

A Comparative Study of Conflict Resolution Models in Genesis 13:1 – 18 and Idofin Odo-Ashe Community: Lessons for Crises-Ridden Nigerian Communities

Theodore Uchechukwu Dickson*, Caleb Olayiwola Alu
Department of Religious Studies, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria
[*successfultheo2000@yahoo.com](mailto:successfultheo2000@yahoo.com)

Abstract

Conflicts abound and are inevitable. They are not limited to any class of people. What makes the difference, however, is how we handle it because many families, communities and relationships have either been torn apart or are in pain resulting from unresolved conflicts. From a comparative viewpoint, the study examined the sources of conflicts and the modes of resolution in the Abraham vs. Lot (Gen 13) and the Idofin odo-Ashe vs. Irodo communities. We realized that the conflict between the Idofin odo-Ashe vs. Irodo communities took a serious turn culminating in loss of life and prolonged legal battle because of selfishness and greed on the part of the Irodos, and unpatriotism on the part of the Idofin Odo-Ashe people. Although the latter finally showed a sense of patriotism, that was rather too late and self-centered, too. The Abraham vs. Lot conflict produced the opposite. While the conflict revealed Lot's selfishness and greed, Abraham's patriotic and selfless attitude which culminated in compromising his natural right and privileges provided permanent solution to the rift. We therefore recommended that crises-ridden communities should embrace Abraham's unconventional approach as antidote to loss, divorce, pain and prolonged legal battles which accompany unresolved conflicts.

Keywords: conflicts, resolution, selfishness, patriotism, compromise

1. Introduction

One of the major factors that have ridden Nigerian societies of peace and development is conflict (Nwaomah, 2011). The termination of the lives of many great men and women due to rivalries resulting from ethno-communal or intra and inter party rivalries remains a major hindrance to world peace and national development (Alao, 2012; Adetunji & Kollie, 2012). Conflict is inevitable. No relationship whether at personal or communal level is immune (Yerkes, 2012). Edinyang (2012) submits that it is a social necessity and a normal and functional inevitable aspect of the healthy function of all communities. He observes that at the family level, conflict might be caused as a result of financial constrain, sexual problems, negligence of emotional, physiological, financial maturity and family encumbrances before contacting marriage, psychological problems, social as well as other variable. At times dispute set in a loving family. Since conflict cannot be avoided because of its inevitable nature, it is however apparent for people in relationships to learn how to manage or resolve it. Disagreement may be temporary if addressed early, or become complex – conflict, if neglected or overlooked. Again, since conflict manifests in all walks of life; anywhere you find relationship between two people, group of people, communities, and even nation to nation, the significance of the study lies on the fact that the impact of unresolved conflict may lead to war, community breakdown, envy and strife. Koranteng-Pipim (2003) affirms the foregoing in his assertion that while these experiences abound, how we handle them make us either bitter or better. A cursory look suggests the presence of one or more of such unresolved and ongoing crises either in our neighborhood or community. In an attempt to proffer solution to crises-ridden communities in Nigeria and beyond therefore, the paper undertakes a comparative study of conflict resolution strategies in the Idofin Odo-Ashe vs. Irodo crises and the Abraham vs. Lot encounter. It examines the sources of the conflicts and methods of resolution. A comparative analysis of the above elements draws points of convergence and divergence, which paves way for possible solutions.

2. Conceptual Clarifications/Conflict Theories

Conflict is defined as: 1) A situation in which people, groups or countries are involved in a serious disagreement or argument. 2) A violent situation or period of fighting between two countries. 3) A situation in which there are opposing ideas, opinions, feelings or wishes; 4) A situation in which it is difficult to choose. Resolution on the other

hand is refers to: 1) A formal statement of an opinion agreed on by a committee or a council especially by means of a vote. 2) The act of solving or settling problem, dispute etc. 3) A firm decision to do or not to do something (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 6th Edition). Conflict is a principal dilemma in any human society, and most times, it is expected. From human history it appears that conflict is an ongoing process in human relations (Nwaomah, 2009). This is because the pursuit of inevitable interests and goals by individuals or group of persons which involves struggle over values and claims to wealth, power and prestige, in which the other party or parties attempt to neutralize, most times culminate in bitter rivalries, threats and in the worst situation termination of life. At times it may result in violence which is the use of force in the pursuit of incompatible and particular interests and goals (Edinyang 2012).

As Alao (2012) observes, many conflict theories have been developed to explain or justify the prevalence of conflict worldwide and particularly in Africa. Gurr (1970) in Alao (2012) among others concentrates on relative deprivation theory developed by Dollard and others as a perception of thwarting circumstances. He contends that when people feel thwarted in an attempt to get something they want, there is the likelihood of becoming angry and then fight the source of the anger. Human needs theory presupposes that when human beings or ethnic groups are denied their biological and psychological needs that relate to growth and development, there is the tendency for ethnic rivalry or fight. This is a common feature in the Niger-Delta crises (Alao, 2010). On the other hand, Coser as cited by Okai (2007) posits a survivalist theory which sees conflict as a struggle between and among individuals or groups over values and claims to scarce resources, status symbols, and power bases. The objective of the individuals or groups engaged in conflict is to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals so that they can enjoy the scarce resources, the status symbols, and power bases.

The above definitions and theories underscore the different presuppositions underlying the various conflicts we see on daily basis in the quest for status, power or resource control. Such unending interests make conflict resolution difficult and sometimes impossible. Nevertheless, the fact that conflict exists is not necessarily bad because when resolved effectively, it can lead to personal, communal and professional growth. In many cases, effective conflict resolution can make the difference between positive and negative outcomes. The good news is that by resolving a conflict successfully, you can solve many of the problems that it has brought to the surface, as well as get benefits that you might not at first expect (Manktelow & Carlson, 2012).

3. Overview of Conflict in the Bible

Conflict was part of lifestyle in the biblical period; a sketch creates dots of conflicts throughout the pages of the Bible. Though this paper is not to give details of the conflicts in the whole Bible, it surveys few conflict situations as background for understanding conflict and conflict resolution as part of human history. The origin of conflict in the Bible predates the appearance of man. Though Zimako (2007) in Alao (2012) traces the origin to the break in the relationship between the Creator and Adam and Eve (Genesis 3), this study argues that internal biblical evidence shows that conflict originated in heaven (see Isaiah 14:12 – 16, Ezekiel 28:16 – 20, and Revelation 12: 2 - 9). The conflict in the Garden of Eden between God and Adam was caused by Satan's deceit (Genesis 3). The conflict introduced by Satan drove a wedge in the relationship between human beings and God. Even though it was based on a lie, the conflict escalated. The result was sinful behavior by Adam and Eve (Lariscy, 2012). God being the Creator and Arbiter punished the players in different measures and finally expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden. He however provided a long-term resolution model (Gen 3:15). The cause of conflict in Abraham's household (Gen. 16, 21) was Sarah's inability to conceive. She was barren. Hagar who was productive became proud and was hateful to Sarah. In counter reaction, Sarah treated her so harshly that she ran away. An Angel asked Hagar to go back to Sarah and be submissive as a means of resolving the conflict. Later, Sarah asked Abraham to get rid of Hagar and her son Ishmael after she had become productive so as not to share the family's inheritance with Isaac. For the sake of peace, Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away as instructed by God. But Abraham kept an eye on them.

Acts 15: 36 – 40 records the rift between Paul and Barnabas concerning the fate of John Mark. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along with them; but Paul insisted otherwise since John had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed to Cyprus. These parties later reconciled (2 Tim. 4:11).

4. The Conflict Between Abraham and Lot

Abraham was very rich before going to Egypt. Lot, the only other member of Terah's family who had obeyed God's command to go to Canaan, was with him (Nichol, 1978). Both Abraham's and Lot's flocks had flourished in Egypt, and Pharaoh, in his display of goodwill to Abraham because of his admiration for Sarah, had added further to his livestock (Virgo, 2001). Sometimes, prosperity comes with attendant challenges or problem. In his word, Norman Duncan expresses the situation of Abraham in this way: "As soon as Abraham and his family came to the Promised Land and he was restored at Bethel, things again started going wrong. His prosperity brought a problem, a difficulty. The problem was the striving and quarrelling between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot" (Duncan, 2002). Conflict arose due to their immense wealth – there was more livestock than available grazing/pasture land. The scarcity of available pastureland, and sometimes of water, resulted in strife between Abram's shepherds and those of Lot. Each group naturally wanted to see his master's possessions prosper (Nichol, 1978).

4.1 Method of Resolution

In the 1970s Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann identified five main styles of dealing with conflict that vary in their degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness. They argued that people typically have a preferred conflict resolution style. They noted however that, different styles were most useful in different situations. Thomas and Kilmann developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) which helps you to identify which style you tend towards when conflict arises. These styles include competitive, collaborative, compromising, accommodating, and avoiding (Manktelow & Carlson, 2012).

Having received the news of the conflict between his herdsmen and that of Lot, Abraham summoned his nephew. Ordinarily, Abraham had several options before him. First, he was the senior partner with Lot, who was only his nephew. So, he could have simply sent Lot away to fend for himself, to make his own way in the world (Duguid, 1999). Second, God's promise to multiply Abraham's 'seed' was not extended to Lot. Rather it was out of goodwill that he took Lot. Third, the quarrels of the shepherds were probably reflected in Lot's attitude and conduct. The latter seems evident in the conflict resolution.

Against the foregone possibilities, Abraham displayed a truly generous spirit. Anxious to avert discord and enmity between himself and his nephew, he proposed the separation of their flocks and herds as a solution to the difficulty (Nichol, 1978). Abraham employed the combination of strategies which include collaborative, accommodating and compromising in which Lot and he agreed on a decision. Manktelow & Carlson (2012) define the three thus: trying to meet the needs of all people involved (collaborative); willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs (accommodating), and trying to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone (compromising). While dialogue which could involve education and accommodation are well-known features in conflicts involving families, communities and nations (Edinyang (2012; Alao, 2012), Abraham's use of compromise is exceptional. This is captured in the following text:

"Abram said to Lot, "We are close relatives. We shouldn't argue, and our men shouldn't be fighting one another' there is plenty of land for you to choose from. Let's separate. If you go north, I'll go south; if you go south, I'll go north" – Genesis 13:8-9

In its analysis of compromise, the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) holds that everyone is expected to give up something and the compromiser also expects to relinquish something. Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming (Manktelow & Carlson, 2012). However, Abraham relinquished as it were his birthright. His use of 'brethren' Hebrew אָחִי •• 'aHim in reference to himself and Lot in the above text is exceptional. This is evident in the meaning of the word. אָחִי •• 'aHim occurred 636 times in the Hebrew text having 26 forms and is rendered variously as 'full brother' (same father and mother) (Gen 4:8), half-brother (Gen 37:4), blood relative (Gen 9:25), fellow (without blood relationship) (2 Sam 1:26), fellow tribesman (Gen 31:32), fellow-countryman (Exod 2:11), and so on. •• 'ach {awkh} the singular of אָחִי •• 'aHim refers to 1) brother 1a) brother of same parents 1b) half-brother (same father) 1c) relative, kinship, same tribe 1d) each to the other (reciprocal relationship) 1e) of resemblance. The above usages not only underscore Abraham's passion for relationship, but also unearthens his value for oneness, peace, and continuity against wealth, fame, and position. By this, he meant to assure his nephew equality of position and treatment.

However, Lot's willingness to choose ahead of his uncle points to his lack of statesmanship corresponding with Thomas-Kilmann's competitive model in which people tend to take a firm stand and know what they want. They argue that this style can be useful when there is an emergency and a decision needs to be made fast; when the decision is unpopular, or when defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly (Manktelow & Carlson, 2012). Lot acted fast and quickly chose the finer pastureland (Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006). Like an opportunist, he did not want to take chances. But in such act lies his fall and betrayal which of course reveals his disregard for relationship and courtesy toward his elder. Although given the offer, he did not show a sense of piety which in most cases constitutes barrier to conflict resolution. Entangled by sight (seeing a land with enough water and vegetation) therefore, he moved to the Plain of Jordan, to the east (Gen 13:10 – 11) while Abraham remained on the hills west of the Jordan and the Salt Sea (Virgo, 2001).

On the contrary, Abraham's sincerity and commitment to conflict resolution is further demonstrated in the fact that though separated, he kept an eye on his nephew. The brotherly love he expressed in the face of conflict was never broken even after separation. Inasmuch as conflict is neither good nor bad, the handling will determine the result of the conflict. Also, it should be considered whether the conflict is constructive/desirable or destructive/undesirable.

5. The Conflict Between Idofin Odo-Ashe and Irodo Compound

The conflict between Idofin and Irodo Communities was a product of land dispute. These communities have lived together for about fifty years. Available evidences show that Idofin Odo-Ashe communities arrived on the land before the Irodo people. Having been established on the land, conflicts bordering on land ownership ensued. Idofin people accused their Irodo counterpart of encroaching into their land and the sell of economic trees. Such conflicts occurred twice before the families ended in court. The lands in question include Obani land, Okingo land, Omipa land, Olojola land and Igbo Irodo land respectively in Idofin Odo-Ashe in Irepodun LGA of Kwara State (Agbaakin, 1988).

5.1 Method of Resolution

Before filing a suit in court the people of Idofin and Irodo have made previous efforts toward resolving their land dispute. For the purpose of this study, extracts from the court proceedings are presented verbatim but in tabular form with minor grammatical corrections, introductory and summary notes. This is with the intension of observing points of convergence and divergence in the conflict resolution process and possible implications.

Different Conflicts and Methods of Resolution

Conflicts	Idofin Community: Plaintiff's Version	Irodo Community: Defendant's Version
1.	The first time Alwoesin and Balogun Soldier first went into conflict. Alwoesin is a member of the defendant's family while Balogun Soldier is from our side over a piece of land. It was settled while the Aroko of my family insisted that they should go back to where they come from. They begged and the issue was dropped.	The first one is that of Balogun Soldier who was a house boy of my father. He discharged from the army to become a farmer. My father took him to our land to allocate a place for him. He made his farm near our farm. There are Indigo trees on the land allocated to Balogun Soldier which our family members still go there to fetch the leaves, there was dispute over this and Balogun Soldier challenged Alwoesin of our family. Balogun Soldier was from Ehin-Afo. It became a dispute and people of Idofin converged and they resolved the issue by saying that we should not go to pluck the Indigo trees where they make farm, but only where there is bush.
2.	The second time, Erinmope people came to beg for land to farm in 1958. We gave them a land at Ajare near Idofin on Idofin land. Then we told them that the land belongs to Idofin people we went to Ilorin; Balogun Gambari took us to Emir. The Emir told us that we should go and perform the traditional rites to	The second dispute was when somebody from the plaintiff's family took people from Erinmope to farm on the land in dispute and we asked them to vacate our land. The head of the family of Ehin-Afo told every one of us that the land belongs to our Irodo family and not their own family. The plaintiff's family then went to Oba (Emir) Abdulkadri at Ilorin to go and file a suit against us. We spent six months contesting the case. At Ilorin they asked us why we stopped the Erinmope from

	<p>determine the ownership of the land. We did it in 1958 early in the morning Oba took red oil the chief next to him took salt they reached the place dig out earth and added palm oil and salt to it; Them Alowoesin and Paul Adunmo took oath. After this Alowoesin of their family had an attack and was carried on bicycle home, he could not go home on his legs. He died within months. Paul Adunmo died only about six years ago (Agbaakin, 1988).</p>	<p>farming on the land and we explained that the land belong to our family. The Oba directed us to go home and settle the matter at home. We reached the place they dug the land and brought out sand to which they mixed with oil. Alowoesin of our family took the oath and said if the land in dispute does not belong to this family the repercussion should be known within six months. Paul from Plaintiff state similarly, tasted the sand mixed with oil swallow him within six months. Before the end of six month Paul became blind and could not see and he died seven years after the oath. Ten years after that time Alowoesin was still alive despite his age. Paul was my age mate, Alowoesin can bear Paul, and he is much older than Paul (Agbaje, 1988).</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>At the court: Substance of the plaintiff's case from the plaint; "a declaration of title to parcels of land known and called Obani land, Okingo land, Omipa land, Olojola land and Igbo Irodo land respectively in IdofinOdo-Ashe in Irepodun LGA of Kwara State and the said lands are to be set out in the plans to be filed and (11) an injunction to restrain the defendants from further trespassing on the plaintiff lands described above" (Odofin-Ashe, 1988).</p>	<p>Tender: a letter titled: re-ownership and trespassing of igbo-rodo written by Irodo family, IdofinEhin-Afo. Signed and dated 11/03/1987 by the following J.I. Olowolayemo head and representative of the head of the family, Samuel Obasa Adekanye and Chief Onirodo – representative of family head.</p>

The above conflicts and their modes of resolution show certain points of convergences and divergences. First, the two parties agreed on the source of the first conflict. However, while those from Idofin community argued that the Aroko of their family insisted that the Irodo family should go back to where they came from, but were later pardoned after much pleading, the Irodo compound submitted that they were only asked not to pluck the Indigo trees in the farmed areas, but only where there is bush. Here, Thomas-Kilmann's competitive and accommodative styles were applied (Manktelow & Carlson, 2012).

Second, the 1958 conflict also had several conflicting submissions which are common when there is a conflict. On the one hand, while Idofin people argued that they gave the land to their Irodo counterparts for farming; those from Irodo said they were informed the land belongs to them. The two parties agreed the Emir at Ilorin asked them to go home and perform traditional rites to determine the ownership of the land. They also agreed on the location, personalities, and substances used for the ritual. However, Idofin people claimed Alowoesin who represented the Irodo compound in the oath had an instant attack and died within months while Paul, their representative, died about twenty eight years later. The Irodo people on their part argued that before the end of six months, Paul, the representative from Idofin became blind and died seven years after the oath, while Alowoesin was still alive (as at 1992), despite his age as one who could give birth to Paul.

Without doubt the Idofin Odo-Ashe and Irodo communities have shared in the bitter pills of unresolved or lingering conflicts. Although with conflicting reports, and perhaps the effort of each party to favor itself, the outcome of the traditional ritual performed by the two communities suggests the fact that one of the two parties suffered loss of human life in the process. M. Humpherys and J. W. Weinstein corroborate the foregoing that violent conflicts are likely to have a considerable negative impact on individual and household's economic position due to loss of asserts and disruption or loss of livelihoods (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2012).

At the Upper Court the two parties tendered conflicting reports in their genealogical claims thus:
 Genealogy/Ownership

Odofin-Ashe Community – Plaintiff	Irodo Community – Defendant
<p>The defendant family comes from Oponda near Egbe in Yagba division. Our forefathers called ElegboOganku married a woman at Oponda. The Oba at Oponda at that time is called Faseyi, the next chief to him was called Sungbo. The people of Oponda also married to a woman called Ogbotimehin. As the woman ogbotimehin was passing the front of Oba Oponda’s house, she was a very slender woman. The Oba of the time called Faseyi said if the woman Ogbotimehin was killed ther would not be any blood found in her. Sungbo told him that there would be blood. To test the credibility of their contentious the woman Ogbotimehin was killed and blood came out from her. There was another woman called Obafe a town mate of Ogbotimehin, ran to their town to inform the people that the people of Oponda had killed Ogbotimehin. When the Iyagba people had this they came with war to challenge the people of Oponda. The Oba of Oponda and his deputy fled to their in-laws at Idofin to settle. There in-law at Idofin received them and they settle them at Igbo-lodo near an ‘Ose’(baobab) tree. Some people have settled there before they came, those people are our warriors who settled at Igbo-loke. The Nupes are the warriors who were employed to combat the Agannigan war – agannigan war was also fought by Nupes. These we employ were also Nupes to counter the aganigan warriors from the incessant attack always carried on Idofin people.</p> <p>Something happened between the Oponda people who came to settle with us. There was a quarrel which led to some who left Idofin for Eruku, Egbe, while the rest came to IdofinOdo Ashe. We received these who came to IdofinOdoashe as visitors. They have no equal right with an Idofin indigene. They cannot become an Oba, no hold traditional title even not that of the chief of masquerade (Agbaakin, 1988).</p> <p>WITNESS TO THE PLAINTIFF</p> <p>My forefathers who sojourned are Tapa (Nupe). The Idofin people invited my forefathers to come and assist them to fight war. We came from Lafiagi side. We were settled at Igbo-loke at Idofin about one mile from Idofin town. The people of Oponda were also settled near us. As I have said, it was during the war and we have settled before the defendant’s people from Oponda came; we reported to Idofin people and they asked us to settle them at ‘igbotiodo’ now called Igbo-Irodo. The Igbo-lodo and igbo-loke still belong to Idofin (Oni, 1988).</p>	<p>Igbo-rodo belongs to my father. Our forefathers came from Ife in those days. Our forefathers came from Ile-Ife were warrior and met the bush Igbo-rodo where they first settled, and they did not meet anybody there. This Igbo-rodo is about 8 miles from Ehin-Afo. Our ancestor called Irodo was the person who found and first settled on the land hence the place is being called Igbo-rodo. All the comprising Idofin called Ehin-Afo, Odo-Aga, Ayekale and Igbana were all scattered far from each other by then – unlike now when we have moved closer to each other. Ehin-Afo was at Eti-Igbo, IdofinOdo-Aga some parts of them were partly at on the road to Ola village and some were at Igbo Awo. IdofinIgbana was also separated into two some were at Ile Igbon and some were at Iwoye, that is how the Idofin were scattered in those days. On the advent of the British people they forced us to draw closer to each other.</p> <p>But on our land at Igbo-rodo we have boundary with Ahun village from Oro River to Oja-Aga (Aga’s market). We have boundary with Omo-Aro from EgunModi to Ose-Omote. On Egbe side Oro River is the boundary between Irodo family and Egbe town. Oroba stream is the boundary between our family and the people of Ehin-Afo.</p> <p>We left Igbo-rodo on the advice of the colonial master who forced us to move together. We now go to Irodo for Epa festival which we have abandoned because of schools. The shrines of Ogun-Agbed and Osanyin are still on the land. The burial yard of Oba Ajolemojoye is on the land, we have Ajagbon tree on the land in dispute. We have Kuyin tree which our forefathers brought from Ile-Ife to plant there, we use Kuyin tree to make ladder for climbing. We have Ore plant, planted by our fathers are still there. Our fathers have Ose tree there, and Indigo trees which we use the leaves for dying are still on the land. We have locust beans fruit trees on the land, the shrine of OgunAjare belonging to our forefathers, where they sacrifice dog etc is still on the land. We have timber trees and Agbon (coco-nut) trees. We are not from Oponda, we are from Ile-Ife. The plaintiff’s are from Idofin from where they were driven. We have a pond on the land called Osibata. I want the court to declare the land as our family land. The name of our forefather was Oleelero Osayando but all male children in our family are called Obasa. We pay tax to IdofinOdo-Ashe, we are merely living together we are not part of Idofin Odo-Ashe we are Irodo. Olojola belongs to Ilora, Okingo to Omo-Aro, Omipa to Idofin Odo-Ashe. Osayando Oleelero and Irodoare not the same person, Irodo first settled in Irodo.</p>

Again, the above submissions reflect what happens when conflicts are allowed to degenerate. Here, at the Court, each party tried to outsmart the other. On the one hand, the plaintiff (Idofin-Ashe people) submitted that the defendant family comes from Oponda, while the defendants (Irodo people) argued they came from Ife. This is followed by denials of relationship and dire need for separation. However, Moses Oni, crown witness to the Plaintiffs seems to corroborate the view that Idofin-ashe community did not only settle first in the town, gave the permission for the Irodo family to be allowed to settle in some part of their land.

Having examined the case, the Upper Court at Omu-Aran, Kwara State ruled thus:

From the evidence before us, one of the germane points for consideration is the claim of the plaintiff that they are the aborigine of Idofin while the defendants are the strangers which they settled on the land on their exodus from Oponda. The defendant refuted this assertion. But the PW 1 – Moses Oni testified in favour of the plaintiff. On the preponderance of evidences before us, we are of the opinion that the account of the plaintiffs as to the ownership of the disputed land is more reliable than that of the defendants and in the final analysis the plaintiffs claim succeeds with the following orders: (1.) The Igbo-rodo land is hereby awarded to the plaintiffs in it's entirety. (2.) The Omipa, Olojola, Okingo, Obani lands though not disputed by the defendants, are similarly awarded to the plaintiffs. (3.) As to the forfeiture of rights to enter and farm on above land, by the defendants, we decline to make any order in that they are doing their farming on them for their living. We however observed that even though the defendants were strangers, they have been assimilated into Idofin Community and they, in one word, are natives of Idofin. We therefore feel that nothing should be allowed to disturb the peaceful co-existence of both parties in Idofin community. The defendants should continue to enjoy their right of existence and means of living in Idofin (Kolade, 1992).

By the above ruling, ownership of the land in dispute was assigned to Idofin-ashe community. However, they were encouraged to co-exist peacefully with Irodo people who retained their right of existence and means of living in Idofin town. From our estimation, that was a fair judgment. But the Irodo people felt otherwise. Not satisfied with the judgment of the Upper Court, which is more or less the Magistrate Court, therefore, the defendants took the following steps. First, they appealed to the High Court before Hon Justice J.F Gbadeyan / Hon Justice M.A Owolabi. The Court later judged in favor of the appellants, set aside the decision to the trial court and in its place orders a dismissal of the plaintiffs/respondents case in its entirety as Signed on 9/07/1992. Second, still not satisfied, the Irodo compound later appealed before the Supreme Court holding in Abuja after the Federal High Court in Kaduna judged in favour of Idofin Odo-Ashe. On Friday, January 11, 2002, the Supreme Court after series of scrutiny and cross-examinations upheld the decision of the Trial and Appeal Courts for lack of substantial evidences. The court awarded the land to the Idofin-Ashe community, and that Irodo compound should pay a sum of ten thousand naira only costs to respondents. Yet out of loving and generous heart, the Idofin Odo-Ashe community rejected the cost attached to the judgment, and accepted the Irodos as part of the community (Supreme Court, 2002).

After a long legal battle, the hope of the Irodos was dashed at the Apex Court. Movement from one court to the other with its attendant tensions would have without doubt left the Irodos with economic, emotional, social and psychological loss. The Court also ruled that they refund the Idofin-Ashe people a total of ten thousand naira. The Idofin Odo-Ashe community rejected the offer but rather accepted the Irodos as part of their community.

6. Comparison of the Conflict Resolution Models

The two conflicts and their manner of resolutions present common parlance as well as disparities that could serve as lessons to crises-ridden communities in Nigeria. For the purpose of clarity, we will pay attention to the personalities involved, the sources of conflict (s) and later their modes of resolution.

6.1 Personalities Involved and Sources of Conflict

S/no	Similarities	Dissimilarities	Lessons/ Remarks
1.	First, there was a kind of relationship between the parties involved in the conflicts prior to the conflicts. Second, the two parties were strangers in their lands. In the first conflict, God brought Abraham to the land but he took	First, while Abraham and Lot were blood brothers, the Idofin Odo-Ashe vs. Irodo Communities came from different locations Second, in the Abraham	First, conflict can arise anywhere, anytime among siblings, colleagues, strangers among others. Second, we should always

	<p>his nephew alongside. In the second conflict, although Idofin Odo-Ashe people arrived first on the land before the Irodos, they were also strangers upon arrival. Hence, the land originally did not belong to either of the parties. Third, both conflicts occurred on the land.</p>	<p>vs. Lot conflict, access to water to feed their enlarged herds of flock was the problem, while trespassing and plucking of economic trees were the problems in the Idofin Odo-Ashe vs. Irodo conflict.</p>	<p>understand that we are all strangers on any the land. Third, while competitive spirit engenders conflict, accommodative and compromising styles lead to peace.</p>
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6.2 Methods of Conflicts Resolution

S/no	Similarities	Dissimilarities	Lessons/Remarks
1.	<p>First, both parties met face to face in an attempt to resolving their conflicts. Second, although at different stages and in different degrees, both the privileged or favoured parties in the two conflicts made some concessions to their less-privileged counterparts.</p>	<p>First, in the Idofin Odo-Ashe vs. Irodo conflict, initial attempt to resolve the conflict was not heeded by the Irodo people. This resulted in a second conflict. Second, in resolving the latter, both parties took their case first to the Emir of Ilorin who prescribed traditional ritual. Out of desperation and possibly shame on the Irodos, and determination never to part with some of their land on the part of Idofin people, the two parties engaged in an oath-taking that resulted in loss of life. Third, not able to learn the required lessons, the Irodos continued to trespass into the land under dispute prompting the Idofin Odo-Ashe people to charge them to court. After series of legal battle which certainly took a toll on both parties, the conflict was resolved in favour of the Idofin Odo-Ashe people as the actual owners of the disputed lands.</p> <p>On the contrary, the Abraham vs. Lot conflict ended the moment both parties met. The reason for the quick and permanent resolution rested on Abraham's exceptional approach. He not only introduced the need for separation, but also surrendered his right as the elder and the heir of God's promise to his nephew. Such unfamiliar and unconventional approach sufficed an end to further conflict as Lot left the scene satisfied.</p>	<p>Larry Crab opines that the difference between spiritual and non spiritual community is not whether conflict exists, but rather in our attitude toward it and our approach to handling it (Crabb, 1999). The above assertion is reflected in the way the two parties handled their conflicts. This also revealed the innate character of the parties and their level of maturity. A look at the four independent parties reveals degrees of selfishness, greed, and unpatriotism. On the one hand, the Idofin OdoAshe, Irodo people and Lot were selfish and unappreciative, while Abraham displayed a true spirit of patriotism and selflessness needed in every conflict situation.</p>

7. Lessons for Crises-Ridden Communities in Nigeria

The fact that many Nigerian families, communities, congregations, and so on are faced with one crisis or the other cannot be overemphasized. This, as evident in the conflict between the Idofin Odo-Ashe vs. Irodo communities take financial, emotional, and psychological toll on the parties involved. Divorce and communal clashes which in most cases result in loss of life or age-long legal battles are products of unresolved conflicts. From the study, we have seen that such cases could linger due to the approach of the parties involved in the conflict resolution process. Attitudes such as selfishness, greed, and unpatriotism, which correspond with Thomas-Kilmann's competitive model (Manktelow & Carlson, 2012), constitute hindrances and aggravate conflict situations. And these ultimately lead to loss, pain and, shame which both the Irodo compound and Lot suffered at the long run.

On the other hand, selflessness and patriotism as exemplified by Abraham not only brings an end to conflicts, but also averts future occurrence. Rather than affirm his right to the promise and also as the elder, he used the accommodative and compromise models. This was uncommon. William Willimon (1997) submits that compromise as a conflict resolution model is effective for conflicts in which the differences are attitudinal or emotional. It is therefore germane to explore the factors that culminated into such unconventional conflict resolution model. Duncan lists three major factors.

7.1 Common Sense

Here Abraham understood that God desires that we use our minds when conflicts arise. Consequently, he could see that the things that united him with Lot were greater than the things that divided them. Such understanding led to his use of *’aHim* ‘brethren’ in describing his relationship with Lot.

7.2 Uncommon Graciousness and Generosity

Abraham’s willingness to give first choice to his nephew confirmed his true sense of self-denial (McCain, 2002). Being the older, he had natural rights, but he understood that if he gave Lot first place, God would take care of the consequences. From a human viewpoint this could put the rights of his family at risk, but Abraham had learned that the best way forward is not to calculate himself, not to act according to his own understanding and desires, but to simply trust in God (Prov.3:3 – 5) (Duncan, 2002).

The above step does not represent Esau’s unmindful attitude toward his birthright (Gen. 25:29 – 34) or contradicts Naboth’s uncompromising attitude toward Ahab’s request (1Kings 21). Instead, Abraham recognized the fact that the land was given to him freely; therefore he had no problem giving to Lot. While Abraham had natural rights as the older and also the direct recipient of God’s promise, the Idofin Odo-Ashe community had right of ownership having arrived first on the land. However, the Idofin Odo-Ashe community failed to understand that although they arrived first, they did not pay to receive the land. Hence they should have been willing to share it with others rather than go to court. This made Abraham’s approach exceptional.

7.3 Real Spiritual Growth

Having learnt the painful lessons of his Egyptian sojourn, Abraham proved a changed person. From a worldly viewpoint, he was making a mistake in giving Lot the opportunity of first choice. After all, God had called him to leave his family (Gen 12:1). But he proved himself a man who has developed spiritual muscles confident that Lot could not rob him what the Lord has promised (Duncan, 2002). F.B. Meyer (1979) adds that Abraham’s willingness to waive his right in the interest of reconciliation was based on his growing faith in God. He concludes that the man who is sure of God can afford to hold very lightly the things of this world. God Himself is his inalienable heritage; and, in having God, he has all. Having separated, Abraham still kept an eye on his nephew and was willing to intervene in times of trouble. This level of spiritual maturity is truly the key to resolving conflicts of all kinds.

8. Conclusion

As part of the human society, conflicts abound and are inevitable. And it is not limited to any class of people or relationship. However, what makes the difference is how we handle conflicts when they occur. From the study, we realized that the conflict between the Idofin odo-Ashe vs. Irodo communities was a product of land dispute. Available evidences show that Idofin Odo-Ashe communities arrived on the land before the Irodo people. Having been established on the land, conflicts bordering on land ownership ensued. Idofin people accused their Irodo counterpart of encroachment and selling of economic trees on their land. Initial efforts at resolution proved abortive as both parties claimed ownership of the land and entitlement to its products, a reflection of Thomas-Kilmann’s competitive model (Manktelow & Carlson, 2012). With time, the conflict took a serious turn which culminated in loss of life and prolonged legal battle because of selfishness and greed on the part of the Irodos, and unpatriotism on the part of the Idofin Odo-Ashe people. Although the latter finally showed a sense of patriotism, that was rather too later and also on the basis that they had nothing to lose.

On the other hand, the Abraham vs. Lot conflict arose due to the striving and quarrelling between their herdsmen over the scarcity of available pastureland, and sometimes of water as for more livestock. Each group naturally wanted to see his master’s possessions prosper. While the conflict reveals Lot’s selfishness and greed which as seen earlier are competitive elements that frustrate conflict resolution, Abraham soared high above all odds to prove that selflessness, patriotism and faith in God’s promise which corresponds with Thomas-Kilmann’s collaborative, accommodating, and

compromising models (Manktelow & Carlson, 2012) are key principles in conflict resolution. His willingness to compromise his rights is a lesson for crises-ridden families and communities in Nigeria.

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