

Exploring Indigenous Perspectives on Reconciliation: A Case Study of Yoruba Traditional Society in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study delves into the indigenous perspectives on reconciliation mechanisms in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the Yoruba traditional society. The reconciliatory mechanisms are a major instrument among the key traditional approaches to conflict resolution in traditional societies. It involves an overarching process that aims to achieve truth, justice, healing, and forgiveness. The concept of reconciliation is widely debated in academic literature. There are divergent opinions on the tenacity of reconciliation in bringing the process of conflict resolution to a close with more prominence emphasis on the indigenous perspectives of reconciliation process in recent years, emphasizing the importance of both the goal and process of addressing issues and healing hurt feelings. Through a case study of the Yoruba traditional society, this study seeks to provide insights into the unique cultural perspectives that influence reconciliation processes in Nigeria. This study noted that reconciliation processes in Yoruba traditional society are complemented with ritual symbols to repair or restore a broken relationship. From the secondary data analysis and observational study, the research establishes the various patterns of reconciliatory mechanisms of the Yoruba traditional approaches to conflicts resolution in Nigeria. It concludes that these mechanisms are appropriate and expedient as an effective home-grown approach that can not only drive a cohesive future, but can also conform to the Nigerian modern system of justice system. The results of this study is hold significance for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners who aim to foster peaceful coexistence and reconciliation, drawing insights from indigenous perspectives.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Indigenous, Reconciliation, Rituals, Yoruba Traditional Society

Introduction

Reconciliation encompasses a broad spectrum of activities aimed at fostering renewed trust in civic relationships. While various scholars have debated the significance of reconciliation, it is generally seen as a process and a goal that involves the pursuit of truth, justice, forgiveness, and restoration. On the other hand, indigenous approaches to the reconciliation process have gained prominence in recent years, as they prioritize both the goal and process of addressing issues and

healing hurt feelings caused by wrongdoing. This study seeks to explore indigenous perspectives on reconciliation in Nigeria, with a specific focus on the Yoruba Traditional Society. By examining the Yoruba approach to reconciliation, this study aims to shed light on the effectiveness of indigenous approaches to promoting peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. However, the concept of reconciliation has been widely debated in academic literature, with various scholars holding divergent opinions on the matter. While many refer to it as social rebuilding, it is also viewed as both a process and a goal that can be influenced by culture and religion from different perspectives (Bloomfield, Barnes and Huyse, 2003). This suggests that the understanding of reconciliation can vary depending on social, cultural and religious traditions, language, customary law and the likes, all of which contribute to an overarching process that involves the pursuit of truth, justice, forgiveness, and restoration. The process can occur within the formal power structure of the state or informally outside its boundaries (Cole, 2014), enabling all levels of society to engage simultaneously in promoting peaceful coexistence. To achieve this goal, states and local communities may adopt indigenous approaches to the reconciliation process. For instance, research conducted by Iyeh Peter's (2014) showed that indigenous approaches to reconciliation were effective in settling ethnic and local disputes in Afghanistan. Generally, indigenous approaches to conflict resolution prioritize both the goal and process of addressing issues and healing hurt feelings caused by wrongdoing (Bloomfield, Barnes and Huyse, 2003).

Arising from this, societies across the globe have utilized indigenous approaches of reconciliation process that are essentially intrinsic to their indigenous traditional institutional structures and environments to maintain peaceful coexistence and to resolve conflicts (Aboyeji, 2019). The goal of the research is to examine the valuable lessons that can be gained from indigenous approaches to the reconciliation process with a reflection on the reconciliatory mechanisms of (Yoruba) traditional approaches to conflict resolution in Nigeria. This is in essence to determine how such approaches possess ethical norms for resolving disputes between members of the communities and or society at large and to picture the insights from which the world as a whole can benefit. The Yoruba people are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, predominantly residing in the southwestern part of the country. They have a rich cultural heritage, including a well-structured traditional society with its unique reconciliation mechanisms. Exploring the indigenous perspectives of reconciliation in Yoruba traditional society provides valuable insights into their approach to conflict resolution and the concept of reconciliation.

A Common Process of Reconciliation Mechanisms in Conflicts

Reconciliation means finding a way to balance issues such as truth and justice so that the slow changing of behaviors, attitudes and emotions between former enemies can take place. The process of reconciliation, according to Hamber, (2015), is premised on building the trust necessary for a degree of cooperation between individuals and communities which involves full redress, justice, reparation and building reconciliation. Reconciliation does not have a formal or generally accepted definition, however, relying on a more recent definition by Rachel and Michelle (2021), reconciliation is defined as a process that entails (re)building and/or transforming relationships that have been harmed by oppression and violent conflict. It involves addressing legacies of the

past violence and oppression, reconstructing broken relationships and finding ways for individuals and communities to live together. Reconciliation may also be strengthened by further efforts to achieve forgiveness between victim(s) and perpetrator(s), including expressions of remorse and willingness to make reparations. Further to this, reconciliation is a multifaceted and multi-level process that involves the improving of both vertical and horizontal relationships between individuals and institutions in society (Rachel and Michelle, 2021). This occurs at various scales, ranging from individual and group initiatives to larger communal, societal, and institutional processes. According to Salter and Yousuf (2016), reconciliation requires or depends on what is possible in a context based on careful consideration of the issues at stake. In addition to this, Simpson (2014) said that reconciliation includes a range of approaches, from the most minimal to the most extreme. These range from helping former enemies live together even if they don't trust each other or have the same values to changing people, society, and politics in order to reclaim dignity and get rid of prejudice, marginalization, and other structural causes. .

However, reconciliation as a multifaceted and multi-level process involves efforts put in place to restore civic trust across personalities, institutions and authorities while also building confidence between political actors and the social fabric (Cole, 2014). This, according to scholars, generally involves developing a vision of a fair, mutually-acceptable and interdependent future; acknowledging and dealing with the legacy of past violence; creating more inclusive institutions and structures based on and enabling transformed relationships and a new social contract while also fostering significant cultural and attitudinal change, building trust, social cohesion and establishing new norms (Volker Boege 2006, Rachel and Michelle 2021 and, Cole, 2014)

Although all of the aforementioned factors are necessary for reconciliation, they do not have to be present at the same time in any given reconciliation effort or otherwise offered one after the other. This is because reconciliation is a process and not just an event as established by the scholars who have extensively debated on the concept of reconciliation in the literature. Arising from this, an effective reconciliation process is always anchored on some critical pillars and rights. One of these is the right to truth. The right to the truth is a crucial tenet of healing in the reconciliation process. The truth regarding what occurred must be disclosed by the parties. According to Hamber, (2015), failure to write the truth means an inability to look for and acquire pertinent evidence that supports the veracity of the claim in question. One is for the accuser to attest to the veracity of the allegations and second is for the accused to prove their guilt or otherwise, and in particular to ascertain the magnitude of the harm. This basically, as affirmed by Hamber (2015), states that if dignity is to be restored, the violations must be acknowledged. Truth-telling, however in another perspective, according to Ajayi & Buhari (2014), which can be influenced by a number of aspects of courts and judicial organizations, such as conventional methods to enshrine the right to truth as a subset of the larger right to redress and reconciliation (Ajayi & Buhari 2014). Another essential pillar in the reconciliation process is the right to justice as explained by Salter and Yousuf, (2016). When justice is mentioned in this context, it is referred to as the judicial and legal system. The purpose of the justice system, according to the scholars, is to ensure that every person who abuses the rights of others is brought to account for their actions. This is due to the fact that criminal culpability can be imposed for human rights breaches after

following the relevant legal procedures depending on the various situations that exist. In any way, justice is done to establish the Rule of Law and the confidence of the victims.

The right to reparation is another pillar in the reconciliation process which has always focused at restoring the dignity of the victims of conflicts (Hamber, 2015). Accordingly, this is the overarching goal of the reconciliation process. Apologies, restitution, and psychological counselling may all fall under this category. In addition to this, it may involve spiritual preparation associated with different cultures, religions, and ritual rites. Depending on the specifics of the situation, this may also take into account any subsequent reform processes that were necessary (Hamber, 2015). The validity and fairness of the restoration process must be carefully responsive to the expectations that have been set for victims in order of reparation. The process of reconciliation can also function as a kind of conflict prevention and healing, particularly when accompanied by assurances that violent or contentious incidents will not occur again. According to Rachel and Michelle (2021), this can be facilitated in such a way that in the future there will not be perpetrators of human rights violations or armed crimes and conflicts that are similar to those that have already occurred. In most cases, this refers to a preventive role that can be accomplished through healing and other procedures that may lead from a fractured past to a cohesive future (Rachel and Michelle 2021). In addition to addressing the underlying causes of disputes and doing a wide variety of other types of actions, scholars affirmed that it can involve making institutional changes in the areas of justice and security so that they become democratic and effective organizations.

Even though at this level of the common process of reconciliation across societies, particularly being used as a multifaceted and multi-level process to improve the vertical and horizontal relationships between individuals and institutions in society (Rachel and Michelle, 2021) at various scales, ranging from individual and group initiatives to larger communal, societal, and institutional processes, traditional reconciliation mechanisms of conflict resolution is a gap that has not been extensively researched into. Arising from this, this study seeks to explore indigenous perspectives on reconciliation in Nigeria, with a specific focus on the Yoruba Traditional Society. By examining the Yoruba approach to reconciliation, this study aims to shed light on the effectiveness of indigenous approaches to promoting peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

Research Methods

This research work was designed to examine the valuable lessons that can be gained from indigenous approaches to the reconciliation process with a reflection on the reconciliatory mechanisms of (Yoruba) traditional approaches to conflict resolution in Nigeria. This was achieved with the use of naturalistic observational study and the content analysis of the secondary data. Strategies used in reconciliation process in Yoruba traditional society, particularly the role of extra-judicial methods which forms the critical pillars in reconciliation process in Yoruba society like justice process through divination, truth process through oath taking, tolerance through use of legal proverbs, peacebuilding through the use of masquerades and healing process through ceremony were studied with non-participatory observational method. A few historical Yoruba towns and traditional shrines and archives were selected for the study where naturalistic

observations were carried out based on traditional history of indigenous conflicts resolutions. This was aimed in order to see how effective such models or mechanisms are at conflict monitoring, prevention, management and resolution. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, archives and other academic papers, among other sources.

Yoruba Traditional Society

Long before the colonial era, customs and traditions were the major sources of indigenous laws, rules, and regulations among the Yoruba people in Nigeria. Although traditional maxims are largely unwritten this period, literacy level among the Yoruba people was associated with their verbal arts, historical antecedents and traditional performances (Lamidi, 2019a, Omotosho, Ihekuna, & Fakoya, 2020). As a result, the Yoruba cultural arbitration system was based on traditional knowledge and wisdom being demonstrated by their ancestral fathers to form community association charged with the responsibility of sustaining peace and maintaining order with people within the immediate environment and against the varied magnitude of rage, rift, brawls, skirmishes or wars including assaults and all other social problems (Omotosho, Ihekuna, & Fakoya, 2020). This is to say that the pre-colonial Yoruba society was not always peaceful, conflicts have been an inevitable part of Yoruba life history exacerbated by competing interests, values, and aspirations to survive and grow such as land disputes, religious disagreements, cultural tensions, and family misunderstandings. According to Murithi (2006b), the Yoruba Traditional Society's conflict resolution and reconciliation process is a vital tool that promotes truth, justice, healing, and forgiveness. It also emphasizes the principles of empathy, sharing, and cooperation in dealing with common problems. These principles provide a framework for regulating human activities to maintain peaceful coexistence. Meanwhile, the critical pillar in the reconciliatory process is the administration of justice. This, however, is not exclusive to Yoruba traditional mechanisms. Justice is synonymous with precision, accuracy, and correctness. . The essence of justice is to demonstrate the true character of being truthful to a person (Aboyeji, 2019). It could be faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty, constancy, steadfast allegiance (Oxford English Dictionary 7th Edition). However, before justice can be administered, a true state of the matter has to be identified. Identification of the truth is sequential to administration of justice in the Yoruba traditional society that is fundamental to the reconciliation process. In the Yoruba traditional society, as in many other indigenous civilizations in Nigeria, the processes involved in the identification of truths were always anchored on justice. It was a significant aspect of the reconciliation process in Yoruba society. The term is commonly used in connection to trial and punishment of individual perpetrators (NOUN, 2009). It can also be referred to as consensus building.

In Yoruba traditional society, consensus building is a fundamental aspect of conflict resolution and reconciliation. The primary goal is to restore harmony and maintain the cohesion of the community. Reconciliation processes often involve bringing together the conflicting parties and their respective families, along with respected community leaders, to discuss the issues at hand. The emphasis is on dialogue, open communication, and the search for common ground.

Along this line, Yoruba traditional society incorporates rituals and symbolism into reconciliation processes. Being the major focus of this study, rituals are believed to have spiritual significance and help restore balance and harmony. They often involve the participation of religious leaders, invoking ancestral spirits, and seeking divine intervention. Symbolic acts, such as the sharing of kola nuts, breaking and burying of calabashes, and pouring of libations, are performed to signify forgiveness, cleansing, and the restoration of relationships.

Approaches to Reconciliatory Process in Yoruba Traditional Society: An Observational Study

A naturalistic observational study was carried out to study the various strategies used in the reconciliation process in Yoruba traditional society, including the role of extra-judicial methods. However, during the observational study, three major processes were observed towards the reconciliation process in Yoruba traditional society. In this regard, it is correct to say that three things are central to Yoruba traditional system or approaches in promoting community peace and social order in the society. First is the full process of conflict resolution and justice dispensing. This includes approaches to the reconciliation process with a reflection on the extra-judicial methods also known as the reconciliatory process by rituals which forms a critical pillar in the reconciliation process across Yoruba society. Second is the healing process which symbolizes the final result of the resolutions process and revitalized relationship between the opposing parties. This is being carried out in the form of ceremonies. Finally, is the deployment of preventive mechanisms through which advice, warning or otherwise is given. This is done to drive parties away from accusations and counter-accusations or possibly avoid conflicts in its entirety.

Reconciliatory Process by Rituals: In some human societies, rituals are employed to aid in the process of reconciliation. It is a crucial element in preserving stability, reestablishing harmony, and mending broken relationships. According to the following observational studies and explanation, rituals involving mythical figures, masquerades, and oath-taking are few examples of the reconciliatory process by rituals in Yoruba society:

Rituals by Mystical Figures

Mystical figures depict mythological ritual objects utilized by the Yoruba's to represent an identified spirit of divine origin known as '*Orisa*'. While some of these mystical objects were designed to represent deified men or women, some of whom were extraordinary beings who had lived their lives mysteriously, other mythical figures may represent spirits of the natural forces, animals, trees and stones. Observational study reveals that some of these mystical figures have been used in Yoruba traditional society to administer justice and conflict reconciliation through divination. A divination is a type of traditional trial by ordeal that is used to ascertain whether or not a person has committed the crime that they are accused of when it is difficult to determine whether or not the disputant is telling the truth. In this process, invocations are made to the spirit of divine origin in order to administer justice. Divination is a crucial part of traditional Yoruba society, serving multiple purposes, including the investigation of criminal activity, enforcement of justice and reconciliation of disputes. Observational study reveals that when divination is

performed, the spirits of divine origin are consulted through a mediumship, and the diviner usually invokes the gods' and ancestors' spirits in order to administer justice or as the case may be. A medium is a person having oracular powers that can interpret, communicate and read the signs given by a diviner, particularly when it is necessary to make a significant decision, whether on an individual or communal level. A medium is always known as a priest in this situation, with gods' and ancestors' spirits alluding to the mystical figure of divination. . Examples of mystical figures in Yoruba society include *Sango*, *Ayelala*, and *Ogun*.

Rituals by Oath-Taking

Oaths are taken everywhere, although it is thought to accomplish the same purpose(s), but the way it is done varies from culture to culture (Grace, 2016). One of the oldest types of ritual solemnity in Yoruba society is the swearing of an oath, which is an explicit vow that calls a deity, spirit, ancestor, place, or sacred item as a witness to the truth of the words sworn. Taking an oath in Yoruba traditional civilization is inherently herculean. It is said to have a metaphysical foundation. It is highly esteemed in a time of necessity. Therefore, observational study revealed that Yoruba do not play around with oath taking, especially when it involves calling upon the gods concerned and using their symbols as a means of swearing, such as iron objects for Ogun, the accredited god of iron. However, the taking of an oath is another extra-judicial way that is typically used to aid the judge or adjudicators in locating areas of weakness in the conflict. Oath-taking is one of the most important instruments in the reconciliation process in Yoruba society.

Observational studies revealed that swearing an oath is a ritualistic practice that requires disputants and their witnesses to demonstrate the veracity of their allegations, statements, and demands in the context of dispute resolution. This study noted that the accused swears the oath to exonerate himself from a charge, or the accuser swears it to demonstrate the authenticity of his accusation. In general, this study indicated that oaths are administered to establish the truth, preserve healthy human relationships, and protect the confidentiality of an organization. Typically, an oath is administered through spoken statements, drinking a mixture, touching a deity's emblem, or crossing over it. This study revealed that oaths are typically administered in a shrine or, in the presence of a deity, chief priest, or ancestors, whose presence is invoked. It is thought that whomever swears the oath falsely suffers particular hardship, misery, illness, or even death, depending on the circumstances; often within a specific time. It is expected that the gods will visit the suspected defaulter with one particular ailment or another within the allotted time/duration, which may be immediate, in days, months, or at the latest, one year. If this does not occur, the suspect is declared innocent and is free to celebrate his innocence in any way he chooses.

Rituals by Masquerades Performance

Masquerades are seen as the reappearance of ancestors who can help Yoruba society deal with an issue that has proven too tough to resolve on their own. . Masquerades, known as Egungun in Yoruba, are typically clad in costumes (èkú) that hide their bodies and faces. To further the idea that ancestor ghosts are not like humans, they usually wear foot coverings. Their hands are also covered, and while they deliver prophetic warnings to the arena crowd, their croaky voices are distinctive. Masquerades were created to address members of the community's natural and genetic

problems. In Yoruba traditional society, masquerades are an authority, since they are commonly viewed as spirits working as village guidance. According to the observational study, masquerades are used to enforce the customary authority that community elders inherited from their ancestors, thereby restoring peace and justice to the land. It was also noticed that masquerades are regularly employed at various traditional festivals in the Yoruba society, where they are staged to fulfill particular traditional customs and rituals. Such performances were intended to create results, particularly by relaying to the ancestors the people's desires to alter the existing condition. Observational studies demonstrated that the Yoruba have faith in the efficacy and impartiality of the masquerade in resolving disputes. When the Yoruba people summoned the masquerade as a final judgment, they believed they were summoning the ancestor, who was represented by the masquerade. As a result, the Yoruba thought that the needs of the living were plainly transmitted to supernatural forces via the ancestral spirit, in this case the masquerade. In a similar development, the observational study found that masquerades are considered as the last arbitrator in significant contentious cases.

Reconciliatory Process by Ceremonial Symbols

Ceremonial symbols are a sequence of consecutive actions conducted in accordance with a customary belief in a predefined order. Ceremony symbolizes the final result of the resolutions process by revitalizing the relationship between the opposing parties. This method frequently tends to heal the hurt feelings caused by the disagreements. The Yoruba system of conflict resolution through reconciliation and ceremonies is based on the notion that further strengthens, improves interrelationships and prevents disputes from recurring after they have been resolved. Observational study showed that the ceremonial process usually involves eating, drinking or both. For the eating, the process normally includes eating of kola nuts where a portion of the kola nuts will be broken and occasionally distributed around for everyone to eat, while local gins or palm wine is used for the drinking and also shared around for everyone to drink. In many cases, both eating and drinking may be sought for ritual purposes. Observational study observed that the eating and drinking is done as a manner of commemorating the end of the fight. This study also noted that alternatively, if neither hard wine nor palm wine is available, regular drinking water can be utilized for the purpose. It was also revealed that traditionally, a woman during the ceremony is required to kneel and offer traditional pleasantries until the chief gives her permission to stand. As a sign of respect and welcome, men are customarily required to kneel before formal resolution proceedings can begin. This is done to humble the disputing parties before the traditional court system with the ultimate goal of restoring peace by settling conflicts amicably, which is fundamental to the traditional system. As the case may be, this technique (the usage of gins, palm wine, or drinking water) is employed to pour libation on the gods and ancestors of the disputing parties. Ceremonial performance typically facilitates the successful resolution of conflicts and symbolizes the reintegration of the conflicting parties. In addition to the foregoing, observational study revealed that the ritual ceremony is done in the presence of gods and all witnesses are binding on every individual or disputing party. In addition, it was noted that, as a sign of reunification, disputants frequently drink from the same cup.

Tolerance, Persuasion and the Use of Legal Proverbs

In Yoruba traditional society, a preventive mechanism is another key tool used to guide interrelationship through which advice, warning or otherwise is given. One of the major techniques used in this regard is by promoting tolerance among the people. This study noted that tolerance is critical to the reconciliatory process in Yoruba traditional environment that has been adjudged as an essential ingredient to healthy relationships. Tolerance is thoughtful and considerate that means willingness to pardon others for their wrong deeds. In Yoruba traditional society, observational study reveals that tolerance is achieved through persuasion and the use of legal proverbs which comprises wise sayings, words of wisdom from elders deduced from close observations with life natural phenomena based on common sense/-cum-experiences. The study also noted that a proverb is a compilation of sage advice that older people have learnt via common sense and experience, as well as careful observation of actual natural phenomena. Among the Yoruba, observational studies have shown that proverbs are used to provoke sober reflection, deeper thinking, advice, suggestion, rebuke, resolve conflicts and/or promote peace and security and the Yoruba people have used proverbs to promote tolerance among the people, particularly to handle disputes with success over the years to stimulate deep thought and serious introspection.

For example:

S/N	Yoruba Proverbs	Literal Meaning	Legal Implications	Goal
1	Ologuso kan ki irin leti omi	A person with only a life charcoal does not walk close to where water is.	The proverb is used to provide advice against impending negative consequence of conflicts.	Advice
2	Ibi afefe ba ti n gbe damu Ologi, ki Oniyefun ma safara.	Wherever one who carries corn paste is being troubled by wind, one who carries flour should not tarry.	The proverb is used to demonstrate how conflicts can escalate to destroy both the primary, secondary, tertiary and shadow parties to the conflicts.	Warning
3	Adijusoko ko le so eni ti yio ba.	One who closes his eyes while throwing a stone cannot say who the stone will hit.	The proverb is used to pacify the aggrieved parties against negative impacts/damages the conflicts could cause.	Warning/Advice

4	Ìberẹ ogun là ñ mọ, enikan kii mọ òpin rẹ.	We only know the beginning of war; we don't know how it will end.	This proverb warns war-mongers against making hate speech while parties are advised to avoid war since its lethality may not be determined.	Warning
5	Òkun kii hó ruru, ká wáá ruru.	Turbulent ocean must not be sailed turbulently.	The proverb is used to calm people who believe in 'balance of terror and 'a tooth for a tooth'. Such proverbs are employed to appease offended parties in apparent or actual confrontations.	Warning/Advice
6	Mọ'wà f'óniwà ló ñ je ọrẹ j'ọrẹ.	To promote friendship is to understand the nature of others.	People must be conscious of the preferences of others. They must be aware of one another's expectations and limitations. Such a cordial friendship will prevent conflicts and friction.	Advice
7	Sùúrù baba ìwà; àgbà tó ni sùúrù ohun gbogbo ló ní.	Patience is the father of all morals, a patient elder has everything.	This proverb is meant to teach people patience and tolerance.	Advice
8	Ilá kii ga ju olóko kí ó máa leè ka.	An okra plant cannot be too tall for the farmer to harvest.	This proverb serves as a warning against confrontation by imparting a moral lesson about compliance.	Warning
9	Ase-sile l'abo-wa ba	You reap what you sow.	This proverb is used to give advice to people with bad behaviors that, whether now or in the future, a person must accept the results of their actions.	Warning/Advice
10	Ti omode ko ba fowo jona, ko ni mo bi o se gbona to.	A child does not know how fire hurts until he touches it.	This proverb is used as a warning to caution someone who is about to make a bad decision.	Warning

Compiled and adapted from Murithi, T. (2006b)

Summary

In Yoruba traditional society, the concept of reconciliation is deeply rooted in their worldview and belief system. Reconciliation is seen as a fundamental aspect of social harmony and collective well-being. It is based on the principle of 'Itan,' which refers to a combination of history, myth, and moral codes that guide human behavior and relationships. In Yoruba traditional society, reconciliation aims to restore balance, resolve disputes, and maintain social cohesion. Yoruba traditional society employs rituals of varied degree and symbolism as essential components of reconciliation. Also ceremonies, such as the pouring of libations, invocation of deities, and the exchange of sacred objects, are performed to invoke spiritual intervention and cleanse the individuals and the community of negative energies associated with the conflict. These rituals signify a symbolic restoration of relationships and serve as a public declaration of reconciliation.

From an indigenous perspective, reconciliation in Yoruba traditional society is not solely focused on legalistic justice or punishment alone, but emphasizes healing, restoration, and the reintegration of individuals into the social fabric. It prioritizes community well-being over individual interests and encourages forgiveness and empathy as vital virtues.

Yoruba traditional society recognizes the interconnectedness of individuals and the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships for the overall stability of the community. Reconciliation mechanisms aim to address the root causes of conflicts and foster long-term peace by nurturing understanding, empathy, and a sense of shared responsibility.

However, while Yoruba traditional reconciliation mechanisms have proven effective over time, they face challenges in the context of modern society. Factors such as urbanization, globalization, and the influence of Western legal systems have posed challenges to the traditional ways of reconciliation. Some Yoruba communities have adapted their reconciliation practices to incorporate aspects of modern legal systems while preserving their indigenous values and principles. In summary, the indigenous perspectives of reconciliation mechanisms in Yoruba traditional society emphasize the restoration of balance, harmony, and communal well-being. These mechanisms involve mediation, family and community involvement, rituals, symbolism, and restitution. By understanding and valuing indigenous approaches to reconciliation, societies can gain insights into alternative ways of addressing conflicts and fostering sustainable peace based on local wisdom, cultural values, and community participation.

Conclusion

From the spectrum of maximalist approaches, the reconciliation process has been predicated on shared values to transformation of society, people and politics in order to reclaim dignity and eliminate prejudice, marginalization and other structural causes. This comprises establishing the level of trust necessary for collaboration between individuals and communities through truth and justice, reparation and restoration, reconciliation and peacebuilding fostering coexistence between former rivals who lack mutual trust or shared values to reclaim dignity and eliminate prejudice, marginalization and other structural causes. Analysis from the study revealed

that reconciliation is a multifaceted and multi-level process that involves efforts put in place to restore civic trust across personalities, institutions, and authorities while also building confidence between political actors and the social fabric, some of which include: developing a vision of a fair, mutually-acceptable, and interdependent future; acknowledging and dealing with the legacy of past violence; creating more inclusive institutions and structures based on and enacting the lessons of past violence. Consequently, an effective reconciliation process is always based on a number of essential foundations and rights. The right to the truth is one of these. Other rights include the right to justice, the right to reparation, and the right to conflict prevention and healing. The study found that reconciliation can happen in any traditional setting, which means everyone, including traditional leaders, can work together to promote peaceful coexistence.

However, this study traced the traditional reconciliation process in Nigeria and Yoruba society to a time before the colonial era, when customs and traditions were the primary sources of indigenous laws, rules, and regulations among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. In Yoruba traditional society, the reconciliation method of conflict resolution is the most significant, final, and prevalent part of conflict resolution, according to this study. Some typical reconciliation processes in Yoruba traditional society are always accompanied by extra-judicial means, also known as reconciliatory processes by rituals, which represent essential pillars in the reconciliation process across the Yoruba community. According to observational studies, the Yoruba community uses rituals to bring people together. A few examples include rituals involving mythical figures, masquerades, and swearing through oath-taking. The second stage is the healing process, which represents the end result of the resolutions process and a revived relationship between the opposing parties. This is done in advance of ceremonial symbols. Finally, preventive systems that provide counsel, warning, or both are deployed. This is done to divert parties' attention away from accusations and counter-accusations, or to avoid disputes altogether.

According to this research, the traditional dispute resolution mechanism is a multi-layered, intricate network that is deeply established in the customs that fit with the people's traditions and indigenous laws when dispensing justice. The study established the various patterns of reconciliatory mechanisms of Yoruba traditional approaches to conflict resolution in Nigeria and affirmed its appropriateness and expediency as an effective homegrown approach that can strive in conformism with Nigeria's modern system of justice to drive a cohesive future or bring an end to the process of conflict in the present time. In conclusion, the study suggests that the laws related to legal aid should include the use of traditional institutions to help formal and informal conflict resolution systems work together better. This may involve making traditional conflict resolution methods more official and flexible in their procedures

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