



## **Traditional Rulers and Community Security In Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The recent security problems in Nigeria have seemed to further spur Nigerians into a greater appreciation of the role of traditional rulers. The emphasis on community policing, which seems to increase in tempo with every new Inspector General of Police, all point to a rising appreciation of the place of traditional institutions in the search for peace and order. This approach is aimed at soliciting the support of the Traditional Rulers and their subjects in the communities, in the fight against crime. Traditional rulers in the country used to have a robust constitutional role. Under the 1960 and 1963 Constitutions, the Council of Chiefs was established for them in the regions and some of the traditional rulers even rose to become regional governors. In the 1979 Constitution, traditional rulers were represented in the National Council of State. But the role of traditional rulers was virtually expunged in the 1999 Constitution, an indication of the declining status of the traditional institutions in the scheme of things. Using the state capture theory, the study argues that continued non-involvement and the loss of traditional rulers constitutional roles with the attendant upheaval in the Nigeria is fuelled by weak enforcement of legislations and laws by relevant government agencies. Data for the study will be generated from documentary sources while analysis will be affected through content analysis. The study suggests a constitutional role and support from governments at all levels.

**Keywords:** Traditional Rulers, Insurgency & Terrorism, Nigeria, Constitution & Security.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The vague natures of the relationship between traditional leaders and post-colonial states have been a recurring theme in sub-Saharan Africa politics since the achievement of independence (Mamdani 1996; van Nieuwaal and van Dijk 1999; van Nieuwaal and Ray 1996). This is due in part to colonial forms of indirect rule that used and incorporated them as an extension of colonial regimes, a means to extract human and natural resources and a strategy for curbing organized resistance against the colonial masters (Mamdani 1996; Mbembe 2001). Although some chiefs

had assisted liberation struggles across the continent, post-colonial governments saw them mainly as the collaborators of the colonial masters and as impediments to the modernization and nation-building projects of the 1960s and 1970s. While not all governments officially banned traditional authority altogether – as Tanzania and Mozambique did, for example – the vast majority extensively curtailed the role of the chiefs in local governance, which was generally limited to cultural and spiritual activities.<sup>1</sup> Despite the attempts to ban or contain kinship-based institutions, as Ekeh (1975) and Sklar (1999) discuss, since independence most African countries have experienced a ‘mixed polity’ or a *dualism* of structures of power. Ekeh (1975) refers to this as the prevalence of ‘two publics’ competing for the allegiance of citizens within nationalised territories that the states involved have seldom been able to control fully. As Skalnik points out (2004), chieftaincies or kinship-based forms of governance have never ceased to be important, despite various attempts by states to do away with them. The current security challenges facing Nigeria has brought to the fore.

The spate of insecurity and threats to lives and properties in Nigeria has reached alarming proportions despite the increasing visibility of the Nigerian state security agencies and paramilitary agencies in the management of internal conflicts. For many Nigerian families, 2018 has become a nightmare on account of deaths resulting from auto accidents and violent crimes. Just about 10 weeks into the New Year, the country has lost 1,351 to violent deaths, according to Sunday Vanguard checks (Ndujihe, 2018). According to him, no fewer than 517 people died violently, across the country. In January, about 676 Nigerians were cut down through herdsmen and farmers clashes, sectarian crises, communal clashes, Boko Haram insurgency, cult clashes, kidnapping, and ritual killings, among others. The deaths are 176 more than the 500 recorded in January 2017. The 1,351 deaths recorded since the beginning of 2018 exclude those who died from illness, childbirth, Lassa fever, etc. The North-East remains the killing field with 591 deaths. It is followed by North-Central, 270; North-West, 193; South-West, 136; and South-South, 131. At the bottom of the list is South-East, 30. Borno State, the hotbed of the Boko Haram insurgency, recorded the highest number of deaths with a figure of 361. Borno is followed by Benue, 163; and Borno’s north-eastern neighbours, Taraba (107) and Adamawa, which witnessed 103 violent deaths; Kaduna, 71; Rivers, 66; Plateau, 54; Zamfara, 45; Lagos, 45. States that also recorded huge deaths include Ondo, 39; Ogun, 35; Jigawa, 30; Kano, 27; Nasarawa, 22; Delta, 19; Anambra, 18; Kebbi, 18; Akwa Ibom, 16; Kogi, 14, and Cross River, 14. The rest are Oyo, 12; Bauchi, 11; Yobe, 9; Edo, 9; Bayelsa, 7; Kwara, 6; FCT Abuja, 6; Niger, 5; Enugu, 4; Imo, 4; Ebonyi, 3; Katsina, 2; Ekiti, 2; Abia, 1; and Osun, 1. There were no reported violent deaths in Gombe and Sokoto.

This report has validated earlier studies by The US Department of State 2008; Erinoshio 2007; Falola 1998, International Crisis Group 2009, USAID 2005). Considering the increase of violent conflicts and occasional state failure in the maintenance of peace and order in Nigeria, this study is anchored by the following questions: How has Nigerian society coped with its monumental profile of violent conflict? Why are extant conflict management strategies defective? What are the modalities for integrating traditional and modern conflict management strategies in Nigeria? These questions are addressed through content analysis of relevant documents.

As community leaders, they had records of all the people that come into the community. Whenever new person comes into the town, information get to the palace, such person is put under surveillance immediately such information gets to the natural leaders. This approach will checkmate and reduce the rate of crime such as kidnappings and other vices in the community and in the country. Security is everybody’s business, if community must be involved, the authority must involve traditional rulers that will inform the security agencies whenever they see strange persons.

#### **Theoretical Perspectives on Traditional Rulers**

Traditional Rulers all over Nigeria in Port Harcourt recently made a strong case for the constitutional recognition of their role which they had been playing right from pre-colonial times.

They questioned the rationale for excluding them from the Constitution whereas previous Constitutions had duly recognized them. They felt that their exclusion had robbed the Government of the needed touch with a vital segment for governance, the local communities.

The 'abolitionist' constitutes one of the two dominant schools of thought in the debate. The abolitionists vehemently deny any relevance for traditional chieftaincy institutions in government and administration in modern day Nigeria.

Some critics are of the view that traditional institutions are feudalistic, anachronistic and therefore irrelevant to our current needs. There are some other people who think that at this period of serious efforts towards national integration, institutions of traditional rulership which encourage ethnic instead of national interest should be scrapped. Others still, sound a note of warning on the danger of allowing traditional rulers wield undue influence in governmental affairs, this argument seems to follow from the lessons of the past civilian-regime which show that some traditional rulers in Nigeria, were politicians camouflaged in royal robes.

Adapting Max Weber's threefold characterization of authority, the abolitionists argue, essentially, that the *raison d'être* of indigenous institutions of rulership is traditional authority, whereas modern governmental systems are based on legal authority as well as democratic principles (Ekong, 1985). The conceptualization of relevance by the abolitionists is reflected in their concern with the seeming incompatibility of traditional authority structures with the demands of democratic ethos. Abolitionists argue that traditional rulership is politically irrelevant given the ascendancy of modern democratic government (Sambo, 1987). This thesis is captured as follows:

Post-war analyses of chieftaincy structures were initially dominated by the now largely discredited midcentury modernization paradigm. Premised on positivist and evolutionary assumptions, these earlier studies of the nation state project predicted the imminent demise of chieftaincy structures in African politics. Analysed in the context of third world decolonization, the cold war and global capitalism, modernization theorists emphasized the erosion of chiefly power in the postcolonial African state. [Blech, et al 2006]

These dominant post-war social science perspectives drew heavily from Max Weber's notion that power is legitimate only when the political expresses voluntary consent. This conceptualization is based on the assumption that rational human behavior is best mediated by the agencies of the modern state and civil society. Thus, since indigenous African structures were widely held to be dysfunctional in this post-war political context, modernization theorists contend that their marginalization is an essential precondition for the socio-political and economic development of African states." (Vaughan 2000: 3).

To this view traditional authority is seen as a gerontocratic, chauvinistic, authoritarian and increasingly irrelevant form of rule that is antithetical to democracy. That is, it stoutly opposed the inclusion of traditional institutions in a fast changing Republican environment. This view argued that even Britain which is deeply rooted in Monarchical traditions was fast shedding down the influence of traditional institutions which the people now consider an undeserved burden on tax payers. Special reference was made to the rather disappointing roles which Traditional Rulers had played in recent years to the disappointment of their subjects. This opposing opinion felt strongly that Traditional Rulers had become too politicized and might constitute parallel Executive or Legislative Bodies which they should not be.

The second school of thought, the retention school, is championed by the holders of traditional rulership positions. Traditionalists regard Africa's traditional chiefs and elders as the true representatives of their people, accessible, respected, and legitimate, and therefore still essential to politics on the continent. This school argues for the need not only to retain the institution of indigenous rulership in government and administration, but also (and more importantly) for an upward revision of the role which the institution plays in the political scheme of things, to a level comparable to what it was in the pre-colonial period. In spite of the given views which are against the retention of traditional institutions and their involvement in public affairs, many Nigerians still cherish the involvement of traditional institutions in National government in general and

Local government in particular. Those in this group are of the view that traditional rulers should occupy their position in the traditional setting without acquiring or wielding political power. They should rather strive to keep alive the rich cultures and traditions of their peoples and maintain the perpetuation of the cherished relics of the people's past. They are of the opinion that traditional rulers should be encouraged in every aspect that enhances the retention of our cultural heritage. With respect to this school of thought, there is a perception of the under-utilization of the institution of indigenous rulership especially in the years since independence was attained in 1960. More important for our own discussion, however, is that relevance is conceived by this school not as a product of that which is assigned by any human being or human organization. As one traditional ruler, Oba of Benin, Omo N'oba N'edo, Uku Akpolokpolo Eredinwa puts it: The traditional ruler or king is not man-made but that who answers to that position is God-anointed and therefore not to be brushed aside or relegated or disrespected (Omo N oba,1982).

Supporting this view, Blench, et.al (2006) articulated reasons for their retention by positing that: Nonetheless, the ongoing political significance of traditional structures did attract the attention of some political scientists working in Nigeria. Miles (1987), for example, picked up on earlier studies and argued that Hausa chieftaincies in both Nigeria and Niger had been co-opted by the nation state and owed their survival and continuing legitimacy to this source rather than to traditional loyalties. Much more wide ranging and influential, though, has been the work of Sklar (e.g. 1993; 1999a; 1999b; 1999/2000; 2003) and in particular his concept of 'mixed government', used to describe the dualism and symbiotic relationship between traditional and state-derived institutions that characterises government in Nigeria and many other African countries. Like Miles, Sklar argues that 'The durability of traditional authority in Africa cannot be explained away as a relic of colonial rule' (2003: 4). Instead he emphasises the role of local initiative: 'African agency in the construction of colonial institutions was largely responsible for the adaptation of traditional authorities to modern systems of government and the legitimacy they continue to enjoy among ordinary people' (Vaughan, 2003: 4).

The third perspective felt that the vicissitudes which have attended the traditional Institutions were not sufficient reason for that vital institution which serves as custodian of our cultures to be completely ignored. It was therefore thought that a midway arrangement to accord an advisory role to Traditional Rulers would be a good starting point to stabilize the reintegrate the institutions with their subjects.

The third, though ambivalent position in the debate is articulated by the accommodations. This hybrid, middle-of-the-road is neither here-nor-there. This viewpoint accepts the position of the abolitionists on the anachronistic nature of traditional chieftaincy institutions, but rather curiously argues for a 'befitting role' for traditional rulers "in specific aspects of our development process"(Sambo,1987). The accommodationist viewpoint is presented as a position of a moderation which recognizes the traditional and cultural relevance of traditional rulers which at the same time agreeing to the point that they (traditional rulers) might not have much place in modern governmental administration. The fact that governmental policies tend to rule out the abolition of traditional institutions while traditional ruler continue to freely enjoy public financial support without clearly defined roles<sup>6</sup> is cited by accommodationists as the practical demonstration of the realistic nature of their position.

It is, however, not clear from the above how the issue of relevance is handled by the accommodationists except, of course, to suggest that this viewpoint amounts to no more than a 'search for a politically neutral but befitting role for traditional rulers'<sup>7</sup> without an accompanying intellectual justification, borne out of rigorous and objective analysis, for such a role.

Supporting this view, in Nigeria perhaps the most detailed recent work has been that of Vaughan (2000) on the twentieth-century history of chieftaincy among the Yoruba. Vaughan (2000: 3) argues that

‘Given the resilience of indigenous political structures and the colossal failure of the Nigerian state, it is essential to re-open the discussion on the role of chieftaincy in colonial and postcolonial Nigerian politics’.

And he summarises his main thesis as follows:

The crisis of political legitimacy confronting the Nigerian state is intimately linked to the ambiguous nature of the public sphere and the absence of viable national institutions capable of unifying a deeply fragmented nation state. The narratives of local politics that are the focus of our analysis here will be viewed in the context of a process of state formation that rests on a tenuous interaction between ambiguous “traditional” structures and modern bureaucratic institutions. The main concern of regional political classes has been to protect their interests by seeking refuge behind traditional structures, themes and symbols that are summoned to validate local aspirations. In this context, state structures are hardly used as effective institutions of administration and governance. Rather, they function largely as mechanisms for allocating patronage and ensuring political domination. Thus, chieftaincy structures – as communal and ethnic-based institutions - partly reinforce a rentier state dominated by ethno-regional commercial and bureaucratic classes.” (2000: 12-13 Cited in Blench, et.al 2006)

Vaughan’s (2003, 2005) edited collections have also been important contributions to the wider debate. In Nigeria itself there has been growing interest in these issues, linked to discussion about the future of the constitution and the role of both traditional structures and related concepts of citizenship, in particular ‘indigeneship’ (e.g. Awe 1999; Agbese 2004; Sklar 2004; Rinyom n.d.). Logan (2008) findings are clear on this thesis: positive attitudes toward chiefs are not incompatible with democracy – and *vice versa*. Even more startlingly, far from being in stark competition for public esteem, local traditional leaders appear to draw their sustenance and legitimacy from the same well as elected officials. Logan’s paper finds that African societies are often quite adept at integrating seemingly incompatible institutional structures, such as traditional institutions. The strongest explanations come from the performance evaluations of other leaders, particularly with respect to trust of local government councillors.

In view of this middle approach, this paper posits that this can be achieved by assigning them a constitutional role in the constitution. Such approach would guarantee peace and security in the country. This is because, the role of traditional rulers should not just be limited to advisory, but they should be given functional responsibilities through constitutional amendments.

### **Theoretical Framework of Analysis**

This study is anchored on historical orientation as its framework of analysis. Like the legal approach, the historical approach is essentially an orientation. It is the historian’s orientation which relies heavily on understanding the present through a probing of what happened in the past. The emphasis is on the sequence of past events. In this approach, the present is regarded as one stage in a series that will continue into the future and the specific features as well as the complexity of developments are carefully described and analyzed. A concern with trends and patterns is sometimes as feature of this approach. At its best the historical approach helps to place a given administrative system in wider context.

Historical studies are essentially relevant because they give more local information. They constitute detailed studies of local communities in Nigeria. The authors concentrate particularly on the social communities in Nigeria. That is they concentrate particularly on the social, political,

and administrative systems in the various communities before the advent and during the era of British colonial administration. Descriptive-historians have been able to challenge some myths and easy generalizations contained in the semi-official and official studies of the same historical period. The traditional states of northern Nigeria formed the backbone of the British system of Indirect Rule. From the early colonial period onwards these states and their peoples have been the subject of a number of studies, most of which have been descriptive and historical. As articulated by Blech, et. al (2006) important early overviews include Burdon's *Northern Nigeria, Historical Notes on Certain Emirates and Tribes* (1909), Temple's *The Native Races and their Rulers* (1918) and *Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria* (1919), Meek's *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria* (1925) and *Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria* (1931), and Hogben's *The Muhammadan Emirates of Nigeria* (1930), revised and updated by Hogben and Kirk-Greene in *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria* (1966). Basic anthropological information is collected in the volumes produced for the *Ethnographic Survey of Africa* (e.g. Forde 1950; Gunn 1953; 1956; Gunn & Conant 1960).

These various works draw upon local histories and chronicles and in turn have spawned more detailed histories of individual polities. The most widely known of these have been published by outside scholars and include Last's *The Sokoto Caliphate* (1967) and M.G. Smith's trilogy *Government in Zazzau* (1950), *The Affairs of Daura* (1978), and *Government in Kano* (1997). But the most rapidly expanding and vibrant category of historical literature is that of locally published histories and hagiographies written by Nigerians themselves. Examples are recent works on the Berom chiefship (Nyam & Jacobs 2004; Dung 2005) and on past and present Emirs of Zazzau (Dalhatu & Hassan 2000; Dalhatu 2002). Many more examples are cited in their report Blech, et.al (2006). Studies such as these are important both as sources of information and as active contributions to the debate about the contemporary significance of traditional rulers and related institutions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This work uses qualitative research approach and applied chronological, thematic method of analysis of data. The work uses both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include royal document, Archival materials and intelligence report written on the institution. Secondary source materials include published and unpublished works such as textbooks, pamphlets and project works. Internet materials were also used. In addition, visits were made to both the Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, Department of History and International Studies Library, both in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The technique of content analysis is used to analyze these sources.

## **SECURITY CHALLENGES AND COMMUNITY POLICING: THE PLACE OF TRADITIONAL RULERS.**

Security is a natural choice of subject for this conference, as the traditional leadership institutions evolved out of people's own attempts to ensure peace and security in their communities. These institutions have changed enormously in the past century in Nigeria, but equally the problems of security have also become more complex and more intractable. Presently the connections between chieftaincy and the various security organizations are mostly informal, but they are very regular and important nonetheless.

Nigerians and her leadership have advanced several reasons for this state of affairs ranging from high level unemployment to acute poverty in the land, ill equipped Police Force, the collapse of Libya's Gaddafi regime and ineffective Policing or what our revered traditional ruler the sultan of Sokoto referred to as the collapse of internal security architecture. Quite frankly the solution to all our several security challenges lies in our adoption of community policing as the methodology of Policing. As proposed, this policy is meant to identify, reinforce and accept community policing as an internal security model in the fight against crime and upkeep of law and order.

According to Aliyu (2007:3), our traditional rulers, nationwide, have been involved in the past and will continue to be involved in the future in the maintenance of our national security includes following among others: a. Trans-border Security b. Internal Security which he divided into Physical and Community, and Food Security. In the pre-colonial era, traditional rulers were generally assisted in their onerous task of securing their domains by subordinate chiefs appointed by them. They were divine kings and personifications of the various communities under them. They were seen and observed as the pivots around which the administration and everything revolved, the supreme religious head as well as the civil authority in the land.

In his argument in support of the significant roles by traditional institutions in the maintenance of internal security, Professor Tekena Tamuno in his *Crime and Security in Pre-Colonial Nigeria* stated that: Then law and order were maintained through well structured though undemocratic methods. In examining the roles of traditional rulers in pre-colonial Nigeria vis-à-vis the internal security of their domains, one can say that they had ably performed security roles at the executive, legislative and judicial levels. They had unlimited powers to punish offenders in line with their own codes of conduct in the various communities. They also engaged in such duties as the general maintenance of law and order, acting as the chief custodians of communal laws and natural resources, reception and entertainment of distinguished visitors. Usman Dan Fodio set out the following functions for the Emirs he dispatched to various parts of Northern Nigeria:

1. Organisation of troops, posting them to different areas and fixing their grants;
2. Maintenance of justice and appointment of judges and other State officials;
3. Collection of Haraji and Sadaqat; and
4. Protection of the land, the defence of the State and protection of religion against change or innovations (Aliyu,2007).

The Emirate system was a federal type of government held together by two powerful Emirs. The central administration was divided into two major sections: the eastern zone and the western zone. The eastern zone included Sokoto, Katsina, Kano, Zaria and Yola with its headquarters at Sokoto. The Emir (Sultan) of Sokoto presided over this zone. The western zone included Gwandu, Ilorin, Argungu, Kontagora and Gwari, with its headquarters at Gwandu. The Emir of Gwandu controlled the administration of the western zone. Immediately after the Jihad Usman Dan Fodio assigned what responsibility of administering the emirate to his relatives. The eastern zone was administered by his son, Bello, and the western zone was administered by his brother Abdullahi.

To make administration easier, the emirs of Sokoto and Gwandu appointed emirs to handle the territories under their own control. They appointed the emirs either from among Usman dan Fodio's descendants or selected people from the local communities. Although the lower emirs had powers to administer their territories according to their local needs, they were closely guided by Islamic principles, and were subject to the authority of the Sultan of Sokoto and Emir of Gwandu. Under the lower emirs were a set of local administrative units called Districts, each headed by a district head or Hakimi. The Hakimi was appointed by the lower Emir either from his family or from the members of the districts. The Hakimi collected taxes, enforced law and order the teaching of Islam. However, he informed the emir of all the major decisions made by him.

In order to administer the villages successfully each district head appointed village heads for all the villages. Each village head was responsible for the peace, order and good government of his village. He administered the village in the interests of the district head. The Hausa/Fulani political system was a hierarchical chain of authority flowing from the central authority, to the emirs, through the district level to the village level.

The Emir who was the chief executive at the emirate level exercised much power over his people. He performed both the executive and legislative functions of government. These functions were performed with the assistance of some advisors drawn mainly from a Council of Ministers. Ministerial responsibilities were assigned to people based on trust, hard work and expertise. The members of the council of Ministers included the following:

1. The Galadima served as the minister for the capital territory and was in charge of the general administration of the capital of the emirate. When the Emir was out of the capital he acted for him until he returned. In other words, he was the deputy Emir.
2. The Waziri acted as head of service for the Emir. All administrative matters of the emirate were coordinated by him. He advised the Emir on the appointment of officials and took charge of important ceremonial duties. It was also his duty to inform all other members of council about all meetings of the emir's advisory council. All these functions qualified him to be a member of the panel of king markers.
3. The Madawaki was the commander-in-chief of the Calvary. It was his duty to lead the military forces in defence of the emirate against enemies.
4. The Sarkin Fada as the Chief Palace Officer, was in charge of administering those who worked within the palace which included the Emirs praise-singers.
5. The Magaji served as the Minister for Finance, but was more appropriately addressed as the Treasurer. He was responsible for the safe-keeping of the Emir's revenue.

In order to please the members of different professional groups, the Emir assigned titles to those who demonstrated high ability in their professions. For example, the best fisherman in a fishing community was conferred with the title of Sarkin Ruwa, and the best butcher was assigned the title of Sarkin Pawa. Once assigned these titles, such people acted as leaders of their various professional groups.

Specifically, according to Aliyu(2007), the Emir and members of his council of advisers served as both the legislative and executive arms of government. The made the laws and supervised their enforcement. At the district and village/ward levels he district and ward heads with their assistants also combined executive and legislative functions. While the executive and legislative functions were fused, the judicial function was quite distinct.

In some parts of Nigeria, especially in the North, certain categories of Emirs were given powers as the sole Native Authorities to administer their Emirates almost to the exclusion of those officials, who before the advent of the British, had considerable input in the administration of their Emirates. The Native Authority system could be divided into two-Administration and Finance and Security. The Administration and Finance was composed of the following:

- Family Head
- Ward Head
- Village Head
- District Head

This structure had political, economic and security implications. It was at once a structure for tax collection as it is was security reporting system. The Family Head had as his responsibility to report to the Ward Head the arrival of a visitor to his home; the full bio-data of the visitor including parentage, town, occupation and reason for the journey undertaken. By this method, the entire administrative structure would be fully aware of movement of people within their domain.

The security department was composed of the following units:

- a. Emirs personal Body Guards (Dogarai)
- b. Native Authority Police
- c. Prisons

The Body Guards (Dogarai), Prisons Guards and the Police were a selected group of people loyal to the Emirate. The heads of these units were carefully selected in order to protect the person of the Emir and to ensure peace and security of the territory. To emphasize the importance of the police within the Native Authority structure, the leadership of the Police Force was often entrusted to a prince. Our revered Emir, in whose honour we are all gathered today, had held such office between 1957 and 1962. He succeeded his elder brother when the latter became District Head. Indeed it had become customary for any eligible Prince to control the Police Force-on his way to the throne.

The Court which was an arm of the security system was in the firm grip of intellectual families with sound knowledge of Sharia law - Alkalai. Above the legal system, all appeals were directed to the Emir's council; which put the Emir at the helm of the legal system—to be advised by the Waziri and Wali. The Customary Courts operated in the same way in the South.

In the Eastern part, the peculiar structure of administration in place necessitated a different approach through the enactment of House Rule Ordinance which recognized the existing political system for security reasons. It gave recognition to the heads of houses as instruments of local government and who were executive agents mostly used for security purposes to serve the interest of the colonial authority. However, the advent of British colonialism altered, to some extent, all arrangements hitherto in place as the final authority shifted base to the colonial officials. In the first instance, the powers of the traditional rulers were eroded in that they became subordinate to the British officers. Instead of giving orders, they started to receive orders from the Resident District Officers. In spite of the power shift that became one of the consequences of colonialism, the inherent influences of traditional rulers as co-security managers of their various domains continued to be felt in the entire country. These changes weakened the traditional authority structures nationwide.

However, beside the security outfits established to checkmate the conduct of the governed, the colonial officers to a very large extent, relied on the traditional rulers for the maintenance of internal security in their domains. Within the colonial era, they were found very suitable and were equipped by the colonialists to continue to exercise their judicial and legislative functions, all aimed at sustaining peace and stability. The roles played by traditional rulers on security issues during the pre-colonial days were continued at the inception of colonial administration. The guarded acceptance and respect accorded them by the colonial officer further strengthened their power to maintain law and order in the Native Authority.

Further changes followed independence. Emirs had to work with another constituted authority known as the council; a system referred to as 'Emir and Council' as opposed to the 'Emir in Council' of the colonial period. Rulers had to abide by the majority decision of their councils, though they still had control of most local government affairs. In each region a House of Chiefs was created and any decision taken by members of the regional House of Assembly had to be referred there for endorsement before it was passed as a law. In 1967-68, the judiciary, prisons and Native Authority police were removed from the control of the Emirs and Chiefs. This dramatic change completely removed more than half of their powers; it did not, however, significantly diminish their prestige in the eyes of their subjects.

The 1976 Local Government laws removed traditional rulers completely from the functions of local government and they became only advisers. *Functions of Emirate Council* under the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, the functions of the councils are purely advisory and include but are not limited to the following:

- (a) Formulation of general proposals and advice to local government;
- (b) Provision of advice on religious matters;
- (c) Support for arts and culture;
- (d) Chieftaincy matters and control of traditional titles and offices;
- (e) Mobilisation of people for self-help projects;
- (f) Assistance in the collection of levies and local revenue (FGN, 1976).
- (g) Making representations to government on matters referred to council by government.

Traditional rulers in the country used to have a robust constitutional role. Under the 1960 and 1963 constitutions, the Council of Chiefs was established for them in the regions and some of the traditional rulers even rose to become regional governors. In the 1979 Constitution, traditional rulers were represented in the National Council of State. But the role of traditional rulers was virtually expunged in the 1999 Constitution, an indication of the declining status of the traditional institutions in the scheme of things.

The declining prestige of traditional rulers has manifested in the continuous rejection of a constitutional role for them by the politicians, who tend to see the natural rulers as rivals. Such was the case during the inconclusive constitution amendment process by the seventh National Assembly. Despite overwhelming agreement on the crucial role of traditional rulers in the maintenance of peace and unity in society, there seems to be an equally overwhelming sense of fear about the implication of strengthening their role statutorily, particularly, among the politicians. Many politicians appear to be comfortable with traditional rulers being no more than mere appendages deriving their powers just from their subjects, rather than from the constitution of the country or the laws of the respective states.

But the prevailing social and political conditions in the country dictate that the hands of the traditional rulers should be strengthened to do more of what they know how to do best: preserving the mores that guarantee orderliness and progress. They need a more proactive statutory backing to acquit themselves effectively in such role. Specifically, the next part of the paper will address the roles of natural rulers in security management.

### **The Relevance of Traditional Rulers in Security Management**

For traditional rulers to participate meaningfully on matters of security in the country, there is the need for them to be re-positioned so as not to just serve as agents of conflict resolution but also as security managers which they were before. With the ever increasing security challenges facing the nation today, the integration of traditional rulers into a security network that will provide necessary stability is desirable. To effectively operate, the security agencies in Nigeria often have to relate with traditional rulers who play prominent roles at the grassroots. They are very well situated to assist security agents in neutralizing threats emanating from their domains or neighbouring communities.

Collaborating this view, a former Inspector General of Police, IGP, Solomon Arase and a champion of Community Policing, has said that since Nigeria got her independence, the country is yet to have a proper policy for national internal security in place. He said this policy is meant to identify, reinforce and accept community policing as an internal security model in the fight against crime and upkeep of law and order. Mr. Arase made this known at a conference on policing the Nigerian federation, organised by the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, NIPSS, tagged “towards integrating community policing in Nigeria’s security architecture: models, policy options and strategies.” According to the *Nation newspaper*, Mr. Arase argued that community policing is historically the rock upon which policing and internal security management rests. The former IGP said such a community policing policy should have distinct principles of policing and pathways to strengthening public trust and partnership between the police and the citizens. He said that the inability of the force to introduce reforms needed for the reorientation of the police psyche inherited from the colonial masters is a major factor that causes lack of trust between the police and citizens. (Aderibigbe, 2017)

Providing background information why this process exist, Tamuno (1970) provided very rich insights into the problems of Policing in Nigeria. This is further collaborated Tamuno & Alimeka (1989) where he says that between “1861-1930” when Lagos was Colonised several Police forces were established, organised and maintained by Colonial and post-colonial Government primarily for other maintenance that engenders repression, a culture of impunity, corruption, incivility, brutality, lack of transparency and accountability. According to him, it is necessary to identify appropriate and reliable policies, programmes and measures for transforming the Nigeria Police Force into a Peoples Police. The former IGP concluded by posing that police legitimacy draws from public consent and trust and lack of effective partnership between the police and the public can only sustain ineffective policing and insecurity among citizens.

The Traditional Rulers played important roles in recent times that doused tension in crises situations which could have escalated into major crisis in many parts of the country. It can therefore be deduced that interventionist policies of some traditional rulers have attested to how important and helpful. They had been and will continue to be relevant on matters of security

affecting any part of the nation. The above stand was further strengthened by the renowned historian Dr. Bala Usman when he said:

Traditional rulers have always been called upon and used to neutralize crises as and when they arose. Besides, successive governments realized that, the surest way to win the hearts and minds of the citizens on major issues of the day was through the traditional rulers(1987 cited by Aliyu, 2007,13 ).

The argument for a special role for traditional rulers in our constitution should not imply an abandonment of the democratic system of government. What it means is that traditional structures should be accommodated and made to operate with modern democracy in such a way that they reflect and mutually reinforce each other.

It cannot be denied that we may not have survived as a people without the leavening effect of our traditional rulers. They have acted and continue to act as respected interlocutors on behalf of the people with their elected and appointed government officials.

They have always served as strong pillars of stability within our society, making our large and diverse populations governable. Apart from the fact that they embody the dynamic, evolving links to our historic past and the future, they also give us pride in the uniqueness and ethics of our society.

Today's largely heterogeneous communities in Nigeria have made the concept of internal security difficult to realize. The traditional rulers should be encouraged to monitor activities in their immediate domains. In most communities, traditional rulers still have a lot to say in the security management of such areas. There is a need to revive the traditional security institutions which used to support governance in the past. However, these may have to be modified to suit the dictates of civility.

It is an irony of fate that traditional rulers who are recognized in all States of the Federation and graded by State Governments are not given official recognition and security roles by the 1999 Constitution. In spite of the above, they have been the pillars of national security from the grassroots to the centre in the country.

## **CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Traditional rulers and security agents should be seen as partners in the onerous task of maintaining internal security. Since security is a collective responsibility, it is our contention that traditional rulers should be ascribed official roles as they remain the focal point of the rural populace. This becomes more desirable as Nigeria today faces numerous threats to its stability. Traditional rulers who had played significant roles in matters of security in the past can be energized to play more roles in the face of new security challenges. It is an accepted fact that chieftaincy institutions in the country have served and will continue to serve vital roles in the maintenance of justice and order, and in the preservation of most of our cherished traditional values, especially in the rural areas where most Nigerians live. The clarion call is for more recognition taking into consideration their past and on-going roles in the sustenance of our national security. This calls for our traditional rulers to be true partners with government and security agencies at all levels, in order to achieve the objective of *Security For All* as stated in the current Grand Strategy on National Security (2016) which was enunciated at the inception of the present administration in 1999 by President Obasanjo. The nation is proud of the contributions of traditional rulers throughout our history: before, during and after the colonial period, up to the present time.

We conclude this paper by drawing attention to the seemingly contentious conception of the role of traditional rulers in security matters between and among the state and societal groups. If we are correct in making the assumption that the ultimate goal of political authorities is the preservation of peace which is, or would be, disrupted by violent conflict, the question then becomes: what

role does the traditional ruler play in the restoration of peace once violent conflict breaks out between the state and societal groups?

The role of traditional rulership institutions in conflict resolution is, too often, assumed rather than demonstrated. In our own view, the role which traditional rulers play in peace building and resolution of conflict is suspect and ambiguous. At best, traditional rulers are effectual in mediating conflict that falls short of violence. However, the traditional ruler becomes irrelevant. The irrelevance is a consequence of a unique dilemma which confronts traditional rulers. The traditional ruler is subject to the overarching control of the state to which he is responsible. At the same time, the traditional ruler, as head of his kingdom, has responsibility to his people. What is being argued here is that the loyalty of the traditional ruler is put to trial when violent conflict breaks out between the governors and his people. In situations of violent conflict, therefore, the traditional order becomes an object of suspicion by the parties to conflict.

Without attempting to further diminish Nigeria's already eroded federal system, there should be provisions in the constitution that would enable traditional rulers exert greater leverage over their communities and domains. The states of the federation should make laws that empower traditional rulers and institutions to play a more active role in the maintenance of law and order.

Embracing this view, while addressing members of the Kaduna State Traditional Rulers Council during their courtesy visit in his office, Governor Nasir El-Rufai said traditional institutions are important in the management of welfare and security in the country, but lamented that their roles have been usurped by the local government authorities. He stressed the need for the review of the 1976 local government laws which give the traditional rulers powers to maintain peace and security in their respective domains. Governor El-Rufai lamented that the problem of insecurity in the state had become complicated and compounded because of the failure of past administrations to assign constitutional responsibilities to the traditional institutions. He explained that a security committee which will include traditional rulers and other critical stakeholders will soon be established by the state government in order to work out the specific roles for traditional rulers towards the maintenance of peace and security in the state (Daily Trust, 2016).

Traditional rulers in Nigeria have gradually witnessed the erosion of their powers, from depending upon British colonial administration to dependence upon elected politicians and as their roles narrowed, that of the political institutions increased.

Many Nigerians have agreed that this situation also creates a huge gap between the people at the grassroots and government at the states and centre.

There have been a few attempts to make traditional rulers relevant at the state and federal levels. The states have their council of traditional rulers, in addition to the existence of the ministries of local government and chieftaincy affairs. Traditional rulers have also been given ceremonial functions as heads of governmental and non-governmental institutions, such as Chancellors of universities and other institutions of learning.

There is also the seemingly unwritten practice in many states of devoting five per cent of local government allocations to the upkeep of the traditional institutions.

But there is need to move beyond these ritualistic acts of recognition. The traditional rulers should be made more active in the protection of not only the values of their people, but also the lives and property of persons within their domains.

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