

INDIGENES AND NON-INDIGENES CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF JOS  
NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF PLATEAU STATE, 2000-2014

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**Abstract**

Jos North in North Central Nigeria in recent times has suffered from indigenes and non-indigenes violence. Ethno-religious sentiment, identity politics and constitutional flaw were the dominant causes of the conflicts. This study examines the context and dynamics of the conflicts from a historical and political perspective. The study adopted a combination of methods. First, we relied on secondary data drawn from an array of published and unpublished materials relevant to the study such as books, journals, magazines, conference and seminar papers, newspapers, white papers of investigation panels and Commission of inquiry. Secondly, primary data were generated using questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was intended to enhance precision while the unstructured questionnaire enhanced diversity and allowed for in-depth discussion. The research sample was purposively drawn from Jos North L.G.A and the timeframe for the study is 2000 to 2014. In interpreting our data, the relationship between ethno-religious sentiment, identity politics and conflict was established at both theoretical and empirical levels. This was complemented by descriptive quantitative analysis. In doing this, information gathered were summarised and processed through statistical package for social science [SSPS]. Conclusion was drawn that the conflict in Jos North Local government is more of ethnic and politics than religion. Recommendations such as creation of good political platform, thorough education of Nigerians to accept the pluralistic nature of the society, strengthening of political participation, constitutional amendment among others were proffered.

**Keywords:** Indigenes, Non indigenes, Ethnic, Religion, and Identity Politics.

**1. Introduction**

Plateau State is situated in the North Central political zone of Nigeria and is home to a number of ethnic and religious groups. The North zone which is also known as the Middle Belt itself came about as a result of minority politics in Nigeria's First republic (1960-1966), and Plateau State is a typical example. Some of the smaller ethnic groups in Nigeria are found in Plateau State, and on average, there are about fifty (50) officially listed ethnic groups in the State (Plateau State Peace Conference, 2004). In addition to the ethnic diversities of the State, Plateau State parades one of the most diverse forms of religious plurality. Chronologically, Jos, the State capital is a hotbed of Northern part of the country and has been home to the headquarters of many Christian missionaries founded in the colonial era. In recent times, many Christian organizations have preferred Jos as its Headquarters (Best, 2006).

Another variant and notion of the religious credentials of Jos is the firm belief among the Hausa-Fulani that they discovered, founded and nurtured the city to a modern city (Egwu, 2003). With the coming of the Hausa identity comes the Islamic label which the Hausa-Fulani wasted no time to assert (Best, 2003). More on this is the fact that Jos is also home to a growing Islamic presence and activity. The Izala movement (JIBWIS), a radical Islamic evangelical organization lays claim to having been founded in Jos and has a very large fellowship throughout Nigeria. In effect, and as a result of the aforementioned factors, conflicts in Jos has a great tendency of becoming rapidly extended and being tagged “Religious Conflict” (Best, 2003). This was because religious identity and ethnicity coincide or contradict each other, depending on the context (Egwu, 2003).

The next level to this analysis is the position of Jos in the conflict map of Plateau State. Jos being the capital of the State is not just a kind of a city whose problem maybe localized and left to its residents to grapple with (Ibrahim, 2006). A conflict in Jos easily escalates and extends to other parts of the State by the mere fact that people residing outside Jos are sentimentally attached to the issues in Jos. Plateau indigenous groups in local government areas outside Jos hold strong opinion about Jos conflict in the same way that the Hausa-Fulani diaspora populations, and by extension Muslim population in the diaspora are sentimentally attached to what happens to the Muslim Umma or Hausa-Fulani community in Jos city and its environs. This is the attempt to create a link between the conflicts in Jos and the Northern Zone of Plateau State.

Be that as it may, and the diversity of Plateau State notwithstanding, Plateau State does not have a long history of conflict. This is why it is initially believed that the State is “home of peace and tourism” in Nigeria. While the rest of Northern Nigeria boiled in the 1980s and 1990s, Plateau State remained peaceful, calm, and reassuring to other Nigerians looking for safe havens from the insecurity that was associated with many of the far Northern states (Best, 2006).

Thus, dysfunctional and sustained conflict in the state dates back only to the early 1990s with the Jos North of April 12, 1994 over the naming of a Hausa- Fulani candidate as Caretaker Committee Chairman of Jos North Local Government Council. This appointment was rejected by the indigenous groups of Afizere, Anaguta and Berom leading to a violent conflict between the two groups. That conflict seemed to have been a culmination of age-long struggles between the indigenes and the Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups to control the machinery of government in Jos North local government area. Earlier in 1992, the Babangida administration created the Jos North local government out of Jos Local Government Area, with boundaries suspected by the indigenous people as designed to give the Hausa-Fulani a permanent hold over the local government (Best, 2006). The Hausa-Fulani saw the creation as an answer to their own cry for political space which they could identify with, thereby having a voice in the political economy of the area. The protest of the indigenous groups against the creation of the local government and effort to reverse the creation fell on deaf ears. The riot of 1994 became a vent for the pent-up tension over the creation and the frustration it generated on both sides of the ethnic divide. Thereafter, there appeared to be a lull in Jos, but less intensify conflicts continued in other parts of the state, like the 1998 Gyero road conflict in Bukuru, the Mangu-Bokkos boundary conflicts of 1992, and the conflict between the Taroh and the Hausa-Fulani in Langtang, also in 1992.

Closely related to this is the issue of compartmentalizing Nigeria into indigenes versus settlers within the same country. The historical process through which this dichotomy was formulated begins from the pre-independence to the colonial period. The dichotomy is not limited to a religious divide but also extended to ethnic, regional and tribal boundaries. Although Nigeria's constitution does not allow any form of discrimination against any Nigerian on any ground whatsoever, the reality on the ground regarding citizenship and indigeneship still rages in Nigeria with no sign of solution, given the aggression with which every indigenous group is determined to maintain the status quo. The conflicts between indigenes and non-indigenes put a question mark on the chapters three and four of the Nigerian Constitution which deal with the rights of citizens and fundamental human rights.

It is against the background that this research poses the following research questions.

- a. How has ethno-religious sentiment influenced the conflict in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State?
- b. How is Nigerian Constitution a factor in the indigenes and non-indigenes conflict of Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State?

The objective of the study is to examine the role of indigene and non-indigenes on the conflict of Jos North Local government area of Plateau State. The specific objectives are to: Find out how ethno-religious sentiments influenced the conflict in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State and to examine how Nigerian Constitution contributed to the problem of indigene-settlers divide in Jos.

## **2. An Overview of Citizenship, Indigeneship and Non-indigenes**

There is no universally accepted definition of citizenship. Scholars and statesmen have conceptualized it from different perspectives and therefore emphasized different aspects of the concept. It is perhaps much easier to identify a citizen than to define it. Gauba (2003) defined citizenship as a status of an individual as a full and responsible member of a political community. He went further to state that citizenship is the product of a community where the right to rule is decided by a prescribed procedure which expresses the will and nobody is discriminated on the grounds of race, religion, gender, place of birth etc. This definition underlines the cardinal contents of a liberal citizen. It outlines aspects such as responsibility, will and absence of discrimination. It may be faulted for its lack of emphasis on rights, ownership and position of rules and government. This deficiency is remedied in the definition provided by Egwu (2003) who notes that citizenship entails a relationship between the individual and the state in relation to mutual rights, duties and obligations. In a similar vein, Otite (2003) defines the concept of citizenship as:

A status of a person who is entitled to enjoy all the legal rights and privileges granted by a state to the people comprising its constituency and is obligated to obey its law and to fulfill his/her duties as called upon by the state for the benefit of all

We can deduce from the foregoing definitions that citizenship denotes a status of a person recognized under the custom or law of a state that bestows on that person the rights and duties such as duty to follow the country's law, to pay taxes, etc.

The Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary of Current English stressed that the word indigene was derived from the Latin word *indigene* which denotes *native, originating or occurring naturally* in a place. The word indigene in Nigeria first appeared in the native authority law of 1954 which defined an indigene as someone whose genealogy can be traced to a particular geo –ethnics space within a local council or state in which she/ he is resident (International Crisis Group of Africa, 2012:3) . Section 2 of the Federal Character Commission Act of Nigeria defined indigene in this direction:

- (a) An indigene of a local government means a person either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents was or is an indigene of the local government concern or
- (b) An indigene of a state means a person who is an indigene of one of the local government in that state.
- (c) An indigene of Federal Capital Territory is a Nigerian citizen other than by naturalization, who cannot lay claim to any state of the federation or is a person born in the Federal Capital Territory and whose descendants lived in the area presently constituting the Federal Capital Territory before 26 February, 1976 and has continued to reside in the Federal Capital Territory after that date.

The definition of the concept is clearly expressed by Egwu (2003) as a status conferred on a person whose parents or grandparents were member of a community indigenous to a particular state. He outlined features such as ancestral root and origin as the crux of indigeneship. The definition neglects other major features such as duration and its modes of acquisition. Nnoli (2001) observed that indigene of a place is an identity of being born in a place in a particular location into a specific ethnic group consider to have a homeland within the locality. Espousing a similar view, the sociologist Otite (2003) conceives of the term indigene as interest-based and biased ideas of a particular group in a society. With this , we can therefore deduced from the foregoing definitions that indigene denotes set of ancestral linkage to a place, root , duration, perception of interest of a group in order to secure maximum control over a place.

The term non-indigenes has been conceived and constituted in different ways. According to Alubo (2006), they are people who have their ethnic background elsewhere, even if they were born in a particular state or lived all their lives there. While in agreement with the above conception, Ibrahim (2007) observed that a non- indigenes is regarded as a bird of passage that would ultimately go home. From the foregoing definitions, we can infer that a non-indigene is someone whose root is traced elsewhere and perceived by the interest- based group as a settler.

### 3. Constitutionalism and Citizenship in Nigeria

Section 25, 26 and 27 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution make provisions for all categories of citizenship i.e. by birth, by registration and by birth, by registration and by naturalization. The constitution also makes provision for the right and obligation of the citizen. The notion of citizenship connotes reciprocity between rights and duties. This is so because citizenship confers certain duties alongside right and privileges.

Sections 33-43 are constitutional provisions which guarantee the fundamental rights of Nigerian citizens. The right to freedom from discrimination, in section 42 (1), (2) and (3) is of utmost importance. According to these sections and subsections:

A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion shall not by reason only that he is such a person be subjected either expressly or in practical application of any law enforce in Nigeria or any such executive or administrative action of the government, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religion or political opinions are not made subject; be accorded either expressly by, or in the practical application of any law enforces in Nigeria or any such executive or administrative action or any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religion or political opinions; no citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reasons of the circumstance of his birth; nothing in subsection (1) of this section shall invalidate any law by reason only that the law imposes restrictions with respect to the appointment of any person to any office under the state or as a member of the armed forces of the federation or member of the Nigerian police force or to an office in the service of a body corporate established directly by any law enforce in Nigeria.

There is no doubt that these constitutional provisions are safeguard against discrimination in any form in the country. They consider all Nigerians as citizens with equal rights, irrespective of race, sex, religion, and status. The framers of this constitution just like the ones before it had the intention to use the provisions of citizenship and fundamental rights to promote national political objectives, to build a united and free society for all Nigerian citizens (Tilly, 2005).

In theory, the enjoyment of fundamental rights has no discriminatory application but in execution, there are a lot of problems, which appertains to some aspect of the constitution itself. This is to say that, the constitution itself, has created problems for Nigeria citizens as it shall be seen in this work. For example, such problems lie in the constitutional provisions on issues like the implementation of the federal character principle, quota system and the problem of indigeneship.

#### **4. Indigeneship and the Nigerian State**

Indigene is a concept employed to distinguish between the indigenes or natives of a state or locality and those who are referred to as non-indigenes or settlers. Indigenes, according to Abdullahi (2002) are a biological term that has assumed serious social and political meaning in Nigeria and around the world. Indigeneity is used in Nigeria to distinguish natives of a particular place from other Nigerian citizens found in that locality.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is a pluralistic multi-national state. Hence, there is deep attachment of Nigerians to their states of origin, regardless of whether or not they are residing there. The Nigerian state does not offer sense of oneness to Nigerians; what give

them hope are mostly their ethnic groups to which they own more allegiance and loyalty (Renolds, 2001). Some of the founding fathers demonstrated aptly their ideas of the Nigerian state in the consciousness of Nigerians. For instances, Obafemi Owolowo noted, “The Nigerian state is a mere geographical expression.....” (Obafemi, 1947) and Ahmadu Bello (1922) observed, “The establishment of Nigerian state is the mistake of 1914...”. These notions about the Nigerian state are still real as those nationalists saw them then. In corroborating this, Osoba and Usman (2003:8) noted about indigeneship in Nigeria thus:

State citizenship (i.e. indigeneity) is even more stringent and biologically determined than national citizenship in the sense that it does not make state citizenship comparable provisions to those on national citizenship by registration or naturalization no matter how long a Nigerian has resided in a state of Nigeria of which none of his parents is an indigene, such a Nigerian cannot enjoy the right to participate fully in the public life of that state.

It needs to be noted that the introduction of regionalism by the Richards constitution in 1946 and the series of changes in leadership in 1963, 1967, 1976, 1987, 1991 and 1996 in the country have not only encouraged sectional consciousness, loyalties and sentiments but have also made these States centers of attraction to Nigerian citizens (Ibrahim, 2007). In emphasizing the importance and the centrality of indigeneship to the Nigerian State, Nwosu (2000) attributed it to the cake sharing syndrome and the distributive pressures associated with Nigerian federalism. Indigene is a weapon in the hands of the political elite in the struggles for state power and resources. As Nwosu (2000:21) eloquently put it.

The political elite have fanned religious and ethnic factors in the pursuit of their selfish and acquisitive interests. This attitude of the elite, fuelled by distributive pressures of the cake sharing syndrome of Nigerian politics, underpins the perennial divisive crisis of our nation concerning revenue, federal character, the struggle for new states... all of these are distributive centrifugal forces in Nigeria’s federalism (Ibid).

One of the things that make the issue of indigene deep-rooted in Nigeria is the factor of land. Land ownership is highly valued in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. Africans and indeed Nigerians see land as an inheritance from God and, as such, nobody wants outsiders to encroach on his inheritance. Land is handed over from one generation to the other (Beinen, 2000). In Nigeria, the state and citizenship have little or no appeal in the consciousness of the people.

As such, they are not bothered about what happened to the Nigerian State and their citizenship status (Galtung, 1996). In other words, people see the State as highly incapable of guaranteeing and protecting their rights and offering them privileges. Acceptance and rejection of linguistic and cultural groups becomes the character of social relations. This leads to discrimination in access to material and non-material resource (Nnoli, 1978)

## 5. Theoretical Underpinning

**The frustration-aggression theory** was adopted and utilized as the theoretical framework of the study. The frustration-aggression theory which John Dollard (1939) and his research associates initially developed in 1939 and has been expanded and modified by scholars like Leonard Berkowitz, Neal Miller and Aubrey Yates in 1980. Scholars who rely on this explanation use the psychological theories of aggression (O'Connor, 2001). In an attempt to explain aggression, scholars point to the differences between what people feel they want or deserve as opposed to what is attainable (Feinberg, 1969).

The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking or frustrating a person's efforts to attain a goal. The frustration-aggression hypothesis attempts to explain why people scapegoat. It attempts to give an explanation as to the cause of violence. The theory, developed by John Dollard and his colleagues, says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target. This theory is also used to explain riots and revolutions. Both are caused by poorer and more deprived sections of society who may express their bottled up frustration and anger through violence.

The theory explains the differences between the expected need satisfaction (what an individual is expecting) and the actual need satisfaction (what comes at the end). Where expectation did not meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront those responsible for frustrating their expectation. This is the central argument that Gurr's (1999) Relative Deprivation Thesis addressed by saying that the greater the discrepancy, however marginal, between what is desired and what is attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result.

The main explanation that the frustration-aggression theory provides is that aggression is not just undertaken as a natural reaction or instinct as realists and biological theorists assumed, but that it is the outcome of frustration and that in a situation where the legitimate desires of an individual is denied either directly or by the indirect consequence of the way the society is structured, the feeling of disappointment may lead such a person to express anger through violence that would be directed at those responsible or people who are directly or indirectly related to them (Fisher, 1999). In a situation where feelings of frustration become widespread among the population and the feeling is that people are getting less than they deserve, the most advisable thing that political leaders can do is to find out what the expectations of such individuals and groups are and to seek ways of negotiation.

- a. All humans have basic human needs which they seek to fulfill, and that the denial and frustration of these needs by other groups or individuals could affect them immediately or later, thereby leading to conflict.
- b. Humans cannot be taught to accept practices that destroy their identity and other goals that are attached to their needs and because of this, they are forced to react against the factors, groups and institutions that they see as being responsible for threatening such needs.

## Justification and Application of the Theory

The theory was adopted based on the notion that Jos North local government conflict surfaced as a result of frustrating tendencies which has been nursed by the conflicting groups

such as preferential treatment of particular ethnic group at the expense of others, favouritism, superiority feelings of religious (religious sentiment) and ethnic groups (ethnicity), discrimination in term of employment, offer of admission, issuance of indigene certificate, prevalence of poverty, high level of labour unrest, imposition of headship by the state machinery, insinuation, grudges, land scarcity and a lot of others (Treameane,2007). It is the accumulation of the frustrating tendencies between the locals and so-called settlers that paved ways to aggressive elements such as the massive killings, burning of houses, destruction of property and a host of others.

The theory is applicable to the Jos North conflict in the sense that the Hausa-Fulani community in the locality often felt aggrieved when addressed as settler and non-indigenes, when they have stayed in the community for a longer period of time. The Beroms, the Afizeres and the Anagutas see the Hausa-Fulani as sojourners in the community. There was also the problem of continue denial of the Hausa-Fulani the mantle of leadership of the local community despite their sumptuous population (Tangri, 1998). Since the creation of the Local Government Area in 1991, the Hausa/Fulani have never emerged as a leader despite their dominant population in the local government. This is based on the perception that the indigenous ethnic minorities had long been dominated by the Hausa/Fulani in the control of commerce and economy in which the former had been reduced to spectators (PSPS, 2006).

This arrangement made the Hausa/Fulani to believe that they are hegemony in the place and that going by the ethno-religious configuration of the area, they would always win. With this development, most government that came often appoint or nominate the indigenous people to head the local councils (Olowu, 2008). There is accumulation of frustration by both the locals and the Hausa/Fulani's.

The locals see the aspiration of the so-called non-indigenes into political or executive offices as an insult. The Hausa-Fulani on the other hand sees the appointment of the minority indigenous people (instead of election) into the machinery of government as anti-democratic (Albert, 1995). With the continuous accumulation of frustration, aggression ensued and consequently conflict.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

This study assumes that:

- Ethno-religious sentiments have mutually reinforced the menace of indigene-settlers conflict in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.
- The contradictions in the Nigerian constitution have played a crucial role in promoting indigenes and non-indigenes conflict in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.
- The struggle for control of power and resources led to settlers-indigenes conflict in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

## **6. Findings and Discussion**

### **a) Ethno-Religious Sentiments have mutually Reinforced the Menace of Indigene and Non-Indigene Conflict in Jos North local Government Area of Plateau State**

In Plateau State, the indigenous tribes have been fighting Hausa incursions since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Jos territory was successfully defended in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century against attempted “*jihadist*” penetration from neighbouring Bauchi, the nearest outpost of the so-called Sokoto Caliphate (Morrison 1982). Beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the British took over the country and Christian missionaries began reaching them, most of the Plateau people converted to Christianity. This was a shame (in the eyes of the Plateau people). Under the *Pax Britannica* (roughly 1900 to 1960), the Hausa-Fulani people and some other Northern Muslims finally found it possible to occupy parts of the Plateau. As they came they established their own self-perpetuating, always expanding, and largely self-governing communities in Jos and elsewhere on the Plateau region. Exploiting networks criss-crossing Nigeria, much of West Africa, and farther abroad, they thrived, acquired property, and grew wealthy, comparatively at least to the less well connected indigenes. They felt themselves superior to the indigenes, whom they viewed as ‘primitive’.

They did not integrate with them by adopting local customs and often, they were disrespectful. In some parts of Plateau, according to Egwu (2009), some Hausa settlers were even given power by the British to rule over the indigenes. Thus accomplishing a principal aim of the *jihad* by other means between 1902 and 1947. The British appointed twelve successive (persons as) ‘*Sarkin Jos*’ who were of Hausa/Fulani origin.

In recent years, the Hausa communities of Jos have agitated for reinstatement of their traditional rulership in the area while some even argued for an ‘Emir of Jos’ to rival the most exalted of the local chiefs (Best, 2006). Moreover, the Hausa language and Hausa culture have shown strong powers of assimilation threatening the smaller minority groups.

The claimed that beyond this, there is an agenda to “Islamize the country” or “impose sharia everywhere” is perhaps less convincing. In any case, a well-remembered Plateau record of successful armed resistance to Hausa incursions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which was subsequently subverted by the British is now being reasserted and re-enacted in the name of indigene rights (Egwu, 2006). The Plateau indigenes now also march under the banner of Christianity.

A more recent historical event is also on the minds of the Plateau peoples. This was the 1991 subdivision of the old Jos Local Government Area into two smaller pieces, Jos North and Jos South. Jos North comprises the city of Jos itself; Jos South has its headquarters at Bukuru, about 15km to the South. (Jos East LGA was carved out later, mostly from Jos South).

This division of the old Jos LGA of course changed the local political equations. Within the new Jos North, in particular, the local peoples were no longer so predominant, most of them living with less admixture of other ethnic groups in Jos South; in elections to city-wide offices in Jos North, therefore, other groups, like the Hausas, are now empowered to win. This is believed by the Plateau indigenes to have been the exact purpose for which Jos North was created; to give the Hausa community of Jos a Local Government Area they could control.

The creation of Jos North Local Government was done to favour the Hausa community in Jos. Since that exercise, Jos North has known no peace. There was no basis for the creation of Jos North, if not to carve a safe haven for the Hausa settler community. Jos North was one of hundreds of new LGAs created by decree of general I. B. Babangida, who ruled Nigeria from 1985 to 1993. In a proper parlance more local governments would drive democracy down further towards the grassroots, bringing it more closely to the people.

For their part, the Jos Hausa community says they are only seeking a fair share of the benefits that should accrue to them by virtue of their citizenship of Nigeria and the long-standing existence of their community in Jos. They say they have acquired their own cultural identity among other communities of Hausas; wherever their ancestors may have come from, they themselves are now 'Jasawa'.

This is not only claimed locally but ascribed elsewhere in the North. Among other things this means that their claim to be indigenes in the area is at least as good as the claim of the Afizeres, Anagutas and Beroms. However, that maybe, they owe a great deal of property in the area. Their exclusion from a share of governance and the benefit of indigeneship of Jos is not only unfair to them as a matter of equity. In Plateau, as indeed all of Nigeria, there are two major religions; Christianity and Islam.

There are however traditional religious followers but in terms of identity and agitation, this later group pitch their tent with either Christianity or Islam. In its contemporary situation, most of the so-called settlers are Muslim, while indigenes are mostly Christians. Based on past experiences, crisis which usually begins as ethnically based can assume religious dimension. However, the division is sometimes not respected as some Yoruba Muslims were killed by suspected Hausa/Fulani Muslims in some apparent display of what Casey (2007) has referred to as the 'Hausa ethnicization of Islam'.

**b) The Contradiction in the Nigerian Constitution has Played a Crucial role in Promoting Indigenes-settlers Conflict in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State**

The current Constitution (1999 constitution as amended) is contradictory in dealing with the indigenes/settlers questions. It provided universal criteria for Nigerian citizenship and also recognizes indigenes for purposes of appointment of ministers. In its interpretation, residency is ignored in favour of indigene/settler. Again, where is the national unity, especially that there is no opportunity for settlers to convert to indigenes? The experience underscores the nature of one country where citizens have different structure of opportunities not because of any objective criteria but due to ethnic origins. This situation perhaps explains why previous peaceful coexistence between ethnic and religious groups is now blighted by regular bouts of violence.

The 1999 constitution [as amended] which was the modification of 1979 constitution created the foundation for the rise of indigenes and non settler's menaces in the country. It provided that access to position and opportunities on the basis of federal character be on the condition of the indigene of the State or Local government concerned (Bamidele and Ikubaje, 2004:65).

Ironically the experience of the different group referred to as settlers or strangers in different parts of the country indicates that they have been in the area several years ago. All Nigerians protect their indigene status because of the attraction it offers. What is noticeable in Jos is that indigene is placed before national citizenship despite constitutional provisions that emphasize the importance and relevance of citizenship, particularly as regard the rights and obligation associated with it.

Section 42 (2) of the 1999 constitution ( As amended) says that no citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth as spelt out in the 1999 constitution, one is a citizen of Nigeria provided such as person: Was born in Nigeria before the date of independence either of whose parents or any of grandparents belong or belonged to a community indigenous to Nigeria. Provided a person shall not become a citizen of Nigeria by virtue of this section if neither of his parents nor any of his grandparents was born in Nigeria. Every person born in Nigeria after the date of independence either of whose parents or any of grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria. Every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria (chapter 3, section 1).

There are also provisions for naturalization and for foreigners to apply for Nigerian citizenship. The constitutional provision also spells out rights and privileges in a fairly comprehensive manner as to ensure rights of all citizens. As used in common parlance, an indigene is synonymous with native, strangers and “son/daughter-of-the soil”, and refers to ascribed identity of being born in a particular location into a specific ethnic group considered to have a “homeland” within the locality. To be an indigene of a place therefore means that the ethnic group can point to a territory as “native land” where such natural land is in a local government area or state.

The Federal Character Commission has defined indigene in the Local Government Area and States. It accepts people whose parents and/or grandparents were indigenes and/or people accepted as indigenes by the council. When one is an indigene of a Local Government Area in a State, he/she is automatically an indigene of that very State.

### **c) The Struggles for Control of Power and Resources Led to Settlers-indigenes**

#### **Conflict in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State**

Between 1991 and 2007 there were several outbreaks of communal violence in Jos. Two stand out: those of April 1994 and September 2001. Elections to the Jos North Local Government council and chairmanship were first held in 1991. Soon after the new LGA was created, the winner of the Jos North chairmanship was Sama’ila Mohammed – a Jasawa. This was exactly what the Jasawa had worked toward and the indigenes had feared.

The elections passed off peacefully, and there were no incidents of communal violence during Samaila Mohammed’s term. But the indigenes complained about his appointment of other Jasawa to key positions in the local government. Sama’ila Mohammed’s tenure of office ended prematurely in November 1993 when General Sani Abacha, upon seizing control of the Federal Government, dissolved all democratic structure in Nigeria, including elected State and Local Government Councils.

General Abacha, a Northern Muslim (Kanuri by tribe though born in Kano), appointed Col. Mohammed Mana, another Northern Muslim (from Adamawa State), as military governor of Plateau State. The day-to-day management of Local Governments was left in the hands of DPMs, pending further instructions. This was early in 1994, when the military governors throughout the country appointed five-person ‘Caretaker Committees’ to run the Local Government Councils. The man appointed by Col. Mana to the chairmanship of the Jos North Caretaker Committee, in early April, 1994, was Alhaji Aminu Mato, a Jasawa.

The indigenes swore not to allow Mato assume office. Tension was thus palpable in the air. On 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008, people thronged to the venue to prevent the handing-over taking place and they succeeded (Bagudu, 2003:88) Col. Mana backed away from Mato's appointment, ordering the DPM to continue running Jos North until further notice. This in turn infuriated the Jasawa. In the following days Jasawa butchers slaughtered animals on the highway near the Jos abattoir resented these and were saying others: "Acts of protest would continue until Mato was installed". On 11 April of the same year, the Jasawa held a meeting near the Central Mosque, calling for people to come out en masse for a demonstration the next day.

The following day, Jasawa youths took to the streets. This later finally degenerated into chaos and violence in the city of Jos, leading to the destruction of property and the death of four persons. Parts of the Jos Ultra-Modern Market, the Gada Biyu market and an Islamic school and Mosque along Rukuba road were destroyed. (Best, 2007: 55). This was mild in comparison to what happened in the later years. The chairmanship of Jos North has never again been held by a Jasawa person. It is not only from the local government chairmanship that the indigenes have sought to exclude Jasawa. One instance of this, discussed below, set off the September 2001 Jos crisis. An earlier example was the attempted appointment, in 1996, of Ado Ibrahim, a Jasawa to the relatively insignificant post of secretary of the Jos North Education Authority.

Normally this appointment would have been made by the local government chairman, but at the time there was none, so the military governor of Plateau State, still a Northern Muslim, appointed Ibrahim. "The indigenes vehemently opposed the appointment. The government dropped him" (Best 2007:57). On 29 May 1999, after a series of elections to all offices, the entire country. Joshua Dariye, a Plateau Christian, a Mushere from Bokkos local government, was elected governor of Plateau State. Frank Bagudu Tardy (or Taddy), also a Plateau Christian, Anaguta by tribe, was elected chairman of Jos North. Under Tardy, the issuance of indigene certificates from Jos North to Jasawa was stopped.

The Hausa/Fulani petitioned the LG chairman in a letter of 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1999, but were not satisfied with his response. Key Hausa/Fulani leaders paid a visit to the LG chairman to register their concern. They were still not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting. They further petitioned the Plateau State Government. The Hausa-Fulani claimed that the Local Government Authorities did not revert to the status quo, and the Plateau State Government did nothing about it (Best, 2007: 59).

With the return to civilian rule under the Christian indigenes of Plateau State, the Jasawa, and other Hausa/Fulani settlers resident elsewhere in the State, were increasingly excluded from participation in the State and the local government and the benefits flowing there from. This formed the background to the September 2001 and subsequent crises. The September 2001 Jos crisis was another attempt to exclude a Jasawa from appointive office. This time the appointment was made into an agency of the federal government, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). The appointment was to the office of NAPEP coordinator for Jos North Local Government. The appointment was made by the then head of State.

From September 7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Jos became the scene of mass killing and destruction. Initial figures compiled by local human rights groups, religious communities and other organizations indicated that more than 1,000 people were killed. Some villages on the outskirts of Jos had been almost completely destroyed; they lay abandoned and empty. In the centre of

town too, extensive damage to mosques, churches, schools, shops, homes, and vehicles was clearly visible (Human Right Watch, 2001:1).

## 7. Looking Forwards

As indicated in our findings, menace of citizenship/indigeneship and conflict in Jos North is a product of contest of identity, land scarcity, decline in economic opportunity, poverty, elitism and contradiction of the constitution. The following sets of recommendations were proffered:

- (a) The constitutional provision on residency rights should be strengthened and enforced to address the issues of indigenes and non indigenes divide that have created conflict not only in Jos but other part of the country. A provision should be made to the effect that a person who is resident in a particular place for a period of not less than five years is entitled to every social, political, and economic privileges and rights associated with the place.
- (b) In order to address the problem of ethno-religious conflict, government should provide a political structure and institutional framework to contain the divisive character of ethno-religious demands and identities in the country.
- (c) There should be thorough education of Nigerians to accept the realities of the pluralistic nature of Nigeria along ethnic, religious, cultural, economic and political lines rather than to be the agent of indoctrination and inciting sermon as governor of Bauchi state, Mallam Isa Yuguda has alleged: "we need a re-orientation of a return to African traditional value of communal living of being our brothers keeper and of societal solidarity".
- (d) The various institutions of political participation like political parties, civil society and electoral process need strengthening, to give room for genuine participation by all citizens. This is because democracy cannot be strengthened without popular participation and empowerment.
- (e) There is need to balance individual right, as provided in liberal democracy, with group rights.
- (f) To effectively manage conflict situation and conflict potentials in Jos North, Plateau State and Nigeria at large, apart from responding to the underlying factor as identified earlier, there is the need to put in place mechanism for dialogue and civil engagement. Government need to devise structure, train requisite personnel and deploy the necessary equipment for monitoring conflicts and deescalating existing conflict situation, transforming them into ending and sustainable peace. The structure should involve all and sundry; including religious groups, ethnic nationalities, civil societies, the academia, women groups and the government.
- (g) Findings of the research also suggested that Plateau State government in collaboration with non-governmental organization should form in partnership with each other to promote civic education, so as to inculcate in the people the method of settling issues in a non-violence manner and to develop the values of mutual compassion for each other. This could be done through workshop, conference and seminar.

## 8. Conclusion

It is established in this study that Nigerian citizens are not fully enjoying their citizenship rights because of the problem of indigenes and non indigenes. This, in the opinion of this study is very dysfunctional, particularly to the goal of national integration and political stability of the country. The issue of indigenes and non indigenes are traceable to the contradiction in the 1999 constitution (as amended).

It is therefore, the contention of this study that something urgent must be done to de-emphasize the importance and relevance of indigenes and non indigenes divide in the political system before national integration; political stability and political development could be achieved. State of residence rather than state of origin should be a major determining factor in national politics.

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