Crippled Giant: Institution Crisis of Monarchy since Amalgamation in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

All human institutions are dynamic. Traditional institutions emerged because of man's need for them, and they change because of various factors. However, monarchical institutions are known to be conservative, culture bound and consistently consistent. Notwithstanding, this giant had faced a lot of crisis and had been crippled over the years in Nigeria through the imposition of the British Colonial rule and post –Independence political developments. In contemporary times, they have been battered, hurt and brutalized by modern political leaders who have seen the monarchical institution as a rival and as an obstacle to their hopes or as instrument to be used and chosen to accomplish their aims. To this extent, little is known historically on the event of change and continuity in the traditional powers and functions of the monarchical institutions. The paper highlights the functions and powers of the monarchy in the society before and during the colonial rule. It also examines their place during the military interregnum and in the current political dispensation. The authors insist with all sense of responsibility, that, monarchical institution has a pivotal role as a link between modern government and local communities, thereby providing a feedback channel through which community needs and aspirations are felt, assessed and addressed. However, what should be done constitutionally is to accept the traditional rulers as purveyors and upholders of traditions, while curtailing and limiting their powers so that they do not clash with executive authorities.

Keywords Monarchy, Giant, Crippled, Institution, Independence, Traditional

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Introduction

Monarchical institution in Nigeria appears to be the longest-lasting pre-colonial and post-colonial body to have endured different phases of Nigerian government till date. Despite its multifaceted socio-political and economic condition, Nigeria offers an important example of an African state where home-grown political structures have shaped the practices of state formation in the twentieth century and have emerged as an integral part of the modern state and society (Vaughan, 2004). Whether under colonial or post-colonial administrations, Nigeria's monarchical bodies have emerged as a link between contemporary-age state and grassroots and therefore, its continuing existence is a boost to local communities.

Conceptual Clarifications

This sub-heading provides a framework on which discourse on how monarchical institutions have been in the past could be relevant to a period in the future with minor modifications and adjustment to conform to modern realities. Monarchy according to Aristotle, is an administration by one individual not reliant on any legal limitation, who does everything according to his own will. The institution of monarchy is the embodiment of the grandeur and sovereignty of the state in an individual. This could be explained in two-fold; one, the peculiar elevation of the head of state as the singular characteristic and organ of supreme power and two; the highest dignity and power of the state (Samuel & Francis, 2010). There are three types of monarchs; absolute, constitutional (limited) and elective. In the first one, the monarch is the Head of State both in name and in fact. In the second one, the monarch is only in name because the position is controlled by the constitution. The monarch can publicise only those laws which are agreed to by an elected parliament, however, the monarch is sure to accept the advice of the cabinet and respect the constitution and the rulings of the state. The only common features of the monarchical institution in Africa are that the sovereign inherits his or her office and usually keeps it until death or abdication.

Constitutional Monarchy

The constitutional monarchy is by far the most common contemporary form of monarchy It is a form of democratic control in which a monarch acts as non-political Head of State within the restrictions of a constitution, whether written or unwritten (Samuel & Francis, 2010). While the monarch may hold formal reserve powers and government may officially take place in the sovereign's name, he does not set community plan or choose partisan leaders. This model is not in use in Africa but in countries such as the United Kingdom and Spain. In these states, the power of the sovereign is traditional, with all of their power conferred in the political executive. So, while technically the British queen has the right to appoint the Prime Minister, this is really decided by the electorate… and while the Queen technically has the power to appoint ministers and declare war, in reality, these duties are carried out by the Prime Minister. All legislative power is vested in the parliament. However, in Africa, only three can be theoretically described as constitutional monarchies wherein, the sovereign is bound bylaws and customs in the exercise of the powers (Eliot, 2014)

Absolute Monarchy

The absolute monarchy is the ultimate autocracy, where a lone leader holds total power over the whole realm (Samuel & Francis, 2010). There is no constitution and there are no checks and balances on the power of the king or queen. Such systems are rare today, although they were once common Europe Louis XIV, the despotic king of France in the 1600s, is a good example of an absolute monarch (Philip, 2014). Also, Saudi Arabia where the house of Saud operates a hierarchical monarchy is an example of a modern absolute monarchy. Morocco ruled by King Hassan II from 1961 to 1996 and then succeeded by his son King Mohammed VI is an example of autocratic monarchy. The kings hold absolute power and appoint the prime minister, all ministers; head of military and regional governments (Rao, 2014).The king also heads a parallel cabinet consisting of retired politicians, business leaders and retired military officers, which run parallel to the administration. He can dismiss the government, disband legislature and sign international accords.[10] He also serves as national spiritual leader. Though the prime minister heads the cabinet ministers known as the congress of ministers, but the appointment of the ministers is done by the king. Also, in Swaziland, the monarchical governments practised by the king (*Ngwenyam* - lion) who doubled as the Head of State promotes absolute leadership. Presently, King Mswati III who rose to the seat after his father King Sobhuza II who died in 1982 reigns together with his mother (*Ndlovukati*- elephant). While the king is the administrative head her mother is the spiritual and national Head of State (Samuel & Francis, 2010).The king appoints the prime minster (head of government) and a smaller minister of representatives for both

chambers of parliament (*Libanola*). Both the fundamental human rights and independence of judiciary and legislature is not protected in Swaziland constitution. The king has the power to suspend the constitution and rule unilaterally under emergence powers whenever there is organized opposition to the royal hegemony.

Elective Monarchy

In an elective monarchy, the place of the king or queen is not hereditary; it is convened upon the monarchy either for an appointed term or for his lifetime. Malaysia is an example of an elective monarchy – there, the supreme Head of State, or "Yang di-Pertnan Agong" is elected to a five year term by a "Conference of Rulers" who holds a secret election (Samuel & Francis, 2010). In Cambodia kings are chosen from all contenders of Royal blood by the "Royal Council of the Throne". In Africa, especially in Yorubaland, this can take place in appointment of Regent rulers in some parts of Yorubaland.

Sub-National Monarchies

There are a great number of systems in Africa which are known as "sub-national" monarchies – small territorial areas inside sovereign states, which have no real administrative power, but which are traditionally recognized officially as having their own rulers. Hence, there are technically several hundred emir, sultan and kings in Africa, all officially recognised, but for the most part, lacking in all sovereign power. Their monarchs can be hereditary or elected, such as in the city-state of Akure in South-western Nigeria, where the ruling *Oba* is chosen by an electoral college from those eligible by bloodline (Philip, 2014).

Pre-Colonial Monarchical Institution in Nigeria

In pre-colonial Nigeria, traditional rulers were rulers in every sense of the word as they derived their executive, legislative and judicial functions from traditions long rooted, recognized and revered by the people of their respective areas of authority. As head of government, the Yoruba *Oba* was considered as a divine king, and in principle he had absolute powers. His trait was *Oba*, *alase ekeji orisa* (king, the ruler and the companion of the gods). He was called by the subjects as *Kabiyesi*, an expression which is said to be a constricted form of the sentence *ki a bi yin kosi* (there is no question of any one querying your authority) in summary; they were "Commander in Chief" in their domain (Atanda, 1980).

They were giants, and also had powers "to do" and "undo", they allocate communal roles and even confer titles on their subject. Elements of their social-political powers bordered on power to allocate and compulsorily confiscate land without compensation (Najeem, 1989). Also, they can allocate any lady to themselves without questioning from any quarters. Little wonder R.O. Ajetunmobi (2003) aptly observed that: "traditional monarch is ordained by God, supported by the spirit of the ancestors as well as enjoys the loyalty and the goodwill of the people." This observation is by no means an exaggeration. In practical terms, the traditional rulers were the guardian of law and order in their several societies; however one feature, which characterised most states in traditional societies in Nigeria before independence, was kingship system with highly organised centralised government. It should however be pointed out that the degree of power varied form one reign to the other. For instance, according to Dudley, the *Emir* among the Hausa-Fulani was "an almost absolute autocratic ruler" who deals directly with all his citizens but relied on specific councillors for advice with "such councillors being the trusted office holders of the king" (Dudley, 1968).

However, there are contrary opinions, Dudley views that *Emirs* political power was subject to natural checks and balances by other traditional councillors. However, there is near consensus that the *Emir*, like the *Oba* among the Yoruba was not an absolute ruler, though   as the executive head of the government he applied substantial powers, chiefly over the common persons. In Yorubaland the king could capture, chastise or even behead without a hearing. But these were powers that he had to use frugally or with restraint and more with rationalisation than without it. This view is supported by Atanda (1980) in his study of Yoruba when he said:

> in any event, the powers of the Oba were checked in many ways … he did not rule his town or kingdom alone. He did so together with a council known as Igbimo. In some places the Igbimo had specific names. They were called Oyomesi in Oyo, the Ilamuren in Ijebu, the Ogboni in Egba towns, the Iwarefa in Ife, Ijesa, Ekiti and Ondo towns.

Further applying the check and balances of the exalted position of indigenous rulers in pre-colonial Nigeria is the view of Ryder (1980) on the role of the titled chief on the Benin *Oba* thus:

> all titled chiefs of both palace and town participated in the Oba's council whose function it was to advise the rulers on any

matter he care to lay before it, and especially in giving judgements and deliberating on questions of war and peace. These same chiefs, together with the members of the junior grades of the associations, were the agents through whom the Oba governed his other subjects. Junior grades furnished messengers, soldiers and other executants of the royal will; the titled chiefs were allocated villages for which they answered Oba, particularly in matters of tribute, and whose interests they in turn represented in court.

Based on the variety in environmental conditions, financial and historic factors, sacred practices and world-view across Nigeria's geo-political space, Emordi agrees there was not one single model of political philosophy (Emordi & Osiki, 2008). Thus aside the monarchical structure discussed above, the Igbo drew a distinct line between the political sphere and the spiritual domain. The chiefs even though spiritually venerated are more of political and social leaders than complete embodiment of both the spiritual and the secular (Edlyne, 2004). Each community had its own political structure around male elders (gerontocracy), traditional title-holders (the chief priest of the shrine, the oldest male of the first lineage group, the *Nze* and *Ozo* title holders among others.), prominent citizens (successful farmers among others) (Edlyne, 2004). This form of political arrangement with minor modifications was characteristic of the vast area of Igboland before colonialism.

All this reflects that there was no room for absolute monarchical institution or unfettered despotism in the political system of the kingship in Nigeria up to 1800. On the whole, noting the remarkable roles played by the traditional rulers in the government of their territories, Atanda (1980) summed it up thus:

> Indeed … the people regarded the government as their government. The idea of dichotomy between the government and the people was minimal, if it ever existed. Consequently, the people were ready to give support … to government functionaries as long as they operated according to the established norms… the people contributed to support the government materially and otherwise.

Corroborating this assertion, George Ehusani (1998) noted that:

> in the old, as legitimate Representatives of their people, traditional rulers were adapting at gauging the feelings of those in their domains and in situations of conflict, the positions they took were hardly controversial. Giving allowance for few exceptions here and there, they were generally not known to betray their people for selfish monetary gains (because) their material well-being and that of their large families were generally guaranteed by their "subjects", such that they did not need to play the sycophant in order to make a living. They largely operated from a truly nationalistic or patriotic disposition. Some of them were reputed to have such courage, fortitude and sense of sacrifice that they naturally died or lost members of their immediate families in the cause of pursuing the interest of those in their domain.

The Monarchy, Slave Trade and Colonial Contact

The larger than life situation with which the peoples in pre-colonial era held their monarchs were soon to be weakened by the participation of the leaders in the infamous Trans-Atlantic Slave trade. Available evidence shows that the traditional rulers aided and abetted the immoral, criminal and illegal trade in human beings that cleared and impoverished African societies (Olatunji, 2010). The advent of British colonialism continued this act of absurdities and criminality in the form of colonial administration. According to Ajetunmobi, the colonial administration was the beginning of gradual erosion and pollution of *Obaship* tradition in which new class of political leaders surfaced. Ajetunmobi (2003) noted that the monarchical institution now became subordinate to Colonial Administration as the king were no longer officers in their domain but rather are accounting officers, they were only in power but not in total control (Osagie, 1999). Instead, the goliaths had been rendered useless and they were now beholden to the new foreign officials. In places where local rulers were not deposed by the contemporary political rulers, their central role was transformed from serving their people to ensuring effective colonial exploitation. In many of such places, the local rulers were reserved in office and through them, Britain governed in form of the so called indirect rule system: Bolanle Awe (1989) notes that through this arrangement, "Britain authority as represented by British officials was superimposed on the traditional institutions of government that is the traditional rulers and their

chiefs". Awe puts up that the indigenous ruler, who became "to all intents and purposes, the agent of colonial system of indirect rule, and as an organ of the colonial administrative structure, he had to, do the bidding of the colonial government to whom he was now primarily responsible" (Awe, 1989). Thus, the foreign government tried to enhance their position by assigning to him more power than was customarily his due, in order to make him its active proxy. Thus, there settled the abhorrent system of solitary native authority whereby the monarch became the only means of government among his people contrary to their traditions and customs. What was meant to be a system of government that protected traditional bodies therefore turned out to be one that had, in practice, little reverence for Nigerian cultures as demonstrated by its system of government? (Awe, 1989).

In addition, under the colonial rule, Patrick Heinecke notes that traditional rulers became the instrument for enforcing British colonial rules including such plans as the collection of taxes and levies and obtaining able-bodied men for forced labour services. He observes that traditional rulers could only remain in power during colonial government if they "agreed to act as the docile agents of their new masters (the British imperialist)" (Patrick, 1986). In ascensions accusation of traditional rulers of the new emirate systems in Northern Nigeria, Heinecke argues that:

> instead of seeing the British as infidels to be fiercely resisted, the new Emirs behave that the British were fulfilling the will of God. Alienated from their local power base, and deprived of the checks and balances that had previously prevented abuse of office, the rules were reduced to the status of petty officials of the colonial government. Only the outward trappings of traditional democracy and popular consent were retained, for the traditional meaning of leadership had been undermined, and the solidarity of the community eroded

During this period too, these rulers were the chief tools, which the colonial rulers used in getting the war demands across to the peoples and a considerable part of the assistances made by Nigerians could be attributed to the exertions of the traditional rulers (Crowder, 1974). In most places, those colonial officers and local rulers oversaw conscription drives. Thus, African human assets were used in war that did

not concern them: They (rulers) become more Catholic than Pope".

While colonisation indeed made African rulers subservient to the dictates of the colonial state, it stimulated the ruler's power for dealing with their perceived administrative enemies. For instance, prisons, courts and police establishments were all created for the local rulers. Some of them made use of the police to arrest their political adversaries who were then tried in courts which were presided over by these rulers. Many of such opponents ended up in jail on irrelevant charges. In several instances, the oppressive character of the colonial state was exemplified by the traditional rulers' harsh treatment of their political opponents. In other words, it was partially through local rulers that the most obnoxious aspects of colonial repression were given expression (Agbese, 2004). As Agbese puts it, certainly, part of the current antagonism to traditional rulers shoots from the deep bitterness over the role of traditional rulers in helping to enforce exploitive colonial strategies. In an organogram, the colonial organisational structure and chain of command is signified thus: The Governor General, who was the head of administration, the Lieutenant Governors were in charge of the Provinces, the District Officers (DO) were in charge of the Divisions and the Native Authorities encompassing the traditional rulers who were responsible for local supervision and governance in their individual territories. The native authorities were the last link in the administrative chain; they enforced locally decisions at the centre (Uche, 2014). This brief description of the colonial approach to Nigeria's monarchical institution shows that most of the monarchical institutions while predating the colonial period was to serve an objective that were clearly antagonist to the very values of the colonised society.

Although, Trans-Atlantic slave trade was universally abolished in Nigeria by 1914, the use of slave labour was still in the palaces of the traditional monarchs. This ensured the existence of underground slave trade. A number of un-liberated slaves worked on the farms and palaces of chiefs and traditional rulers. As domestic servants who have been cut away from their traditional society saw themselves as part of the house hold of their custodians, the marriages of these individuals and the ceremonies connected with them were sponsored by their masters. Later, some of them were resettled when the use of slaves and their ownership became a stigma. Thus, domestic slave use gradually faded out in

most Nigeria Communities. The presence of the colonial rule ensured this decline in the retention and use of slaves. Added to this, the constitution of Nigeria did not recognize the status of a slave or the bastard.

Monarchical Institutions in the First Republic in Nigeria
The monarchical institution before independence in Nigeria had witnessed three constitutional changes starting with the Richards Constitution of 1946, Macpherson Constitution of 1951 and The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954. As independence approach, the colonial system and particularly its institution inevitably became the largest of all nationalist attacks. Castigating the colonial system logically meant a castigation of the monarchical institutions through which it got entrenched. As earlier stated, the relationship between the apparent heirs to the throne and the traditional rulers initially had to be conflictual. As noted by Billy Bitiyong (1989),

> the nationalists had the objective of unsealing the colonialists necessitated a repudiation of the system and its institution including the traditional ones that had been co-opted by the nationalists, second, because of the educational and may be generational difference between the nationalists and the chiefs the latter had become restive about their roles in an independent Nigeria to be controlled by the nationalists. Third, that demands of nationhood emphasized on national development to be channelled through modern bureaucratic institutions call for high level of development and enlightenment on the part of the leadership. The institutional institutions were clearly ill-equipped to handle the new tasks and so were native authorities.

However, independence saw the place of traditional rulers in the federal and regional legislature landing in support of appointed chiefs, although many of the traditional rulers contributed to the indirect system of the colonial government they were made the "unofficial majority of one in each House of Assembly" (Emordi & Osiki, 2008). In addition, some of them strengthened the nationalists. This was in spite of the fact that, as members of the legislative council they depended upon the colonial government for funds. A graphic image of their place at this point in time shows *Ooni* of Ife *Oba* Adesoji Aderemi, who was appointed the first Governor of the Western

Region after the independence of the federation remarked that "we (chiefs) are part and parcel of the Government and we must support the Government as well as serve our people (Munoz, 2003).

As it is well known, traditional rulers in the north fared better through the creation of the council of chiefs – a policy making body whose decisions were binding on the government. Minority councils created in the eastern and western regions further reduced the roles of traditional rulers to mere advisory (Olusanya, 1980).

From the ongoing, it becomes quite clear that by independence, the traditional rulers like their counterparts became prominent actors in the politics of the country. The overall results for the partisanship of these rulers are that they shirked their traditional responsibilities towards their societies. Rather than remaining giants as the custodians of the values and traditions of these societies they chose to be crippled and be the promoters of the political programmes of the ruling parties of their respective regions. This absurdity continued with the politicians been conspicuous in the act of treachery against the society, while the monarchy and their institutions were the invisible conspirators in the post-independence politics of the country. Unfortunately, by 1966, the 'cookies crumbled' and the First Republic collapsed, it did soon only the heads of the more conscious politicians. By then the monarchical institution had been battered and bruised but not totally destroyed or neglected. The rulers then decided to transfer their loyalty to the new actors on the Nigerian political scene, the military.

Military and Monarchy in Nigeria
Military rule brought several changes in the role and importance of monarchical institutions while their counsel was sought by the new military rules especially during the General trans-era initially, they lost their erstwhile formal political roles as enshrined under the 1963 constitution. In the first instance, the military rulers to boards of parastatals and other public institution, found them indispensable in order to introduce their own political programme. Some rulers saw a substantial increase in their personal perquisites of office. However, the military did not reverse to the pre-military days when the rights of the rulers were actually entrenched in the constitution. During this period, there were no connecting factors through which they could seek to influence government decisions. This means that the extent of their

involvement in the politics of the country will greatly depend on the military rulers in a manner that has been described as" follow- follow or what late Fela Anikulapo Kuti termed as 'Zombie' (Anikulapo, 1977).

Generally however the absence of the necessary constitutional safeguard of their inflicts, insights and privileges made them to be vulnerable for the military to cut their wings.

More concretely, the military also introduced a series of reforms which aimed at further pegging the powers of the rulers. For instance, General Gowon administration in both federal and state levels took-over the local police, prisons and native courts in 1966 which was a significant blow to the power and influence of many traditional rules from effective political process in the country. Similarly, the Land Use Decree of 1978 reduced the power of traditional rulers over lands in urban areas. Secondly, the diminishing prestige of the monarchical institution further took a plunge for the worst, following the splitting up of the country into twelve states and new local government drastically reduced the geographical domain of many of the traditional rulers with extensive consequence (Oshuntokun & Oduwobi, 2014). According to the guidelines the "precise composition of each council was to be determined by state governors in consultation with the area" (FGN, 1976). Thirdly, by marrying the traditional authority structure with the states administrative and bureaucratic operations the powers of these rulers were definitely curtailed.

The last straw that broke the camel's back of the monarchical institution came during the reign of General Ibrahim Babaginda regime when he inaugurated a Political Bureau, under the chairmanship of S.J. Cokeey, to organize public debate and out to work a suitable political colloquium for Nigeria (NPB, 1987). In the course of collecting the views and comments of Nigerians on the roles played by the traditional rulers during the era of slave trade, colonial and post-colonial period, the traditional monarchs were indicted. The Bureau was very radical in its final recommendations. It is noted that in view of the fact that the traditional rule appeared to have outlived its time, its abolition may not lead to the people's total loss of their traditions. However, even if any role were to be accorded them, such roles should be confined to the local government areas within their communities where they have relevance. It added that even at the local level, however, they should not be granted legislative, executive or judicial functions (NPB,

1987). On the whole, by the time the military government decided to withdraw to the barracks in 1979, the paramount power of the monarchical institutions in local government affairs had been greatly diminished.

The second coming of the military by General Sani Abacha administration saw the monarchical institution become the megaphone of the regime especially during the June 12 debacle popularly acclaimed to have been won by late Chief M.K.O Abiola. The Guardian newspaper noted the so-called "less-than-noble roles played by many traditional rulers during the years of military rule" (Guardian Newspaper, 2007).There is no doubt that the royal fathers played an ignoble role in the "Abacha Must Stay" campaign in 1998. Thus, as part of the Abacha must stay association in February 1998, the Traditional Rulers Forum (TRF), led by Late Mohammed Macido, the *Sultan* of Sokoto visited Sani Abacha in Abuja. In their solidarity statement they noted: "we have carefully looked around and with all humility hasten to say you (Abacha) is the only person fully qualified to occupy the presidential seat", without being mindful of late Chief MKO Abiola who won the June 12 election and was languishing in security dungeon (Conscience International, 1998).

Monarchical Institution in the Political Dispensations
The second and third republics romance with the monarchical institution reflects the *modus operandi* of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions. The only formal structures in which traditional rulers are included in the 1979 constitution is membership into the council of state at the federal level and the council of chiefs at the state level. However, in the 1999 constitution, there is no prescribe role of traditional rulers over the years, the role of traditional rulers have continued to change as a result of changes in societal structure.

During the second republic, the monarchical institution received the bashing of their life as modern political leaders saw the traditional political leaders as rivals and as impediments to their aspirations as well as instrument to be manipulated and co-opted to achieve their goals, this was reflected in Ogun State Government led Unity Party of Nigeria versus the *Awujale* of Ijebuland imbroglio as *Oba* Adetona was alleged to be a sympathiser of then ruling National Party of Nigeria, which was in opposition to Chief Olabisi Onabanjo led government that deposed him on May 19, 1983 and also threatened to banish him if his

continued stay in Ijebu-Ode was considered capable of leading to a breakdown of law and order.[48] There were several clashes during this period between state governors and traditional rulers, leaving a trail of heightened tension in as many as eleven states. As Afriscope magazine 1982, pointed out: "within the first two years (of the Second Republic), almost every state has witnessed conflicts of one form or another between its government functionaries and its traditional rulers", Governor Jim Nwobodo of Anambra State vs. *Obi* of Onitsha, Ofala Okajbue expressed his displeasure by dropping him as state's representative to the National Council of State. Governor Sam Mbakwe of Imo State ordered that the title, 'His Royal Highness', should be dropped from the names of traditional rulers in the land. In Kano, Governor Abubakar Rimi issued a query to the Emir of Kano, Ado Bayero, alleging that the emir had engaged in acts of disrespect to the governorship. The governor's query to the *emir* precipitated to violent mob demonstrations which led to the death of the governor's political adviser, Bala Mohammed (Agbese, 2004). Several government building in Kano and the homes of some politicians were also burnt during the crises.

In the recent political dispensation, the bashing of monarchical institutions continues on daily basis. Exactly on May 9, 2014, the Lion of Yoruba Politics, *Asiwaju* Bola Ahmed Tinubu had to tongue lashed some *Oba* in Yorubaland during the special prayer session in Ijebu Ode central mosque to mark the 80th year celebration of the monarch. Describing the crippled giant, Tinubu, 'referring to *Awujale*' said: You are not part of the useless *Oba* in Yorubaland who will sell out, we know them and it is not yet time to mention names, … The good *Oba*' in Yorubaland, who are forthright, firm and stand by the truth are not up to five, they are just three (Daily Post, 2014). However, this is contrary to R.O. Ajetunmobi cultural view on the position of the traditional monarchs. That 'Traditional rulership position is the most spiritual, the most prestigious and the most respected and that….Traditional monarchs could not be despised in the public even in contemporary times of cultural adulteration, not only because of their royal comportment, reliability and consistence, but also for the spiritual respect they command" (Ajetunmobi & Yonlonfoun, 2014).

A few weeks later, the *Oba* of Lagos becomes the Public Relation Officers for Lagos APC by endorsing Mr. Akinwumi Ambode, a former accountant general of the state as the incoming governor of the state. In his statement, *Oba* Akiolu declares "we say we are here to launch a book but we know why we are here. We the elder had met and discussed and the people have said that Mr. Ambode will be the next governor" behaving like INEC Returning Officer, *Oba* Akiolu bless with prayer "may you lead all of them". An observer reported that, one may ask, when did *Oba* Akiolu took a position of *Alhaji* Lai Mohammed, the APC National Publicity Secretary. As a father of all Lagosians, and as such, the *Eleko* of Eko should not have shown favouritism to a party; however it shows how the giant had been crippled.

This paper has analysed in sequential and analytical order with historical facts on how the monarchical institutions since independent had been crippled and also witnessed modification and change as a result of societal values, aspirations, imposition of foreign political culture, the behavioural pattern of traditional rulers themselves and the abdication of traditional ethics and ethos.

The Need for monarchical institution in Socio-Political development of Nigeria

The complex role of monarchical institution from pre-colonial era to the contemporary times, no doubt, are enough to distance them or protect them from partisan politics since they double speak and they do not care about honour. Though, Emordi and Osiki, 2008 captured this situation clearly when they throw a poser generally to Nigerians that:

Was it only the traditional rulers that played this kind of ignoble role during this era? Were intellectuals, politicians, the press and general public not involved? Had five political parties not adopt Abacha as a sole candidate in the political process then in place? Is that politician not the ones in control of affairs today? What have we done to all of them who have subverted the peoples will and hope to perpetuate the vicious circle of misrule, looting and stealing of people'srole.

However, in Nigeria, especially in Yorubaland, governance cannot be divorced from the history of the people. Thus, knowing their strategic importance in area of peace and community reconciliation and at the same time excluding them from the political process could be divisive. What we should do is to allow the wisdom of a linkage with the traditional political praxis to chat a progressive future for the country.

This view is supported by Prof. Jide Osuntokun and Dr. Tunde Oduwobi that no one is advocating the dead weight of tradition on a society that is yearning for progress. But there is merit in using in our time,

whatever institution that evolved one hundred years as agents of social mobilisation, even in our current quest for development (Oshuntokun & Oduwobi, 2014).

One may suggest that government should accommodate the monarchical institution either now or in future, some measures of belonging and participation, since traditional rulers still command tremendous respect and veneration from their subjects. They should be empowered by legislation to resume their usurped role of adjudicating in all traditional conjugal dispute and other minor civil cases among their people. This was indeed done by the *Awujale* of Ijebuland in the case of scrapping of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State, if not for His Majesty consistence on the matter with the government of Senator Ibikunle Amosun, Tai Solarin University of Education scrapping would have been a forgotten issue by now, to the extent that some representatives of *Ijebu* in the executive appendage of the administration, not only supported the idea, they even announced and defended the scrapping with the excuse that the government do not have sufficient fund to finance the first university of education in Nigeria, while building almost ten model schools around the state that cost billions of naira, which then shows the hypocrisy of the modern political government (Punch, 2014).

Conclusion:

So far, we have tried to conceptualise the word monarchy, we have also attempted an analysis of how the giants have been crippled since colonial era to the present day. The kernel of discussion in this paper is that there has been gradual paralysis of the role of monarchical institutions in Nigeria from independence till today. However, we are not recommending the restoration of the pre-amalgamation era of the traditional political power of the monarchy nor are we supporting the scrapping of the monarchical institution or complete relegation of the institution which seems unrealistic. We are proposing that the institution of monarchy can be appropriately modified as a substantial section of the society progressively become more aware of their liberties and limitations of democratic governance.

Moreover, that they have been constitutionally recognised reflects the awareness of their relevance in mainly social order, especially at the grassroots, in order to empower them more. The government needs to know that the traditional rulers have a positive contribution to make by virtue of their rapport with the people and as the custodians of the people history and culture it is generally known that they are much nearer to the people than any institution or agency. They are also strategically located for the purposes of mobilising support for government or local government programmes, as any government that refuses to accept this fact, is at its own peril. Traditional rulers therefore possess inherent qualities which makes them superior to the professional politicians, as most of them do not have a 'second address' in the Nigeria political parlance. Till today, monarchical institutions are still enjoying legitimacy and so, are able to stimulate and ginger people to participate in local affairs and thus contribute to the transformation agenda of the rural areas. In other words, there is no doubt that a symbiosis can be found for the two to co-exist for the good of the society. They can form a synergy that will work for the growth and development of the country as a whole. Traditional monarchy is an embattled institution right from the era of British colonial conquest and imposition of colonial rule . The traditional powers of life and death and other privileges they used to enjoy are no longer in place. The military administration in Nigeria has also not help the matters, by their carrot and stick approach. The modern political leaders only used the traditional rulers to achieve their aims and later dumped them. However, we need to preserve this noble institution, give it respect, adore and empower it to perform better.

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