COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN AND WESTERN PEACE BUILDING

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ABSTRACT
Conflict is a two edge phenomenon that can instigate human creativity toward innovation with the aim of providing stability and peace; on the other side is the distractive role it provides to the society. African traditional methods of conflict resolution have lost its potency in recent times due to Western Methodology in conflict resolution and its interference with African Philosophical approach. However, traditional African conflicts resolution mechanism is still relevant, as the Western concept is not providing the answers to peace. It is however imperative that both the traditional African conflict resolution mechanism and the Western Model are fused together in order to provide a conflict resolution in the African environment. Hence both the traditional African method and the Western style method still live with us and peace is what everyone need. This essay is an attempt to harmonize the Africa traditional conflict resolution and western methods of peace building in conflict management in the African environment with specific touch on the IGBO of the South East Nigeria and the BUEM of Ghana . peace building theory was used. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources.

Introduction

African Conflict Management mechanism have been described by scholars as a necessary reality that is important by bringing African traditional conflict medicine to bear with the present day challenges of resolving Modern conflict that have permeated the African continent.

With the end of the systems of world order that colonialism and the cold war provided, Africa is experiencing a greater degree of conflict than it has seen in a long while. While this conflict is frequently noted to be primarily internal in nature, the fact frequently noted is that domestic political conflict does not remain self-contained, nor is itself generated. The stakes of African conflicts in the post-cold war era are indeed internal, but their origins and ramifications involved the entire region. African Conflict in the 1990's is not only prevalent than in earlier periods; it is more virulent and destructive because its implications lie within both the state and the region. More than ever, Africa needs effective conflict management practices. (Zartman W. 2000).

So if Africa has to put the falling apart together; her original values must be revisited (Bob Manuel, 2000:10) Going back to the basics, African traditional societies have over the centuries, developed mechanism in conflicts or dispute resolution; hence they were able to address contending issues within the community and family that comes to confront them on daily basics. Though analysts have argued that the methods, principles and processes that these traditional dispute resolutions mechanisms applied in disputes were not orthordoxically documented, they were done through oral traditions, which got to a state of distortion from one generation to another. Nevertheless, the practices of invoking the same style or tradition is to arrive at a meaningful result, that implant peace to the community is still the same

African traditional dispute resolutions may differ from one clan, lineage, community or family to another but the overriding characteristics of these dispute resolutions rely on (1) The head of the family, (2) The elders (3) oath taking through African traditional religion beliefs (4) The 3rd Party approach, etc all play crucial role in dispute resolutions in Africa.

Conceptualization

Peace is the absence of war, absence of violence.

Peace building is an activities aim at achieving sustainable peace. It includes peacemaking, peace keeping, DDR etc.

Principles and processes of African Dispute Resolution

In Africa, family ties and community networking are constantly respected, maintained and strengthened. When there is a dispute between different parties, priority is given to restoring the relationships. During the dispute settlement, which would normally involve supporters of the disputing parties and the elders meant to talk the matters through, relationships are given prime attention. The relationships are viewed according to the past, and the tense or current conflict, and then the aim would be to improve future relationships. Indirect relationships are analyzed along with direct ones to see cross-stitching potentials, for example, if each of the disputing parties happen to be musicians, this commonality may be utilized as a converging factor. The fear of sorcery or divine punishment is also used to show what the breach of peace would bring upon the society and the conflicting parties. (Birgit Brock-Utne 2001)

Traditional conflict resolution practices reflect principles of reconciliation based on long-standing relationships and values. They tend to be effective in addressing intra-community and even inter-community conflict, where relationships and shared values are part of the reconciliation process (Joe (1993). Traditional mechanisms are rooted in the culture and history of the African people. They emphasize group unity, reconciliation of individuals or groups, and peaceful reintegration into the community. Traditional techniques place the interest of the group above that of the individual. They assume that all parties are interested in and affected by the conflict. The goal is to reconcile the parties to the conflict so that there is a return to social harmony—the goal of cosmopolitanism.

Chiefs, village mediators, tribal elders, community leaders, clan leaders, mobilized women, and local religious figures are well placed to ameliorate certain aspects of larger conflicts. Elders function as a court with broad and flexible powers to interpret evidence, impose judgments,

and manage reconciliation. Traditional leaders use their position of moral strength to find an acceptable solution. Councils of elders and chiefs usually seek resolution through consensus. The solution often involves forgiveness and compensation. Women and traditional religious figures play a unique role in the reconciliation process in some societies. Their very place in society puts them in a strong position to encourage dialogue between feuding parties.(Meyers L J 2005)

African conflict Resolutions

African continent is saturated with conflicts in all corners, ranging from the Northern part of Africa, to the sub-regional areas. Conflicts in Africa are more prevalent now than ever in history. This unfortunate trend of conflict everywhere has even given room to private agencies to be involved in seeking to bring peace back to Africa. The International Negotiation Network (I.N.N) of the center of Emory University and other NGO's such as International Alert in London, The Liberian Council of Churches and others including some in Nigeria's efforts have all been a herculean task. Despite all these efforts to provide solutions to African's conflict, they have remained impervious to these attentions. Though they involve the activities of seasoned peacemakers using the best of personal skills and recently developed knowledge about ways of managing and resolving conflicts, International efforts at conflict management have not been particularly effective or efficient in overcoming the disasters that have brought them to the continent. Some of these conflicts i.e. the Liberia, Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia etc have indeed been brought under control after lengthy and multiple efforts, but these occurrence and duration and the persistence of the other conflicts show that improvements are needed in conflict management. (Birgit Brock-Utne, 2001)

The weakness is twofold, the outburst and persistence of violent conflict means that the homegrown measures at dampening escalation and preventing violence have failed. Before the conflicts rise to an intensity that justifies International attention, domestic measures would be expected to come to play but they have not, at least not effectively. Governance according to Zartman (1997) is conflict management. If some areas of Africa have kept their conflict under control, many have not and have seen the original attempt at building a National community at independence become chewed into pieces and spat out in sub-national ethnic violence. Traditional African conflict management practices have proven ineffective against contemporary - if not modern challenges.

Contemporary challenges may be of the same type of internal contests of authority or clashes between governed communities that Africa has always known. But modern challenges indicate new types of conflicts that contest states authority along with its commonality of values and its respect of venerable leader and that reject community solidarity destroyed by a combination of globalizing experience and parochial ambitions. Whether it is the specifically different nature of these conflicts as a modern phenomenon, or simply their contemporary occurrence as a broader challenge, today's conflicts elude traditional management method, and it is no use blaming the inadequacies or machination of foreign actors for the fact.

At the same time, the persistence of violent conflicts in Africa indicate that modern International methods are also defective in facing the challenges despite the increased attention and improved knowledge about conflict management in the post-cold war era, African conflicts elude International as well as domestic efforts to bring them under control. The methods are often faulted for their foreignness and non-African nature and for ignoring the wisdom of traditional African conflict management practices but even when examined in their own terms according to Modern concepts of conflict management, they tell more from their shortcoming than from their successes.

The conclusions to be drawn are not clear, since failure is usually over determined. As noted, conflict today may be different in nature and modern therefore impervious to traditional methods, yet Africa and thus resistant to International methods. Both traditional and International practices may be sound but poorly applied. Probably most telling but most difficult to deal with method – but especially traditional methods may be operating effectively in keeping large numbers of conflict under control but also out of reach of the analyst, leaving only the exceptionally difficult cases to escalate their way onto the headlines. The only conclusion that does ring clear is that more work is required on the nature of both conflict and conflict management method in Africa so as to improve the fit between the two.

African traditional practices of disputes Resolution; Some selected cases in Nigeria and Ghana.

These traditional practices in dispute resolution in African societies may differ in one form or the other; but each of these practices are aimed at providing peace and co-existence in every given society. In pre-colonial societies as well as in their continuation under colonial and now independent rule, methods did exist to deal with conflict. This fact is a characteristic of all societies. To recognize it is merely to make an empirical generalization, not necessarily to take an interpretative position on the African anthropological thesis that societal harmonization is either an African characteristics or the broader sociological thesis that equilibrium is a universal societal characteristic. (Parsons, 1937). While it is impossible to enumerate all conflict management methods across the whole continent, some salient and representative accounts would bring the richness of Africa experience to light.

These traditional African practices in dispute resolutions are potent and effective; and have helped in keeping African to its present stage of existence. While these practices are bound within the continent, each present one small part as a macrocosm of the whole, thus asserting what needs to be demonstrated and epitomize what needs to be compared. The first task then is to acquire data. Analysts have equally pointed out that data collections when it comes to traditional disputes resolutions are problematic. Other than, by luck of the random, there is no way of knowing how salient or representative selected cases may be until all the cases have been examined, yet not all the cases may be examined. It is meaningful to a certain degree to talk of African conflict management practices, in the sense that such practices exhibit both similarities and differences that are used as reference by people who are identified by the generalization “Africa”. To some extent, Africa share similar practices, but more importantly are to an increasing extent, they claim as their own and draw inspiration from practices at home and elsewhere on the continent.

On the other hand, such claims and references do not indicate that the practices are either common or exclusive to all African societies. Commonality is a challenge to any analysis. Conflict management practices are considered traditional if they have been practiced for an extended period and have evolved within African societies rather than being the product of external importation. Tradition continues to exist even in the contemporary or modern period, and the traditional practices considered are still practiced today. At the same time, tradition is likely to have been updated, adjusted and opened to new accretions in order to stay alive through changing times.

Some of these traditional practices include:

1. Managing disputes within family
2. Managing disputes between one family and the other
3. Managing disputes within the same clan or community
4. Managing disputes between two clans or communities etc

These are the major and obvious identifiable traditional dispute resolutions mechanism. There are other smaller aspects to this case, which this paper will streamline for a better understanding, with specific interest on three African culture setting namely: The TIV of Central Nigeria, The Igbo of South East Nigeria and the Buem Ghana – Togo Boarder all within the African continent.

The Ibo

The ibo’s are a group of people residing in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. Their political and social structures are more complex and organized , but one basic feature remain, their structure in resolving dispute in their society also rely on elders, chiefs, age grade and the Totem, available literature on this indicates that there are variables such as the nature of relationships, socio-economic, status, the nature of the dispute and the disputants past experiences allow for explanations of the choice of various conflicts management strategies.

Dispute Settlement in the Family

In the Ibo society, whenever there is a family dispute, family members will gather in a hut, female and male groups sits opposite each other. The family head (Onyi’si) welcomed the assembled audience with six white and red kola nuts. After the welcoming remarks, he (the head) admonishes those gathered to reconcile this parties. There is no need to decide guilt or

innocence in spousal cases, only to reconcile the husband and wife because of the sacredness of marriage.

Holding a six by two, one inch-thick wooden object, covered with multi-colored bird feathers, the family head (Onyi'si) beckoned the family ancestors to hover round those who had gathered to resolve the family matter. He ceremoniously seated the family "Ofo" (oath object) in the center of the floor and swore the people to be unbiased and to ensure family unity in their judgment. After a brief proverbial introduction of the case, he asked the wife to stand next to the of and present her complaint.The wife a peasant farmer complained that her marriage, after 18 years and seven children had become too abusive to bear. She told the gathered family members that her husband, neglected to provide food for his immediate family and that he was having an affair with a widow in the village. She further stated that her husband had physically abused her when she confronted him with his infidelity and his neglect. She emphasized that she wanted the physical abuse to stop. In response, the husband was equally invited to stand next to "ofo" and present his own version.

The husband countered the report of the wife, stated that his wife had neglected him either by preparing his food late or by not preparing it at all. He retorted that he had stopped buying goat meat for the house because his wife had complained that it was an insufficient meal for a family of twelve. The husband contended that his wife did not understand that their farm had not produced enough to generate extra cash ingredients. He said he had tried to supplement the family income by climbing palm trees and gathering palm nuts, a primary source of cooking oil for interested customers. His customers were mostly widows who did not have able males to fetch them palm nuts. He further stated that he had come home late on many occasions because he was trying to collect fees from customers who could not pay on time. The best time to collect this money was in the evening when his customers who went to sell these nuts might have return from the market.

After involving the god of thunder (Amadioha and the ancestors to punish any person (Mediator) who might cause the husband and wife to sever their marriage, break up the family, and cause conflict. The totem onyi'si through a mediatorre-phrased the dispute as a case of spousal abuse and neglect. It pointed to the wife beating and wife refusal or reluctance to prepare food. Most of the males in the audience questioned the disputing couple. The women on the other hand urged the men to resolve the case without findings fault. The questions were aim at reconciliation. Both families of the couples in dispute reiterated a commitment of reconciliation and to keeping the family together. The deliberation ended when the family head announced that both the husband and the wife were equally responsible for the quarrel. Fines of a cock and a hen were imposed on the couple. A bird will then be slaughtered to smear the blood on the chi to appease the gods and ancestors. The couple is also expected to cook food for all the members that attended.

The question one will ask is what if this action taken did not end the dispute? The Ibo traditional dispute resolution gives room for further appeals. The next stage will be the age grade where the case will be taken.

The Buem's of Ghana-Togo Border

The Buem or the "BuemKator" as they are generally referred to, are located along the central part of the Ghana –Togo border, it is a cluster of farming communities that constitutes the Eastern portion of the larger Buem traditional Area in the Jasikan District of the volta region of Ghana and marks the Eastern limit of the Bia Akwapin Togo mountain range that run across the middle of the country. The Buem traditional Area as a whole is the largest and politically dominant ethnic group in the northern portion of the Volta region. Kinship, politics and conflict management are inextricably intertwined.

Conflict Management practices

The Buem people because of their organized commitment in conflict intervention process, and based on Antropological structural-functional prospective, to the study of social control their conflict management philosophy is structured into several angles all with the aim of providing peace and stability in their various communities. Letsexamines few of these vital traditional management philosophical practices in Buemkator which are complex yet well organized.

1. **Kanye Ndu Bowi** - this philosophical practice acknowledge the short fall of the community and therefore insist that certain standard of conduct must be maintained ,in order to keep the society moving on equal footing where human dignity and respect is

the ultimate goal, the Buem maintained that coercion and morality are viewed as the mechanism of social control, it is therefore a human or community duty to sustain uphold this philosophy (social harmony).

KanyeNdu- bowi is a broad ideological and philosophical orientation that encompassed all manner of social control and modes of conflicts management in the area. One important means by which this philosophy is translated into practicality is the imposition of intrinsic sanctions, the subtle but pervasive means by which members of the community are molded into complying with the rules of social control, the moral code, the normative order and value system.

Intrinsic sanctions are both positive and negative.

Positives ones - The psychic rewards that people receive when they conform to the approved mode of behavior, while the negative are the feeling of moral discomfort that the people experience when they default.

"Social harmony" in Buem community involved the manipulation of social relationship through the use and strengthening of myths, beliefs, values and motives. (Cohen 1974:81). The inculcation of this "kanyeNdubowi" (Social harmony) in Buem society is an integral part of the society and it is also an on-going process which also propel their socialization process. The culturally approved means by which the people strive to achieve conformity to the rules of conduct and ensure the continuity of the community.

The people in this community are compelled to comply with the rules of conduct settle disputes and abide by the outcome of mediation. Buem hold the view that a failure to comply with the rules of social control undermines the social order and is tantamount to an assault on the community as a whole. Such failures are often met only with the imposition of fines but also with strong condemnation by the public whose duty it is to provide public official with loyalty and support in enforcing community rules. The need to settle disputes and abide by terms of disputes settlement is also motivated by the fact that members of the community are invariably in ongoing social and economic relationships and must necessarily deal with each other in the future.

2. **Benyaogba Ukpikator** (Dispute Handling Forum) - The term in Buem literally translation means "to say no to a case between adversaries". This phrase as analyst would criticise holds sway for the too much power bestowed on this forum. This forum also serves as mediator in any case in Buem community, this forum provide adversaries, the avenue to under play conflict and amicably convince each other that whatever may be the matter between is of no significance.

3. **Bate Kate** (Arbitration or Adjudication) - This philosophical thought is conducted either at a lineage head court or in town chief court, depending upon the gravity of the offence. This philosophy is more elaborate in its conflict resolutions than the former.

   The *Bate Kate* is actually time consuming as its processes involves intensive cross-examination and assembling of witnesses and when necessary exhibits. Bate Kate can be expensive because fines and in some cases cost are imposed on convicted parties. Cases that are submitted for Bate Kate either include those thathas failed to be resolved by the former forum (dispute handling forum) or are constitutionally defined as criminals.

   Deliberation here can be an elaborate process. In line with the usual procedure of Bate Kate, each disputant without interruption presents his or her own version of what actually occurred. After both have heard, adjudicator closely questions each disputant on the bases of what he or she has said. The objective of this process as social Anthropologist pointed out is to reach agreement on a single story be eliminating ambiguous elements in the statement or the adversaries. There is extensive use of evidence witness and cross-examination in Bate Kate. The deliberations are usually open to the public and every one present has the privilege to cross-examine any of the disputants. Orders are strictly enforced

and use of abusive language is discouraged and can lead to contempt.

4. **Adzina** (Trial by Jury) - This aspect of conflict resolution in Buem community believe "trial by jury". Adzina works this way to arrive at a verdict in all manner of cases that come before a town chief or a lineage head, some attendants at the hearing who have been present throughout the case hearing, and have been following proceedings are appointed at the end of the hearing to deliberate and return a verdict. This procedure is advanced to similar western style judicial verdict mechanism. It has helped in providing solution in dispute resolutions in Buem communities.

5. **Witchcraft Sorcery and Ordeal** - Buem commonly resort to the use of what some religious scholars referred to as "witchmasory". This term refers to witchcraft, magic and sorcery and any means of voodoo – witchcraft (kabor) sorcery (kave) are what they use to settle conflict when they did not want to bring their grievances into the open i.e coming before the benyaogba – ukpikator or Bate Kate. The combination of this force in Buem community is believed to have potent powers that operate with the adversary's desire to either harm by evil spiritual destructions or death. This practice has also been in use in the Buem community over time in local dispute resolutions.

6. **Kemuikadiakor** (trail by ordeal) - The Buem community consider this aspect of their conflict resolution practice as also potent hence it is still in practice. This practice involve oath taking, a Buemwill traditionally resort to this use in order to determine guilt or innocence, particularly in theft in which evidence is so conflicting that adjudicators find it difficult to come to a decision by secular means. Witchmasory, witchcraft and sorcery accusations also normally call for this process of "trail by ordeal", because the truth in the accusation is often difficult to determine by secular process of mediation and adjudication.

   Usually the town chief will order the disputing persons to consult a medicine man, a fetish priest or an oracle. The disputing parties will be accompanied by appointees of the chief and heads of their respective lineages. Whoever is found guilty by the metaphysical consultant will immediately have his /her hair shaven to the skin and be made to settle all the cost to the travel and the trial. The idea and the practices of peace building are not new. Due to how ubiquitous the term peacebuilding has become within the vocabulary of the UN, National governments, and even nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), Adekeye (2014) pointed out that there are three frameworks for understanding peace building.

The views contain important nonnative assumptions about the nature of peace and about the identity and motivations of peace builders. According to the liberal framework, peace building is understood to be part of a global project of liberal governance, promoted by international and regional institutions and other actors. An Agenda for Peace reinforced these ideas. It tends to focus on political and economic liberalization as key elements in the transformation of war-torn societies. Unlike the western methods of disputes resolution which involves the use of judiciary that addresses conflict through litigation, adjudication, arbitration that usually result to win and lose situation.

Peace building as stabilization shares the liberal concern with order, but rather than focusing its attention on order within states, it sees peacebuilding as being primarily concerned with maintaining the international status quo. The view has become increasingly important since the 9/11 attack on the United States, and the subsequent global "war on terror".

This view acknowledges the multitude of activities conducted under the peacebuilding umbrella, the rationale for these activities is to maintain global security and stability. The position of peace building as social justice was put forward by people who believe that the previous two views place undue focus on maintaining order and global status quo Structural violence is the problem to be addressed through peacebuilding, and peacebuilding therefore involves programs to encourage inclusive access to resources and institutions, to empower marginalized groups, to end discrimination against women and other disadvantaged groups, and to redistribute income and land ownership. In other words, peacebuilding focus on reaching the condition of "positive peace" Boutros-Ghali in his *An Agenda for Peace* categorized peace building

into two: Pre-conflict and post conflict peacebuilding. According to him, pre-conflict peace buHding includes such measures like '[de] militarisation, the control of small arms, institutional reform, improved police and judicial systems, the monitoring of human rights, electoral reform and social and economic development.' Similarly, Rechler (1997:61) sees pre-conflict peace building as: Preventive measures that aim to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor; to promote and implement human rights and the rights of the minorities, and to promote durable development and the realization of a just and fair social order in which there is no discrimination based on race or sex Monsuru Adegboyega Kasali (2006). (karame 2004: 12) cited by Okoro, K. N. (2013) similarly agreed with previous definition he said that peacebuilding as a major concept in conflict resolution and management can be defined as a means of preventing the outbreak, reoccurrence or continuation of armed conflict as well as emergences in a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human right mechanism.

Conflict transformation theory was used adopted because the whole idea of peace building to bring positive transformation of the quality of lives of the victims of the conflict through humanitarian services, compensation, rehabilitation, restoration, reformation, disarmament, demobilization and re-integration.

Therefore, the process of peace building encompasses all the stages of conflict, from the pre-conflict to the post conflict phase, with aim of laying the basis for sustainable peace in conflict tom society.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

1. African should distinguish clearly those cases that can purely be handled at the traditional method of conflict resolution and those of western methods .

2. The development of modern conflict management system for Africa in particular must begin by looking for avenues through which relevant aspects of the pre-colonial customary laws of the areas could be harmonized with the appropriate aspects of modern judicial and administrative systems into the African world view in conflict resolution.

3. It is only when potential and actual conflicts in Africa are understood in their social contents that they can be solved. Values and beliefs, fears, suspicions, interests and needs, attitudes and actions, relationships and networks have to be taken duly into consideration.

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