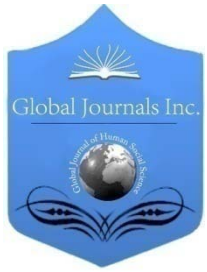
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Conflict Resolution Strategies in Classical Antiquity and Yoruba Society

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Abstract- As long as man lives and as long as societies relate together, conflict is inevitable. Therefore, for peace to reign in various communities, traditional societies had developed a well-defined structure for resolution of conflicts. In ancient times, particularly in Rome and Yoruba land, conflict resolution was done in conjunction with the council of chiefs and elders. Existing studies on the resolution of conflicts have mainly focussed on the modern methods which, over the years, have not yielded any significant result because their modes of operation are at variant with the custom and culture of the people. This paper examines how the traditional Romans and Yoruba resolved conflicts through the use of traditional rulers, that is, the paterfamilias and Mọ́gà jí (family head), Baálé (compound head), Baá lẹ̀ (community head) and the Ọ̀ba (town head). It explores how such traditional role could be brought to bear in the contemporary society, where ethno-religious and resource control conflicts which have resulted in wanton destruction of lives and properties in many countries of the world. This study adopts a comparative approach to highlight how conflicts were settled at various levels of administration in ancient Rome and the traditional Yoruba society. The paper concludes by suggesting how the ancient methods can be re-incorporated into the modern methods of conflict resolution in various communities, especially Nigeria.

Keywords: conflict resolution strategies, traditional rulers, yoruba society, ancient rome, contemporary nigeria.

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Conflict Resolution Strategies in Classical Antiquity and Yoruba Society

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Abstract- As long as man lives and as long as societies relate together, conflict is inevitable. Therefore, for peace to reign in various communities, traditional societies had developed a well-defined structure for resolution of conflicts. In ancient times, particularly in Rome and Yoruba land, conflict resolution was done in conjunction with the council of chiefs and elders. Existing studies on the resolution of conflicts have mainly focussed on the modern methods which, over the years, have not yielded any significant result because their modes of operation are at variant with the custom and culture of the people. This paper examines how the traditional Romans and Yoruba resolved conflicts through the use of traditional rulers, that is, the *paterfamilias* and *Mógàjí* (family head), *Baálé* (compound head), *Baálè̩* (community head) and the *Ọba* (town head). It explores how such traditional role could be brought to bear in the contemporary society, where ethno-religious and resource control conflicts which have resulted in wanton destruction of lives and properties in many countries of the world. This study adopts a comparative approach to highlight how conflicts were settled at various levels of administration in ancient Rome and the traditional Yoruba society. The paper concludes by suggesting how the ancient methods can be re-incorporated into the modern methods of conflict resolution in various communities, especially Nigeria.

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I. Introduction

Both Roman and Yoruba societies from the time immemorial had developed a very strong democratic structure which has in no small way helped in the area of dealing with conflicts before the incursion of modern techniques[1]. It is then apposite to say that the Romans and Yoruba people hada very unique and similar way of administering their communities thereby bringing about peaceful co-existence and spirit of togetherness. There is no gainsaying denying the fact that the British administration did not teach us how to sleep, how to eat, how to procreate and train children, how to accord respect to elders and so on. So also, the traditional rulers as the custodians of the morality of their subjects in Yoruba land and *paterfamilials*[2] in Roman society played immense role informulating a well-structured conflict resolution strategiesto address conflicts in various communities[3]. This accounted for the relative peace enjoyed in those communities in time past. The major concern of traditional rulers and their chiefs in various communities then, stem from the fact that their ability to tackle conflict is a strong determinant factor on how successful the reign of the traditional rulers will be and how peaceful the society will also be[4]. This is because, where there is peace, there will be progress and monumental development.

How successful, efficient and effective ere solution of conflicts is in any society, is critical to the development of such society[5].But, the situations we find ourselves today in Nigeria constitute a reversal of this reality. Societies known to be peaceful, accommodating and friendly in the time past have now become places riddled with conflicts of different versions and nomenclatures such as ethno-religious, intra- ethnic and political conflicts[6]. There is now a paradigm shift from peaceful coexistence societies to arenas of violence and gradual disintegration. The seseries of avoidable conflicts have led to wanton destruction of lives and properties worth Millions of Naira and the security agencies like the police and military have no answer to such conflicts on many occasions[7].

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II. Conflict Defined

Conflict has been defined differently by scholars. Different definitions came as a result of the angle from which the concept is being considered and the issue under discussion. The Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary defines conflict as a serious disagreement between people, organizations, or countries with opposing opinions. It can also be defined as a situation in which there are opposing demands or ideas and a choice has to be made between them.[8]But, for the purpose of this work, we can define conflict to mean that which pertains to the opposing ideas and actions of different entities, thus resulting in an antagonistic state. Conflict is an inevitable part of life since we have different set of beliefs, backgrounds, opinions, ideas and views about life[9].Conflicts are of different types. We have the interpersonal conflict which occurs between two individuals. This is as a result of individual differences. That is, differences and incompatibility in choices and opinions. Another type of conflict is the intra personal conflict; this is the one with in the same group, where there are misunderstandings among individuals in the same group.[10]This may also be due to differences in opinion and interpersonal disagreements.

III. Brief Historical Background of Rome and Yoruba Societies

The origin of the city of Rome was somehow shrouded in mystery but most scholars are of the view that the founding of Rome is based mainly on legend and myth instead of facts and figure. In 19th and 20th centuries, the idea of early kings of Rome was dismissed (Romulus, Numa Pumpillus, Tullus Hostilius).[11] This was taken as merely a legend and not taken seriously. The archaeological discoveries by scholars in the 20th century led to the establishment of the first set of rulers. What made up Rome was the coming together of inhabitants of Rome from various parts of the region. In the Paletine Hill, archaeologists discovered the remains of a primitive settlement from the 8th century BC.[12]

Roman history has been among the most influential to the modern world from supporting the tradition of the rule of law to influencing the American Founding Fathers. The period of Etruscan dominance and the Regal period in which according to tradition produced the first of seven kings, the Roman Republic which commenced in 509 BC when kings were replaced with rule by elected senators.[13]This period marked the vast expansion of Roman territory. Rome gained regional dominance in Latinum and eventually the entire Italian Pennisula by the 3rd century BC. With the rise of Julius Ceasar, the Republic waned and by all measures, concluded after a period of civil war and the victory of Octavian, the adopted son of Ceasar in 27th BC over Mark Anthony. Therefore, the traditional date for the funding of Rome was 27 April, 753 BC. [14]

For a long period of time, the Yoruba people had lived together for many years but did not consider themselves as belonging to one language or cultural group.[15] Rather, they saw themselves as belonging to different units which became known as the Yoruba. History has it that the Yoruba people have been living together since seventh century BC. Another version explains that the "Yorubas" are the descendants of Ham who was one of the sons of Noah.[16] They are considered as the direct ancestors of Cush, the son of Ham, and the black Cushite migrants and settlers that refused to go to Africa with the other descendants of Cush and his son.[17] They settled in Mecca for thousands of years and they became prosperous, powerful, large and respected minority out of the larger Arab community. Because of their strong faith in the indigenous religion and deep rooted belief in mysticism and paganism, they were sent away from Mecca and migrated to the banks of the great River Nile in Egypt where they intermingled with Egyptian Arabs, the Nubians and the Sudanese of the Nile. From there, they eventually migrated down South to the forests and farm lands of what is now known as South-western Nigeria making their primary place and location of pagan worship Ile-Ife.[18] It seems clear that from the various versions about the origin of the Yoruba that there were

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[9] https://www.megaessays.com/viewpaper/2665.html. Assessed on the 12th of July, 2018.

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indigenous inhabitants who had always lived at Ile –Ife. These sets of people were led by Oreluere before another group led by Odùduwà joined the earlier settlers. [19] Though, it is on record that Odùduwà dominated and took control but the two sets of settlers agreed to live together. Odùduwà later married Ọmọnide who gave birth to a daughter and many sons. All the sons were said to have left their father to found kingdoms. This therefore suggests why Odùduwà is believed to be the father of the Yoruba and Ile-Ife, their spiritual home. [20]

IV. Emergence of Traditional Institution in Yoruba Land

It is important at this juncture to trace the emergence of traditional institution in Yoruba land inorder tohave a holistic approach to the subject matter. The need for traditional institution arose as a result of the quest for credible people that would govern their affairs. Traditional stoolis not the same as other positions of authority in Yoruba land. [21]While people vie for other positions of authority, the traditional institution is hereditary. That means, there are families in each community that can ascend the throne of an Ọba as a matter of right. At the head ofany monarchical structure is the Ọba. Before a new Ọba is crowned in Yoruba land after the demise of the predecessor, king makers *(Afọbajẹ)* have to inform the ruling families; *ìdílé ọ̀ọ̀ba*to present one of their sons for the throne. [22] But, if there are many ruling families, the kings makers will have to tell the community the next ruling house to ascend the throne.

When someone has been chosen, which on many occasions take years to resolve as many princes want to ascend the throne. The kingmakers consult *Ifá*so as to select the worthy man who will bring peace and progress to the land *(Ọba tí ó máatu ìlú lára).* After due consultation with the oracle*, bí bá ifá ní gbóóhùn*; *afọbajẹ* (king makers) havetoendorse the person selected by the oracle and make it known to the public. [23] The role played by the elders in the community *(Àgbà Ìlú)* cannot be overemphasized as they are also consulted for advice in the search for the new Ọba. This is more reason, why this adage is common among the Yoruba that; "*Àgbà kò sí ní ìlú, ìlú bàjẹ́, baálé ilé kú ilé di ahoro.*" That is, the wisdom of the elders in the community cannot be wished away. After the approval has been given by the gods, his office becomes sacred. He is considered as the representative of the Supreme Being on earth. [24] His words are final and no one dare question his authority. That is why you hear Yoruba people refer to kingsas*Kábí ọ́ kòsí, tiỌbalàsẹ* and *Alaseekejiorisa.* There presentatives of the gods. [25]

In some communities, it is customary for the chosen Ọba to remain indoor (*Akodì*) for 3 to 6 months. Though, this varies among communities. This is the period when he will be taught traditionally, matters pertaining to the community especially, if he is the one that has travelled out of the community for a long period of time. He will be adequately informed about the history, tradition, belief system, culture and the custom of the people he is about to rule and so on. He will also be offered spiritual assistance on how to rule his people with the fear of God. [26] At the expiration of the period, a day will be fixed for the actual coronation. The nomenclatures in Yoruba traditional society for the recognition of their Ọba which also strengthened the authority of the Ọba are the use of many rituals and myths and by wearing of a crown (*Adé*), the use of horse tail (*Ìrùkẹ̀rẹ̀*) and putting on of flowing native attire (*Agbádá*). [27]

After the coronation rituals have been performed and the new king has been installed, the king makers will present the Ọba to the public with this saying; *Ọba yín tuntun rè ó, séẹ́fẹ́ẹ́,tàbí ẹkọ̀fẹ́,*(This is your new king, do you want him as your king or not?), the people will chorus in unison of their approval. [28] In some communities, we are told that the Ọba will take his last prostration before his subject [29]and thereafter, the

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whole community, even his mother will kneel down for him in honour with this greeting:

Kábíyèsí, ọbaalásẹ èkejì òrìsà, Hail the king, the representative of the gods
*Kí adé pẹ́ lórí, ki ọ̀tà pẹ́ lẹ́sẹ̀,*May you reign for a long period of time
Kí ìgbá tirẹ dára fún gbogbo wa o.May your reign be peaceful for everyone.

The Oba is then taken to the palace, he is heralded with beatings of the drumand singing with various groups representing their society and quarters with uniform attire (*AsọEbí*). Every community and family will want to identify with the new king and share in the joy and happiness. At the palace, various events which are very significant and which in most cases determine how the reign of the new king will be are performed. One of such is the opening of calabash. Three calabash with *íyọ̀*(salt), *eérú* (ash), *epo ati íyẹ̀pẹ̀ dié* (palm oil and little sand) in the each respectively. In some places, *omiàti ewé òdúndún* (water and *odundun* leave) will be in another calabash (*igbá)*. The three calabashes will be presented before the king and will beasked to open any one; anyone opened will determine how his reign will be. While Salt (*Iyọ̀*), denotes joy and happiness, Ash denotes suffering and hash situation and palm oil with little sand denotes that the reign of the new king will be a mixture of happiness and sadness. [30] Our findings indicate that there are certain rituals and sacrifices that would be carried out to the mother earth (*Irúnmolẹ̀*) for the king to make a right choice. The Kingwill pick and open the right calabash. Usually, the king makes the right choice, to be followed after this, is the shout of joy follow by singing like *Amóyèyí jẹ, ìwonnà, ìwonpápáìwo.* Our King has been installed already. Eating and drinking follow as people from every quarter, club and society make different tents where they entertain their guests. [31]

V. Conflict Resolution Strategies of the Traditional Rulers in Yoruba and Roman Society

Before the advent of the British administration into Yoruba land, Yoruba people of South west had ways of resolving both civil and criminal matters by means of an institution which is as old as the history of the Yoruba people themselves. [32] In fact, resolution of conflict was the major duty of the traditional rulers in Yoruba communities in the past. As pointed out earlier that before the coming of the colonial administrators, Yoruba had a highly sophiscated and developed three-tier government structure. That is, the executive, legislature and judiciary. Even, within the executive arm, there were hierarchies for easy administration. We have the *Mọ́gàjí* (Household head), *Báálé* (Compound Head), *Baálẹ̀* (Community Head) and the *Ọba* (King), who was the supreme head of the government and an absolute ruler. [33]It will be safe at this point therefore to discuss the various structures put in place by the traditional institution to address various conflicts in various communities.

VI. Mọ́gàjí (family head)

Settlement of conflict at the family level was handled by the Mọ́gàjí popularly refer to as *OlóríẸbí*. The *Olórí-Ebí*must be the eldest male in the extended family just as in ancient Rome and he must be of ample means. He presided over the settlement of quarrels among his kinsmen. The structure was an informal one as the meeting for such resolution can take place at the backyard of the family house. [34] Like the Roman *paterfamilias*, he has absolute authority over those in his charge and he settled civil cases like co-wives rivalry, dealing with stubborn child in the family, adultery and so on. Usually, the Mọ́gàjí and *paterfamilias* deal with cases within their extended families and sanctions were imposed on the guilty person(s)either by imposing a fine or he/she should make a verbal apology to the family and promise not to do it again. To settle conflict, the family head call on the disputants to state their case. [35]The reasons for inviting the parties is premised on the principle of hear the other side (Fair Hearing). Proverbs, words of wisdom, analogy, persuasion, life experience and precedent were used to settle dispute. The object of this is to have an amicable settlement, where the disputants will not hold any further grudge against each other. [36]

The Mogaji who was the head of the family performed and had jurisdiction over the family

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members. Minor cases that could not be handled at the individual level were taken to him for settlement. The *paterfamilias* in ancient Rome must be a custodian of the tradition and custom of his extended family and must have a wealth of experience on issues like marriage, death and other social issues.[37] His actions were taken in conjunction as custom demands other elderly men in the extended family who are full of experience to settle dispute. *Àgbà kìí wà lójà,kí orí ọmọ wó.* We cannot have an elderly man in the market place and allow the head of a child bends. The judgmentof the Mógàjí and the elders were final over any matter brought before them. The Mógàjí must possess the characteristics of *Ọmọlúàbí* which are honesty, sincerity, faithfulness, openness, firmness, integrity and so on. He must also be well respected by his people and possess the charisma to lead and make sure at all times that his extended families are united. [38] Offenders and erring members of his compound could be excommunicated and driven out of the compound, by *Olórí-ebí* and paterfamilias depending on the magnitude of his offence. Such actions were taken in love to serve as deterrent to others. Serious or conflict between two or more families had to be referred to the *Bàálè* (compound head) who was responsible for settlement of conflict and restoration of order within the area.

VII. The Báálé(compound head)

The Báálé (compound head) held the sway by keenly and painstakingly cross-examining parties involved in any matter within the compound comprising of many families. This is done to make sure that the quarrelling parties got their hearing and justice without delay. The coming together of two or more *paterfamilias* from various families form what the Yoruba people refer to as báálé. On many occasions, matters were dealt with at the family level. But, issues that could not be resolved or when parties involved noticed a kind of bias or a miscarriage of justice, may decide to take their case to the high authority in the community.[39]Theoretically, his power was complete and total until his death, at which point his sons would become the *paterfamilias* of their own families. In some cases, when some difficult decisions had to be made, the *Bàálé* and the compound elders invoked the spirit of *Alajọbí* and the spirit of the ancestors to intervene in the matter. This was done by pouring libation on the floor. Yoruba believes that truly,*Ahọ́n àtiẹnu ma ń jà*. That is, tongue and mouth do fight. This suggests that conflict is inevitable. But, such conflict should be amicably resolved as they arise. Serious matters like improper upbringing, indecent dressing, insult, lying, and lack of respect for elders within the compound are quickly resolved by the *bàálé* in order to prevent escalation into violence which can invariably threaten the survival and the sustainability of the peace being experience in the community.[40]This is apposite to the belief of the Yoruba that *Ojú kan ló ń bí ọmọ, igbaoju ló ń woò́.* Although, a child is born by an individual, but the upbringing of such child, is the responsibility of all. Regular meetings were held between the family heads Mógàjí and the compound heads, *Bàálé* to discuss issues of common interest to the various families within a given compoundand to know how various families are faring. In fact, one finds it extremely difficult to distinguish between the functions performed by the *Mógàjí* and *Bàálé* except in scope.

VIII. The Bàálè (community head)

Next to the *Bàálé* compound-head was the *Bàálè* who handled cases found too knotty,Intractable and very hard to crack by the *Bàálé*. Since he has many compounds under his jurisdiction, his functions are wider in scope than that of the *Baalé*. The *Baalès* representing the various villages hold regular meetings with *Kabiyesi*to discuss about issues relating to development. As we have it in Rome between 753-509 BC., The *Olórí-Ẹbi,* the *Bàálé* and the *Bàálè* are all answerable to the king (*Ọba*) on certain critical matters that affect the community. The Báálè tried all civil cases involving persons from different compounds but living in the same village. In some communities and villages in Yoruba land, two days were set aside to listen to cases brought before them. Some villages pick Tuesdays and Thursday, while in some villages, they settle conflict on market days. Because of the nature of the matters handled at the village level, the Baálè have among his council of chiefs, persons who conduct investigation on matters brought before them. They did this in order to make sure that justice does not seem to have been done but that justice was actually done. This was usually a large gathering where people in the community would like to know how cases were decided. Cases of adultery, rape, robbery, infidelity and so on were decided at this level, fines were also awarded to any party at fault. For example, in Akínlàlú, a community in Ọsun state, Nigeria, before a matter was brought for

[37] Richard P. S. Familia, Domus", and the Roman Conception of the Family Author(s): Source: Phoenix, Vol. 38, No. 4, (Winter, 1984), pp. 336-355 Published by: Classical Association of Canada Stable URL:http://www.jstor.org/stable/1088380 Asseessedon 3rd September, 2018.

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discussion and settlement, certain amount of money would be paid to the council of chiefs for refreshment as many cases lasted for hours.[41]

IX. Oḅa (the king)

The office of the Oḅa is the highest traditional office in Yoruba land. They derived their executive, legislative and judicial powers from a very long tradition and awell rooted history that has existed for generations. They were highly respected and revered by the people of their respective areas of jurisdiction which they represent. Whenever a respected Oḅa was moving around his community, people chorused *Kábíyèsíooooo* (Hail the king) to show respect and honour to the office not necessarily to him. Example of this was when the former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a man of 83 years of age prostrated for the Ooni of Ife, Oba Ogunwusi Eniitan, a 42 year old traditional ruler in Ile-Ife. Many of his critics condemned his action, but he replied them that he was prostrating for the office. It is not about age.[42] That is the rich culture of the Yoruba people. As the position of kings is backed in Yoruba by tradition while that of the Roman society is backed by law. The Oḅa in Yoruba land combined both temporal and spiritual powers in addition to his political powers which he must exercise with serious caution as there were checks and balances to ensure that the traditional rulers did not become autocratic or despotic.[43]

The scope of adjudication at this level is wider than that of Báálè. The Oba (king) presided over both civil and criminal matters and judgments were pronounced based on the gravity of the offence committed. *Paterfamilias* in ancient Rome ensure that peace is restored in various communities where they held sway just like Oba in Yoruba. Those involved in civil matters like dispute over land, conflicts between two compounds, willful damage of property, quarrel, insult, debt and adultery were punished accordingly. [44]While some were asked to pay fine, others like adultery cases were publicly flogged by able bodied men in the community to serve as deterrent to others. For criminal cases such as felony, burglar, rape, homicide, manslaughter, murder and seduction, their judgment may be serious sanctions like ex communication. Cases were handled at the *Oba*'s court. The *Oḅa* might send out few of his chiefs on a fact finding mission in order to get to the root of the matter before judgment is given. This may take more than a week. [45] The purpose according to our finding is to make sure that issues were addressed accordingly and there was no miscarriage of justice.

Before the verdict is delivered, the Oba and his council of chiefs must make sure that all issues that led to the conflict had been handled without bias, prejudice and sentiment. The warring parties, no matter their level of grievances, would be wholeheartedly satisfied with the handling of their cases. Oba must not compromise no matter how close or related the accused and defendants may be to him or to any of the chiefs. As the Oba pronounced his verdict, the disputants must display publicly that they were satisfied and that they were ready to allow peace to reign. One of the disputants would be called upon to thank and appreciate the unbiased, intellect, knowledge and the integrity of the *Kabiyesi* and his chiefs on the way they have handled the matter.

X. The Incorporation of the Traditional Strategies of Resolving Conflict with the Modern Strategies

What we have observed in the recent time in the resolution of various conflicts in Yoruba land in particular and Nigeria in general is that, the police and military who are saddled with the responsibility of maintaining peace and resolving conflicts have not been able to live up to expectation. There are many factors that are responsible for this. The number of security men are grossly inadequate to address these conflicts, corruption which has become the order of the day among the police and the military and the methods and the processes used which are modern and at variant with the culture and tradition of the people. This is more reason why they have not been unable to build peace despite their coercive power. Also, in many of the communities in Yoruba land, the media (Radio and Television) have developed a structure to settle matters that are brought to them. For example in Ibadan, there are Radio and Television stations where programmes are aired once in a week to resolve conflicts. Example of such programmes in Ibadan are *Agbọ̀ràndùn*of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) , *Sọ́ Da Bẹ̀ẹ̀* of the Broadcating Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS), *Gbangbadẹ̀kùn* of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS). These stations on weekly basis invite elders in the communities with wealth of experience to

[41] An oral interview conducted with the Mogaji of BalogunMolomo family of Akinlalu , Ife North Local Governmenent of Osun state Chief OladepoOke on 17th August, 2018.

[42] https://www.google.com/search?q=obasanjo+prostrated+for+oni&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b. Asseessed on 10th August,2018.

[43] Oladumiye, B. 2014.Monarchical Activities of the Yoruba Kings of South Western Nigeria: A Cultural Heritage in Printmaking Visual Documentary. https://www.Researchgate.net/publication/271514800_Monarchical_Activities_of_the_Yoruba_Kings_of_South_Western_Nigeria_A_Cultural_Heritage_in_Printmaking_Visual_Documentary.Asseessed on the 11th September, 2018

[44] Adoption in the Roman Empirehttps://carolashby.com/ adoption-in-the-roman-empire/.Asseessed on 26th July, 2018.

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speak to warring parties. On many occasions, matters were not absolutely settled; they may not be able to enforce any judgment but just to appeal. The high spate of insecurity, threats to lives, conflict related cases that have reached an unimaginable proportion despite the presence of law enforcement agencies and various programmes on the Radio and Television on how to resolve internal conflicts call for an urgent attention. The blameon the increase in violent conflicts can be traced to the failure of the state in rising up to the challenge as at when due. The questions that are begging for answers are; Howhadthe Yoruba Roman societies been able to resolve their conflicts in the past? Why are the modern strategies in resolving conflicts defective? How can we integrate traditional conflict resolution strategies in Rome and Yoruba societies with the modern conflict resolution strategies in Nigeria in general?

As said earlier, the various strategies employed by the modern security agencies to resolve conflict have not yielded any fruitful result due to the coercive nature of their operations. The failure of the modern strategies put in place by government at different levels has made communities in Yoruba land to develop a kind of strategies that are akin to the peculiarity of the current conflict in those communities like vigilante, the local hunters, charms, communal solidarity, etc .It is our aim in this work therefore to consider how the traditional strategies employed in Roman society under the *paterfamilias* structure and that of Yoruba will been gaged to resolve conflict since the traditional rulers are believed to be very close to their people. Their intervention will have greater impact on the Yoruba society in particular and Nigeria in general. Many conflicts will be resolved at the community level where the traditional rulers hold sway. This involvement is to bring about peace whenever there is any crisis and their relentless efforts in containing such crisis in their localities is a pointer to the fact that they are still relevant and can still play a significant role at the various communities they represent if given the opportunity.

Traditional rulers in Yoruba land just as the *paterfamilias* in Roman society have used their wealth of experience over the years to bring development to their people in the areas of health, education, agriculture, economy, politics, .religion and so on. This is as a result of the cultures of excellence, hard work, dedication, determination, sincerity, frankness, truthfulness, ingenuity, industry, and resourcefulness they showcased by them in the affair of their subjects. This is the main reason why Yoruba people are said to be more educated more enlightened and well- travelled. Since they are very close to their people and because they command a lot of respect from their subjects, they are better positioned in the sustenance of the democratic principle of the traditional society. They are regarded as the custodian of the custom and culture of their people and because their enthronement was divine, their words are final.

XI. Conclusion

So far so good, the purpose of this paper has been achieved. We have been able to establish that despite the geographical distance between Yoruba and Roman society, the two cultures have developed and manifested that conflictual matters can be resolved without necessarily going to court to settle matters. Also, we tried to consider the various hierarchical democratic structures that existed in the two traditional societies (Yoruba and Rome) and how they have been able to deal with conflict related matters at various levels in their communities. As said earlier, their closeness to their people has made it easy for them to intervene and tackle various conflicts in their domains and seek instant resolution to such. Their main concern was the peaceful resolution of conflicts which will metamorphose into peaceful co-existence of all and sundry which in no doubt lead to monumental development as progress can only occur in a peaceful environment. But, it is quite unfortunate that the power and the influence of these traditional rulers in Yoruba land and the *paterfamilias* in Roman society have waned due to the wave of social change as both societies embrace new system of government. For example, Roman society moved from the republican rule to a time where people especially women were given more power and freedom. Another great blow to this cherished traditional system is the influence of foreign religions like Christianity and Islam. This really affected the cultural values of the people.

XII. Recommendation

Since traditional rulers are the 'eyes' of the people in traditional society, their roles and impact on their subjects cannot be over-emphasized. This is why there is the need to make some recommendations on how their efforts could be better appreciated by way of developing a synergy between them and various agencies charged with the responsibility of resolving conflict in the contemporary society.

For a better appreciation of the role of the traditional rulers at the traditional society, there is an urgent need for the harmonization of the norms and values the traditional society possess in order to reduce conflict related issues to a barest minimum. The various modern strategies put in place by government and its agencies have not been able to nail conflicts in the bud. There is therefore an urgent need to look inward and incorporate the traditional rulers to the modern methods of resolving conflict to bring about a holistic approach to the subject under discussion.

Given this development, the government needs to provide an enabling environment for the traditional

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rulers to showcase their God given native wisdom to handle conflict. This is very important because government has over the years played down on the capacity of the traditional rulers to make any meaningful change. They are only needed during campaign to help them mobilize the people to vote during elections. If the traditional rulers are given the opportunity to administer justice at their various domains, it will go a long way in reducing the already congested conventional court where proceedings are complex, sophisticated and unpredictable.

The involvement of the traditional rulers in the modern democratic arrangement in Nigeria is very necessary and this is why we are calling on the government at every level to re-invigorate and revitalize the existing strategies of conflict resolution in the traditional society. By strengthening the traditional institution through redefining their roles backing it up with appropriate legal framework which we redirect their *modus operandi* for better performance. If their decisions are given legal support and there is a paradigm shift from mere appeal to enforcement, it will make their efforts to yield fruitful result. It is an undeniable fact that traditional rulers and their council of chiefs enjoy easy access to the people and by so doing; they are very free to express their thought rather than the conventional court that is beaurocratic in nature.

It is also expedient for traditional rulers not to abuse their office for self-aggrandizement in order to command respect. In fact, this is very necessary as many traditional rulers think they are so powerful and that they can do anything they like. We heard of a king in Yoruba land beating up his wife. There is another case of an Oba who was accused of having carnal knowledge of a corps member. All these have really caused embarrassment to the exalted traditional stool. Traditional rulers should stir clear of playing politics when it comes to conflict resolution. Since they are regarded as the custodians of the culture of the traditional society, they need to showcase this in all their dealings by exemplifying the real virtues of Yoruba concept of *Omoluabi* in the way and matter they govern their people.

The government through the National Orientation Agency (NOA) should on a regular basis organize seminars and symposia for the traditional rulers in order for them to be abreast of the modern methods of conflict resolution use by the agencies of government. This will help them to know the happenings and how to get involved in the modern strategies employed as to incorporate this to their traditional system.

Traditional rulers too, especially the educated ones among them should hold regular meetings with other traditional rulers to acquaint them with the current trend of conflict resolution mechanism available in other part of the country. This will help them to have a broader view about how issues are resolved in other part of the country.

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