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Interrogating the Influence of Alien Institutions and Methods of Conflict Resolution among the Cross River Igbo during the Colonial Period

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Abstract

The paper interrogates the influence of alien institutions and methods of conflict resolution during the colonial period among the Cross River Igbo during the colonial period. It stresses indigenous institutions and the methods adopted in conflict resolution. It also identifies and discusses alien institutions and methods of conflict during the colonial period in the area under study. The aliens' institutions and methods covertly and overtly undermined the indigenous ones. The paper also examines how indigenous methods and institutions of conflict resolution and that of the aliens operated side by side. The paper adopted the historical method of qualitative objective analysis of both primary and secondary data. The findings of the study among other things revealed that indigenous institutions and methods of conflict resolution were to a large extent influenced by the alien ones through propaganda and threats. That religious conflict started in the area during the colonial period and widened the scope for individuals to seek redress. It concluded with the view that delay and extortions in conflict resolution were entrenched during the colonial period.

Keywords: Aliens, Indigenous, Institutions, Method, Conflict Resolution.
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Introduction

Conflict resolution entails the art of making sure that socio-economic interactions that have gone sour and threatened the peaceful co-existence of a group, inter, or interpersonal relationship are brought back to a normal or cordial relationship. Conflict is ever-present in human relationships, hence the need to ensure that it does not escalate into destructive situations. That is the reason why every society puts different measures in place that are geared toward the maintenance of peace. The Cross River Igbo had functional institutions and methods of conflict resolution during the colonial period. These structures of conflict resolution witnessed the arrival alien of institutions and methods during the colonial period. These alien institutions influenced the indigenous methods to a great extent. The Cross River Igbo communities under investigation are along the left bank of the Cross River in Nigeria. They include; Ezza, Ikwo, Ezzikwo, Uburu, Okposi Unwana Afikpo, Edda, and Amasiri; the middle of the river bank is inhabited by Ohafia, Nkporo, Abiriba Abam, Umuhu, Ututu, Ihechowa and Arochukwu. These communities are presently in Abia and Ebonyi states in the eastern region of Nigeria

The colonial period in Cross River Igboland started in 1902 with the British Military expedition that brought to an end the Arochukwu hegemony, Afikpo, and other war communities in the area. The colonial government brought new methods of operations and conflict resolution. This period which lasted till 1959 altered many indigenous systems, traditional religions, and patterns of doing things. In other to get a historical grasp on the happenings as it relates to conflict resolution, this paper addressed the method of conflict prevention and resolution during this period with emphasis on how both the indigenous and alien institutions and methods operated. It also examined the influence of colonial administration on traditional methods of conflict resolution. In pursuance of the foregoing, the following were addressed, they are: Alien institution's influence on indigenous institutions of conflict resolution, indigenous institutions of conflict resolution, alien institutions of conflict resolution, new sources of conflict, and new means of initiating the conflict resolution process.

Alien Institutions Influence on Indigenous Institutions Conflict Resolution

During the colonial period, most of the pre-colonial institutions of conflict resolution such as the family, compound elders, *Ikwu*, village assembly, Eze's court, and the age-grades, among others remained unchanged. However, oracles were targeted by alien institutions during the colonial period. The oracles were the supreme courts of each of these communities before the advent of colonial rule in the area. Every indigenous institution of conflict resolution refers to the oracles. But, all changed during the colonial period because the colonial government confronted the oracles headlong and made them unattractive to the people. The colonial officials thought that *Ibini-ukpabi* oracle was the chief of all the oracles in the area. In fact, D. Moor states that one of the reasons for the military expedition on Arochukwu was "to abolish the juju hierarchy of the Aro Tribe which by superstitions and fraud causes much injustice among the coast tribes generally and is opposed to the establishment of Government." This clearly states that the presence of oracle undermined colonial interest in the area. Based on this, the colonial government issued edicts against oracular consultations. T. M. Sharkland in his report boasts that "With the advent of the colonial government in 1902 all the old…judicial system was uprooted." This was achieved through smeared campaigns and threats directed towards the oracles after the 1901/02 military expeditions on Arochukwu. The chiefs were called by the colonial authorities and warned never to encourage the use of oracles and branded them as mediums for defrauding the people. As if that was not enough, the colonial authorities made proclamation acts in 1908. It stipulated that any chief who encouraged the use of oracles in any form would be punished severely. This legal restriction dealt a huge blow to oracles' power base of indigenous institutions of conflict resolution. Some of the people and oracle priests were forced to jettison ancient proven means of peaceful coexistence or use it clandestinely.

The colonial judicial officials inspired by this proclamation, used it to subdue the indigenous processes of conflict resolution. They foisted on the indigenous people a system of conflict resolution that was at variance with their cultures and traditions. About this cultural subjugation, E. N. Ota remarks that "British rule torpedoed the indigenous social and political systems of the peoples and foisted new ones from Britain." The attacks on the oracles succeeded to an extent because they were carried out through force, and reorientation brought by the alien faith-based denominations that spread falsehood against them. However, the people did not abandon an appeal to these oracles even though their uses as the supreme channel of conflict resolution were threatened during the colonial period (See Figure:I).

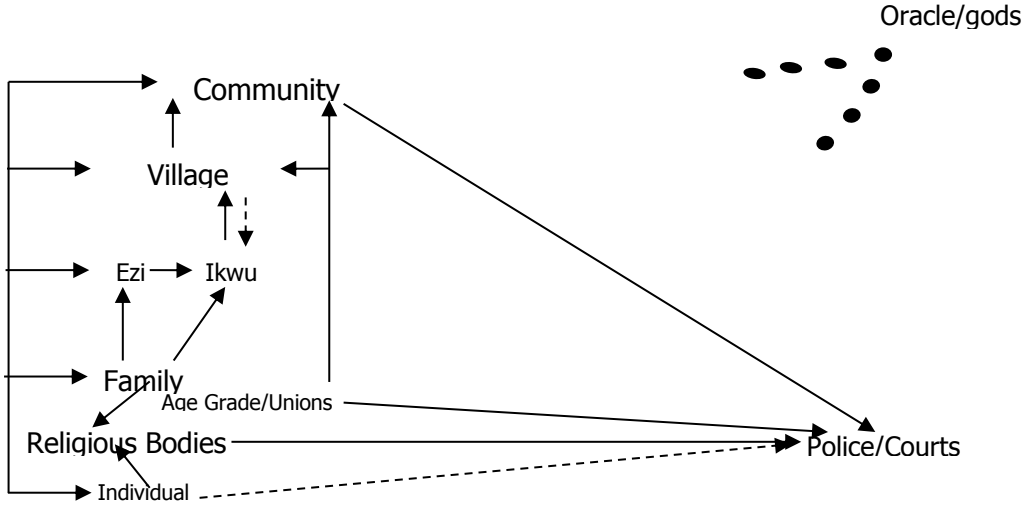


Figure I: Conflict Resolution Institutions and Appeal Channels in Colonial Period
Source: *The Author*

The horizontal and vertical lines show that the people used the indigenous institutions in conflict resolution as the channel of appeal. It also shows that the people used the alien institutions when they felt that the indigenous institutions did not address their issues accordingly. However, the dotted line shows that the oracles were less consulted by the people in conflict resolution.

Town Unions: Town Unions were the new indigenous institutions of conflict resolution that started during the colonial period. All the matrilineal Igbo communities, as well as other Igbo communities, during the colonial period, formed various types of town unions such as Afikpo Town Union, Abiriba Town Union, Ohafia Town Union, Amasiri Town Union, and Edda, Arochukwu Town Unions, among others. This was multipurpose. The scope of operations of these town unions was: the development of their communities, ensuring the welfare of their community members in the diaspora; and resolving conflict among their members; and between their members and members of other communities. The people during the pre-colonial periods were living in compact villages and communities as people with shared values and institutions. The need to tackle the challenges of migration and urbanization and to extend communalism necessitated the formation of these town unions.

Alien Institutions of Conflict Resolution

The dawn of colonialism brought with it new sets of political order, institutions, and religious bodies. These alien institutions were colonial administration, modern courts, and religious bodies. They were in many aspects very different from what was known and practiced by matrilineal Cross River Igbo communities in particular, and in Igboland in general. These under-listed institutions came with their system of government, law, and religion, and foisted it on the people.

i Colonial Government: The successful military expeditions in Arochukwu and Afikpo (1901-1902), sent a chilling feeling that made kings and people of the Cross River area avoid any confrontation with the Whiteman power. The leadership of these communities came to terms with the realization that their actions were now been questioned, not by their subjects as they used to be. But by extraneous authority with military might to enthrone and depose monarchs. This report lends credence to the attitudinal shift of the people. This report states that:

> *The political aspect of the district has altered in a most marked degree…beyond all questions, to the success of our war now waging against the Inokun. At the beginning of the quarter, the majority of the town evinced no particular regard for the Whiteman…. However, the war against the Inokun (Arochukwu) people has brought them to their senses.*

The report further remarks that:

> *I have received visits from the towns of Ebom, Afafani, Annang, Isumudon, Ekuri, Ugep, Abayong, and all Afikpo towns, one and all came to express their friendship with the whites and hoped we will not make war on them, and if the Government desired anything done, they will be only too willing to assist in any possible way.*

For instance, two villages from Afikpo, namely; Anohia and Kpokirikpo allied with the British expedition force and waged war against Afikpo in 1902. This was the first time in the history of Afikpo to experience intra-communal conflict. The colonial government instigated these two Afikpo villages to fight the whole of Afikpo. They also participated in the intra-communal war. At the defeat of Afikpo, the colonial administration was established in Afikpo.

ii. New Religious Bodies: The matrilineal Cross River Igbo communities witnessed the arrival of new religious bodies during the colonial period. These religious bodies were Christian missions and Islamic missions. Both of these groups played significant roles that influenced the indigenous institutions and processes of conflict resolution. The method of their

conversion forms of teaching and indoctrination of indigenous people, and the destruction of oracles and shrines led to conflict in these communities.

iii. Christian Missions: After the military expeditions on Arochukwu and Afikpo as earlier discussed, the colonial authority invited and encouraged the establishment of Christian missions into the area to come and complete the subjugation through psychological expeditions on the people. Christianity reached Arochukwu in 1902, Ohafia in 1910, Abiriba in 1911, Nkporo in 1912, Edda in 1920, Afikpo and Amasiri in 1923 and 1924 respectively. As Christianity entered the area it introduced education which assisted greatly in breaking the remaining resistance and also divided the people. The introduction of Christianity just like the modern court widened the scope of conflict resolution institutions in the Cross River Igbo.

The uniqueness of Christianity and its denominations from the indigenous institutions rests in the fact that it was an exclusive organization (this is because its converts were taught not to associate with non-converts including their siblings), which was contrary to indigenous institutions which maintained relationships with everyone without discrimination. Christian denominations also posed as the beginning and last resort in conflict resolution for their members. The members were encouraged neither to use the police nor the court or other 'worldly institutions,' which included the indigenous institutions but to resolve their conflict through the churches. These Christians derived their motivation from Paul's teachings on conflict resolution which stipulate that:

> *If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have a dispute about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to your shame. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge disputes between believers? But instead, one brother goes to the law- and this is in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have a suit among you means that you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?*

This scriptural position created a superiority complex in the indigenous converts which in turn undermined the indigenous institutions and methods of conflict resolution. To worsen matters the leadership of the church-imposed sanctions on members who approached the 'worldly institutions' for conflict resolution. Furthermore, the foreign missionaries compounded the confusion the indigenous believers had in Paul's teachings with another teaching as T. Okere observed:

> *Indigenous religion was condemned as idolatry; their gods were but demons or fetishes; their ancestors were lost souls, having lived and died outside the church; their feasts and ceremonies were all idolatrous and pagan; their dances were immoral; their diviners were sorcerers; their medicine was magic and quackery; their languages were hopelessly tone-infested cacophonies, while their names were unpronounceable gibberish for which the canonized names of European canonized saints had to be substituted.*

These teachings not only emboldened the native converts not to submit to the indigenous institutions of conflict resolution but also to destroy places of traditional worship. Consequently, this mindset caused the indigenous believers to treat these institutions and cultural injunctions with disdain. This often led to physical attacks on the shrines of the gods. For Instance, in 1913 in Abiriba, indigenes converted to Christianity were going from one *Obu* (a village hall that housed village gods) and destroying the idols of the ancestor. They burnt down the Kamalu shrine and at Agboha, carried away the ivory icons of Nfijioku. This resulted in conflict between the church and the community. However, the Enachioken in Council, under

Eze Nnam Nmaju Otaka restrained the community from retaliation. Rather took the matter to the British Colonial Administration at Bende. These Christians were tried and convicted.

Similarly, the Christian missions at Unwana, Afikpo, Edda, and Amasiri were constantly in Conflict situations with members of *Egbela Umuruma, Egbela Ndi Ishina, Egbela Edda, and Ogo* (exclusive cultural groups) during the 1930s. The source of this conflict was the desecration of the sacred places of these exclusive groups by native converts. Other sources included the Christian condemnation of polygamy and early marriage. The conflict increased when the Church began to preach against polygamy and early marriage. The conflict got to its zenith when members of the church were asked to detach from indigenous institutions as their continuous association meant worldly entanglement which was devilish.

The members of these cultural groups, who were elders of their various communities, banished Christians and denied them their rights of inheritance. The practice further hindered freedom of movement; people were secluded from being seen, let alone freedom of speech, and compelled Christians to undergo initiation, as Christians were forced to swear an oath according to *Ogo* rites at the cost of their highly-priced lives. The entire terrain was charged with constant attack from the *Ogo* exclusive group; as their performances could be sudden, simultaneous such that Christians were rounded up and had nowhere to escape. The colonial administration during this period always resolved the matter between the Christians and these cultural groups in favor of the Christians. Hence, these cultural groups resorted to clandestinely terrorizing the Christians and destruction of their places of worship.

iv Islamic Mission: This was another religious group that entered into the Cross Igbo community. Amid conflict, Islam was able to take a foot-hold in Anohia one of the villages in Afikpo community. For instance, Okpani Egwani (known as Alhaji Ibrahim) a native of Anohia was converted to the Islamic religion. He returned to Anohia village home in 1957 and amidst conflict converted a vast number of his village people to the Islamic religion. He and his followers destroyed their village shrines. This plunged the community into a conflict situation. Due to the support of the colonial administrators, the Islamic groups got justice in the court. In 1958, a conflict resolution process was initiated by some elders of Anohia. The Moslems and non-Moslems agreed to respect each other's rituals and not to interfere with one another. They erected a mat fence as a demarcation to separate the two parts of the village from each other. The resolution was reached in October 1959. The matter was resolved by the senior Afikpo age grade, Ekpe Uke Esa), elders from the neighboring and related Igbo village groups of Amasiri, Edda, Unwana, and Okpoha.

It is worthy of note that the processes of conversion to both Christianity and Islam in the Cross River Igbo communities as identified in this study were conflict-prone. But not like the bloody conflict by the jihadists in the Hausa states of Nigeria and some West African states. Elliot Skinner, describes the Islamic pattern of conversion thus, "persuasion and often by the sword." Persuasions, indoctrination, condemnations, vituperation, and iconoclasm rather were the strategies used by these religious groups in these communities. These strategies sowed divisions and hatred among family members. It also pitched some indigenes against their community which often led to overt and covert conflict among the people. Furthermore, these alien religious groups in these communities established themselves as authorities in conflict resolution within their host communities. They used the agencies of the government such as the court, to resolve their dispute. They also viewed appeals to indigenous institutions as an aberration and punished the members who used them. It is significant to emphasize that faith-based institutions used either the police or court to resolve their conflict with non-converts during this period.

v. Modern courts*:* In 1900, the British Crown took over from the Niger Company in the protectorate of Southern Nigeria which the Cross River Igbo was a part. The British enacted the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, which stipulates the objectives of the colonial courts. Part of the

Act includes, "to establish laws and institutions and to constitute courts and officers for peace, order and good governance of her Majesty's subjects…," The British officials based on this established native courts in the Cross River Igbo communities and in other parts of Igboland. According to Ralph More:

> *It is on these courts that the government mainly relies on dispensing of justice among the natives, for the establishment of peace and good order in the territories, for the carrying out of all Administrative and Executive work… and for the furtherance of trade, education, and agriculture throughout the territories.*

The colonial administration in pursuance of the above objectives, created area courts for the justice system in Igbo communities. The establishment of this court in the area under study started in 1902. These communities, who before the advent of the colonial government operated sovereign traditional political self-government, were brought under new political authority.

H. F. Morris and James Read, on the Composition of these Courts, state that, "These included not merely judges and magistrates, administrative officers and police officers from Britain, but clerks, messengers, and policemen who might be local people, native strangers from other areas."[23] Furthermore, due to the attitude of extortion by the court officials, the use of modern courts to resolve the conflict was frowned upon by the people. It was deemed as a money and time-wasting venture that did not resolve conflicts but rather increased them. This notion was entrenched in the heart of the people. It was so much that the Ekpe cultural group during the 1920s composed a derogatory song on the use of the modern court system. The song is " *Oje Bende ubi ruru affifia oje Bende, Oje Bende ubi gi ruru affifia, oje bende."* (The song means you that delight in going to Bende to initiate litigation in court your farm had grown weeds). It also meant that you would spend all your resources in court without gain. The general conception of the people was this maxim, *inigi akporu enyigi ga court unuaka buru enyi* (which means that you cannot take your friend to court and remain friends).

Ormsby-Gore, the Under Secretary of State observes that "nothing tends to undermine the native traditions, society, and organization more than substitution of European for native legal forms." This substitution was the basis of the hatred of the people towards the modern court. For the European administration to achieve the denigration of the indigenous institution of conflict resolution and to redirect the people to their institutions, there is, therefore, the need to use force or threat if need be to achieve it. In pursuance, of the foregoing, the colonial administration just like Christian missions launched an attack on the oracles and other indigenous processes of conflict resolution such as *Ogbe,* and *inuinyi* by tagging them trial by ordeals.[26]

Review of Conflicts Appealed to Colonial Courts: After the analysis of intelligence and other reports on conflicts referred to colonial courts for resolution by the Cross River Igbo communities, it was observed that:

i. Generally, there were few conflicts appealed for resolution by the people during the colonial period specifically between 1902 and 1933. However, between 1933 and 1960, there was a marginal increase in the number of appeals. Communities, such as Abam, Abiriba, Edda, Ohafia, and Amasiri had the lowest appeals for conflict resolution. But Afikpo community had the highest number. In most referred conflicts land disputes had the highest number of appeals. Land disputes were followed by murder and religious conflicts.
ii. Issues referred to these courts took years and ended without resolution. In most cases, the disputants abandoned their issues in court.
iii. It was capital-intensive to engage in conflict resolution processes through these courts.

New Sources of Conflict during the Colonial Period

There were levels of conflicts that were limited to inter-personal, family, inter-family, and inter-communal conflicts during the pre-colonial period. But, in the colonial period new dimensions of conflict such as intra-communal, chieftaincy, and religious conflicts started in the area. The new sources of conflict during this period were political, iconoclasm, and forceful conversion to either Christianity or Islam.

Intra-communal Conflict: During the colonial period boundary conflict increased among these communities. The people of Abam and Ohafia have existed side by side peacefully as brothers from common ancestry based on the accepted tradition of origin by these communities. However, the advent of colonial presence in the area sowed a seed of discord that germinated into a destructive conflict. In 1937, a boundary dispute between Abam and Ohafia erupted. This conflict progressed to the killing and maiming of both farmers and travelers from both Abam and Ohafia. The boundary conflict attracted G. I. Jones the District Officer into the area in 1937 and he attempted to broker peace. Jones's peace efforts failed because all the parties to the conflict refused to participate for fear of arrest and imprisonment. However, in 1940, the alarming nature of the conflict led the women of both communities to form a joint protest march. These women went to the disputed boundary with *omu* (palm frond) and threatened these communities that if they failed to stop the killings they would always be coming there so that all of them would be killed. The women compelled the two communities to define the boundary of the disputed area so that the problem would be resolved. This led G.I Jones and the two communities to plant beacons on the disputed boundary, in line with the natural boundary which was *Uduma* river.

An incident like this was widespread in the Cross River Igbo communities during the colonial period. Boundary disputes that were not previously seen developed as a result of new political and administrative structures that the colonial government set up.

Means of Initiating Conflict Resolution Process

The means of initiating litigation were formal complaints, going to the family, compound or village head and reporting a situation that an individual wanted to seek redress; the giving of a broomstick and the placement of a palm frond. But the means of conflict resolution that was rarely used was oracular summon as a result of the 1908 Proclamation Acts which stipulates that:

> *Any Chief who directly or indirectly permits, promotes, encourages, or facilitates any trial by ordeal which is prohibited by this proclamation, or the worship or invocation of juju which has been prohibited by any order made under this proclamation, or who knew of such trial, worship or invocation, or intended trial, worship or invocation does not forthwith report the same to a resident of the province in which such trials, worship, or invocation has been intended to be held or made, shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred pounds or to imprisonment for any period not exceeding three years.*

To enforce this act, the colonial officers used the services of paid spies. As A result of this measure and the consequences that followed anyone who was caught, most of people stopped the use of oracular summons in conflict resolution. But Abam evolved new processes to oracular involvement in conflict resolution.

This process was called *Ikuyi Nkuma Ennọ* (It means to throw a stone in a pit toilet). This measure did not involve going to the oracle shrine to initiate a case against the individual. The aggrieved individual picked a stone utters the name of the person that caused the offence and threw away the stone into a pit toilet in his/her compound. The person would direct people to inform the offender in question that he or she had thrown a stone in the toilet for him. The offender answered the summons by going to the shrine with the following; a fowl, alligator paper, and some cash. However, the people who failed to respond to such summon were visited

by unimaginable consequences. As a rule, it was incumbent on the accuser to inform people that he had summoned such a one but if the offended refused to let people know of his action, such an individual was charged with murder should the accuser die. To put this process in motion did not require any money, the reason was to give opportunity to the poorest person to seek redress and also circumvent the colonial officers' prying eyes towards oracular summon.

Other methods of conflict resolution that were used during the colonial period include the deployment of broomstick and palm front. The deployment of broomstick involved going to the compound of the person that threatened another by the relation of the one threatened with a broomstick. On reaching the compound, a broomstick is handed to an elder or grown-up person found there, with the message that their relation had threatened one of their own. And that they have in turn handed the life of one of their family members to their care and should any harm come to him or her the person in question will be held responsible. This move swiftly forced the families to come together and resolve any issue that had prompted the threat to life. The application of palm front is mostly used to stop people from entering into a property or farmland until the ownership status of such a place is determined. This method is preventive. This method comes into force when someone suspects that his or her property has been taken by another and wants to stop the person from accessing it until the reason for the encroachment is known. When the palm front is placed on the property or farmland it bars everyone from entering the said property until a resolution was reached.

Conclusion

This paper examined the influence of alien institutions and methods of conflict resolution on the indigenous counterparts during the colonial period. It showed that the oracles were targeted by all the alien institutions of conflict resolution by branding them fetish and using every means to discourage the people from using them. It also revealed that the religious conflict and inter-communal conflict started in the area during the colonial period. It highlighted that the alien institution, especially the court introduced merchandising of conflict resolution and prolonged periods of conflict resolution. The influence of the alien institutions on the indigenous was made possible because of the faith-based converts to Christianity and Islam. These were achieved by propaganda and destruction of sacred places of worship of the indigenous ones. However, irrespective of the alien's influence on the indigenous institutions, the people invented new method of conflict resolution that helped them to sustain their age-long institutions and practices. Findings revealed among other things that the advent of the alien institutions and methods of conflict resolution operated the indigenous ones and gave the people more options to seek redress.

Endnotes

[1]Awa Idika (83years), Community Leader, Interviewed at Abam, September 14, 2017.;Ugwu Ikwo (63years), Civil Servant and Historian, Interviewed at Afikpo, September 26, 2017; Ude Uchendu (74years), Retired Teacher, August 11, 2018, and Akanu OnyeIje (60years), Trader, Interviewed at Abiriba, November 4, 2017.

[2]National Archives Enugu (NAE). ARODIST 3/1/55.T. Vol.1 AD 635.15. More in M Shanklands' Intelligence Report on Aro. "Aro-Sub Tribes Mr. H. F. Mathew's Anthropological report on the Aro Federation."

[3]National Archives, Enugu, ARODIV 3/1/55, T.M Sharkland, "Aro-Sub Tribes, H. F. Mathews's Anthropological Report on the Aro Federation."

[4]National Archives, Enugu, no17 of 4.2.02 in C.S.O 1/13 Ralph More, "High Commissioner Address to Chiefs,"1902).

[5]A. J. C. Tremearne, "Native Law and Procedure in the British West Africa," *Journal of the*

Society of Comparative Law15, no.2 (1915):97.

[6]Idika, Ikwo, Uchendu, and Onyeije, interview cited.

[7]E. N. Ota, *The Evolution of the Nigerian State* (Umuahia: Charlespatricks, Michael and Tessy Publishers, 2010),26.

[8] National Archives, Enugu (NAE), Calprof 10/3, Vol.II "Quarterly Report on Ediba District, 31-12, 1901.

[9]NAE, "Quarterly Report on Ediba District."

[10]Nnamdi Ibe, interview cited.

[11]Njoku, Donatus Igwe "The Socio-Economic and Cultural Impact of the Presbyterian Mission in North Eastern Igboland (1880-2006)," ((Ph.D Thesis. University of Nigeria Nsuka. 2007), 234.

[12] All the informants opined that the Christian missions forced their fellow brothers not to respect their tradition. Any cooperation with them would cause them to sin and all the people that tried to summon their fellow Christians were suspended.

[13]Paul., "I Corinthians: Law Suit Among Believers," Reflecting God Study Bible, 1 Cor 6:1-7, *New International Bible(NIV)* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 1742.

[14]Odim Udensi, (80yrs), Retired Blacksmith, Interviewed at Abiriba, March 20,2016 Ogbu.; Ukiwo. Egbu, (84yrs), Retired Blacksmith, nterview at Abiriba, Feb 10, 2016.;Nwoke Agwu, (67yrs), Trader/ Local Historian, Interviewed at Abiriba, Feb 2, 2016.

[15]Odinaka Kalu, (73 yrs), Civil Servant (Retired)**,** Afikpo**,** Interviewed on September 15th, 2018.; and Omenka Aka, (64 yrs), Teacher**,** Afikpo**,** Interviewed on September 15th, 2017. See also. Donatus Igwe Njoku, "The Socio-Economic and Cultural Impact of the Presbyterian Mission in North Eastern Igboland (1880-2006)," (Ph.D Thesis., University of Nigeria Nsuka. 2007), 180.

[16]kalu, Aka, Interview cited.

[17]Kalu and Aka, interview cited. Odinaka Kalu, and Omenka Aka, interview cited. See also National Archives Enugu NAE. Af 426/47 Memorandum. T. M. Sharkland " Egbele/Ogo."1924, 2-4.

[18]Ude Ukaogu (72years), Oath Priest, Interviewed at Afikpo, September 28, 2017.; and Oyim Ekuma(61years), Farming, Interviewed at Afikpo, Fabruary 26, 2018. See Simeon Otterberg, "A Muslim Igbo Village," *Cashiers d' Etudes Africains* 42, (1971), 231-260.

[19]Elliot P. Skinner, "Strangers in West African Societies," *Journal of the International African Institute 33,* no.4 (1963), 309.

[20]National Archives Enugu (NAE) More Ralph, Chief Secretary's Office Lagos, 1/13, XXXIII, "Moor to Colonial Office," 7 January 1903.

[21]National Archive Enugu (NAE). ARODIST 3/1/55.T. M Shanklands' Intelligence Report on Aro. "Aro-Sub Tribes Mr. H. F. Mathew's Anthropological report on the Aro Federation." Vol.1. 16. The destruction of Ibiniukpabi and other military expedition accounted to the spread of the native courts in the Cross River Igbo Area.

[22]Ralph, "Colonial Office."

[23]H. F. Morris and James Read, *Indirect Rule and the Search for Justice*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 183.

[24]Odim Udensi, (80yrs), Retired Blacksmith, Interviewed at Abiriba, March 20,2016 Ogbu.; Ukiwo. Egbu, (84yrs), Retired Blacksmith, Interview at Abiriba, Feb 10, 2016.;Nwoke

Agwu, (67yrs), Trader/ Local Historian, Interviewed at Abiriba, Feb 2, 2016.

[25]Tremearne, "Native Law,"98.

[26]Udo Onuoha (78years), Retired Customary Court Judge, Interviewed at Ohafia, February 10, 2019; Anthony I. Nwabughuogu, *The Dynamic of Change In Eastern Nigeria,1900-1960: Indigenous Factor in Colonial Development* (Owerri: Esther Thompson Publishing Company, 1993), 102-103. See also Charles K. Meek, *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), x.

[27]The review here is based on the information contained in Arodiv, OGoProf, BenDiv, AfiDic and UmDiv documents accessed from the National Archives, Enugu.

[28]Finding revealed that unique practices of conflict resolution remained unchanged during the colonial period.

[29]Egbe Igiri (70years), interviewed at Abam, April 25, 2018; Charles Okoko (58years), Historian/Publisher, Interviewed at Umuahia, February 18, 2019. See also Charles Okoko, The Abam of the Cross River Igbo: A Historical study to 1960, MA Dissertation (University of Nigeria Nsuka,1986), 42; National Archives, Enugu (NAE). Jones, G. I. Inteligent Report on Abam Clan, OW: 4150, 3/1/519, 1932, NAE.

[30]Tremearne, "Native Law,"97.

[31]Akannu Agwu (65 years), Farmer, Interviewed at Abam, August 29, 2017. And Okoko

[32] Egbe and Okoko interview cited.