GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY AND HUMANITARIAN CRISES: HOW WANEP PLAYED ITS ROLE IN WEST AFRICA IN 2019

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Abstract; Many reports in the mass media regarding the humanitarian crisis caused by economic and political instability in West Africa continued to become headlines widely discussed throughout 2019. The saying "there will be no smoke if there is no fire" also applies to the situation in West Africa. This crisis happened due to several reasons, such as the increase in armed conflict crises, civil war, authoritarian leaders, and rebellions carried out by extremist groups. Instead of offering practical solutions to end the crisis, the government, as a critical actor, sometimes even becomes the root cause of the conflict. Consequently, the situation triggered several civil society grassroots movements in various countries in West Africa. One of the global civil society movements that later emerged was The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). This research looks further at how WANEP responded to the instability in West Africa in 2019. In looking at the role of WANEP, the Neo Kantian approach is used to understand the global civil society movements in peacebuilding attempts. The method used in this study is a qualitative method by analyzing data sources from official reports and previous studies, which are relevant to answering the research question. It is found that WANEP had initiated and was involved in many capacity-building efforts to educate the people and minimize the impacts of the crisis.

Keywords: WANEP; West Africa; Neo Kantian, conflict, peacebuilding

INTRODUCTION

In response to many conflicts and humanitarian crises that have taken place in West Africa, global civil society in West Africa in 1998 established The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). WANEP is a regional civil society network that is institutionalized into a formal organization that focuses on peacebuilding. In achieving its goals, WANEP cooperates well with individual actors, groups of non-governmental organizations, regional or international organizations, and the government.

Threats to human security are a complicated problem in West Africa both because of ethnic conflicts, natural resources, and even rebellion against the ruling government regime. The conflict dynamics in West Africa continued to increase until they peaked in 2019. Referring to the report released by Palik, Rustad & Methi (2020), the year of 2019 was a challenge for countries in West Africa to achieve overall regional stability. Based on the observation findings, the number of conflicts in 2019 was among the highest in history since 1946. The number of state-based conflicts in 2019 are total 25 conflicts—11 of which were civil wars. As non-traditional actors, global civil society movements such as WANEP in upholding peace in West Africa were receiving a lot of attention. There was a huge expectation from the people that WANEP might contribute to reducing the impacts of the instability within the region.

This research departs from several previous studies and publications related to the role of WANEP in undertaking peacebuilding efforts in West Africa. The first study based on Bombande's (2016) article entitled "The Role of WANEP in Crafting Peace and Security Architecture in West Africa". In this article, Bombande explained the role of WANEP in creating peace in West Africa by establishing relations and cooperation with the governments of West African countries. Secondly, an article by Eze (2020) entitled "Civil society organizations and the ECOWAS peace and security agenda: A case study of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)". Similar to Bombande's previous writings, Eze also explained the role of WANEP in maintaining security in West African countries. It is just that in his writings, Eze emphasized more on the WANEP strategy through collaboration with ECOWAS. Then, another study by Eze (2016) entitled "The Role of CSOS in Promoting Human Rights Protection, Mass Atrocities Prevention, and Civilian Protection in Armed Conflicts" also discusses the role of WANEP in West Africa but places more emphasis on overcoming the problem of humanitarian crises in the region. The previous literatures have clearly explained the roles of WANEP in implementing conflict management in West Africa. However, there has yet to be research discussing the specific impact of WANEP on peacebuilding attempts in West Africa, specifically in 2019. Meanwhile, the trend of conflict between 2018-2019 has increased quite sharply and can be interpreted as an important basis for viewing WANEP's response in addressing the spike in the conflict in West Africa. In addition, no previous research has examined the role of WANEP using a Neo-Kantian perspective.

The presence of WANEP as one of the most prominent global civil society organizations in upholding peacebuilding is a breakthrough in responding to the failure of traditional actors, in this case, the state government, in dealing with the existing internal conflicts. In this research, further analysis will be made regarding the role of WANEP as an actor in

undertaking peacebuilding efforts in West Africa during 2019. In addition, we will also look at the effectiveness of the programs that WANEP has implemented in reducing conflict in the West African region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Neo-Kantian Approach in Seeing Global Civil Society Movement

In the theoretical realm, the Neo-Kantian approach is one of the leading approaches in studying an action that arises from adopting universally applicable norms. In this case, the universality of human rights is a strong foundation in efforts to uphold peace throughout the world, including in West Africa (Keane, 2003). In the Neo-Kantian approach, Immanuel Kant's theory of perpetual peace is the primary reference for peacebuilding in West Africa. Immanuel Kant noted three definitive articles in endless peace theory to achieve global peace. The first definitive article is republicanism, in which Kant states that all countries must be republics or hold republican values. In its development, the republic, in this case, is understood as a democracy. Kant's belief that peace is created in countries that hold democratic values eventually gave birth to a new theory called democratic peace theory. The second definitive article is that the state must be involved or cooperate with international institutions that uphold the values of peace. This is called the pacific union. While the third definitive article emphasizes the acceptance of universally applicable values such as human rights as the supreme law. This definitive article is called cosmopolitan law (Kant & Smith, 2016). Noting those definitive articles, we consider that the Neo-Kantian approach is suitable for researching civil society movements in the field of peace, in this case, WANEP. Another conceptual view of Neo-Kantian has been brought by Perret (2006). This approach emphasizes a bottom-up process, which includes tactics regarding the actions of global civil society in achieving its goals. From this point of view, there are several important efforts to note (Perret, 2006). First, information politics can be interpreted as the ability of global civil society to produce and disseminate information quickly and credibly. Second, symbolic politics is a tactic for solving communication/issues with certain symbols to attract public attention. In addition, leverage politics is defined as the ability of global civil society to collaborate with other more powerful actors to increase their capability and engagement. Finally, it also discusses accountability politics, which is an act by global civil society to monitor and control government policies, so as not to injure or offend the goals that global civil society is trying to achieve (Perret, 2006).

Peacebuilding Attempts

We adopted peacebuilding terminology in this paper based on the UN definition. In this case, peacebuilding can be interpreted as reducing risk (including preventive action) in a conflict to achieve peace and sustainable development in a region. The implementation of this peacebuilding places more emphasis on conflict management, which addresses strengthening the fundamental elements of a country so that the government has sufficient capacity to carry out conflict management. The state or society will feel the

impact of peacebuilding. By undertaking peacebuilding efforts, the state will continue improving its capabilities to effectively fulfill its people's obligations. Meanwhile, the community will be subject to and bound by the laws that apply to the government (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2008). Along with strengthening globalization, peacebuilding efforts no longer rely solely on the role of traditional actors such as the state. The emergence of global civil society movements such as WANEP is one of the manifestations of civil society's efforts to take part in efforts to uphold international peace.

In the literature written by Barnet, M. et al. (2007), it said that peacebuilding is an action to recognize and help actors to prevent conflict by strengthening the peace. The post-conflict peacebuilding would look at three dimensions: the creation of stability, restoration of state institutions, and socioeconomic status in the conflict. These three dimensions are the goal of what conditions should be achieved for being a peacebuilder. WANEP has been critical in creating peacebuilding in West Africa. The three dimensions of peacebuilding in West Africa by WANEP should be analyzed further to see the role of WANEP.

METHOD

The method used is a qualitative method. Lamont (2015) states that qualitative methods refer to data collection and analysis strategies that rely on non-numeric data. Because it is non-numerical data, qualitative methods can explore a phenomenon in more depth. Qualitative methods are used with the aim of researchers being able to identify and map the role of WANEP in upholding peacebuilding in West Africa in 2019. More specifically, researchers use document-based research and internet-based research in collecting the data collection process. Researchers use a report entitled "Conflict Trends in Africa 1989-2019" as justification for seeing a significant spike in armed conflict in West Africa. The authors then use some of the literature in analyzing the role of WANEP using the Neo-Kantian approach in upholding peacebuilding in West Africa in 2019. To measure the effectiveness of WANEP's part, the authors analyze conflict trends that occurred in West Africa in the years after 2019.

We used the discourse analysis method in analyzing the data that has been collected. Lamont (2015) explained that discourse analysis is a data analysis technique in a qualitative way by analyzing a form of communication, both written and verbal, to get the deep meaning of a phenomenon. In carrying out the discourse analysis technique, the researcher first determines the literature to be analyzed and then conducts a literature analysis to identify the extent of the role of WANEP in upholding peacebuilding in West Africa in 2019. Because it is a technique that analyzes the meaning of a piece of literature, the researcher pays great attention to when the literature was published so that there is no bias and misunderstanding regarding the context of the literature being analyzed. In the end, using this qualitative method will find out how WANEP as a global civil society network is an alternative solution to overcoming the problem of conflict in West Africa in 2019.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The West Africa Geopolitical Realm

Like most African countries, the West African continent is located on a semi-arid to arid continent. The lack of springs and waterways exacerbates the dry conditions of this region. Such physical geographical conditions make people's activities concentrated in coastal areas. In contrast, people who live in the middle of this continent must face various environmental problems such as clean water crises, food crises, poor sanitation systems, and regular sandstorms that happen every year. Ultimately, this has implications for the spread of several infectious and deadly diseases in African countries. On the social landscape, the problem of population growth in West Africa is escalating the scarcity of natural resources in the region. The population in West Africa has quadrupled in the past 50 years, with the total population currently standing at around half a billion people. The population in West Africa is one of the youngest populations in the world, based on data from The World Bank (2020).

However, the problems in the West African region are wider than environmental problems and overpopulation. Historical factors such as a former colony and prolonged civil war between tribes are inseparable in discussing the issues faced by West Africa. According to a report published by the Oslo Peace Research Institute (PRIO), the number of conflicts in West Africa increases yearly. However, in several years it has decreased. The surprising finding is that 2019 was the peak of many conflicts in West Africa and has even become one of the highest number of cases in history since 1946. The number of disputes that were state based in 2019 was 25, an increase of 4 rows compared to those in 2018, with a total of 21 matches. The twenty-five conflicts comprise 11 domestic and international civil wars (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, 2020).
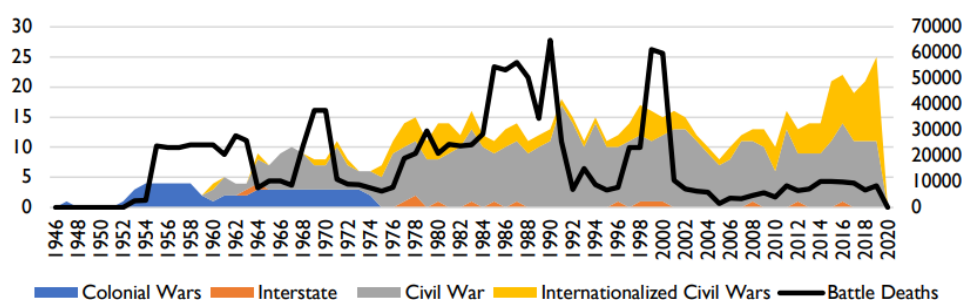

Figure. 1 *State-based armed conflict* in West Africa (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, 2020)

WANEP as a Transnational Peacebuilding Network in West Africa

The West African Peace Building Network (WANEP) is a network initiated by West African civil society to build peace in the region. WANEP is officially the representative of the West African region in the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), a global network for preventing armed conflict and upholding peace worldwide.

WANEP focuses on a collaborative approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, working with various actors from civil society, government, intergovernmental agencies, women's groups, and other partners to build a platform for dialogue, sharing experiences and learning in the West African region.

The values or principles that underlie the vision, mission, strategy, and tactics are no less critical in analyzing a civil society movement. WANEP itself has several main operational principles in every move it makes. First, in upholding peacebuilding, WANEP prioritizes empowering local communities involved in the conflict. This means that WANEP in this case, functions as a facilitator for communities or local actors in resolving disputes in their area. Second, in upholding peacebuilding, WANEP can reconcile the parties involved in the conflict. This is because if this reconciliation is not carried out, subsequent conflicts will likely occur. Third, WANEP promotes mutual understanding by encouraging in-depth studies and dialogue to discover a conflict's root causes. Fourth is inclusivity in responding to competition by involving all stakeholders in conflict resolution mechanisms. The involvement of various groups, starting from civil society actors, businesspeople, and government representatives, makes conflict resolution easier. Fifth, respect for all groups regardless of religion, ethnicity, race, etc. This is caused by egalitarianism and non-discriminatory attitudes, critical points in mediating conflicts, especially in a plural region like West Africa. (WANEP, 2021). The operational principles above become a system of norms firmly embedded in various efforts to enforce peacebuilding by WANEP.

WANEP Programs Implemented in West Africa

In realizing its vision of upholding peace in the West African region, like other global civil society networks, WANEP works on five main programs: WARN, WAPI, NAPE, special intervention, and CSDG. The first one is West Africa Early Warning and Early Response (WARN), a response program that is an early warning of potential conflicts in the region. Ultimately, this program pioneered the creation of a similar program by ECOWAS called ECOWARN. This program is carried out by monitoring and reporting socio-political conditions in areas with potential destructive conflict. From the information collected, WANEP releases prevention strategies and provides conflict resolution recommendations to policymakers. In this important activity, the information is also conveyed down to the entire network, both formal and informal. In ensuring the distribution of this information, WANEP then formed a supporting program called the National Early Warning System (NEWS) in all WANEP network countries. This information has been disseminated to governments, grassroots networks, and UN agencies (WANEP, 2021).

Secondly, there is also the West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI), a program launched to increase the capacity of academics, practitioners, businesspeople, and organizations engaged in preventing armed conflict. The output of this program is increasing the number of practitioners who are working in the field of peacebuilding to assist in the process of reconciliation of a conflict comprehensively. As of 2010, WAPI has conducted training and capacity building for more than 400 peacebuilding practitioners,

including some of them from UN agencies and ECOWAS. WANEP also created a program called NAPE or Non-violence and Peace Education which is a program to promote a culture of peace and non-violence in West Africa. The main target of this program is children and youth in schools and other informal sectors. In addition, in the conflict resolution mechanism, WANEP has a unique direct engagement -or in their terminology, particular intervention- program in which WANEP is committed to initiating constructive dialogues in mediating the parties involved in the conflict. Finally, WANEP also started a program called the Civil Society Coordination and Democratic Governance Program (CSDG). This program aims to support the transition towards democracy for countries in West Africa (WANEP, 2021). Based on this fact, we can see that the activities of WANEP are highly connected to achieving a peaceful democracy implementation in the region of West Africa. The five main WANEP programs above have been routinely carried out in previous years and continued in 2019.

Particularly throughout 2019, several programs had been fruitfully implemented by WANEP. For example, in 2019, WANEP, in collaboration with the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) and The African Union (AU), launched an election monitoring project called Election Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation (EMAM) in Nigeria. EMAM's triumph was apparent when in 2019, it succeeded in preventing conflicts that had become entrenched in Nigeria's previous elections. EMAM creates democratic elections in Nigeria by making thorough preparations before the election, strict supervision and monitoring during the election, and bridging mediation in the post-election (WANEP, 2019b). In addition, as an effort to prevent the adverse effects of the spread of terrorist extremism, WANEP also managed to organize a workshop on countering violent extremism (CVE). Also, in 2019, WANEP succeeded in collaborating with the European Union (EU) in holding the Women's Leadership Project as a manifestation of WANEP's commitment to protecting women as vulnerable people.

DISCUSSION

WANEP within Neo Kantian Perspective

The noble mission that WANEP strives for in preventing conflict, maintaining peace, and overcoming humanitarian crises embodies Immanuel Kant's dream in his perpetual peace theory. Immanuel Kant introduced endless peace theory in his writing entitled "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay" in 1795. In realizing world peace, where all countries apply human rights principles, according to Kant, they must first fulfill three conditions or what Kant called the definite article. The first definite principle in perpetual peace theory is republicanism. According to Kant, in realizing peace and efforts to uphold human rights, countries must adhere to the principle of republicanism and be a republic. The republic Kant mentioned is a country that keeps the human rights of every individual. Countries that support individual rights tend not to go to war with each other because individual rights can be threatened in a fight. In its development, republican governments are often used interchangeably to refer to countries that adhere to a democratic system. Yet Kant himself never equated these two terms. According to Kant, a republic is a form of state that separates legislative and executive powers (Kant & Smith, 2016).

Kant & Smith (2016) continued the second definitive principle is the Pacific Union. Countries in the international system are like individuals as social communities who need each other and are mutually affected by the behavior of other countries. Therefore, the republican state will try to ensure that other countries also adhere to the principles of peace and human rights in republicanism. The peace alliance *(foedus pacificum)* and peace agreement *(pactum pacis)* are the solutions countries will undertake to ensure human rights enforcement and achieve peace. In the end, the Pacific Union – a union between countries that adheres to the values of republicanism will be formed. Then, to codify human rights values, a third definitive principle emerged, namely cosmopolitan law. "The rights of men, as citizens of the world, shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality" is a quote from Kant that embodies that no individual has more rights over other individuals. The idea of cosmopolitanism emphasizes that regional differences do not cause one group of individuals to have fundamental rights different from other groups of individuals. Basic values apply universally to essential matters such as human rights, which need to be codified into a universal law called cosmopolitan law.

If we did a deeper analysis, the three definitive articles above are very condensed with the vision and mission of establishing WANEP. The first definitive article, Republicanism, is reflected in WANEP's efforts to oversee the process of democratic elections in West Africa through the Civil Society Coordination and Democratic Governance Program (CSDG). In addition, WANEP also makes this program a means of supporting the transition of West African countries toward a more democratic direction. The purpose of doing so is the same, authoritarian governments tend to create a lot of conflicts in West African countries, which are very plural. This is in line with democratic peace theory. The second definitive article is peace union. WANEP is a global community network engaged in upholding peace. In addition, WANEP also assists regional organizations in West Africa in distributing information to prevent conflict through ECOWARN. Then, the third definitive article, cosmopolitan law. WANEP is trying to realize this through one of its programs, namely the West Africa Peacebuilding Institute (WAPI). In this program, WANEP builds capacity for practitioners and academics engaged in conflict management. In addition, the values of peace and humanity are disseminated by WANEP through dialogue with state leaders and involvement in education for children and youth in schools. The above shows how WANEP, as a network of global communities, has a vision that aligns with the ideals of perpetual peace sparked by Immanuel Kant in his theory.

From Kant's perpetual peace theory, WANEP can be identified as a global civil society network model with a community of law model. According to Dahbour (2005), there are three models of the global community, one of which is the community of law. Community of law is a model of global civil society that fights for the principles of peace, justice, and human rights to apply in all regions regardless of national boundaries and are not limited by specific local laws. It is because these principles are basic principles that are entitled to be enjoyed by all human beings. If reflecting on the WANEP vision which wants to create a just, peaceful West Africa where respect for human rights is upheld, and people can meet their basic needs and have freedom of self-determination, then we can identify WANEP as one of the concrete examples of a global community with a community of law model. This is also very visible when WANEP facilitates interaction between the security sector and community members and builds community capabilities to act responsively,

effectively, and efficiently towards the conflicts that took place in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and other West African countries in 2019 (WANEP, 2019a).

Leverage Politics and Information Politics: The Two Effective WANEP Tactics

Gaining influence from the grassroots community will certainly only be enough with the support of adequate political elite forces. Therefore, one of the surefire tactics used in WANEP is leverage politics. This tactic is a form of persuasion carried out by global civil society to gain support from political elites, individuals and international institutions with significant capacity in the political arena (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). In this regard, WANEP, the official representative of the West African region in GPPAC, has obtained support from various international organizations with the economic and political capacity to influence peacekeeping in West Africa. For example, WANEP obtained funding to implement several programs 2019, such as the Election Monitoring, Analysis, and Mitigation (EMAM) program, the Workshop on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), and the Women's Leadership Project from the European Union. Apart from the European Union, WANEP receives funding from USAID and other organizations. Politically, WANEP's efforts to create peace have received support from ECOWAS, the African Union, and even the United Nations through the United Nations Development Project (UNDP), the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), and the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) (WANEP, 2019a).

Apart from leveraging politics, WANEP also undertook peacebuilding in West Africa using information politics tactics. According to Keck & Sikkink (1998), the information politics tactic is used by global civil society in voicing their actions by relying on the rapid distribution of information. Besides that, accuracy, credibility, and the way the information is made so that it is persuasive are also part of information politics tactics. WANEP, a formal global civil society network, utilizes the dissemination of information to persuade the public and the government about the problems of conflict in West Africa. This can be seen in the implementation of the ECOWARN, NEWS, and WARN programs which are still running today. A concrete example, in 2019, was a project to mitigate violence and violations in elections in several West African countries, so NEWS was used as an integrated information program to monitor the current situation. The output of this NEWS is in addition to basic information and several policy briefs and special reports published by WANEP in 2019. These policy briefs and reports are then used by countries as input for policy reform in counteracting existing problems. One example is Togo, which heavily depends on the policy recommendations published by WANEP in responding to the rife robbery problem in the country.

Effectiveness of WANEP Role in West Africa

Several things must be considered in justifying the success of a civil society network. First, did the civil society network achieve its targets and goals? Second, to what extent can the effectiveness of the network movement be legitimized? Therefore, in seeing the effectiveness of WANEP's role in West Africa in 2019, it is necessary to know whether the

WANEP targets and goals in 2019 have been achieved and how far has WANEP's performance been effective. The program targeted in 2018 to be completed in 2019 has been achieved. For example, strengthening the NEWS program as the key to conflict management was completed in June 2019. Then, the focus on the issue of gender security and women's capacity in peacebuilding which was worked on in 2018, was also successfully continued in 2019. Other programs running regularly since - previous years, such as WARN, NAPE, WAPI, and CSDG, are still running in 2019. Thus, the targets and goals of WANEP in enforcing peacebuilding in West Africa arguably can be achieved through a series of programs that have been implemented.

Then, to see the effectiveness of WANEP, it is necessary to look at the output of the programs that have been implemented and how significant these programs are in upholding peacebuilding in West Africa. WARN and ECOWARN have contributed to the success of democratic electoral processes in Senegal, Nigeria, and Guinea Bissau. WANEP conducted training for 200 community monitors in Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, as well as 150 observers in Senegal, 200 observers in Guinea Bissau, and 114 in Nigeria to monitor the electoral process in their respective countries. Then, as explained earlier, the publication of reports from NEWS is used as policy recommendations in several countries in West Africa. Then, WANEP also conducted training and increased capacity building for 4,279 people to uphold peacebuilding regarding conflict resolution strategies, dialogue, mediation, government involvement, and others. Also, young people and vulnerable people, especially women in school, were trained in several West African countries (WANEP, 2019a).

In this case, we can see how WANEP was eager to focus on long-term capacity building to empower the civil society in West Africa. WANEP, through its program such as EMMA, was much more likely to help peaceful coordination during the Nigerian election. In this case, in the middle of massive armed conflict challenges in West Africa (Allison, 2020), WANEP significantly prevents broad impacts on society. Through EMMA, WANEP showed how a democratic society could be expected to start a peace-building process within a country.

CONCLUSION

Geographical conditions, the problem of overpopulation, ethnic plurality, and status as a former colony are some factors that contribute to the complexity of the issues in West Africa. In the aftermath, armed conflict in West Africa peaked in quantity in 2019—becoming the most in the history of West Africa since 1946. The role of WANEP through several programs successfully carried out in 2019 provided new breath for peace in the region in the following years. WANEP comes with several programs primarily engaged in prevention mechanisms and capacity building in dealing with armed conflict in West Africa. General elections in Nigeria and other West African countries that have been successfully implemented democratically cannot be separated from the success of the WANEP-NEWS monitoring system. Promoting several capacity-building programs for vulnerable people is also carried out because it is the first step in conflict mitigation. As most of the programs implemented by WANEP in capacity-building, it tended to be more

targeted at long-term impacts. Therefore, we can see that in achieving peacebuilding means and undertaking its activities, WANEP played significant roles in West Africa, especially in 2019. It cannot be separated from how they built their ideas the very first time they created a network, how they mapped the root cause of the crises within the society in the region, also how they conducted specific strategies and tactics in responding to the concerns by directly engaging with the community. In this case, we can also see how WANEP expanded its network by gaining cooperation with other international relations actors to support the effectiveness of its actions in the West Africa region. From the perspective of Neo-Kantian, WANEP showed how it could trigger a democratic society which later led to a peaceful social interaction in West Africa. Further, this research can be a starting point for subsequent studies in mapping the effectiveness of WANEP capacity building for conflict mitigation in the future.

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