particularly suitable for studies in the humanities and social sciences where concepts, values, and meanings are culturally embedded and not easily reducible to measurable variables ([Greenhalgh et al., 2018](#)).

The choice of a narrative review is methodologically justified given the exploratory and interpretive nature of this study, which

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examines *Ojemba Enwe Iro* as an indigenous Igbo philosophical concept relevant to peacebuilding. Existing scholarship on indigenous ethics, proverbs, and moral worldviews remains theoretically fragmented and methodologically diverse, making a rigid systematic approach less appropriate ([Ebendor & Ikhide, 2024](#)). A narrative review enables the integration of philosophical, anthropological, and peace studies literature, allowing the study to synthesize diverse perspectives while critically engaging with their assumptions and limitations.

Scope of the Review and Research Orientation

The narrative review is oriented toward conceptual and interpretive analysis, rather than empirical generalization. Its primary objective is to examine how indigenous philosophies—particularly African and Igbo moral traditions—have been discussed in relation to peacebuilding, conflict prevention, migration, and social coexistence. This orientation aligns with scholarly arguments that narrative reviews are especially appropriate for culturally specific, theory-driven, and emerging areas of research ([Angelopoulou et al., 2022](#); [Sun et al., 2022](#)).

The scope of the review encompasses peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and theoretically significant studies that engage with indigenous knowledge systems, African philosophy, peace and conflict studies, migration ethics, and hermeneutical approaches. Emphasis is placed on literature that addresses ethical frameworks, proverbs, oral traditions, and cultural narratives as mechanisms of social order and conflict resolution. By adopting this scope, the study situates *Ojemba Enwe Iro* within broader scholarly debates while preserving its cultural specificity and philosophical depth.

Literature Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

The literature search followed a structured yet flexible strategy consistent with best practices in narrative reviews (Lee et al., 2018). Relevant sources were identified through academic databases commonly used in the social sciences and humanities, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and discipline-specific repositories. Search terms combined thematic and conceptual keywords such as *indigenous philosophy*, *African ethics*, *peacebuilding*, *conflict resolution*, *migration*, *proverbs*, *Igbo philosophy*, and *hermeneutics*, using Boolean operators to refine results.

Inclusion criteria focused on scholarly works that (1) explicitly engaged indigenous or African philosophical frameworks, (2) addressed peace, conflict, coexistence, or ethical relations, and (3) contributed conceptual, theoretical, or interpretive insights relevant to the research focus. Exclusion criteria were applied to sources that were purely descriptive, lacked academic rigor, or were tangential to the study's conceptual aims. While narrative reviews do not require exhaustive coverage, attention was given to representativeness, theoretical significance, and relevance to ensure analytical balance and credibility (Yu et al., 2023).

Analytical Procedure and Narrative Synthesis

Following source selection, the review proceeded through thematic synthesis and interpretive analysis. Key arguments, concepts, and findings from the selected literature were extracted and organized into thematic clusters, such as indigenous philosophies in peacebuilding, African moral traditions, migration and coexistence, and hermeneutical approaches. This process allowed patterns, convergences, and divergences within the literature to emerge (Jiang et al., 2022).

The synthesis was conducted narratively rather than aggregatively, emphasizing conceptual relationships and interpretive depth. Findings from different disciplines were integrated into a coherent analytical narrative that highlights how indigenous philosophies function as ethical frameworks for peace. Critical analysis was applied throughout to assess theoretical assumptions, contextual limitations, and gaps in existing scholarship (Choi-Lundberg et al., 2024). This approach ensures that the review moves beyond summary toward analytical contribution, forming the basis for interpreting *Ojemba Enwe Iro* as a distinctive Igbo philosophy of non-hostility and coexistence.

Rigor, Transparency, and Methodological Limitations

To enhance rigor and transparency, this narrative review follows recognized quality principles for non-systematic reviews. While not bound by PRISMA requirements, elements such as clear research orientation, transparent selection logic, and systematic thematic synthesis were incorporated to strengthen methodological credibility (Miquelotti et al., 2021). The quality of the review was further guided by principles outlined in the Scale for the Assessment of Narrative Review Articles (SANRA), which emphasizes clarity, justification, and analytical coherence (Baethge et al., 2019; Feldman et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, certain limitations inherent to narrative reviews are acknowledged. The method relies on interpretive judgment, which may introduce selection or interpretive bias. Additionally, the absence of quantitative synthesis limits generalizability. However, these limitations are consistent with the study's philosophical and conceptual aims. By explicitly acknowledging them, the study maintains reflexivity and methodological integrity, positioning the narrative review as an appropriate and rigorous approach for examining culturally embedded indigenous philosophies within peace and conflict studies.

RESULTS

Conceptual Meaning of *Ojemba Enwe Iro* in Igbo Worldview

The analysis reveals that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* occupies a central position in Igbo moral and philosophical thought as an ethical principle governing mobility, interaction, and coexistence. Literally translated as “the traveler does not seek enemies,” the concept encapsulates a normative expectation that individuals who move beyond their place of origin must actively cultivate peaceful relationships in unfamiliar social environments. Within the Igbo worldview, mobility is not morally neutral; rather, it carries ethical obligations shaped by communal values and practical wisdom (Aniga, 2023; Mbaegbu & Ekiienabor, 2018; Nkama et al., 2022).

The results indicate that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* functions simultaneously as a moral injunction and a survival strategy. The concept emphasizes prudence, restraint, and adaptability as essential virtues for navigating plural social spaces. Conflict is not merely undesirable but economically and socially destructive, particularly for migrants whose livelihoods depend on cooperation and trust (Agu & Margaça, 2025; K. E. Amaechi, 2020; Uduku, 2002). This interpretation situates *Ojemba Enwe Iro* as a culturally grounded ethic of non-hostility that regulates interpersonal conduct beyond the boundaries of kinship and ethnicity.

Igbo Conceptions of Personhood and Communal Ethics

The findings further demonstrate that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* is inseparable from Igbo conceptions of personhood and communal identity. In Igbo philosophy, personhood is not an intrinsic attribute possessed at birth but a status achieved through moral conduct and social recognition within the community (Kahaka, 2019; Mbiti, 1970; Onyeocha, 1997). Individuals become “persons” through responsible

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participation in communal life, adherence to ethical norms, and the maintenance of harmonious relationships.

Within this framework, the ethic of non-hostility embedded in *Ojemba Enwe Iro* reflects a broader ontological commitment to relational existence. The results show that peace is not conceived as the absence of violence alone but as the presence of balanced social relations sustained by mutual respect and moral accountability. Migrants who embody this ethic are seen as extending Igbo communal values into wider social contexts, thereby reinforcing the continuity of Igbo moral identity even outside the homeland (Anyanwu, 1999; Nwala, 1985; Onyeocha, 2007; Quarcoopome, 1987).

Migration, Adaptability, and Economic Rationality

Another key result concerns the relationship between *Ojemba Enwe Iro*, migration, and economic rationality. The analysis shows that Igbo migration is historically linked to economic aspiration, resilience, and opportunity-seeking rather than territorial expansion. Within this context, peaceful coexistence becomes a practical necessity. The results indicate that conflict with host communities threatens not only social harmony but also economic stability and long-term investment prospects (Abejide et al., 2024; Aniga, 2023; Okide et al., 2025; Reynolds, 2002).

The concept of *Ojemba Enwe Iro* thus emerges as an adaptive strategy shaped by lived experience. It encourages migrants to prioritize cooperation, negotiation, and social integration over confrontation. This ethic aligns with the broader Igbo valuation of wealth (*aku*), fulfillment, and a good name (*aha-oma*), which are achieved through sustained social relations rather than short-term gains (Etu et al., 2024; Mensah & Iloh, 2021). The findings underscore that economic success in Igbo thought is inseparable from ethical comportment and communal acceptance.

Diaspora Institutions and the Institutionalization of Peaceful Coexistence

The results also highlight the institutional dimensions through which *Ojemba Enwe Iro* is enacted in Igbo diaspora contexts. Igbo migrants often establish communal organizations such as Igbo unions and recognize leadership structures, including the institution of *Eze-Igbo*, in host societies (Eze et al., 2014; Muoh, 2015; Nwalutu, 2018; Opone, 2012). These institutions serve as mediating bodies that reinforce norms of peaceful coexistence, collective responsibility, and dispute resolution.

The findings suggest that such organizations function as extensions of Igbo communal life, translating indigenous ethical principles into organized social practices. Through communal meetings, mediation mechanisms, and cultural activities, diaspora institutions actively discourage conflict with host communities and internal fragmentation. *Ojemba Enwe Iro* operates here not merely as an abstract moral ideal but as a guiding principle embedded in organizational norms and leadership practices, reinforcing peace at both interpersonal and collective levels.

Post-Conflict Experience and the Reinforcement of Non-Hostility

Historical experience, particularly the aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War, emerges as a significant contextual factor shaping the relevance of *Ojemba Enwe Iro*. The results indicate that post-war displacement and reintegration reinforced the Igbo emphasis on adaptability, rebuilding, and peaceful engagement in diverse environments (Lodge, 2018; Lynn, 2017; Muoh, 2015; Nnadozie, 2002; Okwuosa et al., 2021; Smith, 2005). Migration during this period was not only an economic response but also a moral test of communal values under conditions of vulnerability.

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The findings show that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* gained renewed significance as a guiding ethic for survival and reconstruction. By prioritizing non-hostility, Igbo migrants sought to rebuild trust, access opportunities, and re-establish dignity in contexts marked by political and social uncertainty. This historical dimension strengthens the argument that the concept is not static but evolves in response to collective experiences of conflict and recovery.

Ojemba Enwe Iro as an Indigenous Peacebuilding Resource

The analysis further reveals that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* possesses clear peacebuilding implications beyond the Igbo context. The concept embodies principles central to contemporary peace discourse, including dialogue, mutual recognition, restraint, and ethical responsibility toward others ([C. Amaechi & Umukoro, 2023](#); [Obinwa, 2019](#)). Unlike externally imposed peace models, this indigenous ethic arises organically from lived social practices and long-standing moral traditions.

The results suggest that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* offers a culturally grounded framework for preventing everyday conflicts that often escalate into broader communal tensions. By encouraging migrants and hosts alike to view coexistence as a shared moral project, the concept contributes to social stability in plural societies. Its emphasis on non-hostility provides an alternative lens for understanding peace not as a formal institutional outcome but as an ongoing ethical practice embedded in daily interactions.

Synthesis of Findings

Taken together, the results demonstrate that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* operates at multiple levels: individual morality, communal identity, economic rationality, institutional practice, and peacebuilding ethics. The concept integrates philosophical reflection with pragmatic

concerns, showing how indigenous wisdom can regulate social behavior in complex, multicultural environments.

The findings confirm that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* is not merely descriptive of Igbo behavior but prescriptive in shaping expectations of conduct, particularly in contexts of migration and diversity. As an indigenous philosophy of non-hostility, it provides a coherent moral framework that links personhood, community, and peace. These results lay a strong foundation for the subsequent discussion on the theoretical and practical contributions of Igbo indigenous philosophy to contemporary peace and conflict studies.

DISCUSSION

Indigenous Non-Hostility as an Ethical Framework for Everyday Peace

The findings of this study demonstrate that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* functions as an indigenous ethical framework centered on non-hostility and coexistence, particularly within plural and migratory contexts. As revealed in the results, this Igbo philosophical concept operates as a normative guide for everyday conduct, emphasizing restraint, adaptability, and relational responsibility. Rather than framing peace as a formal institutional outcome, *Ojemba Enwe Iro* situates peace within daily social interactions, especially among migrants whose survival and well-being depend on harmonious relations. This supports the interpretation of peace as an ethical practice embedded in lived experience, where avoidance of hostility is both a moral obligation and a pragmatic strategy for sustaining social and economic stability.

These findings resonate with existing scholarship on everyday peace and indigenous ethics. Studies on indigenous moral frameworks, including African philosophies of coexistence, similarly emphasize relational ethics and non-violent social engagement as

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foundational to peacebuilding (Ferguson et al., 2021; Presta, 2024). Research on indigenous practices in plural societies highlights how shared ethical norms reduce social tension and foster mutual recognition (Omonkhuwa et al., 2020). While most of this literature focuses on concepts such as Ubuntu, the present study extends this discourse by foregrounding an Igbo-specific ethic that articulates non-hostility in the context of mobility. Unlike some universalized interpretations of indigenous ethics, *Ojemba Enwe Iro* is explicitly grounded in migratory experience.

The implications of these findings are significant for peacebuilding theory and practice. Theoretically, they challenge dominant peace paradigms that prioritize institutional or legal mechanisms by emphasizing micro-level ethical practices as foundational to social order (Ebo, 2019). Practically, incorporating principles of non-hostility into community-based peace initiatives can strengthen social cohesion in culturally diverse settings. From a policy perspective, recognizing indigenous ethical frameworks such as *Ojemba Enwe Iro* encourages culturally responsive peacebuilding strategies that empower local communities and migrants alike (Okwuosa et al., 2021). Such approaches broaden the scope of peace interventions beyond formal institutions toward everyday ethical engagement.

Indigenous Conceptions of Personhood and Communal Ethics

The results further indicate that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* is deeply embedded in Igbo conceptions of personhood and communal ethics. Personhood, within this framework, is relationally constituted and achieved through moral conduct within the community. The study shows that peaceful social relations are sustained not by individual autonomy alone but by ethical responsibility toward others. This communal orientation reinforces non-hostility as a marker of moral maturity and social belonging. Migrants who embody this ethic are

perceived as extending Igbo moral identity into broader social spaces, thereby maintaining continuity between homeland values and diasporic life.

These findings align closely with broader African philosophical discourses on personhood and communal ethics. Scholarship on Ubuntu and communitarian ethics similarly emphasizes relational identity and shared humanity as foundations for peaceful coexistence (Akinola & Uzodike, 2018; McCarthy et al., 2019). Comparative studies indicate that such philosophies promote dialogue, reconciliation, and collective responsibility, often offering alternatives to individualistic social theories (Khan, 2023; sj Miller, 2016; Ujomu, 2024; Venter, 2004). However, while Ubuntu has been widely theorized, Igbo perspectives on personhood have received less systematic attention. This study contributes by demonstrating how *Ojemba Enwe Iro* operationalizes communal ethics specifically in contexts of mobility and intercultural encounter.

The theoretical implications of these findings suggest the need to re-center relational conceptions of personhood within peace and social theory. Policies informed by such perspectives may prioritize social belonging, collective healing, and ethical integration over assimilationist models (Metz, 2016). Practically, community programs that foster mutual responsibility and recognition can mitigate social fragmentation, particularly in migrant-receiving societies. At the policy level, integrating communal ethics into social integration frameworks may enhance inclusivity and reduce conflict by affirming shared moral obligations across cultural boundaries.

Migration, Adaptability, and Conflict Prevention

This study's findings underscore the role of indigenous cultural ethics in shaping migrant adaptability and conflict avoidance. *Ojemba Enwe Iro* emerges as a guiding principle that encourages migrants to navigate unfamiliar environments through cooperation, patience, and

social sensitivity (Aniga, 2023; Kuschminder, 2021). The results show that adaptability is not merely a personal trait but a culturally informed practice grounded in communal ethics. By prioritizing non-hostility, Igbo migrants actively reduce the likelihood of conflict with host communities, thereby fostering stable social relations essential for economic and social integration.

These insights are consistent with broader migration and diaspora studies that emphasize cultural resilience and ethical adaptation. Research indicates that migrants often rely on indigenous moral frameworks to manage cultural stress and build social networks in host societies (Feng & Patulny, 2025; Krannich, 2022; Ryan et al., 2008; Yoon, 2025). Comparative studies highlight similar patterns among diverse migrant groups, where cultural ethics facilitate conflict avoidance and cooperative engagement (Botelho et al., 2022; Hos et al., 2022; Paudyal et al., 2025; Valeeva et al., 2019). While some migration literature focuses on structural integration, this study reinforces the importance of ethical agency and cultural values in shaping peaceful coexistence.

The implications for migration policy and social integration are substantial. Policymakers should recognize indigenous cultural ethics as resources rather than obstacles to integration. Programs that encourage intercultural dialogue and acknowledge migrants' ethical traditions may reduce xenophobia and social tension (Del Pino-Brunet et al., 2021; Doğan & Küçükbüküçü, 2025; Gabrielli et al., 2022; Gungor et al., 2021). Practically, community-based initiatives that draw on indigenous values can support adaptive integration strategies. At a policy level, incorporating ethical dimensions into migration governance can enhance social cohesion and conflict prevention in increasingly diverse societies.

Indigenous Institutions and Informal Peace Governance

The findings also highlight the role of Igbo diaspora institutions in maintaining social harmony and preventing conflict. Institutions such as cultural associations and traditional leadership structures function as informal governance mechanisms that reinforce norms of peaceful coexistence. These organizations provide social support, mediate disputes, and promote engagement with host communities. The study shows that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* is institutionalized through these structures, transforming an ethical principle into collective practice that sustains social order within diasporic settings.

This observation aligns with scholarship on informal peace governance and indigenous institutions. Studies across diverse contexts demonstrate that community-based organizations play critical roles in conflict prevention and social cohesion (Hachmann et al., 2023; Ifatimehin et al., 2025; JumaAgaya et al., 2021). Comparative research on indigenous governance, such as among the Anywaa and Somali communities, reveals similar patterns where informal institutions mediate tensions through culturally rooted practices (Hameretibeb, 2024). These parallels suggest that diaspora institutions function as extensions of indigenous governance adapted to new social environments.

The practical implications of these findings point to the importance of supporting community-based peace mechanisms. Policymakers and local authorities can strengthen social cohesion by collaborating with diaspora institutions and recognizing their mediating roles (Bela & Mierina, 2025; Dafallah & Witter, 2025; Hasić & Telalović, 2021; Karabegović, 2024). Integrating indigenous practices into formal conflict resolution frameworks may enhance legitimacy and effectiveness (Nigatu & Jobir, 2022). At a broader level, these insights advocate for participatory governance models that

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value informal institutions as partners in peacebuilding ([Danial et al., 2024](#)).

Indigenous Philosophy and Contemporary Peace Studies

Finally, this study contributes to contemporary peace and conflict studies by demonstrating the relevance of indigenous philosophical concepts such as *Ojemba Enwe Iro*. The findings show that culturally grounded ethics offer valuable insights into everyday peace, relational morality, and adaptive coexistence. By emphasizing non-hostility and communal responsibility, the study expands theoretical understandings of peace beyond institutional frameworks to include ethical practices embedded in daily life ([Namakula, 2022](#)).

These contributions engage ongoing academic debates on the role of indigenous knowledge in peace studies. While proponents argue that indigenous philosophies enrich peace theory by offering alternative epistemologies, critics caution against uncritical generalization across contexts ([Khurtsidze, 2023](#); [L. M. Miller, 2017](#)). The present study addresses this tension by situating *Ojemba Enwe Iro* within its specific cultural and historical context, thereby avoiding universalist claims while demonstrating broader relevance ([Khurtsidze, 2023](#)).

The implications for theory, policy, and future research are multifaceted. Theoretically, integrating indigenous philosophies supports efforts to decolonize peace studies and diversify its conceptual foundations. Policy-wise, culturally informed peacebuilding strategies can enhance legitimacy and sustainability ([Sidorova & Virla, 2022](#)). Future research should pursue empirical investigations of indigenous ethics in diverse settings to explore their practical application and adaptability, thereby advancing inclusive and context-sensitive peace frameworks.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that *Ojemba Enwe Iro* constitutes a distinctive Igbo indigenous philosophy that articulates an ethic of non-hostility, adaptability, and relational responsibility, particularly in contexts of migration and intercultural encounter. Through a narrative and hermeneutical analysis, the study shows that peace, within this philosophical framework, is not primarily an institutional construct but an ethical practice embedded in everyday social interactions. The findings reveal how *Ojemba Enwe Iro* functions simultaneously as a moral guideline, a survival strategy, and a communal expectation that governs behavior beyond the boundaries of kinship and ethnicity.

The discussion further establishes that this indigenous ethic is deeply rooted in Igbo conceptions of personhood and communal life, where individual identity is achieved through moral conduct and social harmony. By situating *Ojemba Enwe Iro* alongside broader African philosophies such as Ubuntu, the study highlights both conceptual affinities and unique contributions, particularly its explicit engagement with mobility and diaspora experiences. The analysis also underscores the role of diaspora institutions in translating indigenous ethical principles into informal governance mechanisms that sustain peace and prevent conflict in host societies.

Overall, this study contributes to peace and conflict studies by expanding the conceptual space for indigenous philosophies as legitimate sources of theoretical and practical insight. It advances the discourse on everyday peace by foregrounding non-hostility as a culturally grounded ethic rather than a purely legal or political outcome. By doing so, the study not only enriches African philosophy and indigenous studies but also offers a context-sensitive framework for understanding peacebuilding in increasingly plural and migratory societies.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research is based on a narrative review and hermeneutical analysis rather than empirical fieldwork. While this approach is appropriate for conceptual and philosophical inquiry, it limits the ability to capture lived experiences, variations in practice, and potential contradictions in how *Ojemba Enwe Iro* is enacted across different Igbo communities and diaspora contexts. As a result, the findings should be understood as interpretive rather than empirically generalizable.

Second, the study focuses primarily on published academic literature and documented philosophical interpretations. This reliance may inadvertently privilege formal or elite representations of Igbo philosophy while underrepresenting everyday vernacular understandings and practices. Additionally, the study centers on Igbo philosophy without undertaking a systematic comparative analysis with non-African indigenous traditions, which could have further illuminated the broader applicability or specificity of the findings. These limitations do not undermine the study's conceptual value but indicate the boundaries within which its conclusions should be interpreted.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should build on this study by incorporating empirical methodologies, such as ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, or participant observation, to examine how *Ojemba Enwe Iro* is practiced in everyday life among Igbo migrants and host communities. Such studies would provide richer insights into how this ethic operates in concrete social situations, how it is negotiated under conditions of tension, and how it may evolve across generations and geographical contexts.

Further research is also encouraged to undertake comparative analyses between *Ojemba Enwe Iro* and other indigenous philosophies, both within and beyond Africa, to explore shared ethical patterns and contextual differences in peacebuilding practices. Interdisciplinary studies that link indigenous philosophy with migration studies, public policy, and conflict resolution could deepen understanding of how culturally grounded ethics can inform inclusive governance frameworks. These directions would strengthen the empirical foundation and broaden the theoretical impact of indigenous philosophies in contemporary peace and conflict studies.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: J.I.O.; Data curation: J.I.O.; Formal analysis: J.I.O.; Funding acquisition: J.I.O.; Investigation: J.I.O.; Methodology: J.I.O.; Project administration: J.I.O.; Resources: J.I.O.; Software: J.I.O.; Supervision: J.I.O.; Validation: J.I.O.; Visualization: J.I.O.; Writing – original draft: J.I.O.; Writing – review & editing: J.I.O. Author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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The study was reviewed and approved by the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndifu-Alike Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was not required for this study.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest related to this research.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT and PaperPal to improve the clarity of the language and readability of the article. After using these tools, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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