

Beyond Charisma: A Weberian Analysis of Internal Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Early Nigerian Pentecostalism

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Abstract

Using Max Weber's theory on the routinisation of charisma, this study analyzes how early Nigerian Pentecostal movements managed internal disputes during their formative decades. Methodologically, this qualitative, socio-historical analysis utilizes specific primary sources, including internal church records, training modules, memoirs, area publications, and denominational histories from The Apostolic Church Nigeria (TACN) and Christ Apostolic Church (CAC). Rather than re-litigating every dispute, this interpretive, Weberian approach traces conflict episodes to identify how resolution mechanisms functioned as steps toward institutionalisation. The findings demonstrate that conflict resolution was not merely reactive; it served as a formative governance practice where legitimacy was negotiated, boundaries defined, and organizational continuity secured. By showing how charismatic authority was systematically translated into formal procedures, offices, and permanent institutions, the study highlights the overlooked organizational labor behind the public visibility of Nigerian Pentecostalism.

Menggunakan teori Max Weber tentang rutinisasi karisma, studi ini menganalisis bagaimana gerakan Pentakosta awal di Nigeria mengelola perselisihan internal selama dekade formatif mereka. Secara metodologis, analisis sosio-historis kualitatif ini memanfaatkan sumber-sumber primer yang spesifik, termasuk catatan internal gereja, modul pelatihan, memoar, publikasi wilayah, dan sejarah denominasi dari The Apostolic Church Nigeria (TACN) dan Christ Apostolic Church (CAC). Alih-alih mengadili kembali setiap perselisihan, pendekatan interpretif Weberian ini melacak episode konflik untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana mekanisme resolusi berfungsi sebagai langkah menuju institusionalisasi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa resolusi konflik bukan sekadar tindakan reaktif, melainkan praktik tata kelola formatif tempat legitimasi dinegosiasikan, batasan ditetapkan, dan kontinuitas organisasi diamankan. Dengan menunjukkan bagaimana otoritas karismatik diterjemahkan secara sistematis menjadi prosedur formal, jabatan, dan institusi permanen, studi ini menyoroti kerja keras organisasi di balik visibilitas publik Pentakosta Nigeria.

Keywords

Authority; Max Weber; Nigerian Pentecostalism; The Apostolic Church Nigeria; routinisation of charisma.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Different accounts of Nigerian Pentecostal origins frequently emphasise spiritual eruption vis-à-vis revival fire, prophecy, healing, intense prayer cultures, and the magnetism of gifted pioneers (Ojo, 2006; Kalu, 2008; Marshall, 2009). From the Aladura and Indigenous Movements (1910s to 1930s) to the Classical/Mission phase (1930s-1960s) and then to the Charismatic Renewal (1970 to present), it could be said that those emphases are not wrong. However, they can obscure a more organisationally demanding question that early Pentecostal communities had to answer repeatedly, often under pressure: how does a movement founded on extraordinary experience maintain coherence when extraordinary claims begin to compete with one another? According to Weber (1978), charismatic authority is powerful but often an unstable foundation for leadership; its legitimacy is personal and easily contested. For a movement to endure, it must be able to navigate the routinisation of charisma, which often involves a shift, catalysed by internal disputes, from reliance on gifted individuals to the establishment of institutional pillars like standardised rules, formal offices, and clear jurisdictions. In early Nigerian Pentecostalism, disputes did not simply interrupt growth; they often became the very occasions through which governance was clarified and institutional endurance became possible (Aluko, 2024b; Odion, 2025; Komolafe, Nzinga & Mulinge, 2025).

This paper, therefore, reworks early Nigerian Pentecostal history from the standpoint of internal conflict resolution as a mechanism of institutionalisation. The central argument is that early Pentecostal bodies did not become durable because charisma disappeared, but because charisma was repeatedly processed through disciplinary action, mediated settlements, relocation, negotiated access to land, and sometimes schism, into institutional forms that could outlive the immediate authority of individual leaders. While the discussion references the broad Nigerian setting in which religious conflict is socially consequential, the focus remains intra-movement and intra-denominational: how leaders and followers in early The Apostolic Church Nigeria (TACN) and related Pentecostal networks handled disagreement among themselves, and what those handling practices produced in terms of order, legitimacy, and organisational continuity.

Scholarly engagement with conflict and conflict resolution in Nigerian Christian contexts is extensive, spanning ethnic-religious conflict, intra-church disputes, and the relationship between social stability and church growth (Theophilus, Ikena & Nonso, 2023; Adeleye et al., 2024; Oyekan et al., 2024). Owoeye (2010) and Aluko

(2017; 2024a)'s documentations of major religious and ethnic conflicts within Nigeria highlight the general social reality in which churches operate and reinforce a baseline assumption for this study: conflict is not an occasional anomaly but a recurring feature of communal life, shaped by differences in background, moral conviction, education, exposure, interests, and social positioning. If conflict is inevitable, then what differentiates fragile movements from durable ones is not the absence of disagreement but the availability of trusted procedures and culturally workable settlements that prevent disagreement from dissolving the community.

Recent research also connects conflict resolution to the vitality of Christian life through the mediating institution of the family (Bartoli, 2007; Aluko, 2017; Adeleye et al., 2024; Zalukhu, 2025). Adeleye et al. (2024) argue that effective conflict management in Christian households strengthens unity and stabilises the faith environment that nurtures participation and commitment, which in turn, supports broader growth of Christianity in contemporary Nigeria. Similarly, Strømsnes's analysis of church attendance and membership in religious voluntary organisations suggests that consistent participation contributes to social capital formation, reinforcing the idea that stable patterns of belonging and practice matter for collective durability (Strømsnes, 2008). Audi's earlier contribution, though framed explicitly as a church-growth discussion, is relevant here because it recognises that growth problems are not merely theological; they consist of social and organisational challenges that must be confronted in context, including the ways internal problems hinder expansion or retention (Audi, 2004). Taken together, these works legitimise a shift in emphasis: instead of treating conflict as a side topic, one can treat conflict resolution as a central mechanism through which religious communities sustain participation and transmit identity.

However, much of the early Nigerian Pentecostal story is still told through the lens of revival and charismatic leadership, sometimes leaving the impression that institutionalisation is a natural by-product of spiritual power (Adeleye & Aluko, 2025a; Clement, 2025). The present study positions itself differently by asking how, in specific early episodes, disagreements were processed in practice and what those practices produced. In that sense, the article complements rather than replaces charisma-centred narratives as it argues that revival power became institutionally consequential partly because communities developed conflict-handling mechanisms that could preserve order without extinguishing Pentecostal spirituality.

The analysis employs Weber's typology of legitimate authority, namely traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal, to interpret the institutionalisation of

early Nigerian Pentecostalism. Charismatic authority rests on recognition of an exceptional gift or calling; it is intensely motivating but vulnerable to dispute because a rival can claim an alternative revelation or a superior anointing. Traditional authority derives legitimacy from inherited status and customary structures, which become relevant in societies where chieftaincy and royal institutions remain influential. Rational-legal authority is grounded in formal rules and offices, the kind of authority that stabilises organisations through repeatable procedures and defined competencies (Weber, 1978). In early Nigerian Pentecostal life, these authority forms did not exist in isolation; they collided and interpenetrated, especially as Pentecostal communities navigated land allocation, public order concerns, and the moral meaning of engaging with traditional titles.

Olaniyi's application of Weber to authority and power dynamics helps frame institutionalisation as a negotiated outcome produced by tensions among these authority types rather than a simple linear shift from "charisma" to "bureaucracy" (Olaniyi, 2019). This study adopts that orientation by treating moments of conflict as moments when authority is clarified. When a community excommunicates a dissenting teacher, submits to relocation pressure, or splits into separate bodies, it is not merely reacting; it is producing governance, defining boundaries of doctrine, clarifying who has the right to speak for the movement, and establishing precedents that later leaders can invoke (Aluko, 2024b). Abdulmasih's account of "intelligent leadership," though developed in a Catholic perspective, also contributes an interpretive layer because it emphasises leadership that motivates through shared mission and internalised commitment rather than sheer command, a dynamic that resonates with Pentecostal attempts to sustain unity through moral persuasion, spiritual discipline, and communal norms (Abdulmasih, 2021). The implication is that conflict resolution is not only administrative; it is also moral and symbolic, because legitimacy in religious organisations depends on whether resolutions appear faithful, fair, and spiritually credible.

Methodologically, this article is a qualitative, socio-historical analysis built from the sources provided through an MA thesis and training modules by the researchers on TACN history and early church foundations; internal church documents and souvenirs from TACN Modakeke and Ile-Ife Areas; memoir material from Banji; denominational histories, including a TACN area publication on Pastor J. A. Babatope; and Fatokun's edited historical work on tensions and schisms within TACN (Adeleye, 2010; Banji, 2006; Church Record, 2019; Fatokun, 2017; The Apostolic Church Nigeria, 1993). While the approach is interpretive and Weberian,

the research aim is not to re-litigate every disputed detail, but to trace the conflict episodes, identify the resolution mechanisms that were used, and show how those mechanisms functioned as steps in institutionalisation.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. Understanding Early Nigerian Pentecostalism

A Weberian reading expects early Pentecostal movements to experience recurrent instability precisely because charisma invites contestation. In practice, early Nigerian Pentecostal communities repeatedly faced the question of how to respond when a member claimed a new revelation, when leaders disagreed over doctrine, when external authorities demanded order, or when traditional institutions offered status that could reshape ministerial legitimacy. The routinisation of charisma is visible when disputes are processed into durable outcomes: a teaching is classified as unacceptable; a leader is disciplined; a worship centre relocates and becomes a recognised headquarters; land is allocated through external legitimation and becomes denominational property; a schism creates a new body and thereby stabilises identity boundaries for both the parent and the offshoot (Weber, 1978; Fatokun, 2017; Olaniyi, 2019). The case materials below illustrate these dynamics in concrete episodes centred on TACN's early experiences and the CAC-related institutional outcomes that emerged from conflict.

A. Ilesa: "Ododo Pataki," Excommunication, Satire, and Royal Mediation (1930s–1942)

The Ilesa episode associated with Hezekiah Akinyelu is a classic window into how a charisma-driven dispute becomes an institutional problem and then a governance problem. Adeleye presents Akinyelu as an early dissenter in TACN Ilesa, while interview testimony by D. O. Agboluaje reports that Akinyelu claimed a revelation labelled *Ododo Pataki* ("Essential Truth") and propagated teachings including "no payment of tithes" and an opposition to priestly language grounded in the claim that "priests" killed Jesus, therefore naming anyone a priest (or being called a priest) was framed as spiritually wrong (Adeleye, 2010; D. O. Agboluaje, personal communication, April 9, 2007). What matters sociologically is not only the doctrinal content but the authority logic: a dissenting leader sought legitimacy not by appealing to established

procedures but by appealing to revelation, which forced TACN authorities to decide whether revelation could override communal doctrine and recognised leadership (Adeleye & Aluko, 2025b). The institutional response was boundary enforcement through discipline: Akinyelu was labelled a heretic and excommunicated, a decision that functioned as an organisational technique for protecting doctrinal identity and reaffirming that charismatic claims would be subject to corporate gatekeeping rather than treated as self-validating (Adeleye, 2010; Weber, 1978).

The dispute then spilt into the public sphere and took on a cultural form of resistance that is important to document because it shows how conflict travels through emotion, reputation, and popular communication. The aggrieved group expressed its anger in a satirical song directed at Babatope, a local leader associated with the disciplinary action. As preserved in the sources, the song ran:

Babátópé Olè,

Ewúré Eléwúré, Mée,

Àgùntàn Alágùntàn, Mée,

Léyìnkùlé Babátópé

Oh! Babatope is a thief,

Hear the bleating of the stolen sheep, Mee.

The crying goats in his courtyard, Mee,

Oh! Babatope is a thief.

(Adeleye, 2010; D. O. Agboluaje, personal communication, April 9, 2007)

This satire is not an ornamental detail; it is part of the conflict-resolution ecology. It illustrates how spiritual and doctrinal disputes are fought through social honour and shame, and how followers mobilise cultural repertoires to delegitimize leaders when formal decisions go against them. At that point, the conflict became a threat to civic order. The Owa Obokun in council reportedly ordered the closure of TAC Oke-Eso, plausibly to prevent escalation in the town, before later ruling in favour of TAC's continued presence at Oke-Eso while also offering Akinyelu and supporters a parcel of land elsewhere at Igboosi (opposite Ilesa Grammar School) to construct a worship centre, an arrangement remembered as the permanent site of CAC Okeesa/Ilesa (Adeleye, 2010;

Ademowo, 2010). The settlement strategy is revealing: rather than forcing an unrealistic reunion, traditional authority produced a spatial compromise that reduced direct confrontation and stabilised public peace, while TACN's disciplinary stance preserved internal doctrinal identity. In Weberian terms, this is routinisation under pressure: charisma driven dissent forced the creation (or deployment) of decision mechanisms, excommunication, arbitration by external authority, and resource redistribution, that converted a volatile dispute into an enduring institutional geography in which both communities could persist (Weber, 1978; Olaniyi, 2019).

A further twist strengthens the argument that conflict resolution is itself institutionalisation. Akinyelu reportedly continued under the Ododo Pataki umbrella until 1942, when his associates chose affiliation with CAC; Akinyelu rejected the move, and his loyalists dissociated, leaving him without leadership over either TAC or CAC structures in Ilesa (Adeleye, 2010). This pattern is sociologically consistent with routinisation: when followers begin to prize stable organisational belonging, property, governance, and wider legitimacy over the singular authority of one charismatic dissenter, charisma can lose out to institutional consolidation, even if charisma initially generated the dissent (Weber, 1978; Aluko, 2024b).

B. Modakeke: Growth, Noise Complaints, Relocation, and Administrative Consolidation (1931–1942)

The Modakeke materials show a different kind of conflict, less doctrinal rivalry than public-order friction and administrative pressure, yet the routinisation logic remains. TACN's growth in Modakeke is associated with Amos Adetoye(se) Akinwumi, an artisan-evangelist whose methods reportedly included evangelistic travel, market-based contact (including hawking wooden stools as an entry-point for preaching), and faith-healing prayer/fasting during a smallpox/influenza-like outbreak, alongside collaboration with believers from other Christian traditions (Church Record, 2019; Adeleye, 2010).

In a movement where healing and loud, ecstatic worship are not incidental but constitutive, growth predictably intensifies visibility and, therefore, conflict exposure. The church's early proximity to the District Officer's residence reportedly triggered official displeasure about "incessant uncontrollable shout," framed as an environmental nuisance and a threat to

quiet life, resulting in pressure to relocate the worship site to Odo-Okun (Church Record, 2019).

The resolution mechanism here is crucial: relocation was not merely “defeat” but an adaptive settlement that preserved the movement’s survival and, over time, produced a durable administrative centre. In other words, conflict with external authority was resolved through spatial reorganisation, which then became institutional identity, TACN’s headquarters location and a stable structure for continued evangelism and oversight (Church Record, 2019). From a Weberian angle, this is charisma being channelled into rationalising practice without extinguishing it: the movement retains charismatic worship and healing identity while adjusting its organisational footprint to reduce external friction and maintain legitimacy within the wider governance environment (Weber, 1978; Olaniyi, 2019). Contemporary leadership scholarship that stresses motivation, internalised mission, and collaborative commitment can illuminate why such relocation strategies can succeed: members accept costly organisational change when they perceive it as serving the mission rather than serving elite ego (Abdulmasih, 2021), a dynamic that plausibly shaped how early believers interpreted relocation as sacrifice for continuity rather than capitulation.

C. Ile-Ife: Land, Sacred-Space Reclassification, Defection, and Non-Litigious Separation (1933–1942)

The Ile-Ife case shows how conflict resolution in early Pentecostalism often ran through land, sacred space, and competing claims to communal legitimacy. Church souvenir materials and related narratives describe early TACN beginnings in homes and subsequent relocation, including a significant appeal to the Ooni of Ife, who approved land in a forest area (Igbo-Olose) reportedly associated with traditional religious use and stigmatised burial practices (Church Record, 2008; Fabunmi, n.d.). The narratives also remember a figure described as a herbalist and Ifa specialist (“Anifa-Inu-Iwe”) as having been connected to the grove prior to its allocation to the church, and the church’s occupation is framed as a victory that redefined the area, later renaming it Odo-/Oke-Isegun (Church Record, 2008; Fabunmi, n.d.). Even when one brackets the theological interpretation of “victory,” the sociological mechanism is clear: external legitimation (royal allocation) plus symbolic

reclassification (renaming and testimony) stabilised possession and made the land a durable institutional anchor.

When the broader TAC crisis in Southwestern Nigeria unfolded, Ile-Ife became one of the sites where the institutional consequences of conflict were most visible. Accounts indicate that Pastor E. T. Latunde and many members at TAC Moore defected with him to join CAC, while the remaining TAC loyalists relocated to another site to allow peace without legal confrontation, which is presented as explaining why TAC Ile-Ife Area headquarters later sat at Okesoda rather than Moore (Banji, 2006; Church Record, 2008). This “peace by withdrawal” is a form of conflict resolution that deserves emphasis because it produces institutional outcomes without courtroom resolution: it reduces escalation, prevents prolonged hostility, and results in clearer denominational boundaries and stable geographies of administration (Aluko, 2024b). In Weberian terms, the inability to sustain unity becomes a catalyst for the creation of distinct jurisdictions, separate sites, separate oversight, separate legitimacy narratives, which is one of the ways charismatic movements routinise: conflict becomes a sorting mechanism that hardens organisational identities and makes governance possible on both sides of the split (Weber, 1978; Fatokun, 2017).

D. Chieftaincy Titles: Conflict Between Pentecostal Holiness Boundaries and Traditional

Disputes over chieftaincy titles illustrate a deeper authority collision: the encounter between Pentecostal attempts to maintain holiness boundaries and Yoruba traditional systems that confer social legitimacy. Adegboyega’s account describes how Pastor I. B. Akinyele’s aspiration to hold onto or pursue the Balogun of Ibadan title generated significant disagreement among leaders, with some viewing such titles as too entangled with traditional religious expectations to be spiritually permissible for ministers (Adegboyega, 1978). The Dictionary of African Christian Biography (DACB) biographical entry on Akinyele similarly presents this controversy as a salient issue, indicating that it was not merely private but a public identity struggle for both the individual and the movement (<https://dacb.org/stories/nigeria/akinyele-isaac/>). In institutional terms, chieftaincy conflict forces a church to define whether its legitimacy is primarily charismatic (spiritual gifting), rational-legal (ministerial office and rules), or willing to incorporate traditional authority as socially

useful capital. When consensus fails, the conflict can yield separation, but it also yields something routinising: it generates precedents, doctrinal statements, and “lines” that later leaders can enforce, thereby converting a contested moral issue into a more stable governance boundary (Weber, 1978; Olaniyi, 2019).

Fatokun’s treatment of tensions and schisms records the influence of the Latter Rain revival stream and the way doctrinal misunderstandings around it culminated in rupture. The movement’s transnational spread into Apostolic networks and its Nigerian impact through Pastor S. G. Elton are described as producing both revival effects and doctrinal conflict with TACN leadership, with unresolved issues contributing to the formation of a breakaway body, “The Gospel Apostolic Church” in Ilesa, and to Elton’s resignation from TACN appointment (Fatokun, 2017). Institutionally, this is a textbook case of conflict resolution by differentiation: when an institution perceives that doctrinal accommodation threatens coherence, it may choose to protect its boundary by letting the dissenting stream institutionalise elsewhere. Aluko’s recent framing of schism as structurally tied to Christianity helps here: separation is often interpreted morally as failure, but sociologically it can function as a stabilising device that relocates irreconcilable difference into separate containers, reducing chronic internal volatility and enabling each side to routinise its identity more clearly (Aluko, 2024; Fatokun, 2017). This does not romanticise schism; it simply recognises that schism can be one of the “resolution” outcomes through which charismatic conflict becomes institutional order.

E. Factors Contributing to Internal Conflict

Several interlocking factors recur across early Pentecostal conflicts in the TACN/CAC orbit, and they can be understood as the predictable pressures of a movement seeking to govern charisma in a complex socio-political environment. *First*, revelation-competition is central: when an actor claims “essential truth” or a distinctive revelation, the claim implicitly challenges existing doctrinal boundaries and leadership legitimacy, forcing the community to decide who has the recognised authority to define orthodoxy (Adeleye, 2010; Weber, 1978). The Akinyelu dispute exemplifies this dynamic because the authority claim was rooted in revelation and produced a doctrinal clash (tithes; priestly language) that could not be settled simply by goodwill; it required institutional decisions, and institutional decisions inevitably create winners and losers, thereby

intensifying conflict even as they stabilise boundaries (Adeleye, 2010; D. O. Agboluaje, personal communication, April 9, 2007). *Second*, leadership contestation and what might be called “power usurpation pressures” arise when followers reassign loyalty from established offices to dissident leaders, or when leaders fear that tolerating dissent will undermine the credibility of discipline and governance. In Weberian terms, early Pentecostalism’s vulnerability here is structural: charismatic authority does not automatically recognise “office,” so leaders must repeatedly build and defend the idea that communal order requires accountable structures, not only gifted personalities (Weber, 1978; Olaniyi, 2019).

Third, material and financial issues, often inseparable from doctrinal conflict, shape disputes. The tithe controversy is not only theological; it implicates resource flows, welfare obligations, and the capacity of a movement to sustain ministers and maintain property. When dissent challenges tithing, the conflict may be experienced by leaders as a threat to the organisational economy, even when participants argue from scripture or revelation, thereby intensifying the stakes and narrowing the space for compromise (Adeleye, 2010; Owoeye, 2010). *Fourth*, the interface with traditional authority systems contributes to conflict because chieftaincy titles, royal mediation, and land allocation can confer legitimacy and resources while also raising fears of syncretism or idolatrous association. The chieftaincy controversy around Akinyele illustrates how traditional status can pull against Pentecostal holiness boundaries, and how disagreement over this interface can fracture leadership cohesion (Adegboyega, 1978; Turner, n.d.; Olaniyi, 2019). *Fifth*, external governance pressures, colonial administrative control, public-order concerns, and community peacekeeping shape internal church decisions. Modakeke’s relocation narrative shows how the movement’s worship style and growth triggered external demands, and how internal cohesion depended on whether members could interpret relocation as mission serving rather than humiliating (Church Record, 2019; Abdulmasih, 2021).

Sixth, transnational influence and doctrinal importation can generate conflict by introducing new revival emphases that local institutions judge disruptive or doctrinally unsafe. The Latter Rain controversy demonstrates how global Pentecostal currents can become local governance crises, forcing institutions to choose between accommodation and boundary enforcement (Fatokun, 2017; Aluko, 2024b). *Finally*, the speed of Pentecostal growth itself

amplifies conflict: rapid expansion increases the number of leaders, creates competition for recognition, raises property and resource needs, and multiplies occasions for disagreement. Owoeye's broader observation that conflict is pervasive in social life becomes more acute under conditions of accelerated mobilisation and heightened expectations, where disappointment and rivalry can take theological form (Owoeye, 2010). Contemporary studies linking conflict resolution to stability in Christian communities also indirectly reinforce the point: where conflict-handling capacity is weak, growth can become fragile, but where conflict-handling capacity is strong, growth can become sustainable (Adeleye et al., 2024; Strømsnes, 2008).

2.2. Biblical and Organisational Concepts of Conflict Resolution

In early Pentecostal institutionalisation, biblical conflict resolution, procedural discipline, and third-party mediation function not merely as reactive strategies, but as interconnected, routinising technologies of governance. Scriptural templates, such as the private-to-communal escalation pathway in Matthew 18:15–17 and the council-based discernment model in Acts 15, serve as proto-procedural resources. Rather than remaining devotional references, these texts provide a scriptural rationale for repeatable, structured methods of hearing disputes and issuing decisions (Weber, 1978; Adeleye, 2010). By narrating modern constitutions, executive councils, and disciplinary committees as "biblical order," these movements sacralise bureaucratic procedures, transforming organizational compliance into a spiritual obligation.

However, for these structures to maintain legitimacy without being perceived as "quenching the Spirit," they must adhere to rigorous standards of fair hearing and evidence. Grounded in Pauline counsel regarding witness testimony and communal restoration (e.g., 1 Tim. 5:19–20), institutional credibility relies heavily on the perceived fairness of disciplinary actions. When discipline lacks transparent procedural credibility—as seen in the Ilesa excommunication backlash—it can generate counter-legitimacy narratives that actively destabilise authority (Adeleye, 2010). Consequently, routine practices such as documenting allegations, convening elders, and providing structured pathways for reintegration are established to prevent internal disputes from escalating into existential organizational crises.

When internal procedures fail, early movements frequently rely on mediation and arbitration—often crossing boundaries between church and community authority—as vital organizational technologies to secure long-term stability. The

external arbitration by the Owa Obokun council in Ilesa demonstrates how third-party intervention converts volatile theological and leadership contestations into manageable, localized arrangements, such as spatial separation and negotiated land allocations (Adeleye, 2010; Ademowo, 2010).

Far from being mere emotional closure, these combined mechanisms of biblical replication, fair hearing, and structured arbitration create the precise institutional conditions required for sustained participation and communal continuity (Adeleye et al., 2024; Strømsnes, 2008). Through these patterns, raw charismatic authority is systematically translated into durable, predictable governance structures.

2.3. Discussion: Conflict Resolution as Routinisation in Practice

Across these case materials, conflict resolution appears less as an afterthought and more as a constitutive mechanism through which early Pentecostalism became institutionally durable. The Ilesa episode shows routinisation in layered form: *first*, doctrinal boundary-making through excommunication; *second*, the cultural politics of legitimacy and resistance through satire; *third*, public-order containment through traditional authority intervention; and finally, spatial settlement through land allocation that produced parallel institutional geographies (Adeleye, 2010; D. O. Agboluaje, personal communication, April 9, 2007; Weber, 1978). What looks like fragmentation is also a process of institutional mapping: TAC and CAC identities become territorially anchored, administrative oversight becomes clearer, and future conflicts now occur within more defined jurisdictions. In that sense, resolution does not necessarily heal relationships; it often stabilises systems. Aluko's recent emphasis on the structural intimacy between schism and Christian history helps interpret this without moralising it: schism can operate as a governance outcome when a movement lacks a shared mechanism for doctrinal convergence, and separation can reduce the internal volatility that would otherwise destroy organisational continuity (Aluko, 2024; Fatokun, 2017).

The Modakeke relocation narrative adds another dimension: routinisation can be produced not only by internal doctrinal policing but also by adaptive settlement under external pressure. By relocating, the movement converts a conflict with the governing authority into an administrative reconfiguration that eventually becomes institutional identity and headquarters stability (Church Record, 2019). This suggests that routinisation is not only "bureaucratisation"; it is also organisational learning under constraint. The movement retains charismatic worship but develops an ability

to negotiate space, manage public visibility, and preserve mission continuity under surveillance or complaint. Leadership theories that emphasise mission-internalised motivation rather than coercive command help illuminate how such costly adaptations become acceptable to members, especially in movements where sacrifice is spiritually valorised (Abdulmasih, 2021).

The Ile-Ife narratives further show how routinisation may proceed through land legitimisation and symbolic reclassification of sacred space, followed by non-litigious separation during wider crises, producing stable denominational geographies that can be administered over time (Church Record, 2008; Fabunmi, n.d.; Banji, 2006). The chieftaincy controversy then reveals routinisation at the level of identity boundary: conflict forces explicit decisions about the church's relationship to traditional authority, and those decisions become precedents that clarify acceptable leadership behaviour (Adegboyega, 1978; Olaniyi, 2019).

Taken together, the cases demonstrate that early Nigerian Pentecostal institutionalisation was built through a repertoire of conflict-processing tools: discipline (including excommunication), mediation and arbitration (often involving traditional authorities), relocation and spatial compromise, and schism as differentiation when reconciliation failed (Adeleye, 2010; Fatokun, 2017; Church Record, 2019). These tools are routinising because they are repeatable, and repeatability is the bridge between charisma and institution. Contemporary scholarship that links conflict resolution to stability in Christian homes and to sustained participation in religious communities provides a modern echo of the same logic: where conflict-handling capacity is strong, commitment and continuity become more likely; where it is weak, growth can be undermined by recurring rupture (Adeleye et al., 2024; Strømsnes, 2008). The argument, then, is not that charisma disappears, but that charisma becomes governable through practices that limit the destructiveness of inevitable disagreement and translate crisis into organisational form (Weber, 1978; Olaniyi, 2019).

3. CONCLUSION

Early Nigerian Pentecostalism did not institutionalise simply because revival produced crowds or because charismatic leaders inspired devotion. It was institutionalised because communities repeatedly confronted internal and external conflict and developed workable ways to process it. Through discipline, mediated settlement, relocation, negotiated land arrangements, and sometimes schism, early

Pentecostal bodies clarified doctrine, stabilised leadership legitimacy, protected communal order, and produced durable organisational geographies that outlived individual pioneers. A Weberian analysis thus reframes conflict episodes from being merely disruptive to being constitutive: they were moments when charisma was forced to become organisationally legible, generating the institutional scaffolding that later made Pentecostal visibility sustainable in Nigeria's religious landscape.

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