

■ Article ■

## ***Àdìn-Aláàdìn*: Rethinking the Contemporary Challenge to Akurẹ Cultural Identity**

*Ohúkáyòdè R. Adéşuyi*

### Abstract

The paper critically examines the concept of *Àdìn-aláàdìn* (alien culture) in contemporary Akurẹ and its effects on the community. It appeals to multiculturalism and ethnocentrism to buttress its point. While it maintains that colonialism introduced to Akurẹ in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century led to multiculturalism in the ancient city, it later resulted to ethnocentrism which has caused the people of Akurẹ to jettison their cultural practice and embrace alien culture (election) especially in the selection process of the Deji. It argues that, although it is desirable to bring in another culture to permeate in the culture of Akurẹ, but this must not be at the expense of the Akurẹ cultural heritage, especially in the processes of selecting the Deji, the Akurẹ Monarch. The paper observes that, if allowed to be part of the processes, election, as an alternative to the traditional procedure, may complicate the entire process. It concludes that the existing traditional “due process” should be followed strictly so as to allow peace and tranquillity in the ancient city.

■ **Key words** : *Àdìn*, *Àdìn-aláàdìn*, Akurẹ, Deji, ethnocentrism, multiculturalism

### Introduction

There are two Yorùbá sayings that go thus; *A kii f'omọ w'omọ kí a má bàá lu kan pa*, if we entertain any comparison between two children, we may severely injure one. And, *Ẹran kii lé ẹran nínú isàsùn*, Meat don't send out meat in pot. These sayings serve as reminder to holders/believers of some cultural heritage that one should not wait until any alien culture drives his/her culture into extinction. Some cultural practices have

gone into extinction, because other peoples' cultures and traditions are more preferred than theirs. This is common in some African communities; in which case, their cultural traditions are traded off for foreign ones. The foreign cultures are cherished; thereby relegating their traditions or such traditions being referred to as obsolete.

Akurẹ, an ancient town, is the capital city of the present Ondo State in the South-Western part of Nigeria. "Akurẹ" does not mean the town alone; it also means the dialect spoken in Akurẹ and some other towns. In other words, Akurẹ has its own dialect which differs from the proper Yorùbá language. It is spoken by people of Akurẹ North, Akurẹ South, Ifẹdọrẹ Local Governments, and some parts of Uṣo in Qwọ Local Government of Ondo State. The dialect serves as an identity for these people.

Akurẹ, as a town, has its own cultural ways of doing things, and therefore, is unique in this regard. One of these ways is the selection of the traditional ruler in the town. The process of selection of the *Oba* is traditional, which involves among other ones, consulting *Ifá*. Of late, there has been an introduction of another process, although alien to Akurẹ, which is election. The "electoral college" comprises of the *Ìàrẹfà mefà*. These are chiefs that make up the king makers. This process of election, which is considered and referred to as (*àdìn-aládìn* [alien practice]) in this paper, is an attempt to jettison the old process, and therefore, perceived to have detrimental effects on the Akurẹ cultural heritage if allowed. This paper shows that there are defects in the newly introduced system and proves how this can cause havoc in the town, especially among the chiefs and the town's people at large.

### **Conceptual Clarifications of *Àdìn*, *Àdìn-aládìn*, and *Iwà***

*Àdìn* is a concept in Akurẹ.<sup>1)</sup> *Àdìn* is literally interpreted to mean *iwà*, which is its Yorùbá language variant. A critical analysis of the two concepts will show that they do not mean exactly the same thing. The

etymology of *ìwà* is analyzable such that when it is divided into “*ì*” + *wà*, the meaning can be expressed. The “*ì*” does not have any meaning, for it is a dependent morpheme. This kind of morpheme does not have any meaningful import, but is added to a verb for it to be meaningfully understood. *Wà* is a verb/existential morpheme, meaning exist. It is an independent morpheme. Whether or not this morpheme is joined or prefixed by any morpheme, it is meaningful. It also confers usefulness on a dependent morpheme. Sometimes, the meaning of the combination of dependent and independent morphemes gives a meaning that cannot be linked with the initial meaning of an independent morpheme. Sometimes, the meaning can be linked to the initial meaning of an independent morpheme and when joined with *wà*, an independent morpheme, become *ìwà*.

*Wà* could mean ‘to be’ or ‘to exist.’ In this sense, *wà* is an existential morpheme; it could mean to dig; it could also mean that one is in a certain condition.<sup>2)</sup> The combination of “*ì*” and “*wà*” becomes *ìwà* (character). The meaning of the word, a noun formed by the combination is not linked with the initial meaning of the independent morpheme, *wà*.

*Àdìn*, when closely looked at, does not have exactly the same meaning as *ìwà*. As analyzed in case of *ìwà*, *àdìn* is derived from “*à*”, a dependent morpheme, and “*dìn*” that is both dependent and independent. Hence the task is to give the meaning of *àdìn*. Before that, it has to be quickly pointed out that *ìwà* has its variant in Akure, which is *ìwà*.<sup>3)</sup>

In Akure, *ìwà* could be interpreted to mean character, behaviour, conduct. In this case, an Akure will say *ìwà rẹ̀ sun-àn* or *ìwà rẹ̀ rẹ̀ mí*, which in Yorùbá is *ìwà rẹ̀ dára* or *ìwà rẹ̀ wù mí*; meaning his/her characters are good or I like his/her characters.<sup>4)</sup>

*Àdìn* means more than what *ìwà* or *wà* means. *Àdìn* is synonymous with *ìwà* [*ìwà*] (character), *àṣà* (culture), *ùṣe* [*ìṣe*] (tradition). Given this, *àdìn* is considered as an all-encompassing concept. However, some may say that it is all inclusive, that is, it brings what is not supposed to be within its scope to be. Whereas, a clear understanding of it will make one know that it is an all-encompassing concept, which stands for charac-

ter, culture, and tradition. *Àdìn* as character is personal; it is referred to as personal/individual *àdìn*. But *àdìn* as culture and tradition is interrelated, so this is called collective *àdìn*.

Personal *àdìn* serves as identity for individual, for an individual is known and identified through his *àdìn*. Sometimes, the individual *àdìn* is attributed or linked with *ẹwà*; hence there is the Akurẹ name *Àdinlewà* (character is beauty). The beauty of a person is not reckoned with but his/her character. Collective *àdìn* are the ones common to, and shared by, all Akurẹ people. These include language (dialect), religion, socialization, dressing, food, history, governance, etc.

*Aládìn* is another important concept. “*Al*” is a prefix before *àdìn*. It confers ownership on the bearer of *àdìn*. *Aládìn* is a derivative of *ọni kọ ni àdìnà ọni làdìnàaládìn* = All mean the owner of *àdìn*. When *àdìn* and *aládìn* are combined, it becomes *àdìn-aládìn*, meaning character, culture, tradition (all) of another person.

The focus of this paper is culture and tradition in Akurẹ<sup>5)</sup> town, which is a collective *àdìn*. Note that the social practices of a particular society “cannot be understood unless social meanings with which they are invested are understood” (Philips, 2001, p. 11). These social practices are all in *àdìn*, which involves culture and tradition.

The cause of *àdìn-aládìn* and its implication, as it shall be shown, is the fact that varying cultures have been implanted into the original *àdìn* Akurẹ, which is the cause of the contemporary problem. Norms of other societies have been taken as the measure with which to assess theirs. As noted by Anne Philips, “It is inappropriate to take the norms that emerge within one society as the measure against which to assess the practices of others, it is not a useful way forward” (2001, p. 12). This happens when some people feel they understand the social practices, norms, culture, and tradition of a society, when in the real sense, they do not. “The social meaning and significance of cultural practices [are] best understood by those who engage in them, and it is all too easy for ‘outsiders’ to misread them” (Ibid.).

## **Culture and Its Effects on Akurẹ**

Culture has been variously defined by scholars, with some similarities and differences. Ernest Gellner sees culture as a “pattern of behaviour and communication unique to a particular community” (1983, p. 92). This definition is too restrictive. For Patrick A. Edewor, it is “the totality of a people’s way of life” (2003, p. 195). This definition is, though it seems encapsulating, too inclusive. It allows a place for things that are not supposed to be under culture. For Kwasi Wiredu, culture can be understood in, at least, two senses. It can be understood to mean the social norms and customary beliefs and practices of a human group. It can also be understood to mean language (1998, p. 36). Culture, as social norms and customary beliefs and practices, depends on the existence of language, knowledge, communication, interaction, and methods of transmitting knowledge to born and the unborn. One prominent feature of culture is the fact that it is historically derived and it involves a generational transmission through socialization, thereby making culture a learned phenomenon (Edewor, 2003, pp. 195-196). Hence, it has been classified into two aspects; the material and non-material. While the former has to do with tools, technology, arts, etc., the latter has to do with norms, values, beliefs, laws, ideas, philosophy of people, etc. Although both have impacts in the life of people, the focus here is the non-material.

The non-material aspect of culture is both historical and political (Staden, 1998, pp. 15-25). Being political allows it to be used in furtherance of political enterprises or to achieve certain political effects, “whether these effects are politically conservative or progressive” (Ibid., p. 15). Being historical means it is looked at from the perspective of anthropology. In this case, culture is seen as “cultures”—beliefs, cultural practices, laws etc.—and are categorized under the plural form (Ibid.). In all, the culture(s) of a community is/are identified with the community. Therefore, it means that each community has its own culture(s) with which it operates, which is referred to as cultural relativism. This is the

view that grasps at a truth about the contextual nature of principles of ideas, beliefs, traditions, culture. It also represents the difference between cultures (Philips, 2001, p. 1).

However, cultural difference is sometimes interpreted to imply cultural hierarchy rather than cultural variation. In this regard, to some, there is dichotomy and gradation—“better and worse,” “more advanced and more backward” cultures, “us and others.”<sup>6)</sup> Given the difference among communities, therefore, the practices of these communities may likely not be the same, if they are not related in any kind.

The culture of a particular community can be affected, thereby resulting to change and bowing down for another culture partially or completely, if the alien culture is stronger and more powerful than the culture of the community (Adésuyi, 2016, pp. 126-138). Sometimes, such a community thinks that an alien culture is worthy of being emulated and, as a result, try to emulate it without thinking of the adverse effects. A culture is incorporated into another culture by means of mixed culture. Mixed culture is said to be “a combination of blend of different cultures with one’s own” (Adeleke, 2008, p. 43). When cultures have been combined together, the result is multiculturalism, in which case, almost all the cultures in a society are given importance (Hornby, 2010, p. 970).

However, no matter how suitable an alien culture is, it may not be as perfect as the original culture of the people. An attempt to make a particular (the original) culture of the community bow down or disappear for another culture is tantamount to killing such community. It is possible for some to argue that there may not be cultural ventilation, when the old culture remains and is not affected. But this does not mean that the alien culture coming to permeate should do that to jeopardize the already existing culture.

In Akure, alien culture (*àdìn-aládìn*) has mixed with the Akure culture and tradition, only to affect them negatively. Western culture has been imposed on Akure people. This has resulted in culture conflict, which is not without consequence. The consequence of this is that “a great deal of indigenous socio-political and cultural settings will be parti-

ally or completely burnt or eroded away, or totally overhauled” (Ugboajah, 2008, p. 69). By culture conflict, it means the situation in which two cultures meet and there exists a clash of culture (Ibid., p. 71). Culture conflict does not arise in isolation, as pointed out. The genesis is multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is said to have emerged in the 1960s (Udefi, 2013, p. 66). It is conceived as an ideology that refers to the “overall evaluation of the majority group addressing the degree to which they possess positive attitudes towards immigrants and cultural diversity” (Toth & Vijder, 2002, p. 252). Some see multiculturalism as a “paradox in dealing with the question of how to construct a society that accommodates universal rights with the rights of the minority groups” (Bailey & Harindranath, 2006, p. 304). Given these conceptions, and others not mentioned here, multiculturalism is seen as an alternative to ethnocentrism, which is perceived to be deadly (van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014, pp. 459-478).

A critical look at multiculturalism as alternative to ethnocentrism reveals that it is not the case that the consequence of the rejection of ethnocentrism is multiculturalism; rather it is the acceptance of the latter that results in the former. In other words, multiculturalism is the antecedent, while ethnocentrism is the consequence. Perhaps this is the reason for Kymlicka’s assertion that multiculturalism is characterized as a feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity. It “encourages citizens to acknowledge and embrace the panoply of customs, traditions, music, and cuisine that exist in a multi-ethnic society” (2012, p. 4). It, in a way, multiculturalism allows different cultures to co-exist, although it still gives recognition to, and respect for, diversity. It is because groups, races, nations have mixed together different ideas, cultures, and traditions that resulted in to comparison among these ideas, cultures, and traditions to see which of these ideas are superior, better, inferior, worse etc., and which are not (Bloemraad, 2014, pp. S292-S334). Comparison among cultures, ideas, traditions is what gave birth to ethnocentrism.

W. G. Summer, the first user of the concept, views ethnocentrism to mean that a particular group is intentionally and deliberately put at

the center and the group at the center is propagated as being emulated. That a group is put at the centre will mean that such a group, together with all it has (ideas, culture, traditions, etc.), is considered to be unique and better (1906). Another view on ethnocentrism is that it is “lacking acceptance of cultural diversity and intolerance for outgroups” (Berry & Kalin, 1995, p. 329) which results to “lack of acceptance of cultural diversity, a general intolerance for outgroups and a relative preference for one’s ingroup over most outgroups.”

However, ethnocentrism is a double edged phenomenon, with both negative and positive ends. For J. W. Neuliep and J. C. McCroskey (1997, pp. 385-98), it serves as a means to encourage “patriotism and willingness to sacrifice for one’s central group.” It is also a tool in constructing and maintaining one’s cultural identity. This is to say that ethnocentrism is not bad in its entirety. It is an attempt to judge the other group’s way of life by the standard of the way of life of one’s own group.

The ethnocentrist feels his way of life is better and tries to impose it on others. Patrick Edewor (2003, p. 198) notes that the way of life of the ethnocentrist might be influenced by his acquaintance with some other person’s culture and feels that this other person’s culture is better than his own. Therefore, he tries to impose it on his own. In this case, the new “culture” is now his, and he is trying to bring it at the detriment of his original (initial) culture. Where multiculturalism exists, ethnocentrism will be found, which leads to culture conflict and finally anarchy.

Akureṣ is an ancient town, whose origin is traced to Ile-Ife.<sup>7)</sup> Its system of governance, until the advent of colonial masters, was monarchy. Westernization<sup>8)</sup> has come into Africa with mixed cultural traditions. In this regard, Akureṣ’s case is not different. The influence (both positive and negative) is overtly observable in many aspects of African culture and tradition (Adeleke, 2008, p. 48). The negative is more evident in and, at the same time, disastrous to, especially, Akureṣ culture and tradition. A typical instance of where this is found is the political setting, the system of governance and especially the selection and installation of the king (the Deji of Akureṣ).



Given the influence of westernization on the Akurẹ (the people together with their culture and tradition), the institution of monarchy is in disarray. The institution has “suffered one form of onslaught or the other, which has gravely dragged the once revered institution down the hill” (Afe & Adubuola, 2009, p. 129). The kingship institution, especially in the South-Western part of Nigeria, has been experiencing unpleasant challenges. There is the unusual power tussle, or what can be called “power for relevance” among the subjects. One of the factors responsible for this, as pointed out by Afe and Adubuola (Ibid., p. 114), was the introduction of indirect rule brought by colonialism. With this, the traditional rulers have lost their political authority; the much revered *Kábièsí* (the unquestioned) is now being questioned on many issues by higher authority.<sup>9)</sup> What they now have is pseudo-authority; at the same time, they can best be described as ceremonial rulers over their subjects. However, people still struggle to get the so called “nominal authority and recognition” (Ibid.).

### **Critical Analysis of the Processes of Selection of the Deji: Past and Present**

The government of pre-colonial Akurẹ was an absolute monarchy. Borrowing Olusanya Faboyede’s idea, it was “an institution of great personification of power” (2013, p. 99). The King was more dreaded than even gods. However, in Akurẹ, traditional governance began to change when colonialism was introduced into Akurẹ. At the beginning it was not evident, but it was much later. Colonialism was coincidental with the year Oba Afunbiowo Adesida 1 became the Deji of Akurẹ.<sup>10)</sup> He was said to have been assisted by one Captain Roupell, who was appointed a Commissioner to Akurẹ in 1897 (Atandare, 1972). Afunbiowo was installed with mixed feeling. He had contested for the stool of Deji two times and lost, but he managed to win the third time. He was “happily sad.” He was happy because he finally got the position, but sad because

he was indebted, for he had borrowed money to contest the revered seat. For him to pay back his debt, the Deji and Captain Roupell had to sign a treaty that the *Qba* would get all he had spent and even more, but that he (Deji) would have to support the British rule. *Qba Afunbiowo* did not resist because of the perceived benefit (Atandare, 1972, p. 70). This agreement served several purposes. One, it served as the genesis of colonial rule in Akure. Two, it served as a sell-out of the Akure people. This also brought *àdìn-aládìn* into Akure. This does not, however, mean that there were no merits; civilization and its elements came in. But does it mean that if the Deji had not sold-out his people because of his egoistic tendency, the Akure people would not have witnessed civilization and development?

The office of the Deji is hereditary, as in the case of other *Qba* in Yoruba land. “The office is hereditary in the same family, but not necessarily from father to son” (Johnson, 1921, p. 40). The succession by hereditary is established by male descendants of the original founder(s) of the lineage (Raji and Danmole, 2004, p. 270). When *òpó yè* occurs, meaning that the Deji joins his ancestors,<sup>11)</sup> the *Ìàrẹ̀fà mefà*, king makers, who are members of the Deji-in-Council, will make announcement of the passing away of Deji. In all, there are sixteen chiefs; some of them are *Olisa*, *Qdọpetu*, *Èlẹmọ*, *Asamọ*, *Aro*, *Ojọmu*, *Asae*, etc. (Afe, 2008, p. 58).

After the announcement, burial and other rites for the deceased king will follow. Having completed these rites, the next process is that of searching for the right successor of the king. Here comes the duty of the *Ìàrẹ̀fà mefà* and others, whose actions are needed. The first thing is for the *Ìàrẹ̀fà* to inform the royal families to present candidates from among the princes, from whom one will be chosen.<sup>12)</sup> Having presented them (the candidates) to the *Ìàrẹ̀fà*, they (the *Ìàrẹ̀fà*) will, in turn, present them to the *Ifá* priest, who will consult *Ifá* to know whose candidature is preferred.

There are criteria that must be met by any Prince vying for the stool of Deji. Apart from the basic criterion of being an authentic member

of a royal family with royal blood flowing in his vein, the following criteria must also be met:

One, his birth must be after the ascension of his father to the throne of Deji and not his grand father. The father must die and be buried as Deji.

Two, his mother must be Olori (Queen), who is a/or one of the recognised wife/wives of the father, the Deji.

Three, he must be morally upright, physically balanced (without any deformity whatsoever), and emotionally stable, and an acceptable age (Ige, 2005, pp. 6-7).

Looking at the first criterion, it implies that some princes have been denied *Dejiship*. Indirectly, they have been denied one of the rights of a royal family. Given the trend of *Obaship* in Akure, only one particular royal family and some selected members of such family are favored by the criterion; the royal house is the Adesida family. Members of the family have been succeeding one another since June 10, 1897.

Each candidate is represented by an object. The object could be *èkóidè* (a feather of a parrot), *eyo edió* (cowry shell), *òkúta* (stone), *àkí-kàrágbá* (part of broken calabash), *àpáidì* (broken pot), *eyo èkà* (a maize grain), etc., which serve as the candidates' agents (Atandare, 1972, p. 68 & p. 106). The name of each of them is whispered on each of their agent by *Asamò*, who represents the *Ìàrèfà* and hands each to *Ọ̀şinio*.<sup>13)</sup> He consults *Ifà* to choose the rightful person. This process is I call "Oracular Blind Review and Screening" of the candidates. The profile of each candidate is run through, and what will become of the fortune of the town (Ajayi & Ojo, 2011, p. 313). Having done this, *Ọ̀şinio* "returns and hands back the [object], which has the best portent" (Ige, 2005, p. 7). The *Olisa* then pronounces the name of the successful candidate (Ige, 2005, p. 7). The successful candidate is invited to his own house for *Arapon*.<sup>14)</sup> He is taken to *Aşamò*'s house for seven days where his physical fitness is tested. He is equally tested for potency at *Ùtàmò* with two ladies (virgins) to see whether or not he can "perform"

(Atandare, 1972, p. 107; Ige, 2005, pp. 3-7).

One has to question the ethical implication of this practice. One does not deny the fact that it is a cultural practice, but how tenable is the practice? How about the health implications involved? It is assumed that the virgin ladies are most likely going to be STDs free. On the other hand, the Deji-elect is already with wife. How about the right to freedom of expression of the ladies? If they are forced, it means they have been deprived of their rights. If they are persuaded to consider the “royal offer”, how sure are we that they are willing to accept the offer? What if they reject, is there any further implication? Cannot the Deji-elect test the potency with his wife? Is it the case that the Akurẹ might be suspecting foul play, thereby doubting the trust of the family? These and some other issues may be raised against this practice.

Apart from this, other rites include leaving for *ugbó Alakurẹ* (old site of Aşodeboyede family quarters); going to Ooye’s house, where he will live for three months in seclusion; and finally to *Àdòfin* (Deji’s palace), where he will be crowned (Ige, 2005, p. 5). Now that government of the day intervenes, when all these have been completed, he is presented with a Staff of Office and certificate by the State Government. For the Akurẹ people, this is the “due process” for becoming the Deji.

The last selections and coronations of the Deji showed that the Akurẹ people have been affected by *àdìn-aládìn*, thereby not following the due process. The first was the occupation of the deposed King, Adesina Oluwadare Adepoju,<sup>15)</sup> a royal Prince from Oşupa ruling house. Adepoju did not meet some of the criteria. For instance, he did not meet the first and the second criteria in their entirety; and the larger part of the third criterion. This, however, did not cause any controversy, for people wanted Deji at all cost. The second was the selection of the new Deji, Oba Adebiyi Adesida, Afunbiowo II. The selection process was alleged to have irregularities and be highly political. What will surprise is that one of the offences for which Adepoju was removed by the Akurẹ people was also committed by the Deji. He was said to have “deliberately refused to complete the traditional rites for the stool of the Deji of Akure land,

contrary to the tradition and custom of Akure land” (Oladoyinbo, 2010).

Princes Ademola Adegoroye and Adebisi Adesida were two major contestants for the stool of Deji. The latter was chosen via election by the *Ìàrẹ̀fà* (the King makers). But almost immediately after the pronouncement of the new Deji by the government there followed different allegations from the camp of the opposition. It must be noted that Adegoroye did not meet all the criteria stated above. But since the *Ìàrẹ̀fà* decided not to raise the matter, no one else could do so. One of the processes is consulting *Ifá*, which is said to be necessary. This was neglected, and instead introducing a practice that is alien to the Akure as regards selection of the Deji.

That the Akure have introduced *àdìn-alàdìn* in the selection of the Deji has caused problems, conflicts, and possibly anarchy in the town. Although the *Ifá* oracle was consulted by the *Ìàrẹ̀fà* and the preferred candidate was chosen by *Ifá*, the result was not used. This implies that “there have been occasions where people ignored the counsel of *Ifá* oracle” (Ajayi & Ojo, 2011, p. 317). After consultation with the *Ifá* oracle, the election was conducted. Both processes were said to have favored Prince Adegoroye.<sup>16)</sup> However, the State government was said to have picked Adesida. The Governor of the State, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko, was alleged by one Prince Oye Arosoye to have rigged the election and announced Adesida in the absence of the king makers and immediately issued a letter of appointment to Adesida.<sup>17)</sup> Meanwhile, the Governor had promised that his administration would not dabble into chieftaincy matters and would play a neutral role when such issue arose (Johnson, 2010). His Deputy, Alhaji Ali Olanusi, was reported to have said that “the emergence of the new Deji followed all the traditional processes according to the culture and norms of the town.”

Consequent upon the demise of Oba Adebisi Adesida in 2013, attempts were made to search for a new occupant for the vacant stool. This time, it was the duty of the Oşupa Ruling House to produce the next Deji. At the close of the nomination process, thirteen candidates were cleared for the “contest.” What was expected was that the

Kingmakers would follow the “normal traditional way” to select the new Deji (Adegbehingbe, 2015a, p. 3). The “normal traditional way” expected was the selection through the process of consulting *Ifá* as tradition demands. However, it turned out otherwise; instead, it was reported that the “kingmakers unanimously decided to *elect* Prince Kole Aladetoyinbo among other contestants to occupy the then vacant stool.”<sup>18)</sup> This implies that the process of selection was election. Chief Olu Falae was reported to have said that “the kingmakers unanimously *voted* for the candidate out of thirteen...” (Adegbehingbe, 2015b, p. 2).

It is not argued here that the process of *Ifá* is immune to challenge or criticism. For instance, it could be that some disgruntled elements among the candidates suspected foul play. This can be taken care of because there is the possibility of objective consultation. What is meant by objective consultation here is that the practice of divination in this regard is a group divination; a group divination is performed by a renowned group of *Babaláwo*, who are considered competent. When this is ascertained, a higher degree of objectivity is guaranteed. This is not the case for election; the degree of objectivity perceived in election is lower compared to divination. Apart from the higher degree of objectivity, election is always not trusted. The viable approach is the divination process where it is believed that those vying for the post are “traditionalists.” As a result, they must abide by the dictates of tradition. Whosoever emerges as the monarch should realize that his preoccupation is to pre-*side*, most of the time, over traditional and cultural matters.

From all indications, it clearly shows that, even if there had not been irregularities, they did not follow the due process in selecting the Deji. From what had been discussed earlier, the processes must be followed before presentation of letter and certificate of appointment (if necessary, which I doubt anyway) and staff of office.

Election, a practice alien to the selection of Deji, was introduced and this has caused a lot of rancor, thereby dividing the Deji-in-Council. Another perceived problem is that, if continued this way, discarding consultation of *Ifá* for election, what is seen in the contemporary political

period may come to play in the traditional political setting of Akure. This may result in some people being perceived as enemies and their lives endangered, as it is happening in the country. If this creeps in, it may turn out that lives and possibly properties are not safe.

Critics may see election as nothing bad. How this will be argued to see the light of the day is what is not clear. It may be argued that via elections, people are represented. To me, I do not see any representation here. The Deji is the head of the town (indigenes and residents). How many compounds are represented by the *Ìàrẹ̀fà* that constitute the “electoral college” in the process? Members of the Electoral College are just sixteen. One is not convinced that they represent their compounds and interests.

If election replaces consulting *Ifá*, the problem of extorting the town’s people may be the order of the day. The same way Oba Afunbiowo Adesida 1 allied with Commissioner Roupell may be re-introduced with government of the day; the reason being that the new Deji may want to find a means of generating resources for himself to replace the money expended.

The deliberate neglect of *Ifá* is an infringement on the belief of some people, especially those who strongly hold onto the belief that *Ifá* is always there to reveal the unknown, while they think election cannot do so. Some believe that the voice of *Ifá* is the voice of people. Therefore, being deaf to its voice is being deaf to the voice of the people. For Enitan Onikoyi, “the voice of *Ifá* is not something you can cast aside” (2010). What this implies is that an attempt to jettison *Ifá* is an attempt to cause religious violence, or at best social disorder, at least among the traditionalists and their opponents. Morally, if the means to achieving an end is bad, it is thought the end is bad. So if the due process is boycotted because of some selfish interest, the ascension to the throne is questionable.

## Conclusion

While the focus of the paper is the selection process of the Deji of Akure, which has been greatly affected by *àdìn aláđìn*, conceptualization of basic concepts such as *adin*, *ìwà* (*ùwà*), *àdìn-aláđìn* was necessary. This was done to prepare the ground for the discussion, selection of the Deji which is a cultural identity in Akure. Having observed that this element of cultural identity has been negatively affected, the antecedent is traceable to multiculturalism, which later, in an unsuspected manner, led to ethnocentrism; in which case, alien culture has been given recognition. By implication, it is *àdìn-aláđìn* that is embraced thereby putting the once revered cultural practice in jeopardy. This has been traced back to the introduction of colonialism to Akure in 1897 when the then Deji, Oba Afunbiowo Adesida 1 ascended the throne. He needed to get money to pay the debt he had incurred while he was vying for the Deji. This coincided with the arrival of foreigner who later assisted him to accomplish his (Afunbiowo's) mission.

Despite all these, I attempt to retrace one's step and go back to the good traditional past. This is with the view to identifying and associating with one's cultural identity which appears to have been dragged into the mud due to over-embracement of alien culture. If this is not done, it is perceived that it has great implication on other aspects of Akure cultural identity. In other words, the selection of the Deji must not be via election, which is alien to the Akure people and cultural practices. Rather, the appropriate *àdìn* of Akure should be embraced.

Therefore, it is viewed here that going back to the traditional practice will be a viable alternative. If election is opted for, it may lead to opposing camps and alleging of irregularities which may create enmity, conflicts, confrontation, and anarchy (Adesuyi, 2015, p. 62). Following Adedayo Afe, the necessary function of consulting *Ifá* is for there to be peace and with the sole and ultimate reason of preventing calamity among people (2010, p. 56). Afe believes that:



Ifá oracle, through its priest, [will] select the most suitable candidate for the throne. It [is] a taboo for a king to emerge without consulting the Ifá oracle. Any king that [emerges] without the consent of any Ifá priest/oracle [will] have his tenure troubled with lawlessness, injustice and lack of peace in the society (2010, p. 56).

Another implication is that it may even be that if the person that finally emerges as the winner perceives that some particular electoral representatives do not vote for him, he may be looking for a way to revenge. One other thing that needs to be done is for the criteria for the stool of Deji to be reviewed to accommodate princes from other ruling houses to be eligible to contest, otherwise, they are being denied of their rights as members of the royal family who are also entitled for the post.

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- 1) By Akurẹ here, it refers to all the communities that speak Akurẹ dialect. These communities occupy the present Akurẹ North, Akurẹ South and Ifẹdọrẹ, and some part of Owo Local Government Areas of Ondo State.
  - 2) See *A dictionary of the Yorùbá language*, Second Impression, Reprinted, (Ibadan: University Press PLC., 2006, p. 227)
  - 3) In Yorùbá language, it is not permissible for vowel letter/sound u/ /u/ to begin a word. This rule is not applicable to some dialects, e.g. Ijẹsa, Ekiti, Akurẹ etc. ùwà is the variant of iwà; this does not, however, mean that ùwà and iwà mean the same thing strictly/technically, but they do at the surface level. For detailed analysis, see Kola Owolabi (1996). *Ijinlẹ Itupalẹ Ede Yorùbá (I): Fonetiiki ati Fonoloji*, Ibadan: Onibonjoje Press & Books Industries (Nig.) Ltd, pp. 138-141
  - 4) Note that iwà could mean a (high) place, seat of honour or power. It is in this sense that Akurẹ will say *Oba gúnwà* (the King is seated).
  - 5) By Akurẹ here, I mean the town itself. Akurẹ, the capital city of Ondo State, is an ancient city. Although, there are other communities in the town with their Kings and Chiefs; they are, however, not clearly recognized by people, except those familiar with the town. These communities are Isikan and Isọlọ. There is much to be explained about these communities, but not here. Akurẹ is said to have sprung from Ilé-Ifẹ, the acclaimed source of Yorùbá race. This cannot be properly established, due to the fact that Alakurẹ and his people, who were already occupants of Akurẹ land could not be traced to Ifẹ. The only traceable person to Ifẹ was Aşọdẹboyede Ajapada. The latter was the first monarch in Akurẹ, and later Alakurẹ. For a detailed history of Akurẹ, see J. O. Atandare, *Iwe Itan Akurẹ ati Agbegbe Rẹ* (1972).

- 6) To save time and space, I shall not expatiate more on the dichotomy and gradation. Its essence here is to point out what some people interpret cultural difference to mean. For more details, see E. Biakolo, (1998). "Categories of Cross-Cultural Cognition and the African Condition". In P. H. Coetzee and A. P. J. Roux (eds.), *The African Philosophy Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1-14.
- 7) Tracing a Yorùbá town to Ilé-Ifẹ̀ as its source is believed to justify the authenticity of such a town as Yorùbá, otherwise its link and claim are considered pseudo.
- 8) By westernization, what is meant is the bringing of customs typical of Europe and America to other countries, especially African. See A. G. Adeleke, *Bed Culture among the Yoruba*, 43
- 9) The cases of erstwhile *Qba* that have been dethroned are instances to buttress this point. There are others being tried in law courts of alleged offences. For *Qba* that were deposed, countless examples could be cited. In Ondo State, there were the cases of the then Oloṣo of Owo, Sir Olateru Olagbegi in 1965, the then Oloṣa of Òbà-Ilé, Ilesanmi Bayode, Orioge II in 1980, the then Deji of Akurẹ̀, Oluwadare Adesina Adepoju in 2010 etc. The case of Alowa of Ilowa in Obokun Local Government of Osun State, Oba Adebukola Alli being tried in a law court of alleged rape of a Corp's member is was another instance. For the report on the case of Alowa, see *Alaroye Tuntun*, Idi Ketalelogbon (Vol. 33), Eyo Karun un (No. 5), May 31, (2011): Oju iwe keji (2)
- 10) Oba Afunbiowo Adesida I became the Deji of Akurẹ̀ on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, 1897.
- 11) *Òpó yè* means 'the pillar' has fallen. Deji is referred to as the pillar.
- 12) From all indications, there are two surviving ruling houses in Akurẹ̀ -the Ajapada and Alakurẹ̀ ruling houses. The Alakurẹ̀ ruling house seems not to be visible; most of the *Qba* emerged from the Ajapada ruling house. However, the Ajapada ruling house now has branches. From this ruling house are Odundun, Osupa, Adesida etc.
- 13) Oṣinio is the head of the *Ifá* Priests. He consults *Ifá* for, and on behalf of, the town.
- 14) This is a feast. People eat some varieties of food for a period of nine days. During this period, the Deji-Elect feeds Akurẹ̀ people. However, his wife/wives and child(ren) must be absent. They are either kept in seclusion or go on temporary exile. They return on the ninth day, when they will be welcomed by people with drums and songs. The ashes and other particles/substances that could make them have any contact with *Arapon* must have been cleared.
- 15) He became the Deji on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, 2005.
- 16) I do not want to adduce to the claims of some people that Adegoroye was rejected by the Ondo state government, because the Prince was in the opposition party in the State.
- 17) See "New Deji of Akurẹ̀ Gets Letter of Appointment" in P. M News, August 13, (2010), available on <http://pmnewsnigeria.com/2010/08/12/new-deji-of-akure-gets-letter-of-appointment> (accessed on 11/10/2011).
- 18) This was according to High Chief James Olusoga, the Olisa of Akure. For more details, see Alatise, Olusola, "Aladetoyinbo Becomes Deji of Akure" in *The Hope*, No. 1996, Tuesday June 9, 2015, 1-2.

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### Biographical Note

**Olúkáyòdé R. Adésuyì** teaches philosophy at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. His areas of specialization are Epistemology and African Philosophy. His areas of competence include African Aesthetics, Gender Studies, Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion. [omoluka@gmail.com](mailto:omoluka@gmail.com)

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