International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology
Volume 9 Number 6 June, 2017
ISSN 2006 - 988x
ABOUT IJSA

The International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology (IJSA) is published monthly (one volume per year) by Academic Journals.

International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology (IJSA) is an open access journal that provides rapid Publication (monthly) of articles in all areas of the subject such as Socialization, post colonialism, kinship and Descent, Culture, ethnography etc. The Journal welcomes the submission of manuscripts that meet the general criteria of significance and scientific excellence. Papers will be published shortly after acceptance. All articles published in IJSA are peer-reviewed.

Contact Us

Editorial Office: ijsa@academicjournals.org
Help Desk: helpdesk@academicjournals.org
Website: http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/IJSA
Submit manuscript online http://ms.academicjournals.me/
# Editors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Roland Armando Alum</td>
<td><em>Senior International Research Consultant, ICOD Associates of New Jersey, Trustee: DeVry University (New Jersey Campuses), USA.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Roseline M. Achieng</td>
<td><em>Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535 South Africa.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Fidelma Ashe</td>
<td><em>School of Policy Studies, University of Ulster Newtownabbey BT37 0QB Northern Ireland</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Silvia Ciotti</td>
<td><em>Department of Environmental Science, St. John International University Italy.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. C. I. David Joy</td>
<td><em>United Theological college, Benson Town P.O. Bangalore-46 India.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kewal Krishan</td>
<td><em>Department of Anthropology Panjab University Chandigarh-160 014 India.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Isabella Crespi</td>
<td><em>Ph.D Sociology and Research Methodology Professor of Cultural Sociology Department of Education University of Macerata Italy.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. M. Isabel Garrido Gómez</td>
<td><em>Professor of Legal Philosophy Faculty of Law University of Alcalá Spain.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Isabella Crespi</td>
<td><em>Ph.D Sociology and Research Methodology Professor of Cultural Sociology Department of Education University of Macerata Italy.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Amani Hamdan</td>
<td><em>Ottawa University 1440 Heron Road APT 710 Ottawa, ON K1V 0X2 Canada.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Brian Milne</td>
<td><em>106 Glen Road, West Cross, Swansea SA3 5QJ, Wales, UK.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Stephen Vertigans</td>
<td><em>Applied Social Studies, Faculty of Social Science Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, UK</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Md. Emaj Uddin</td>
<td><em>Department of Social Work, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. John Horace Enemugwem</td>
<td><em>Department of History &amp; Diplomatic Studies, Faculty of Humanities University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Eleonora Kormysheva</td>
<td><em>Director of the Golenishev Egyptological Center, Russian State University for Humanities Moscow, 157265 Miusskaya square 6 Department of the History of Orient, The Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow 103031 Russia.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Editorial Board

Dr. Hyun-Chin Lim
President, Korean Association of Political Sociology
Dean, College of Social Sciences
Seoul National University
Seoul 151-742, Korea

Dr. Nels Paulson
Assistant Professor of Sociology
University of Wisconsin-Stout
332E Harvey Hall
Menomonie, WI 54751 USA.

Dr. Samuel Law
MD FRCP(C)
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto.

Dr. B. B. Mohanty
Professor and Head
Department of Sociology
Pondicherry University
Pondicherry 605 014, India.

Dr. Rashid Solagberu Adisa
Agricultural and Rural Development Specialist
Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Dr. Joy Asongazoh Alemazung
Lecturer and International Student Officer
Hochschule Bremen (University of Applied Sciences)
School of International Business (SIB)
Werdstrasse
Bremen, Germany.

Dr. Julia Maria Wittmayer
Scientific Researcher & Consultant
DRIFT (Dutch Research Institute for Transitions), Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Dr. Rukhsana Gazi
Associate Scientist & Head,
Health Systems and Economics Unit,
Health Systems and Infectious Diseases Division, ICDDR, B
Mohakhali C/A
Dhaka 1212
Bangladesh.

Dr. C P S Chauhan
Professor of Education & Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Aligarh Muslim University,
Aligarh India.

Dr. Sunita Bose
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
SUNY, New Paltz
New Paltz, NY 12561.

Dr. Matthew M. Chew
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
Hong Kong Baptist University
Kowloon Tong, Kowloon
HKSAR, China.

Dr. Eswarappa Kasi, Ph.D
Guest Faculty,
Department of Anthropology,
University of Hyderabad,
Hyderabad- 500 046,
Andhra Pradesh,
India.

Dr. Hoon Chang Yau
Assistant Professor of Asian Studies
School of Social Sciences
Singapore Management University
Singapore.

Dr. Stephen J. Hunt
Department of Sociology and Criminology,
Faculty of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences,
University of the West of England,
Bristol, UK.
Interpersonal conflict among Caribbean couples in Jamaica, Guyana and the United States
Krim K. Lacey, Letroy O. Cummings, Karen Powell Sears, Niki Matusko, Rohan D. Jeremiah and James S. Jackson

Treaties and national peace; (Joshua 9:19-21) and the socio-cultural imperatives of the green tree agreement
Obodoegbulam Agi Otto and Grace Lawrence-Hart
Interpersonal conflict among Caribbean couples in Jamaica, Guyana and the United States

Krim K. Lacey1,4*, Letroy O. Cummings2, Karen Powell Sears3, Niki Matusko4, Rohan D. Jeremiah5 and James S. Jackson4

1,4Department of Sociology and African and African American Studies, University of Michigan-Dearborn, USA.
2Department of Sociology and Psychology, University of the Southern Caribbean, Maracas Valley, Trinidad and Tobago.
3Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Denison University, Granville, OH, 43023, USA.
4Program for Research on Black Americans, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, USA.
5School of Public Health, Community Health Sciences Division, University of Illinois-Chicago, USA.

Received 5 October, 2016; Accepted 2 May, 2017

While interpersonal relations are an important aspect of people’s lives, they are also punctuated by conflict and tension. This study examined relationship conflict among Caribbean couples with an emphasis on experiences and potential determinants. The study is based upon secondary probability data collected in Jamaica, Guyana and the United States. The bivariate results revealed differences in factors associated with conflict among Caribbeans across countries. Multivariate analyses suggest that conflict occurring among partners is complex and contingent on level of relationship satisfaction, closeness to partner, frequency of discontentment and social and cultural backgrounds.

Key words: Relationship conflict, gender roles, social context, Caribbean couples.

INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal relationships are an important aspect of people’s lives and play a pivotal role in well-being and quality of life (Proulx et al., 2007; Hawkins and Booth, 2005; Frech and Williams, 2007). Couples in marital and long-term relationships experience a variety of benefits, including personal satisfaction, happiness and better overall health (Frech and Williams, 2007; Hawkins and Booth, 2005; Kurdek, 1991). Popular perceptions hold that successful relationships are relatively conflict-free. This idea is reinforced by images of happy couples interacting positively in relationships devoid of struggle and strife. In reality, conflict is a common occurrence in intimate relationships and an understanding of the role of conflict in relationships may be essential to understanding the experiences of couples across societies.

Research on the dynamics and determinants of relationship conflict has been limited in several ways. First, studies tend to address relationship conflict as a dimension of intimate partner violence, even though violence and conflict may be conceptually and experientially distinct (Holman and Jarvis, 2003; Lloyd, 1990). Secondly, a larger percentage of studies on relationship conflict and discord have been centered on the North American and European contexts with very little attention to this dynamic in Caribbean countries, differing in socio-political histories, values, norms and social
arrangements (Few-Demo et al., 2014; Lloyd, 1990). These important factors may be instrumental in the interpretation and management of interpersonal conflict (Cingoz-Ulu and Lalonde, 2007). Using the ecological model, this study sought to understand the complexity and differences of interpersonal relationship conflict among Caribbean couples in Guyana, Jamaica, and the United States using population level data.

Background

Social and cultural orientations may be sources of dispute in relationships because of their influence on roles and expectations within these partnerships. More often, especially during the early stages of relationships, partners strive to negotiate and address expectations that include clearly defined duties and obligations (Pawlowski, 1998; Kurdek, 1991). However, the transition to understanding and embracing these expectations is not always smooth, and couples encounter various changes and inconsistencies that can create conflict in their relationships (Hochschild, 1989). Hochschild (1989) suggests that tension in relationships is partly due to differences in partners' gender ideologies, resulting in contrasting views of individual roles in the home. There may be occasions where issues surrounding women's work and the decision-making process in relationships are at the center of partner disputes. Couples' failure to adequately address specific responsibilities and expectations can be problematic and become the basis for spousal conflict throughout the course of the relationship (West, 2004).

Rabin and Shapira-Berman (1997) observed that tension often increases throughout the course of relationships when couples develop a pattern of decision-making based on traditional role expectations, in which masculine power is assumed and expected. In these instances, tension is most often generated from men (Chevannes, 2001; Chevannes, 2003; Figuerora, 2004). This might be true for male partners who are strongly invested in traditional perspectives on relationships. Individuals who hold such views often promote male exemption from household tasks and the assignment of full domestic responsibility to women. In Caribbean societies, where there tends to be strong adherence to such beliefs, there is widespread observance to male dominance and female submission to male authority that are driven by patriarchal cultural and social norms (Roopnarine, 2013). This may be particularly relevant, for example, among East Indian women in Trinidad (Morgan and Youssef, 2006) and Guyana who make up a large segment of the population (Cummings, 2010; Danns and Shiw Parsad, 1988, 1989). Women within these societies are encouraged to maintain traditional patriarchal norms, which shape an image of them as passive, dutiful and subservient, notwithstanding the fierce resistance of some women (Morgan and Youssef, 2006). Women's failure to defer to men's authority under these normative expectations is not generally welcome and is a source of tension in relationships, which can escalate and reach severe levels including physical, emotional and financial abuse (Wekker, 2006; Amirthalingam, 2005).

Researchers have identified a number of factors associated with lower levels of relationship conflict. Studies conducted in the United States suggest that relationships based on egalitarian principles tend to have higher levels of satisfaction resulting in low marital conflict (Rabin and Shapira-Berman, 1997; Amato et al., 2007). A study conducted among urban Afro-Guyanese found lower marital tension exists among couples who experience higher levels of daily positive interaction such as affirming affectionate or humorous partner exchanges (Cummings, 2007). Fewer incidents of relationship conflict have also been noted among couples with similar religious ideologies, compared to those with dissimilar religious views (Coleman and Straus, 1986).

Considerable research suggests that both religion and economic resources are among the most significant sources of stress in committed relationships and are often central reasons for relationship conflict (Day and Acoc, 2013; Conger et al., 1990; Coleman and Straus, 1986; Liker and Elder, 1983). Religious values arguably have been a conduit for prescribed roles, norms, expectations, and conduct in interpersonal relationships. Studies suggest that religion contributes to relational inequality; in which one partner is more likely to regulate, control or dominate another partner (Day and Acoc, 2013; Coleman and Straus, 1986). Relationships based on inequality arise from the fact that most world religions have historically been patriarchal and ideological in nature, and grant authority over family decision-making and control of resources to men. Caribbean nationals tend to identify with a religious practice which usually defines their interpretation of and acceptance of traditional gender roles. Although these principles can help to stabilize relationships, they can also be a source of conflict with deviation of traditional ideologies. The ideological mismatch can create arguments and conflict among partners who have yet to embrace these changes (Day and Acoc, 2013). Similarly, studies suggest that economic hardships are major life stressors that often are associated with negative influences on the quality of marital interaction (Chevannes, 2001; Chevannes, 2003; Liker and Elder, 1983; Conger et al., 1990). Research indicates that men who experience economic hardship often respond with hostile behavior that may rupture the positive interaction between intimate couples (Conger et al., 1990). Cummings (2007) further contends that men who are unable to obtain work to support their families often become tense, irritable and explosive.

Although economic difficulties experienced by males can be offset by wives' participation in the labor market, this participation can also affect the happiness of
husbands and result in elevated levels of conflict in the relationship (Amato et al., 2007; Henry-Lee et al., 2000). Husbands’ unhappiness may be attributed to cultural expectations of men’s role as the breadwinner. Therefore, their inability to live up to these expectations can create insecurity about their authority; and this perceived loss of authority may intensify, especially when they are unable to provide financially. Since it is commonly the norm for men in Caribbean cultures to play the role of financial provider, women working outside the home can become problematic if it affects the self-esteem of their male partners, even though many homes are headed by females. The financial independence women gain from working outside the home may also shift the power dynamic in relationships, thereby calling into question men’s control over the household, creating friction in the relationships. While wives’ inability to secure income can cause financial strain, being unemployed can also indirectly stabilize their union by curbing frustration, humiliation and resentment that husbands might develop from sharing co-provider roles (Cummings, 2007; Chevannes, 2001; Chevannes, 2003).

Starkey (1996) further contends that the psychological distress derived from economic hardship linked to unemployment can affect the quality of intimate relationships in other ways. For one, quality of relationship is affected when stressors manifest through verbal and non-verbal communication during interactions. Patterns of negative interactions have been linked to increased dissatisfaction among couples (Cingoz-Ulu and Lalonde, 2007; Chow and Ruhl, 2014). Satisfaction in relationships for some couples is often premised on quality of interaction and time spent with each other without conflict.

Research primarily based on data collected in the United States indicates that high levels of sustained conflict are associated with a greater likelihood for explosive arguments and the potential for intimate partner violence (Vives-Cases et al., 2009; Flood and Pease, 2009). Although the association between conflict and violence has been well documented, many relationships characterized by sustained conflict are absent of physical violence (Lloyd, 1990). Previous research asserts that the presence of conflict may more negatively affect women’s assessments of marital quality than it does for men (Cingoz-Ulu and Lalonde, 2007). However, because of the potential for violence in relationships, and the substantial consequences associated with intimate partner violence, there is a need for additional understanding of interpersonal relationship conflict among Caribbean couples.

Theoretical orientation

Social ecological theory is a useful framework for understanding how conflict in relationships might be identified and managed differently cross-nationally (Dutton, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Goodwin, 2003) and within nations (Day and Acocck, 2013). In this view, partners operate within multiple cultural and subcultural systems that may have distinct normative expectations, and are uniquely shaped by them. These contexts include the larger social or cultural social groups, the family unit, and individual personality factors. The unique cultural context of Caribbean life may serve to shape the management of tension and conflict in key ways. Caribbean cultures tend to have a collectivist orientation, which is typically characterized by family values, group harmony and sharing resources, as well as working together to solve problems; although arguably there is a formal and sometimes informal acceptance of gender hierarchies. In cultures with strong communal bonds, conflict may not sever ties that often lead to relationship dissatisfaction. While individualistic societies more typical of the United States tend to emphasize self-reliance, independence, detachment and the primacy of personal over in-group goals, relationship conflict may more easily disrupt relational ties and be associated with relationship dissatisfaction. Couples with multiple cultural orientations, in which one or both parties have been influenced by foreign cultural ideals, via education, travel or other subcultural exposure, may have increased experiences of tension and conflict due to misunderstanding of each other’s values, beliefs, and ideologies (Sandhya, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 1994; Goode, 1971).

Research questions and hypothesis

This study attempt to address a few questions including: (1) Do rates of interpersonal conflict differ across cultural contexts and orientation? and (2) What are key determinants of interpersonal conflict across cultural groups? Given the differences in cultural and social expectations about relationships across contexts, the study expect to find differences in rates of interpersonal conflict trending higher among couples in the United States. It also anticipates differences in associated factors of interpersonal conflict between those couples within the Caribbean region compared to those in the United States context.

METHODS

Sample

Secondary data that used probability sampling frames collected in Jamaica, Guyana and the United States were analyzed.

Caribbean samples

Samples collected in the Caribbean regions were based on the 2002 population census (Bynoe et al., 2006; Boxill et al., 2006). The sample in Jamaica was drawn from the urban Kingston metropolitan regions, St. Andrew and Portmore. Interviews with
randomly selected adult study participants were conducted in August 2005 and completed in December of that year. A total of 1,218 interviews were completed in Jamaica. The Guyanese sample covered the greater Georgetown (urban), suburban and rural areas. Questionnaires were provided and collected between July and December 2005. A total of 2,068 interviews were completed in Guyana (Lacey et al., 2016).

**United States sample**

The US sample was drawn from the National Survey of American Life (NSAL) re-interview. The NSAL is the largest and most comprehensive survey on the US Black population, and the first and only known representative study on Caribbeans residing within the United States (Jackson et al., 2004; Neighbors et al., 2007). Multistage probability sampling techniques were used to generate the sample. Face-to-face interviewing was the main method of data collection, with a smaller portion of interviews conducted by telephone. A subset (n=663) of US dwelling Caribbeans interviewed was analyzed for this study.

**Predictors**

**Demographic variables**

The socio-demographic variables included gender, age, marital status, education, employment, and income. Age was a continuous measure. *Education level* was categorized by primary or some high school, high school graduate, and college, vocational or technical school. *Employment status* reflected employed, unemployed, and not in the workforce. *Income* was divided into five quintiles: Bottom, second, middle, fourth and highest. The bottom quintile reflected lower income groups and by contrast the higher quintile category comprised individuals within high income groups.

**Religiosity**

Religious conviction was gauged by participants’ response to, “How religious would you say you are?” Response options ranged from “very religious” to “not at all.”

**Satisfaction in relationship**

Relationship satisfaction was assessed by the question: “How satisfied are you with your relationship/marriage?” Response options ranged from “very satisfied” to “very dissatisfied.”

**Help with chores**

Assistance with chores was addressed by asking participants, “How much does your (spouse/partner) help with regular chores such as shopping, cleaning or yard work?” Response options ranged from “a great deal” to “not at all.”

**Closeness in relationship**

Closeness to partner comprised two measures: “How close do you feel to your spouse/partner?” and “Overall, how well do you and your spouse get along together?” Together these measures had an internal consistency ranging from 0.76 to 0.78 across samples. Both variables were examined individually, and summed for higher-level (multivariate) analysis due to limited cases within individual variables.

**Arguments with partner**

Frequency of arguments in relationship was determined by the question, “How much does your (spouse/partner) argue with you?” Possible answers ranged from “a great deal” to “not at all.”

**Conflict in relationship**

Interpersonal relationship conflict was examined with the question: “In general, how much conflict or tension do you feel there is between you and your spouse/partner?” Measured on a Likert scale, responses included: A great deal, some, a little, or not at all. Married and partnered individuals were the focus of analysis for this study.

**Analytic strategy**

Bivariate analysis (t-test) and multivariate logistic regressions were the analytic procedures used to address the research aims. Predictors (e.g., satisfaction, get along, closeness, arguments) were reversed coded for analysis. Higher scores were given greater endorsement. The dependent variable was coded to reflect conflict (e.g., a great deal, some, a little) =1 versus no conflict (not at all) = 0. The significance at the 0.05 alpha level was set. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 22. Sampling weights were applied to all analyses involving the Jamaican and Guyanese cross-sections. Due to the underlying complex samples, all statistical analyses involving the US Caribbeans accounted for the complex multistage clustered design of the NSAL sample, unequal probabilities of selection, nonresponse, and post-stratification to calculate weighted, nationally representative population estimates and standard errors. In the datasets from Jamaica and Guyana, post stratification weights based upon census estimates of age and gender were also applied.

**FINDINGS**

**Sample characteristics**

Guyanese participants were on average slightly older than their Jamaican and US Caribbean counterparts (m = 40.5 vs. m = 38.9 vs. m = 38.0). Females were the majority across samples (Guyana 51% vs. Jamaica 69.5% vs. US Caribbeans 61.4%) (Table 1). In Guyana (34.2%) fewer participants were married compared to Jamaicans (56.6%) and US Caribbeans (49.1%). The education level of participants across samples also differed with more than half (54.0%) of Guyanese participants obtaining a primary or some high school education, around a half (49.8%) of Jamaicans graduating from high school, and more than a third (43.3%) of US Caribbeans obtaining a college education. While participants in general were employed across samples, lower rates were observed among
Jamaicans (44.1%). The income of participants, however, was different across populations with less than a third (30%) of Guyanese participants with incomes within the second quintile category, less than half (42.4%) of Jamaicans in the fourth quintile category, and just over a quarter (29.1%) of US Caribbean participants are more represented within the fourth quintile category. In general, a larger percentage of Guyanese (81.2%) experienced some variation of conflict in their relationship compared to their Jamaican (53.1%) and US Caribbean counterparts (55.1%).

**Bivariate analysis**

Illustrated in Table 2, there were similarities in response patterns across countries between gender and associated factors of relationship conflict. Across nations, higher mean scores, indicating greater endorsement, were generally found for males compared to females on these associated factors, although differences in significance were observed. In Guyana specifically, significantly different mean scores were found between men and women with regard to: Helping with chores (men = 3.22 vs. women = 2.95; *p* < 0.001); satisfaction in their relationship (men = 3.65 vs. women = 3.50; *p* < 0.001); getting along with their spouse (men = 3.59 vs. women = 3.45; *p* < 0.001); and closeness to their partner (men = 3.66 vs. women = 3.60; *p* < 0.001). In the United States, differences were only observed for the category “helping with chores” (men = 3.40 vs. female = 2.55; *p* < 0.01). Differences were not found in Jamaica along gender
lines surrounding the associated factors of relationship conflict.

**Multivariate results**

Similarities in predictive factors of relationship conflict were found among Caribbean residents but not for Caribbeans residing in the United States (Table 3). Satisfaction in relationship, closeness to partner, and arguments with their partner was all predictive of relationship conflict among Guyanese and Jamaican respondents. Specifically, lower odds of relationship conflict were found for both Guyanese (AOR = 0.690, \( p < 0.05 \)) and Jamaicans (AOR = 0.691, \( p < 0.05 \)) who were satisfied with their relationships, when other factors were controlled. Similarly, Guyanese (AOR = 0.549, \( p < 0.001 \)) and Jamaican participants (AOR = 0.693, \( p < 0.05 \)) who exhibited closeness to their mating partner had lower odds for relationship conflict. Conversely, the odds of relationship conflict increased among Guyanese (AOR = 3.05, \( p < 0.001 \)) and Jamaican (AOR = 2.51, \( p < 0.01 \)) couples when there were consistent arguments in the relationship.

Differences in socio-demographic factors were also found to affect relationship conflict. While age was significantly associated with a decrease in relationship conflict among Guyanese, this was the opposite for Jamaican and US Caribbean participants. The findings showed lower odds (AOR = .981, \( p < .001 \)) of relationship conflict among older Guyanese. Income was also predictive of relationship conflict among US Caribbeans.

Notably, bottom quintile (AOR = 11.28, \( p < 0.05 \)), second quintile (AOR = 6.29, \( p < 0.05 \)) and the highest quintile (AOR = 7.50, \( p < 0.05 \)) had increasing odds of relationship conflict. Guyanese participants within the higher income category (e.g., fourth quintile) had increased marginally significant odds of relationship conflict (AOR = 1.55, \( p = 0.062 \)). No association with income was found among Jamaican participants. Gender, however, was associated with relationship conflict among this population (Jamaicans); the odds (AOR = 1.49, \( p < 0.05 \)) of relationship conflict significantly increased among women.

**DISCUSSION**

An examination of relationship conflict among Caribbeans across three national geographic locations revealed increased rates of relationship conflict among Guyanese couples compared to couples in Jamaica and the United States. Also evident from the study females had lower ratings on factors associated with relationship conflict compared to their male counterparts. This was more true among Guyanese participants which may reflect cultural traits and traditional ethics unique to this sub population. These differences create concerns about perceptions that both men and women may hold about close relationships, which can ultimately affect relationship quality and dynamics that may be a source of tension and disputes.

Multiple factors were predictive of relationship conflict that speaks to evolution of collaborative or competitive behaviors among partners. In the Caribbean region, satisfaction in relationship, closeness to partner, and arguments in relationship were associated with relationship conflict. The opposite was found among Caribbeans in the United States, which may be attributed to changes in attitude and expectations about relationship after migrating or with length of time in an environment that is more supportive of egalitarian principles over traditional (gendered hierarchical) norms. Even though Guyanese families specifically may gravitate towards maintaining dual income households, which results in females spending more time outside the home, cultural changes regarding gender socialization may have not kept pace. Many families are still constructed along traditional gendered socialization roles. This gendered division of labor dimension remains strong and partners are likely to be satisfied in a relationship when operating within the confines of their accepted respective gender domains.

"Family leadership" styles, maternal or paternal or balanced between parents, as well as allocated/shared responsibilities to family members were also evident within our findings. For example, the inverse relationship between age and relationship conflict found among Guyanese may represent the demands of child rearing and other commitments in the earlier stages of the relationship; consequently, preventing couples from having the opportunity to focus on building intimacy and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Guyana</th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
<th>U.S. Caribbean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>( p )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with chores</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction in relationship</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get along with spouse</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness to partner</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument with partner</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0.820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Gender and conflict.**
personal commitment. Although these responsibilities are expected to decline over time, it is not uncommon for individuals to develop better coping and interpersonal conflict resolution strategies with maturity and length of time in the relationship. This trend was especially unique to the Guyanese sampled population.

The findings also illuminate economic independence whereby income further influenced relationship conflict among US Caribbeans and partially among Guyanese. This was reflective across various income categories among US Caribbean couples and is very difficult to explain. Meeting financial needs and expectations may be a source of stress among couples within this context, potentially creating conflict in the relationship. Yet, the marginal association found between higher income and relationship conflict among Guyanese may result from material demands that if not met, could produce frustration and subsequent discontent in the relationship. Increased financial and spending power may come with a sense of entitlement that is grounds for conflict when other critical needs are not met. Often, relationships may begin to suffer when the drive to obtain material acquisitions takes precedence and the relationship focus becomes less important.

While other socio-economic factors did not significantly influence conflict among Jamaican couples, gender was a factor. Being female was associated with reported conflict in relationships among Jamaicans. One possible explanation for this outcome may be related to the gradual deviation from traditional values, as well as greater independence among women in this country, which can be a source of tension and disputes among partners who are unwilling to adjust to contemporary norms.

### Conclusion

This study is unique in that it features a comparison between two Caribbean developing countries (Guyana and Jamaica), and a developed country (United States)

---

**Table 3. Logistic regression predicting relationship conflict.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Guyana Exp(B) CI</th>
<th>Jamaica Exp(B) CI</th>
<th>US Caribbean Exp(B) CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>0.982(0.972-0.992)**</td>
<td>0.995(0.982-1.01)</td>
<td>0.997(0.975-1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.05(0.781-1.40)</td>
<td>1.49 (1.02-2.19)*</td>
<td>1.44(0.436-4.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom quintile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second quintile</td>
<td>1.42(0.922-2.19)</td>
<td>1.44(.816-2.54)</td>
<td>11.28(1.36-93.79)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle quintile</td>
<td>1.48(0.930-2.36)</td>
<td>.738(.172-3.16)</td>
<td>6.29(1.20-33.10)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth quintile</td>
<td>1.55(0.979-2.45)</td>
<td>1.24(.636-2.42)</td>
<td>3.72(0.816-17.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest quintile</td>
<td>1.38(0.797-2.40)</td>
<td>1.58(.710-3.52)</td>
<td>7.50(1.56-35.96)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1.13(0.699-1.84)</td>
<td>.820(.481-1.40)</td>
<td>0.786(0.024-25.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in labor force</td>
<td>.827(.597-1.15)</td>
<td>.787(.506-1.22)</td>
<td>0.341(0.054-2.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary/some high school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduates</td>
<td>1.10(0.795-1.53)</td>
<td>1.07(0.599-1.91)</td>
<td>3.66(0.361-37.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/vocational/technical</td>
<td>1.25(0.820-1.87)</td>
<td>1.37(0.701-2.68)</td>
<td>5.01(0.613-40.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religiosity</strong></td>
<td>1.33(0.718-2.45)</td>
<td>1.11(0.323-3.82)</td>
<td>1.64(0.688-3.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with chores</td>
<td>0.986(0.809-1.20)</td>
<td>1.02(0.872-1.20)</td>
<td>0.710(0.430-1.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction in relationship</td>
<td>0.690(0.504-0.945)*</td>
<td>.691(0.499-0.958)*</td>
<td>1.90(0.902-4.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness to partner</td>
<td>0.549(0.451-0.669)**</td>
<td>.699(0.568-.845)**</td>
<td>0.950(.569-1.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argue with you</td>
<td>3.05(2.50-3.72)**</td>
<td>2.51(2.01-3.12)**</td>
<td>0.192(0.086-0.428)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05; **p < .01; ***p < 0.001; Negelkerke R² Guyana = 0.337***; Negelkerke R² Jamaica = 0.307***; Negelkerke R² USCaribbean = 0.441***.
to understand conflict in intimate relationships within the Caribbean Diaspora and across cultural contexts. Bivariate and multivariate analyses revealed important differences and insights into key determinants of interpersonal conflict among Caribbean couple. While this study contributes significantly to our understanding of relationship conflict within the Caribbean and across cultural settings, it is not without limitations.

Among the limitations of this study is the use of cross-sectional data that do not permit exploring changing patterns of behavior over time as well as social and political factors that may influence relationship conflict. Second, samples were only collected in the greater Kingston area, an urban setting, and may not be generalized to other areas of the country, despite the fact that a larger percentage of the Jamaican population resides in this region at the time of data collection. Third, the study did not address individuals in visiting relationships, non-committed sexual relationships, and how the parameters of their relationship affects the manner in which conflict is manifested or understood. Finally, the study did not adjust for other important factors (e.g., length of time in relationship, race or ethnicity, generation status) that may influence relationship conflict. Even with the challenges noted above, this is one of the few studies to conduct cross-cultural analysis of relationship conflict among Caribbeans residing in three different geographical locations. While providing a better understanding of relationship dynamics and possible influences of conflict, this study recognizes the cultural differences and similarities that exist among couples across societies. The study also signals the need for the availability of resources geared to addressing conflict management and resolution at the institutional and societal levels to assist couples with inter-relational conflict for the purpose of improving interactions and social relations. Since intimate relationships are generally formed early in life, especially within the Caribbean context, it would be beneficial to institute programs that address conflict management in educational systems through curriculums to better equip young individuals entering partnerships with the knowledge and skills to cultivate healthy interpersonal relationships. This may help to reduce incidents of interpersonal violence among couples, especially in Caribbean regions where there are higher than normal rates (Lefranc et al., 2008). It is important to include information in the curriculum noting that conflict is a normal aspect of social relationships that can be utilized positively and can be a useful source of growth and change for maintaining balance, effective communication, elements of how to compromise, and ways of responding to partners needs as they evolve. It may also be useful in helping to establish and re-establish roles and responsibilities as careers change, families grow and partners get older. Teaching individuals' skills to enhance communication and manage conflict in a non-violent and productive manner is a key strategy for intervention and prevention.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

REFERENCES


Full Length Research Paper

Treaties and national peace; (Joshua 9:19-21) and the socio-cultural imperatives of the green tree agreement

Obodoegbulam Agi Otto* and Grace Lawrence-Hart

Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Ignatius Ajuru, University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers, Nigeria.

Received 2 October, 2016; Accepted 4 November, 2016

In international politics, bilateral and multilateral relations are conducted based on national and regional interest. This is because development can only thrive in a peaceful environment, different societies or nations enter into treaties or alliance to protect their national or regional territories. This study focuses on the Gibeonites treaties with the Israelites as an exercise to protect their national interest and its binding effect on the Israelites not minding how it came about. It also analyses the green tree agreement and its socio-cultural imperatives in the interest of regional peace. The study examines the genesis of the Bakassi conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon and its socio-cultural implication on the inhabitants. The place of oath taking as a vital ingredient in peace building in Africa is highlighted. The research adopts the inter-disciplinary approach; which implies a combination of more than one approaches namely; historical, philosophical and phenomenological in the discussion. The paper observes that the green tree agreement is a political and not a historiocultural solution to the Bakassi conflict. It concludes that any individual, group or society seeking to have peace, must be willing to sacrifice a portion of his possession or pride in the overall interest of all.

Key words: International Politics, Treaties, Cultural, Society.

INTRODUCTION

In the international arena, one of the pre-occupations of nations in the conduct of international relation is how to maintain peace both at home and abroad. This perhaps explains why countries join international organizations or enter into bilateral and multi-lateral agreements with others. Without mincing words, membership of these international organizations helps to protect weak nations against the powerful ones. Even among strong nations, their excesses are checked (Haralambus and Horborn, 2008).

Without doubt, different nations, cultures and societies are endowed differently. Some countries possess a superior military might; others strong economy. Some others large population; while some scientific and technological advancement give them a comparative advantage. In international politics, domination, fear or the treaty of it, causes anxiety among nations. Kalu (2010) hold that “Our generation is confronted with many problem notably among which include – acute hardship, anxiety, ravaging war, economic inequality, terrorism,
religion, fanaticism and political instability.

Okoro (2010) contends that “While wars and conflict are not new in human history, the ferocity with which it occur in our world, casts aspersion on the concept of the world becoming a global village”.

The search for an alternative or solution, have forced different nations to align or re-align with bigger powers to protect their social, economic, political or cultural sovereignty. This study focuses on the Gibeonites treaty with the Israelites (Joshua, 9:19 to 21) (New Testament Bible USA, 1985) and the socio-cultural imperatives of the green tree agreement. The study adopts the interdisciplinary approach in the discussion. To this end the historical philosophical and phenomenological approach were used. Historically archival materials were searched to get the various treaties entered into by Britain and Germany on one hand, and Britain and France on the other as well as Nigeria and Cameroon concerning the Bakasi Peninsula.

Philosophically, the issue of fairness equity and natural justice were considered as to how Britain and Germany could enter into a treaty about a people that are not theirs. Phenomenologically, the study undertakes an ethnographic survey of the cultural areas covered by this study.

Conceptual clarifications

Treaties

A treaty in this context referred to an agreement willingly or persuasively entered into by two parties or more with the sole objective of protecting, preventing, or preserving their individual or collective interest. In conducting international relations, countries were concerned with three main issues: “restraining inter-state conflict, securing human rights and managing the economic system” (UNOOSA, 2007). In this wise therefore, treaties were seen as the only option that can help to unite nations. “Moreover, treaties shifts issues from the political arena into a juridical rule based forum” (United Nations Publication, 2012). According to United Nation’s record by 2005, there were approximately fifty thousand treaties on file in the UN treaty system which confirm the importance of treaty as a unifying factor among nations.

Nation

The term nation, according to Ezeani derives from a latin word “natus” meaning birth. In his view, the essence of a nation is inter-changeable and this poses great difficulty in its definition and conceptualization. Quoting Connor (1978) this essence is a psychological bond that joins the people and differentiates it in the sub-conscious conviction of its members, from all other people in most vital way. According to scholars, every nation is distinguished by four main features Common language, population, defined territory and sovereignty.

Peace and human society

In the view of Aja “Peace is a relative condition of security friendly climate that allows individuals and group relations to progressive order and stability (Aja, 2007)”. Philosophers have different view of peace. They hold that peace is both natural and a creation of human society. For instance John Locke insists that the universe is not lawless but orderly. To St. Augustine of Hippo, there are two cities; (a) the city of God (that is built upon perfect heaven) peace and (b) the earthly city of man which is characterized by selfishness, greed, corruption, tension and strife, fear and terror of death (Aja, 2007). According Machiavelli as quoted by Sabine and Thorson (1973) “Human nature is profoundly aggressive and acquisitive; men aim to keep what they have and to acquire more”.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict whether at local or international level, leads to a breakdown of law and order and may also result to a loss of human and material resources. To discourage the occurrence of conflict, scholars developed some conflict resolution models such as the social atavistic conflict thought by Lombroso (2006) or the conflict resolution model by Thomas and Kilmann (1999) which are adopted as the analytical model in this study.

According to the theory of social atavism, there is a natural tendency on the part of creatures to migrate, expand and dominate space or territory using any means possible, physical or the use of force. In conflict thought, it is the tendency to expand one’s territory that breeds reentrance or clash of occupation. In the human context according to Aja (2007), migration and territorial expansion leads to dispute over the control of land mass or territorial waters, or air space.

In order to check any probable conflict which might result from acquisitive or expansionist tendency of individuals or states, it would be appropriate to undertake the cost benefit analysis of such conflict in terms of human and material resources, national pride and global interest. According to Thomas and Kilmann (1999), “conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspect while increasing the positive aspect of conflict”. Conflict resolution entails reduction, elimination and termination of all forms or typologies of conflict in any society. To this end, Thomas and Kilmann (1999) identified five styles of conflict management to include - competing, compromising, collaborating, avoiding and accommodating.
In the view of Sandole, 1999 cited in Elleh, 2013), to deal with a deep routed intractable conflict requires a holistic and comprehensive approach (New Jerusalem Bible). As it were, this will make for an in-depth grasp of the complexity and characteristic nature of the conflict.

Both the social atavistic conflict thought and the conflict resolution model presented earlier underscores the point that man is gregarious and acquisitive by nature; always eager to take advantage of situation and circumstance especially where he has an upper hand. However, in dispute resolution, compromise does not necessarily mean surrender instead it is a wise application of the intellect to sacrifice something for a long term benefit as the succeeding discussions review

The Gibeonites pact

The Gibeonites having heard and seen the great conquest of Joshua on the neighbouring towns around decided to put themselves together to plan for any workable strategy that will stop the Israelites from having battles with them. Knowing the power of treaties they feigned to be people from a very far country because they were seriously in need of a peace deal in the form of a treaty. They lied to Joshua, despite his insistence to know where they were coming from. In the course of time, the Israelites discovered that they were their neighbours, they could not war with them because they have made a peace agreement not to war with them. The princes of Israel were angry for being deceived yet they could not raise their hands against the Gibeonites instead they said ‘we have sworn unto them’ (Joshua, 9:19,ff) (Harpers Bible Commentary, 1988).

The peace agreement between the two nations served as a strong force in restraining war between them. For this reason, even when Joshua was in rage he said ‘we will let them live lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore unto them’ (New Jerusalem Bible). More so, In the Old Testament narratives, commitment to the content of a covenant relationship is not only human but divine. Even God obliges himself to this content. For instance, the attitude of the Israelites in Exodus had angered God so much that he wanted to eliminate them from the face of the earth. However God changed his mind, when Moses reminded him of his covenant with Abraham and the promise He (God) made.

As an individual, Joshua knew the risk or danger associated with breaking of a covenant of all the people who came from Egypt, only him and Caleb entered the promise land. He knew that the rest of the people could not owing to their rebellious nature against God and obstinate lack of confidence in God to make due his promises he made to their father Abraham. So, when this resent issue came up, it was obvious that to be on the safe side, they have to keep to the terms.

Without doubt, the Gibeonites were all aware that the strength and weakness of the Israelites lies in their covenant relationship with God. To secure their favor is always better than to push them to the religious angle. Since God meant everything to them, the Israelites would as much as possible strive to maintain their religious obligation.

In the Hebrew tradition, relationships are built on trust. These in most cases, are obtained in a covenantal treaty. For instance, the relationship between God and Abraham, it was stated thus—“If you will obey me and keep my commandments ….” Again, during the military exploits of Jephther, he also made a vow… “If I go to this battle and come alive……” (New Jerusalem Bible).

These and many more, amplifies the scared position of covenant in the socio religious life of the Hebrews and by extension, Israelites. It is well understood that a serious curse follows the violation of a covenant. Unavoidably, the Israelites have been deceived to enter into a covenant with people they were expected to eliminate. As it were, covenants once entered into, remains irrevocable. This means that the Israelites must oblige themselves to it in their own interest and safety. On the part of the Gibeonites, it seems they have achieved their aim. The elders of the Israelites said “Thus what we shall do to them, let them live rather than bring retribution down on ourselves on account of the oath we have sworn to them”.

On account of the above, the elders resolved “Let them live but let them be wood cutters and water carriers for the whole community” (Joshua 9:20) (Mbiti, 1969). While the earlier mentioned may sound terrible to the admirers of the Gibeonites, it was accepted with their whole heart, as a better option. Realizing the predicament of their neighbors who were destroyed completely, slavery was better than death. Thus, the Gibeonites were reduced to servants in their own land and allowed to live.

According to biblical scholars, the earlier mentioned treaty explains the presence of the Gibeonites around the temple and other religious site of the Israelites. They serve as hewers of wood and carriers of water. In actual fact, this treaty avails the Gibeonites to come close to the temple which ordinarily, was not to be. Again, the above demonstrates that an individual or a people can secure benefit if they humble themselves.

The Bakassi conflict

The 1913 British German boundary adjustment in the South-East of Calabar is often cited as the basis for Cameroon’s claim to the Bakassi Peninsula. According to Wikipedia, the Obong of Calabar conceded his territory to the British, thereby relinquishing his political sovereignty.
Owing to the aforementioned, this Bakassi Peninsula has been a subject of international conflict occasioning series of international boundary adjustment effort from the colonial period to the post independence era, with both Nigeria and Cameroon laying claim to the territory. However, Nigerian citizens occupy Bakassi. The Nigeria/Cameroon boarder conflict epitomizes the high level of maturity and brotherly love between the two countries despite initial skirmishes; especially, against the backdrop that the bone of contention is manipulated by external factors to the benefit of the Western powers. While economic benefit occupied the front burner of this conflict, the socio-cultural implication on the inhabitants of the peninsula was played down.

The partitioning of Africa as a result of the 1884-5 Berlin Conference pitched African societies against one another. Here, brothers and other family members were divided. Ethnic groups which had existed as one were forced to belong to different countries, not minding the damage such was going to bring on the language, socio-political organization, economic and religio-cultural life of the people (https://unowa.unmissions.org/LinkClick...).

The socio-cultural imperatives

According to Mbiti “Man in Africa is anthropocentric” (Mbiti, 1969). He is at the centre of existence. This comprises the unborn, the living and the departed ancestors. Ikenga Metu asserts that Africans are highly religious people. Ejizu (2007) quoting Leonard writes that “The Africans live religiously, dress religiously, eat religiously, dance religiously and die religiously (Ejizu and Ozo-Mekuri, 2007). To the Africans, their existence is their religion and their religion existence. Therefore, to remove an African from his ancestral home, might mean detachment from their route. In Africa, land is a central phenomenon. The African is born into it, nurtured on it, and will be buried in it. To detach him, from the land means severing him from his route. The International Court Justice (ICJ) judgment transferring Bakassi over to Cameroon raised both social and spiritual question to the inhabitants, and If they are to be evicted from the land, where they have lived for centuries with their forebears. Their concern was; ‘what to do with the grave of their ancestors’ (Obodoegbulam) (Obodoegbulam, 2009).

Mbiti warns that such was capable of resulting to conflict (Mbiti, 1969).

The green tree agreement

After what might seem as the international intrigues and manipulations to pitch the two countries against each other, the peaceful settlement was evolved in 2002 otherwise known as the GREEN TREE AGREEMENT.

The final document contained such provisions as follows:

1. Under the green tree agreement, Nigeria can continue to extract oil and natural gas from the peninsula and only pay taxes to the Cameroonian government.
2. Cameroon would not force Nigerian nationals living in Bakassi to leave the zone or change their nationality.
3. Respect their language, culture and belief.
4. Respect their right to continue their agricultural and fishing activities.
5. Protect their property and customary land right.
6. Not levy in any discriminatory manner taxes and other dues on Nigerian nation living in the zone.
6. Take every necessary measure to protect Nigerian nationals living in the zone from harassment or harm.

The document also provides a time frame for Nigeria’s withdrawal of her military and civil government from the territory and transfer political administration to Cameroon which was completed in 2013 (https://unowa.unmissions.org/LinkClick...).

Dispute resolution mechanism in Africa

In African tradition, treaties are made through oath taking between two or more persons, families or communities who hitherto have been engaged in one form of disagreement or conflict which sometimes have resulted to loss of lives and properties. In reaching this peace agreement, aggrieved parties come together on a neutral ground to swear an oath with their lives and the lives of their generations yet unborn before a religious element which is presided by the priest of a particular deity. The parties make solemn promises never to go back to whatever resulted to the conflict that degenerated to spilling of blood.

According to Tasie (2005), oath taking is a veritable tool in conflict resolution, he maintains that in oath taking parties in dispute may swear for the other on the emblem of a particular deity, this is because the deity aids in making the oath binding on the parties involved since the omniscience nature of the deity is believed to transcend human experience.

So strong is the oath taken to live in peace that nobody tries to break their pronouncement in the oath because it is always attached with severe consequences on the defaulters. However, this oath are not always written in black and white but stories of the agreement and what led to the agreement are always transmitted verbally through oral tradition so that the younger generation will not fall victim of breaking the oath sworn by their forbears.

Furthermore, witnesses are always sought to be present before the oath is taken, this process creates provision for a third-party or witness in the event of
violation of the oath. The witnesses most times are gotten from the neutral ground where they have chosen to go for the peace agreement through oath. Oath taking as treaties for peace is so potent in the traditional setting because violation of such agreement always results to terrible consequence which can wipe out an entire community or family if the deity before whom the oath was taken is not placated. More so, the gods and ancestors of the land are always called upon to bear witness and punish offenders, reason being that the gods are the community police whose duty is to punish offenders of any sort. Owete (2010) that is why in the traditional setting when people violate the agreement secretly they are punished and also made to appease the deities where necessary, hence, the fear of being punished by the deities makes every party to the treaty stick to the agreement so reached; there by creating room for a lasting peace where conflict hitherto existed.

In the traditional setting treaties by oath is so important in that it could be administered on individuals and communities to strengthen and promote good relationship. More so, in communities where incessant crisis occur treaties by oath are taken to mystically bind the people together in order to restrain them from violence. Mbiti (1969) calls this kind of oath “blood brother” as it makes the people involved to relate like real blood brother, they will not engage in anything that will degenerate to shedding of blood.

Therefore, treaties provides a potent platform to guarantee peace if the parties involved decides to come together for peace, the agreement reached will serve as a check on the parties involved. Peace which is the absence of violence is key to development hence, if the society must have a meaningful development treaties of peace is inevitable. This is because the society is going through series of conflict ranging from sectarian, youth restiveness, ethnic variance, etc, which often leads to destruction of human lives and public structures; that is why a unifying activity is needed to bind people together and create the consciousness of restrain from violence in the event of any violence (Lawrence-Hart, 2014).

Implication of breaking treaties

The implication of breaking treaties varies from community to community or from one culture to another depending on the institution where the treaty was established. However, defaulters of treaties are often faced with severe consequences. Relating this to the Gibeonites peace agreement with the Israelites, it is obvious that the Gibeonites took advantage of their prior knowledge of the Israelite military exploit to save their people and culture. Despite the fact that they tricked the Israelite to a peace agreement, this was a binding oath which the Israelite realized they cannot afford to break. They were also aware of the supernatural consequence for doing so. Generally, people keep to the tense of an oath to save themselves and their future generation of the resulting consequence for violation. Relating this to the green tree agreement, both Nigeria and Cameroon obliged themselves to it partly because of regional peace and socio-cultural implication. To remove the inhabitants of the Peninsula will mean cutting them off from their ancestral home which both countries will not want to get involved because of the natural implication.

Conclusion

The discourse earlier mentioned, presents some of the challenges which confront humanity in a conflict situation. Generally speaking, international relations thrive better on the principles of mutual benefits. Whether it is between majority and minority or weak and strong powers, it is an incontrovertible fact that each has something to offer and something to protect. The Gibeonites in Joshua 9:19 to 21, realized that they cannot afford to go to war with the Israelites hence suing for peace. The Israelites also appreciating the fact that they need peace with their neighbours, embraces this offer. Without over stating the obvious, it is possible to secure victory in war but not peace. Total peace at any point can only be achieved when individuals and groups place public interest above personal pride or ego. Bringing this home to the Nigeria Cameroon conflict, both nations realized that they can achieve more through agreement and compromise than war. Any military or diplomatic confrontation between the two countries will lead to loss of human and material resources. Though some felt that the green tree agreement is a political solution to the dispute. It is hoped that the historical and cultural imperatives on ground will be called up someday.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the enormous benefit which derives from peaceful co-existence among individuals and societies or countries, the following suggestions will promote global unity:

1. Feuding parties in any conflict should realize the limit of their strength.
2. Should embrace the olive branch once it is extended to them.
3. Victory in war does not automatically translate to peace, so, even after defeating an enemy in battle, there is still need to come back to the negotiating table to sue for peace.
4. People should learn to keep the terms of their agreement because any violation might attract super-
natural sanction.
5. While negotiating for peace individuals and societies should divest themselves and place societal interest above personal gain.
6. In any agreement for peace or conflict resolution, parties must make provision for further negotiation or renegotiation in future.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

Harpers Bible Commentary (1988). London Harper role publication
https://unowa.unmissions.org/LinkClick...
https://unowa.unmissions.org/LinkClick...
International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology

Related Journals Published by Academic Journals

- Journal of Economics and International Finance
- Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism
- African Journal of Business Management
- Journal of Accounting and Taxation
- African Journal of Marketing Management
- International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology