



RESEARCH ARTICLE

TRENDS IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION OF THE IFE-MODAKEKE CLASHES IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined trends in conflict transformation of the Ife-Modakeke clashes in Osun State, Nigeria. The study adopted the historical-analytical research design in the collection and analysis of qualitative secondary data. Findings revealed that the factors responsible for the Ife-Modakeke conflict include: internal weaknesses, collapse of Yoruba institutions and the war-torn Oyo Empire; land disputes, creation of Ife-East Local Government, debate over Modakeke's sovereignty, boundary disagreement, and payment of land rent (Ishakole). The effects of the war were found to include, loss of lives and displacement, disruption of economic activities such as farming and trade, exacerbating poverty levels and socio-economic inequalities, psychological trauma, grievances and mistrust among others. The institutions of conflict management include traditional institutions such as traditional rulers, Obas, state and federal governments as well as socio-political and cultural organizations. Among the methods used in the conflict resolution include mediation via separation of the two communities, inaugurating several committees comprising of chiefs of both towns, and later adoption of conflict transformation approaches involving holistic approach oriented towards reconciliation and peace by the government, inauguration of the Ife-Modakeke Inter-community Peace Advocacy Committee, confidence building and signing of peace pact culminating to a large extent, the transformation of the conflict since 2000 and paving way for enduring relative peace. It was therefore recommended that for the conflict transformation to be sustained, the displaced persons should be resettled and rehabilitated with emphasis on peace education while rightful respect and authority of the traditional rulers should be restored to enable prompt and effective management of disputes before it escalates into crisis.

Keywords: Conflict transformation, clashes, peace-building, conflict settlement, peace advocacy.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts the world over have destroyed many lives and property as well as source of displacement of millions of citizens either as internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees in other countries. In Africa, ethno-religious conflicts amidst other forms of conflicts are rampant, which include lethal ethnic conflicts in Zaire, Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia, Uganda, and Lesotho to mention but a few. It is noteworthy that since the collapse of the Soviet Bloc which coincided with the age of globalization, civil conflicts increased in Africa (Oguonu and Ezeibe, 2014; Zilong, 2018), given the quantum of arms trafficking and proliferation in the continent.

The Nigerian State is replete with ethnic conflicts which includes: Ife-Modakeke in Osun State; (Toriola, 2001); Yoruba-Hausa in Shagamu, Ogun State (Ojiji, 2007); Eleme-Okrika in Rivers (Abada, 2024); Zango-Kataf in Kaduna State (Agrawal, 2008); Tiv-Jukun in Wukari, Taraba State (Fwaje et al., 2020); Ogoni-Adoni in Rivers State (Ade-Ajayi and Buhari, 2014); Chamba-Kuteb in Taraba State (Shinge, 2024); ItsekiriIjaw/Urhobo in Delta State (Aja-Apkuru 2011); Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra State (Agwu, 2007); Ijaw-Ilaje conflict in Ondo State (Albert, 2007); Basa-Egbura in Nassarawa State (Umar, 2017); and Hausa/FulaniSawaya in Bauchi State (Agrawal, 2008). These conflicts have provided a pattern that makes scholars attribute their causes to greed, power and wealth distribution (Oladoyin, 2001; Toriola, 2001; Asiyabola, 2007), resulting in loss of lives, displacement of people and the destruction of properties. Thus, the greatest challenge facing the process of conflict resolution in Nigeria is the issue of maintaining balance and peacemaking among the conflicting parties by a third party, specifically the Nigerian Government. The peacemaking efficacy hinges on how the government as an institutional mediator can facilitate an unbiased balance (Lamidi, 2019) as well as transform the conflicts.

Ife and Modakeke communities in Southwestern Nigeria have engaged in protracted intra-communal conflicts. Asiyabola (2007) and Olayiwola and Okorie (2010) have recorded seven major wars between these two communities as follows: 1835-1849, 1882-1909, 1946- 1949, 1981, 1983, 1997-1998, and 2000; therefore, it appears to be the oldest intra-ethnic conflict in Nigeria. Its psychological dimension has reached an extent that both parties are in cold war (Olayiwola and Ndukaku, 2010). The recent crisis has caused over 2000 deaths and several more injuries. Several hundreds of people were shot, slaughtered or lynched; several houses and properties were destroyed. Akanle (2009) posits that the destruction of lives and property during the Ife-Modakeke debacle has been wanton. The major issues in Ife-Modakeke conflicts involve claims of indigene-settler dispute and attempts to ward-off those regarded as intruders (Soares, 2019; Adebayo, 2021; Mugabe, 2007).

Conflict transformation which is the burden of this study goes beyond mere cessation of hostilities, but an enduring and sustainable resolve by warring parties to alter their perceptions towards the root cause of the conflict. In the case of the Ife-Modakeke conflict, efforts at completely resolving and transforming it seem not have been struck yet, because there seems to be cold war situation between the two communities and could still serve as triggers to further conflicts. The study therefore set to investigate the extent to which the Ife-Modakeke conflicts have been resolved and transformed. The above is in view of limited research mapping the impacts of the conflict resolution mechanisms on conflict transformation of the Ife-Modakeke conflicts. On the whole, the burden of this study is examine holistically, rather than previous piecemeal approach, the remote and immediate causes of the Ife-Modakeke conflict, its effects and different conflict handling styles as well as the extent to



which its resolution mechanism has transformed the conflict. This is very necessary in order to access whether the calm in both communities is only but a mere cessation of hostilities or real transformation leading to sustained peaceful coexistence. The essence is to see if there is a silver lining from the conflict handling style that could foster sustainable peacebuilding blocks to forestall the return to the battlefields and consequential wanton killings, displacements and destructions of property and means of livelihoods in both communities as pointed out earlier in the introductory part.

1.1. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at examining trends in conflict transformation of the Ife-Modakeke clashes in Osun State, Nigeria. To achieve the above aim, the specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To identify the factors responsible for the Ife-Modakeke conflict;
- ii. To ascertain the effects of the conflict on the lives and property of the people in the two warring communities;
- iii. To analyze the extent to which the conflict has been resolved and transformed between the two warring communities.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

Clashes

The word conflict derives from the Latin *conflictus* and the verb *confligere*, which means convergence of blows or affections. However, both Lucretius and Cicero used this verb to refer to the possibility of meeting, comparing and coming closer. In the process of time, the meaning of conflict changed and became synonymous with fighting, contending or clashing in a hostile manner. In psychological parlance, the concept of conflict refers to the emergence of antagonistic or opposing forces that influence certain events, behaviours, desires, attitudes and emotions (Psychology Spot, 2026).

Though used interchangeably, clashing in this study is used to describe series of confrontation in a protracted conflict. Whereas conflict refers to a condition in which two or more people are incompatible (Uignou, The People's University, 2024; Kesterner and Ray (2002; Harks, 2000); clashes result from direct opposition and confrontation by two or more people that is incompatible. So, clashing implies a more intense and direct confrontation, often involving physical or verbal aggression in what Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK, 2005:2) describes as clash of interests, while conflicting suggests a more subtle or passive disagreement. In a clash, the parties involved are actively fighting against each other, while in a conflict; the disagreement may be more nuanced and less overt. However, both clashing and conflicting can lead to tension and discord between individuals or groups (This vs That, 2026).

Conflict Transformation: This refers to the art of turning animosity, hatred, and domination into spirit of collaboration, creativity, and community. It envisions an end to cycles of hostility and violence and build healthier and more equitable world. Conflict transformation is often associated with the idea of restorative justice, which often draws from indigenous wisdom and traditions around the world that value restoring someone to right relationship and standing in the community instead of punishing them (Martin, 2019).



It goes beyond traditional conflict resolution, but addresses the root cause of violence and insecurity. It aims at a long-term systemic change and a transition from “conflict-habituated” to “peace-habituated” systems by taking a holistic approach and long-term framing of conflict positively (Lederach, 2003). In the actual sense, conflict transformation is associated with change in how individuals and groups perceive each other and their relationships, adopting nonviolent approaches such as dialogue, empathy, and joint creative problem-solving. By focusing on root causes, conflict transformation essentially takes a holistic approach, and is long-term in nature framing conflict positively (Umukoro, 2025).

Theory of Conflict Transformation

Conflict Transformation as a distinctive theory was established between the late 1980s and 1990s; however, it took its roots from existing concepts of conflict management and conflict resolution. The Conflict Transformation School posits that conflicts are always in a flux and constant state of change with the aim of transforming them into situations that are socially useful and non-destructive. Given that conflict is in itself a dynamic and changeable process, therefore any process which seeks to alter it must be equally dynamic and changeable. It follows that within the ambit of Conflict transformation, some conflicts are better off being transformed, rather than being resolved (ignou, The Peoples University, 2025).

Conflict Transformation theory emerged due to the following crucial changes in the nature of conflict, which calls for its re-conceptualization: First, most recent violent conflicts are asymmetric, signified by inequalities of power and status. Second, many contemporary conflicts are protracted, and seemed to defy age-long conceptualized sequence or cycle of conflict phases. Thirdly, protracted conflicts distort societal settings, its economies and regions and create complex emergencies inflamed by a combination of local and global factors such as the arms trade. These complexities put together pose contrasts to the relative simplicity of the hitherto existing mainstream theories of conflict resolution, especially those canvassing win-win outcomes in two-party contests.

A leading exponent of Conflict Transformation theory is John Paul Lederach. Other scholars who have also contributed to conflict transformation include: Johan Galtung who in his contribution specifically devised and defined several key concepts and also developed the conflict triangle model; David W. Augsburger defined conflict transformation as the task “to reopen the future for the parties to the dispute in ways that empower them to move back into responsible relationships.” Conflict transformation requires a metamorphosis in each of the three elements: transforming attitudes (“by changing and redirecting negative perceptions”), transforming behaviour (“by limiting all action to collaborative behaviour”), and transforming the way the conflict is structured (“by seeking to discover, define, and remove incompatibilities by creative design”). Thus, no real conflict transformation can take place without understanding the cultural roots of the ways in which conflict is expressed (Miall, 2025).

The Conflict transformation theory is an attempt to explain the formation and transformation of contemporary conflicts, because it provides a means by which peacebuilders transit from conflict to the desirable outcomes. The field of conflict transformation is relevant to most contemporary violent conflicts like Ife-Modakeke war which appears asymmetric, protracted and complex in nature. Thus, conflict transformation theorists contend that contemporary conflicts like the Ife-Modakeke require more than the reframing of positions and the identification of win-win outcomes, rather it is aimed at



engaging with and transforming the relationships, and in some cases, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict. It sees constructive conflict as a catalyst for change. It also recognizes that conflicts should be transformed gradually and should include a variety of actors (Ignou, The Peoples University, 2025).

Though four major criticisms have been leveled against the application of Conflict Transformation theory as follows:

Time and resources: In intense crisis situation, time and resources may limit conflict transformation efforts, because they may not always be available, particularly where immediate action is required.

Political will: political leaders and institutions, whose supports are needed, may be reluctant to support such changes which they deemed to be in contrast with their power or interests.

Difficulty in measuring success: Here, the outcomes of transformation are usually more difficult to measure and may take years to become apparent, quite unlike the traditional conflict resolution where successes can be measured by the either the absence of violence or agreements signed by feuding parties.

Resistance to change: Some parties who may be beneficiaries from the conflict may be prone to resistant to transformation efforts, and are capable of jeopardizing the broad-based support needed for successful transformation (PolSci Institute, 2025). In spite of the above weaknesses, Conflict Transformation still provides a comprehensive approach to addressing internecine conflicts such as the Ife-Modakeke wars.

In spite of the above criticisms, its strength lies in its holistic approach to conflict resolution whereby conflict is handled in sequence with emphasis on what type of action or intervention is appropriate, by whom, and at what time?, until there is a positive change among the parties to a conflict as well as a transformation into a non-violent situation. In the case of Ife-Modakeke conflict, Conflict Transformation theory is useful in that it can really be of help in transforming the situation of uneasy peace existing between the two parties to that of a permanent resolution by changing their orientations towards each other and other elements within the two societies that support the continuation of the conflict.

Thus, the theory of Conflict Transformation describes a situation where all the efforts of the traditional institutions, the government agencies and reorientation programmes of internal and international agencies are not only geared towards mitigating the conflict from escalation, but building sustainable ceasefire, peacebuilding and deep-rooted healing that would discourage the triggers of the conflict.

In the buildup to the protracted Ife-Modakeke war, many other ad hoc measures were adopted, yet the conflict persisted. Signs of sustainable peace began to emerge only when actions that depict conflict transformation started receiving the attention of mediating actors.

Conflict Transformation theory also serves as a barometer for accessing what is left undone in the mediation process, which if not addressed is capable of triggering-off the conflict.



3.0 MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study adopted the historical-analytical research design which is deemed suitable for the collection of secondary data and qualitative research of such long-standing conflict. The essence of adopting the historical research is to gather, verify, and synthesize evidence from the past in order to gain in-depth understanding of the events that culminate to the cause, effect, and various methods adopted in handling the Ife-Modakeke conflict, over time. This enabled a thorough assessment of the extent to which the conflict has been positively transformed. The secondary sources of data were derived from textbooks, journal article, official documents, conference papers and symposium, working papers, monographs, and internet sources and these were content-analyzed thematically to address the stated objectives of the study.

4.0 DISCOURSES

4.1 Factors Responsible for the Ife-Modakeke Conflict

There were remote and immediate causes of the Ife-Modakeke conflict. In the case of the remote causes, Akinjogbin (1992) identified three factors, which include internal weaknesses, collapse of Yoruba institutions and the collapse of the Oyo Empire. These factors led to different wars between Ife and other Yoruba kingdoms. Also, these series of wars in Yoruba land led to disintegration, formation and relocation of towns in Yoruba land. On account of the immediate causes, Ife and Modakeke group include land issues, Ife-East Local Government, debate over Modakeke sovereignty or staying with Ife, boundary disagreement, masquerade (egungun) crossing into each other's territory (Elugbaju, 2016),

Since its first outbreak in 1835, there have been a number of causes which have overtime varied or consolidated and culminated into open violent conflict that has on a number of occasions pit both Yoruba sub-groups against one another. Among them are land ownership, rent over land and the question of local government for Modakeke. For instance, the August 1997 violence was sparked off by the location and relocation of headquarters of the Ife – East local government council. The ultimate objective of the separatist sentiments has always been the creation of a separate local government for Modakeke.

Indeed, the issue of a separate local government has been central to Ife – Modakeke relations and was certainly prominent among the concerns in the civil disturbances of 1981. It was both a cause and a suggested solution at the same time (Tokunbo and Oladipupo, 2006). To this end, the causes of the conflicts between Ife and Modakeke are many and varied and are partly economic and partly political and identity issues revolving around landownership issues, payment of land rent (Isakole), status of Modakeke community, local government creation and location of local government headquarters (Asiyanbola, 2010).

At the initial stage, the relationship between the Ifes and the Oyo refugees (Modakeke) was very cordial to the extent that Ife Chiefs threw their doors open to more Oyo refugees because they are good allies in moments of warfare and in farm work. Specifically, it was posited that the Oyo refugees provided military support to the Ife's during the Owu War of 1825 and various Ijesha invasions. However, the Ife regretted harbouring the Modakeke's when they lost political and economic dominance over them (Albert, 2001 cited in Lamidi, 2019). No sooner than the Modakekes became permanent members of the Ife Kingdom, they craved a different identity. The first intra-community



conflict between the Modakekes and the Ifes broke out in 1835 (Oladoyin, 2001). To negotiate peace, a ceasefire was brokered in 1886 through the efforts of Samuel Johnson, a historian, and Charles Phillips, the Bishop of Ondo (Toriola, 2001). The parties signed a treaty in Lagos with Governor Maloney which provided for the evacuation of the Modakekes from the Ife Kingdom (Toriola, 2001). However, the Modakekes later returned to the Ife Kingdom on the condition of peaceful living and respect for the authority of Ooni the paramount ruler of the Ife Kingdom. The 1940 judicial pronouncement made it mandatory for the Modakekes who wish to continue to live on Ife land to pay tribute (Asiyanbola, 2007). However, the Modakeke people were not satisfied with the resolution of the conflict (Ogbara, 2002) which explains why the conflict resurfaced in a vicious cycle in the 1960s until the 1990s (Albert, 1999).

On the part of the Ifes, after the demise of Ooni (King) Abeweila, they launched two early attacks to express their displeasure to the good hands of fellowship the demised King extended to the Modakekes as well as the purported killing of an Ife traditional figure in Ibadan. History has it that King Abeweila was poisoned around 1849 and denied royal burial by the Ife people as a result of his cooperation with Modakekes (Otite, 1999:69; Akinjogbin, 1992:20). The Ife people were aggrieved over the killing of an Ife Chief, Okunade by name, who settled in Ibadan in the early 19th century, a brave warrior and an autocrat that wielded much influence in Ibadan politics. Okunade's autocracy was challenged by some Oyo citizens in Ibadan and was allegedly killed while the Oyos took over the political leadership of Ibadan (Albert, 1999). In fact, the situation degenerated into a trans-ethnic enmity, which became noticeable during the Ibadan and Ekitiparapo war, when the Ifes aligned with the Ekitiparapoto to fight the Ibadan, and the Modakekes, on the other hand, teamed up with the Ibadan to fight the Ekitiparapo people (Lamidi, 2019).

The above brought about the framing of two identities, one of the original settlers (landlords) and the migrants, tenants, farmhands, and a resettled group considered as refugees (Modakeke). These categorizations form the remote causes of the conflicts between the two groups. Though the two groups are people of same ethnic (Yoruba) descent, they were separated by economic and political gains engendered through superior-subordinate notions that have created an overarching challenge to peace. Thus, the first major economic cause of the crises was the isakole (land tribute) which the Ife landlords collected from the Modakeke until the late 1970s (Akanle, 2009), which was abolished after the promulgation of the Land Use Decree of March 29, 1978 by the military government (Akanle, 2016). The Decree created uneasy relationships between the two groups as the Ife people perceived it as an infringement of their rights of landownership.

The Modakeke people on the other hand, who were predominantly farmers, saw the Decree as an opportunity for free tenancy and refused to pay tributes to their landlords. By virtue of the 1978 Land Use Decree which transferred land ownership in Nigeria from family/compounds to the government without regard to peculiar circumstances that structure the relationship between migrants/tenants and indigenous landowners in different communities, generated land conflicts between tenants/migrants and indigenous landowners (families/compounds) leading to the non-recognition of indigenous institutions for conflict resolution in some rural Yoruba communities and increasing number of inter-group fights (Oyerinde, 2002). Thus, while the Ife landlords insisted on maintaining the status quo in the collection of isaloke, the Ife tenants resisted it leading to violent clashes between them.



Another trigger to the violent clash was the renaming of Modakeke as Ife South in 1983 resulting to loss of lives and further damage to property (Adegbite et al., 2016). Thus, the Ife's penchant for the continued framing of Modakeke's as their subjects and Modakeke's quest to assert their foothold over the centuries has been the major reasons for the internecine clashes. Oral tradition trace both the Ife and Modakeke as both are descendants of Oduduwa, the perceived progenitor of the Yoruba people. The socio-cultural and political systems of the two communities are essentially identical and their geographical distributions largely overlap. As related as Ife and Modakeke are, however, both have engaged in protracted conflict for over a century (Toriola, 2001).

The Modakeke people are generally considered strangers, tenants, and migrants in Ife, and the Ifes regard themselves as the 'landlord' over the people of Modakeke. Historical accounts suggest that the people of Modakeke migrated and settled in Ile-Ife in the aftermath of the collapse of the Old Oyo Empire in the nineteenth century, which caused a refugee movement to the south and resulted in the occupation of the contemporary location. Two distinct categories of people were thus created: the original Ife settlers, who later assumed the role of landlords, and the Modakeke migrants, tenants, farmhands, and a resettled group considered as refugees. These categorizations form the remote cause of the conflicts between the two groups (Toriola, 2001: 27; Asiyanbola, 2007).

Historians generally trace the crisis to pre-colonial Nigeria, especially during the Yoruba internecine wars of the nineteenth century. Some of the identified major conflicts that broke out between the two groups include: the two bloody battles of 1849 (Johnson 1921, cited in Lamidi, 2019); the communal war of December 1882 (Manning, 1979, cited in Lamidi, 2019); the conflict over the selection of an Imam by the Modakeke in 1934 (Ade-Ajayi and Smith 1971, cited in Lamidi, 2019); the Ishakole (land rent) dispute of 1946–47 (Afolayan, 1998 cited in Lamidi, 2019); the confrontation over the reception of a British parliamentarian (Rev. Sorenson) in January 1949 (Afolayan, 1998); the conflict over the establishment of the Modakeke High School (Akinjogbin, 1992:11); the conflict over the establishment of the Olorunsogo Plank Market (Agbe, 2001:17); the opposition to self-help development projects by a fund-raising activity of the Modakeke in 1980 (Albert, 2001:39); and the request for a separate Local Government Council which began in the 1950s and resulted in a series of crises that continued till early 21st century.

4.2 Effects of the Conflict on the People in the Two Warring Communities

Like many other violent conflicts, the Ife-Modakeke conflict led to series of losses in terms of lives and property which the people suffered on both sides of the warring communities. This finding is in harmony with the submissions of Akanle (2009) that the destruction of lives and property during the Ife-Modakeke struggles has been wanton. Records suggest that during the 1997 crisis alone no fewer than 2,000 and perhaps as many as 5,000 people were killed. Property destruction exceeded \$42.4 million, and 10,000 farmers were displaced from Modakeke farmlands. Schools, public utilities, houses, and cars were burnt while over 10,000 people were internally displaced.

Economic activities have been affected, as many businesses have relocated from the two communities due to the conflict. Suspicion and distrust are mutual, fueling violence at the slightest provocation. Akanle argued further that a dangerous dimension is youth aggression and disorientation. Young people became the conscience of their communities during crises and unleashed mayhem beyond the elders' control.



Besides, about 31% of the vegetated land-cover had been lost to the Ife-Modakeke conflict (Adegbite, Balogun, & Buba, 2016). More so, Makinde (2014) reported that a resident of Modakeke, who pleaded not to be named, alleged that many indigenes of the town who are farmers had not been allowed to return to their farms since the end of the last crisis. He added that some people from Ife always prevented Modakeke farmers from harvesting their cash crops insisting that the Modakeke indigenes farming on Ife land should pay land tribute (Elugbaju, 2016). In a nutshell, the impact of the Ife-Modakeke conflict on the two warring communities can be categorized into five:

- i. Loss of Lives and Displacement, disrupting social structures and strained community cohesion.
- ii. Economic dislocation resulting from loss of property and means of livelihood as it disrupted economic activities such as farming, trade, and tourism all vital sources of income for the communities and exacerbating economic hardships, poverty levels and inequality in the communities.
- iii. Psycho-health traumas such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues.
- iv. Strained Intercommunity Relations as there are grievances and mistrust hindering social integration and cooperation.
- v. Destruction of landmark cultural heritage such as artifacts, and cultural sites during clashes depriving the communities their heritage and hindering tourism potential (FasterCapital. Com, 2024).

4.3 The Extent to which the Ife-Modakeke Conflict has been Resolved and Transformed

There had been several attempts to the resolve the seven recorded major violent clashes between the Ifes and Modakekes as pointed in out in the preceding section. Actors involved in the resolution include the individual traditional rulers, Obas, state and federal governments as well as socio-political and cultural organizations. Among the Obas is Ooni Abeweila who attempted to give Modakeke a separate land to live (Shina and Ndukaku, 2010). Ooni Adelekan Olubuse attempted to resolve the crisis by implementing an 1886 treaty which recommended the expulsion of Modakeke from Ile-Ife. Since becoming the Ooni, Oba Okunade Sijuade has also spent much of his energy and time in trying to resolve the crisis, even though the people of Modakeke have accused him of favouring the Ifes (Asiyanbola, 2007).

The role of traditional institutions in managing the conflict includes inaugurating several committees comprising the chiefs of both towns. The chiefs of both towns in turn meet at intervals to champion the peace and progress of the towns reaching resolutions on salient issues (Elugbaju, 2016). Thus, since 1847, the various conflict resolution attempts could be classified as pre-colonial traditional peace approach, the colonial interactive peace approach and the post-colonial partisan peace approach (Ogbeide and Olatunki, 2014; Aja, 2007).

However, considering the sporadic nature of the conflict whereby after each particular episode of settlement, the conflict is re-ignited is an indication that these resolution methods are tantamount to temporary relief. From records, it appears only a fraction of the Yoruba traditional institution (i.e. the role of Oba) has been applied towards the pursuance of peace. Traditional institutions in Yorubaland include the office of the king, chiefs, deities' chief-priests, the Ogboni to mention a few, which are all part of the Yoruba cultural institutions for managing and resolving conflict. They have played frontline roles in the management of the Ife-Modakeke conflict. By traditional institutions, for the



study, it means the home-grown or local models and methods the communities have used overtime and possibly still use in managing the conflict that has threatened their continued existence.

The colonial government's approaches appeared ad hoc, since they were not tailored to address the root cause of the conflict. Thus, the initial methods of resolution of the Ife-Modakeke conflict had deep-seated shortcomings arising from the actors' inability to bring succor to the minds of those who recorded losses during the war (Elugbaju, 2016). For instance, the first attempt to resolve the crisis by the colonial government ended up becoming a breeding ground for the later conflicts. This is exemplified by the handling of the first intra-community conflict between the Modakekes and the Ifes which broke out in 1835 (Oladoyin, 2001).

To negotiate peace, a ceasefire was brokered in 1886 through the efforts of Samuel Johnson, a historian, and Charles Phillips, the Bishop of Ondo (Toriola, 2001). The parties signed a treaty in Lagos, the former Federal Capital of Nigeria with Governor Maloney. The treaty provided for the evacuation of the Modakekes from the Ife Kingdom (Toriola, 2001). The Modakekes later returned to the Ife Kingdom on the condition of peaceful living and respect for the authority of Ooni, the paramount ruler of the Ife Kingdom. The 1940 judicial pronouncement made it mandatory for the Modakekes who wish to continue to live on Ife land to pay tribute (Asiyanbola, 2007). The inhabitants of Modakeke were not satisfied with the resolution of the conflict (Ogbara, 2002) and the conflict rather than abate, resurfaced in a vicious cycle in the 1960s until the 1990s (Albert, 1999).

Though the initial postcolonial government approaches seemed to have brought some noticeable changes, however, a closer examination showed flip-flop results. It was geared towards the mere conflict handling styles such as investigation and clarification of the situation analysis of the communal conflict'. These include, use of force and some dictatorial actions such as forceful abrogation of land rents (Ishakole) by dint of the 1978 Land Use Decree which abolished private land holding, which sparked-off its own violent crisis, unilateral creation of local government without consultations. The government then played the role of institutional enforcer that could override other groups. For instance, in December 1980 a fundraising ceremony organized by the Modakekes was disrupted by policemen, which pushed them into agitation for their own separate local government council. Contrary to their expectations, when the new local government was announced in April 1981, it was placed under Ifes as usual.

Another political problem arose with the creation of a new council (Ife East Local Government) in 1996, which was relocated from Modakeke to Oke-Ogbo in Ife (Olayiwola and Okorie 2010: 958), showing the lopsidedness of the government in handling the conflict. This relocation pushed the Modakeke into protests that lasted till 1998 amidst secret killings and brutal violence that occurred in 2000 (Toriola, 2001: 28).

The Era of Conciliatory Approach: The government stepped up its conflict resolution measures in the 1990s by delving into and resolving some of the structural anomalies that gave rise to the conflict. They were able to reach a consensus by both parties on cessation of payment of on land by the Modakeke, the Ogunsua of Modakeke was upgraded to third class Oba, and the creation of LGA. Various commissions and panel of enquiries were established to resolve the conflict, namely: Honourable Kayode Ibidapo Obe's Judicial Commission, Chief Alex Akinyele Committee of Enquiry and Commodore Olabode George's Committee that led to the final peaceful resolution of the conflict in 2000. The committee made the following resolutions: Change in the Modakeke status. For instance,



the name “Ife” should be added to the name “Modakeke” as a suffix to become ‘Modakeke-Ife; Ife East LGA office should be created for Modakeke in Oke DO; a Mobile Police Training Institution should be created in Ile-Ife; Police buffer zones should be created in conflict flash points (Commodore Olabode Gorge Ife-Modakeke Committee Panel Reports, 2000). Other forms of resolution by previous committees included resettlement, relocation and peace education. For example, Judith Asuni organized a peace education programme for youths in both Ife and Modakeke in 2000.

This latter period, the government responded to the crisis by adopting a holistic approach oriented towards reconciliation and peace. All concerned groups and associations were involved in this peacemaking process (Afolayan 1998; Agbe, 2001:16; Toriola, 2001:23; Aguda, 2001). There is no doubt that this government initiative took cognizance of the possibility of sustainable peace between the two communities while the response of the people of both communities was positively geared to keep to their promise of upholding peace. By so doing, the government helped the conflict parties (Ife-Modakeke) to move beyond their incompatible and combative positions to explore potential integrative outcomes, a process which necessitates significant trust (Nathan, 1999:7).

Beyond mere conflict resolution, a landmark model which approximated the conflict transformation model was applied landmark to find a lasting solution to the age-long conflict via a third-party intervention of United States Agency for International Development/Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) under the leadership of Dr. Isaac Olawale Albert (Olayiwola and Okorie, 2010). This took place between 1999 and 2000. The intervention processes employed include: media campaign activity; separate community training activity; and joint training on forgiveness, reconciliation and transformative leadership of the two communities.

At the end of these, a formal inauguration of the Ife-Modakeke inter-community Peace Advocacy Committee took place at Oduduwa Hall, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria on 16th September, 2000. Olayiwola and Okorie (2010) argued that there is no doubt that this initiative made a tremendous achievement in restoring peace between the two communities and members of both communities kept to their promises of upholding peace. But this only ends the physical dimension of the conflict. This manifest in the fact that there is no physical battle or confrontation occurring till date but the psychological bitterness may still have been lingering, which explains why all outstanding contentious issues such as complete resettlement of displaced people should be expedited to push the memories of mayhem behind them.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Having examined the trends in conflict transformation of IFE-Modakeke clashes, whose objectives were to: identify the factors responsible for the Ife-Modakeke conflict; ascertain the effects of the conflict on the lives and property of the people in the two warring communities; and to analyze the extent to which the conflict has been transformed, anchored on the theory of Conflict Transformation while adopting the historical-analytical research design for collection of qualitative secondary data and analysis, based on the findings, it was therefore concluded that: Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that:



- The factors responsible for the Ife-Modakeke conflict include, internal weaknesses, collapse of Yoruba institutions and the collapse of the Oyo Empire due to series of wars; land issues, creation of Ife-East Local Government, debate over Modakeke's sovereignty, boundary disagreement, masquerade (egungun) crossing into each other's territory, etc, which is partly economic, political and identity issues.
- The effects of the conflict on the lives of people in the two warring communities include, loss of lives and displacement causing immense suffering, disruption of social structures and strained community cohesion; hindering economic activities such as farming, trade, and tourism, increased poverty levels, exacerbating existing socio-economic inequalities within the communities; psychological trauma, strained inter-community relations breeding grievances and mistrust; hindered social integration and cooperation; destruction of cultural heritage while hindering tourism potential.
- The extent to which the over 150-year Ife-Modakeke conflict has been transformed include efforts made by individual traditional rulers, Obas, state and federal governments as well as socio-political and cultural organizations, which began with the adoption of conflict resolution styles such as separation of the two communities, inaugurating several committees comprising of chiefs of both towns, and conflict transformation approach that used holistic approach oriented towards reconciliation and peace by the government, grass-rooted inauguration of the Ife-Modakeke Inter-community Peace Advocacy Committee, confidence building and signing of peace pact by the two warring communities. These efforts have yielded positive results as since the last conflict in 2000, there have not been any serious skirmishes and there have been relative peace between the two warring communities given the sustained efforts to change the narratives by addressing the root causes of the conflict such as changing their perceptions towards each other and persuading them to resolve to coexist peacefully and abhor conflict which they were meant to see as destructive and detrimental to development.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. For sustainable peace and consolidation of the already attained level of transformation, policies that continue encourage social integration and discourage fixated identity attachment that is laced with primordial prejudices should be religiously pursued among the people of the two communities.
2. A lasting agreement should be reached to resettle those displaced from both towns that could not go back to their pre-war homes or land.
3. Since youths are mostly likely prone to trigger conflict; hence, adequate peace education should be directed at them starting from the home and then schools and places of worship.
4. The federal and state governments should endeavour to compensate those that lost valuables during the war as a form of succor that would have lasting impact in placating their resentments and nostalgia of the war.



5. To achieve a sustained transformation of the conflict, the state and federal government should restore sufficient respect/authority over their subjects so that they could legitimately settle dispute or skirmishes in their communities before they escalate into crisis stage.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that no conflict of interest exist in this manuscript.

Artificial Intelligent (AI) Statement

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