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Dynamics of Indigene/ Settler Conflicts in the Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria (1994-2012)

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Abstract

The Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and highly complex society. With groups both indigenous and settlers, the zone from 1994 to 2010 struggled to grapple with the intricacies of the indigenous/settler and ethno-religious dichotomy. The perennial violent conflict in the zone was always between the Hausa/Fulani settlers and indigenous ethnic groups. The Hausa/Fulani claim they deserve the indigeneship of the zone, having been active participants in the political, economic, and resource development of the area, thereby contributing immensely to the development of Jos as a modern city. The indigenous groups, on the other hand, regarded the Hausa/Fulani as settlers who migrated to the place for greener pastures when tin ore was a foreign exchange earner for Nigeria. This paper examines the dynamics of indigene/settler conflicts in Plateau North, its dimension, and the zero-sum nature in which one group wanted to gain and the other lose. The paper argues that what made the conflicts in the zone more complex was the multiplicity of factors such as ethnicity, religion, competition

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for scarce resources, and an attempt to gain and control political and economic space. It concludes that these negative dynamics hindered and frustrated the dividend of democracy in the zone, as lives and property were lost and scores rendered homeless in the conflicts.

Keywords: Dynamics, Conflicts, Trends, Indigene/Settler, Hausa/Fulani, and Plateau North

Introduction

The perennial conflicts in the Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau North were between the indigenous community and the Hausa/Fulani settlers. The clashes, which were about indigeneship rights, access to land for farming and cattle grazing, water, and other key natural resources, resulted in the loss of lives, destruction of properties, and the displacement of residents. Though the mere existence of diverse ethnic or religious groups did not engender conflict, the diversity of the state meant that land-based conflict easily became integrated with grievances that relate to ethnicity, religion, and political power.

Similarly, the area was highly complex with diverse multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and multi-religious groups. This complexity made the zone to be divided along the lines of religion, language, culture, ethnicity, and regional identity, thereby incubating conflicts. The Hausa/Fulani claimed that they were the earliest arrivals in Jos through migration during the pre-colonial and colonial times. According to them, they dominated trade, politics, and the traditional institution in Jos until 1948, when the last Hausa *Sarkin* of Jos died. The Hausa *Sarkin* was replaced by the first Gbong Gwom, Jos, Rwang Pam, an indigene, in 1948. The indigenous groups, however, argued that before the conquest by the Europeans, the existence of the Hausas among the indigenous groups in the area was not through conquest or early arrival, but courtesy of the *Amana* (trust) relationship between indigenes and the Hausa/Fulani. They asserted that during the nineteenth century, the Bauchi Emirate entered into a non-aggression agreement with the indigenous groups, and it was a voluntary relation. Some of the indigenes voluntarily accepted this *Amana* (trust);

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some feared it was for political subordination to the Bauchi Emirate rule and thus rejected it.¹

These contacts sparked off unhealthy rivalries in most parts of the zone, especially Jos, and remained a major source of intractable inter-ethnic and religious conflicts. The indigene/settler phenomenon was a serious cancer in the politics of Plateau North. As a cancer, it spread to every part of the zone and assumed an ethno-religious outlook in 1994 following the appointment of a Hausa/Fulani settler as the Chairman of Jos North Local Government Area. The effects were so visible and disastrous to the socio-economic development as well as to the peaceful coexistence of the inhabitants of the zone. In human histories, issues bordering on communal conflicts and inter-ethnic crises are common phenomena, as conflict is a reality in social relations at the individual, group, organization, community, and societal levels.² The persistent conflicts arising from the indigene/settler divide in various parts of Plateau North can be traced to differing conceptions, definitions, and perceptions of who qualifies as an indigene and who is regarded as a settler. These distinctions were closely tied to debates over the rights and privileges that should accrue to each group. The tension was further intensified by unhealthy and divergent ethnic-based interests, ambitions, and aspirations, as groups engaged in fierce competition over scarce resources to satisfy competing social and economic demands. These conflict dynamics ultimately led to significant loss of lives and property, as well as the widespread displacement of citizens.³

¹ Nankin Bagudu, *Recrudescence Civil Disturbances and Human Rights: The Jos and State- Wide Crisis*, (League for Human Rights, Jos, 2004). p. 65; Plateau Indigenous Development Association Network (PIDAN), *The History, Ownership, Establishment and the Misconception About the Recurrent Jos Conflict*, (n.d). p. 3-6.

²Idanosa Osaretin. "Ethno-Religious Conflict and Peace Building in Nigeria: The Case of Jos, Plateau State", *Academic Journal of Inter-Disciplinary Studies*. Vol 2 (1), (2013). pp.349-360.

³Aaron Sayne. "Rethinking Nigeria's Indigene/Settler Conflict", *US Institute of Peace*, Working Paper. (2012) Available at www.ciaotes.cccolumbia.edu. Accessed 02/06/2021.

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The Indigenous Groups in Plateau North

The dominant indigenous groups in Plateau North can be found in the six Local Government Areas in the zone: Jos North, Jos South, Jos East, Bassa, Riyom, and Barkin Ladi. The groups are Berom, Afizere, Anaguta, Miango, Irigwe, Rukuba, etc. The Berom is one of the largest indigenous ethnic groups not only in Plateau North but also in Plateau State. The Berom can be found in about four local government areas of Plateau North, and these are Jos North, Jos South, Barkin Ladi, and Riyom. They are also found in Southern Kaduna in Kaduna State, where the Berom settlers there traced their origin to Za'ang (Zawan), and a Berom district in Jos Plateau. They were assumed to have emigrated from Wakuri to Jos Plateau and settled first in Ashono, and from there moved to Riyom, where the group expanded to other places such as Machi, Afana, Assob, Rimi, Jal, Kuru, Gyel, etc., which made up the former southern part of the Jos division. About 99% of Berom are predominately Christians. Statistically, they constitute the largest population in Plateau State, and they speak the Berom language.⁴ The Jos East Local Government Area is dominated by the Afizere ethnic group, also known as Jarawa. They are also found in Jos North at the foot of the museum called Gwash and in the Jos South local government area. They traced their roots to Kaduna State, from where they migrated to Plateau State in three phases. Although they dressed like the Hausas, their culture is entirely different from the Hausas. They are a very peaceful people. In the pre-colonial times, the Afizere people loved living in the hills, and they believed this helped them to repel the Fulani Jihadists during the invasion of the area in the 19th century. The Afizere people are mostly Christian and hunters and they engaged in farming for subsistence.

The Anaguta group was the first inhabitant of present-day Jos. They are found in the Jos North Local Government Area only. The Anaguta group also joins forces with the Afizere to defend the city of Jos against the Jihadist invaders. When the Emir of Bauchi attacked the area with about 400 men, the Anaguta group, with the help of other indigenous groups, was able to repel the Islamic invaders. Because of their cultural similarities with the Afizere, they are always mistaken to be Afizere. Their

⁴ Dung Pam Sha, *The Politicization of Settler-Native Identities and Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Jos, Central Nigeria*, (Ibadan, Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd, 2005). pp. 46-49

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ancestors lived in Gwong (presently Nasarawa Gwong), where they were believed to have originated from. They are disadvantaged politically, numerically, and economically. They are predominately Christians and farmers. Tin ore mining and the conflicts in the Jos Plateau have robbed the Anaguta of their lands and properties.⁵

The Rukuba group is found in the Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State. They are one of the dominant ethnic groups in the Bassa Local Government Area alongside the Irigwe, with whom they are always in a constant fight over lands and properties. The Rukuba people dress like the Northern Muslims and are predominantly farmers. The Bassa Local Government Area is dominated by the Irigwe, Miango, Rukuba, Buji, Chawe, Jere, Gusu, Kurama, Amo, and other ethnic groups.

The Irigwe people are found in the Bassa and Barkin Ladi local government areas of Plateau State. They are located about twenty miles from Jos, the state capital. They have a sizable population of about 70,000 people. Before their contact with the Europeans, the Irigwe people used to practice polyandry. However, the introduction of Christianity in the area by the Europeans changed the practice. Farming and trading are the major occupations of the Irigwe people.

The Miango people are found in the Bassa local government area of Plateau State. They are very friendly people and have a population of over 20,000. Over the years they have always been in constant conflict with the Fulani herders in the area over grazing routes. The Miango people are predominantly farmers, and they adopt quite a number of Hausa customs.

Meanwhile, there are other smaller groups like Ateng in Riyom and Ganang, Ron, and Kulere in Barkin Ladi, respectively, and they are part of the indigenous groups in Plateau North. They were not conquered or subjected to external influence during the pre-colonial period.⁶

⁵*ibid.* pp. 49-52

⁶*ibid*

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The Settlers Groups in Plateau North

There are a lot of settler groups in the Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State. Among them are the Hausa/Fulani, who were the first to arrive due to their proximity to Jos, and Plateau was part of the Bauchi Emirate during the pre-colonial and early period of colonialism. There are also the Yoruba from the South West, the Igbo from the South East, and other smaller groups from the Middle Belt, South-South, and the far North.

The Hausa/Fulani are categorized into three distinct classes.

The first are the wealthy class who engaged in high-level businesses such as transportation, real estate, oil and gas, and its distributions in Jos and its environs. They are connected with their ancestral homes and with federal government institutions at the center and also have a very strong base in Jos, where they reside.

The second class are the peasants and semi-proletarian population who engage in small-scale all-year farming and cattle rearing, shoe shining, and other petty trading. These groups are found in the local communities of Plateau North.

The third class are the middle class who engage in small-scale transportation (tricycle and motorcycle) and retail businesses. They also engage in the sales of various agricultural products. Islam is the major religion of the Hausa/Fulani, although they are scattered into several Islamic religious sects, fundamentalist and liberal.⁷

The Yoruba ethnic group in the Jos Plateau has three distinct classes, and these are The wealthy class who engage in large-scale commercial ventures such as wholesale and retail trade, real estate businesses, and the production of industrial goods either independently or in partnership with the public (government) or foreign investors.

The Yoruba middle class are those who engage in teaching, lecturing, catering/restaurant, and transportation businesses. They also engage in other businesses such as construction and supplies.

The lower class among the Yoruba settlers are involved in petty trading, vehicle repairs, and management and operation of business centers. The Yoruba ethnic group are either Christians or Muslims, and they are more coherent as a people.

Like the other dominant settler communities in Jos, the Igbo have three distinct classes:

⁷*ibid*

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The Igbo engage in big commercial ventures such as importation of goods, estate ownership, transport businesses (small and medium scale), and investment in the marketing of petroleum products.

The middle class among the Igbo community consists of spare parts dealers, retailers, restaurant owners, teachers, lecturers, etc. They are also involved in car hiring and sales businesses.

The lower class in the Igbo community in Jos consists of motorcycle transport operators, food retailers/vendors, bus conductors, those who engage in daily financial contribution businesses, etc. The Igbo community in Jos has a very strong attachment to events at home in Eastern Nigeria, as this shows in the mass periodic movements when they have any festivities back home, especially during the new yam and new year celebrations. They are predominantly Christians.⁸

Other settler groups from the Middle Belt region of Nigeria and minorities from Southern Nigeria (Edo, Asaba, Warri, Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers, and Rivers) also engaged in different forms of businesses, like the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo. These smaller ethnic groups equally have wealthy, middle, and lower classes among them.⁹

Methodology

The paper adopts the descriptive and analytical historical research methodology in discussing the dynamics of the indigene/settler conundrum in Plateau North. The paper critically analyzed how conflict dynamics affected the peaceful co-existence of the residents of Plateau North. It highlights how its trends and dynamics impacted negatively on the peace and development of the zone and Plateau State in general. Using relevant books, journal articles, reports, and content analysis, the paper sourced opinions from respondents on the effects of these dynamics and the probable solutions for peace and development in the zone and state.

⁸*ibid.*

⁹John Campbell. "Rethinking Nigeria's Indigene-Settler Conflicts", *Council for Foreign Relations*. (2012) Available at www.usip.org Accessed 4/06/2021.

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Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts the theory of pluralism to discuss the dynamics of conflicts in Plateau North, considering the heterogeneous nature of the zone. According to Robert Dahl, pluralists believe that power in a state should be shared among different groups while varied ideas, opinions, and expressions on social issues arise in the process. As various interests, ideas, and opinions emerge, it becomes essential to aggregate these diverse interests and ensure representation for all groups. This representation is crucial for fostering peace, order, and stability. Moreover, most smaller groups within the larger society strive to preserve their unique identities, values, and practices. According to the theory, representation is carried out by the elites of these groups, who advocate for their members, make decisions on their behalf, and communicate these decisions back to them. This process is designed to prevent any single group from dominating, oppressing, or marginalizing others. This leads to a balance of power and a more representative outcome for society.¹⁰

With the multiplicity of ethnic groups in Plateau North, both indigenous and settlers, scattered in the various local government areas and communities with different cultural backgrounds, it has been difficult reaching a compromise when issues of representation come up because of fears of domination and marginalization in economic, political, and natural resource distribution. This fear and denial always breed conflict with its changing pattern and dynamics.

The Indigenous Certificate and the Plateau North Conflicts

The formalization of indigeneship in Nigeria began with the 1979 Constitution, which was progressive yet very vague, as it did not prescribe how the criteria should be administered. The solution to the vagueness of the Constitution was the introduction of an indigeneship certificate, issued by local government areas in the country. The other side of this was that the federal government could not issue this particular certificate. The Constitution allowed the local government areas in the country the discretion of deciding the qualification for an 'indigene certificate' in their areas.

¹⁰ William E. Connolly. *Ethos of Pluralization*, (Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 1995), Darity William Jr. *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed, (Detroit, Macmillan books, 2008). pp. 9, 448

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Consequently, most local governments often collaborated with the traditional authorities in their domain in identifying who qualified for this certificate. Despite the complication, the indigenous certificate became the passport for recognition in the local government areas in Plateau North and in other parts of Plateau State.¹¹

In Jos and other local government areas in Plateau North, the Hausa/Fulani complained that without the "indigene certificate" in places where their population is huge, they are "stateless," their children helpless, and are not able to access political and economic opportunities in the areas. They also complained that before the Jos North Local Government Area was created in 1991, the indigene certificates were shared equally among the indigenes and the settlers, even though the indigenous groups of Berom, Afizere, and Anaguta opposed it. It was signed by the district heads. With the coming of a Hausa/Fulani, Samaila Mohammed, as chairman of the Jos North Local Government Area from 1991 to 1993, he began to sign and issue the certificates to his people and others. This development made the indigenous groups of Berom, Afizere, and Anaguta complain that allowing the Hausa/Fulani to continue to access the indigene certificates deprived them of the job opportunities, scholarships, and appointments that were meant for the indigenes in Jos and the state.

These complaints climaxed in the 1994 violent conflict following the appointment of another Hausa/Fulani as the next chairman of the Jos North Local Government Area and the usurpation of the rights and privileges of the indigenous community in Jos North. The report of the Commission of Inquiry into the 1994 crisis headed by Justice Fiberesima stated thus:

A recurrent friction for many years between the Berom, Anaguta, and other tribes on one hand, and the Hausa/Fulani on the other, is the remote cause of the riot. Each part lay claim to Jos. The Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere claim that they are the undisputed indigenous people of Jos and that the Hausa/Fulani are settler strangers who migrated into Jos for various reasons, which include commerce, employment, and repair of fortune, but the Hausa/Fulani contend that they also claim political ascendancy over the other communities at all times. This feeling of one having

¹¹D. C. Bach. "Managing a Plural Society: The Boomerang Effects of Nigeria Federalism", *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 27 (2), (1989), pp.218-245.

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supremacy over the other simmered for years, only to break out into open confrontation and riot on 12 April 1994.¹²

The power tussle between the indigenous community and the Hausa/Fulani reared its ugly head again under the chairmanship of Frank Bagudu Tardy, an indigene, from 1999 to 2002 in the local government area when “Residency Certificates” were introduced. The introduction of this certificate was seen as the only evidence to show that an individual who was not an indigene has been or is still a resident of Jos Plateau and was eligible to contest for political positions within the state but not eligible for political appointments or using state or local government agencies to gain employment.¹³

The chairman, Frank Tardy, upon resumption, reverted back to the old practice of using the district heads to get applications for indigenous forms approved. The memo excluded the district and wards occupied by the settlers, including the Igbo, Yoruba, Urhobos, and other Nigerians. Among all these groups it was only the Hausa/Fulani who protested their exclusion and asked that the new policy be reverted back to the old policy. While the protest lasted, public interest increased in Jos and in other local government areas in Plateau North, which also introduced the ‘indigene certificates’ and ‘settler certificates’ for indigenes and settlers, respectively. The population became polarized in and around these places, leading to the incubation of conflict, and the state government was getting concerned about the implication of this rising anxiety for peace and security in the area.¹⁴

Consequently, the Plateau State Government on 22 May, 2000, directed the Jos North Local Government Area to maintain the status quo and treat everybody in the local government as previously obtainable, pending the creation of new districts.

¹²See the White Paper on the Commission of Inquiry into the Crisis of 12 April, 1994 in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State by J. A. Fiberesima, D. J. Igah, M. B. Usman, I. D. Mohammed, T. Tidel, S. O. Aboki and P. P. Deshi, (2004). Available at www.r2knigeria.org. Accessed 19/10/2023

¹³Henry Gyang Mang and David Ehrhardt. “The Politics of Paper: Negotiating over and Around Indigeneship Certification in Plateau State, Nigeria”, *Canadian Journal of African Peace Studies*, Vol. 50. No. 3. (2018). pp. 331-347.

¹⁴Shedrack Gaya Best, Christian Willie and Abu Sabastine Saidu, *Pen and Peace: The Plateau State Experience*, Jos, International Centre for Reconciliation and Centre for Conflicts Management and Peace Studies, (University of Jos, (2007). pp. 59-60

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Meanwhile, the politics between the indigenous groups and Hausa/Fulani in the Jos North Local Government Area on the basis of indigeneity continued to provide the fundamental background to the conflict in the zone. Both the Hausa/Fulani and the indigenous groups sought to manipulate the affairs of Jos in a particular manner that is likened to a zero-sum game, where it is extremely ethnocentrically competitive.¹⁵ In Jos Plateau, Judicial Panel of Inquiries reports into the violent conflicts were not implemented, thereby encouraging impunity among perpetrators of violent conflict in the area. Before conflict escalated, there were always early warning signals such as sending letters and dropping flyers around the city center, intimating the residents of an impending attack, holding nocturnal meetings, mounting roadblocks, etc. These happened before the 1994, 2002, 2004, and 2008 crises in Jos. The security forces never leveraged all these early warning signals to nip impending violent attacks in the bud.

Indigene/Settler Conflicts: The Case of Plateau North

The indigene/settler phenomenon in Plateau North was one of the lingering contradictions among the same people who lay equal claims to citizenship in the area and who engaged in cultural, religious, economic, and political exchanges in the past fifteen years. The settlers constituted a critical part of the society, where they engaged in worshipping, socializing, trading, paying taxes, and marrying the indigenes, but when it comes to sharing of resources, including ownership of land, they are resisted. When this happens, the indigenous/settler sentiments are whipped up, and the settlers suffer gross injustice or discrimination.

Plateau North became attractive to pastoralists in the nineteenth century when its population was relatively small, and following the discovery of tin ore in Jos, the area began to expand exponentially. The conflict in the zone can therefore be traced to the differences between the indigenous population and the Hausa/Fulani settlers.¹⁶ The indigenes in the area felt the resources belonged to them and therefore should be managed by them, but the Hausa/Fulani settlers are equally laying claims to the Jos

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶George Ehusani. "Citizenship and Indigene/Settler Syndrome", *The Guardian Newspaper*. (4 July 2005). Available at www.the-guardian.com. Accessed 4/06/2021.

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metropolis, saying they are entitled to equal rights in the economic, political, social, and resource spheres of the area. Their argument was that when they migrated to the area, there was no Jos, and that their contribution helped in no small measure to the development of the city.¹⁷

Drivers of Conflict in Plateau North, 1994-2010

The primary drivers of indigenous and settler conflicts in the area are interconnected and complex. They are linked to factors such as ethnicity, politics, and religion, as well as other contributing elements, including discriminatory identities, the responses of regimes during crises, and the challenges posed by a dysfunctional Nigerian Constitution.

Ethnicity

The heterogeneous nature of Jos and other parts of the zone in general were identified as key factors to the violent conflict in the area. This aside, ethnic identity frequently coincided with religious affiliation in the area. While the indigenes are mostly Christians, the Hausa/Fulani are predominantly Muslims. That was why the clashes in the zone between the two groups are often perceived from the lens of ethnicity.¹⁸

Politics

In Plateau North, the major cause(s) of conflict include, among others, poor leadership, poor communication, limited resources, differences or misperceptions, inequitable treatment, and individual attitudes. The indigenous/settler and ethno-religious conflict has been mostly pronounced since the return of democracy in 1999. As pointed out by Alubo, between 1994 and 2010, the violent clashes in Jos, Barkin-Ladi, Bassa, and Riyom were between the indigenous people and the Hausa/Fulani settlers. A critical examination of the conflict in the area revealed a causal relationship among all the parties during political party ward congresses and local government elections. For

¹⁷Roger Blench and Mallam Dendo. *Natural Resources Conflicts in North Central Nigeria*, (London, Mandarav Publishing, 2004).

¹⁸Ogoh S. Alubo. *Ethnic Conflict and Citizenship Crisis in the Central Region, Nigeria*, (Ibadan, Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies (PEFS) 2006). p. 9-10.

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example, all the crises in Jos from 1994 to 2010 were as a result of politics during elections.¹⁹

Religion

In Plateau North, religion becomes a focal point whenever conflict arises, which contributes to the ethno-religious nature of these disputes. This was because the Hausa/Fulani were mostly Muslims, and the indigenous groups and the settlers from the South and Middle Belt states were mostly Christians. Religion has generally been a fundamental influence on politics in the North since the mid-1970s, particularly following the introduction of Sharia law in 2000. This development prompted a significant migration of Christians to Plateau State from other regions. They brought with them stories of discrimination and atrocities they went through in those Sharia states, thereby building tensions between religious communities in the state, especially Jos.²⁰

The Nigerian Constitution

The bogus nature of the Nigerian constitution made Plateau North a key flashpoint, where indigene/settler confrontation raised dust in Jos between the indigenous groups of Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere and the Hausa/Fulani settlers. This was because the constitution was not clear on this matter, as the Hausa/Fulani believed they had indigeneship rights anywhere they resided in the North. The Nigerian constitution was not explicit on the status of ‘a settler’ in Nigeria, and this breeds conflict as it emphasized more on citizenship.

This made the implementation and application of citizenship in Nigeria very problematic. In addition, this made Nigerians undergo subnational identities through support and identification. Nnamdi corroborated this assertion thus:

The problem of indigeneship and citizenship is that while the Constitution says that Nigerians have the right to settle and own properties anywhere in the country if they decide, in practice the indigenes think they have rights over the settlers. This

¹⁹*ibid*

²⁰Jana Krause A. “Deadly Cycle: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State Nigeria”, *Working Paper*, (Geneva, 2011). Available at www.files.ethz.ch/isn. Accessed 10/06/2021.

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should not be because they are under the law. The law grants equality to all citizens. The problem is that Nigerian law has colonial content in it. Before the creation of states in Nigeria, anybody could move to any part of Nigeria, settle there, and work, but with the creation of states, discrimination started. It happened because the British wanted divide and rule for easy administration of Nigeria. This is why it has been difficult to build a strong, united Nigeria....²¹

Discriminatory Identities

The indigene/settler dichotomy in Plateau North strived due to its multi-faceted and multi-cultural background and is identity-based. Identity on its own did not promote the conflict, but the multiplicity of factors such as ethnicity and religion aided it. People who were from the same community but because of religious differences were not trusted; they were seen as enemies. The same thing happened among security personnel and security institutions. There were cases of bias and discrimination by security personnel who were sent to go and restore peace between indigenes and non-indigenes during crises. When they discovered that one of the parties in the conflict belonged to their faith, they built up an identity that favored the party over the other. These discriminatory practices were the cause of intractable conflict in Plateau North. The Hausa/Fulani dominated federal government supported the Hausa/Fulani Muslims, while the state government supported the indigenous community or Christians in the state during conflict.²²

Moreover, the indigenes and the settlers lived together and married each other, but when it came to sharing resources, scholarship, employment in the civil service, and political appointment, the indigene/settler dichotomy always set in. This made the settlers suffer great injustice and discrimination, and this sometimes resulted in violent conflict. In these local government areas, the indigenes are recognized with an

²¹Nnamdi Aduba, 68+ Oral Interview, at the University of Jos, Jos North LGA, Plateau State. Nigeria. 22/06/2023.

²²Kemi Emina, "Belong and Non-Belonging: A Discourse on the indigene/Settler Issues in Jos, Nigeria", *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 5. No. 5. (2015). pp. 58-62.

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indigene certificate or certificate of origin, while the non-indigenes are given a resident or settler certificate.²³

Pattern of Regime Responses

The volatility of any conflict actually depends on the pattern of regime response. The institutional mechanisms of the government in power played a crucial role in conflict avoidance, preservation, and tension reduction, as the maintenance of peace and orderliness is essential to ensuring the security of lives and properties. This is critically underscored as a principal responsibility of government in Section 14 (2b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which says that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.” In a situation where the institutions of government remained quite unconcerned or nonchalant, the possibility would be the escalation of conflict early warning signals to full-scale violence. On the other hand, where the institutions of government are responsive, the possibility of conflict turning violent will be greatly reduced.²⁴

Conflict Dynamics in Plateau North

Plateau North experienced armed conflict of great magnitude from 1994 to 2010. These conflicts from strict observation had their trends and dynamics. The cause(s) of these conflicts included, among others, religious fanaticism, intolerance and extremism, obstructive and destructive modes of worship, government patronage of a particular religion and marginalization of others, sensationalism in media reportage, illiteracy, unemployment, nepotism, bigotry, and armament.²⁵

It was observed that religion and ethnicity were consistently manipulated to serve the interest of the Hausa/Fulani by religious bigots and conflict patrons. For example, the Boko Haram militant group was more political than religious,

²³*ibid*

²⁴Aja Akpura- Aja. Basic Concepts, Issues and Strategies of Peace and Conflict Resolution, (Enugu, Kenny and Brothers Ent. Nig. Ltd, 2007).

²⁵Onyinyechi, Pricilla Woriboko. “Current Trend of Armed Conflicts in Nigeria and their Social and Ecological Impacts”, in Onyinyechi Wariboko, E S Akama, Woriboko Wotegbe, Weneke O Wellington, G I K Tasié and J O Obinoche, eds. *Religion in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Professor E.S. Akama*, (Port-Harcourt, Chadik Printing Press, 2016). pp. 488 -501.

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considering its modus operandi. The Hausa/Fulani were severely accused of instigating violence in Plateau North in order to gain territorial control in the communities. It is on record that anytime there were clashes in the area, mercenaries and Boko Haram always came from the far north to fight for the Hausa/Fulani. Examples were the 2010 Dogo and Nahawa communities' massacre in Du District in Jos South Local Government Area, in which over 300 people, mostly women and children, were killed by the Fulani militia who invaded the communities; and the 2010 Christmas bombing in Jos. The attackers complained that the attacks were in retaliation for the stealing of the cows belonging to Fulani herders by the Berom Christian youths and the killing of Muslims in Jos and Plateau State, respectively.²⁶

Another in the series was the 2012 ethno-religious attack in Barkin-Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas, in which over 140 people were killed by gunmen suspected to be mercenaries from neighboring Chad and Niger Republic, who fought for the Fulani herdsmen in the areas.²⁷

There was also the rustling of cows belonging to the Fulani herdsmen by the indigenous ethnic groups or non-Muslims or a combination of both, and this always led to reprisal attacks from the Fulani herders through mercenaries. There were trends of banditry and kidnapping that became a thriving business in Plateau North and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons used as conflict tools in the zone. There was also the use of foot soldiers and complacency on the part of security personnel in curbing violence any time it erupted, as most of them always showed organic solidarity with their ethnic or religious groups. Meanwhile, Bot agreed that the crisis in the state was ethno-religious but, however, blamed the activities of some individuals, thus:

Gingirin, AT&T, and other segregated residential environments in Jos are no-go areas for non-Muslims and Christians alike. Going to these places, especially in the night alone, is risky even for security personnel. The security situations in these areas have deteriorated to the extent that non-Muslims or Christians dress like them in these

²⁶Newswatch Magazine. "Jos Erupt in Violence Again", (23 January 2010). Available at www.newswatchnigeria.com. Accessed 12/05/2021.

²⁷Ignatius Kaigama, "Overcoming Evil with Good: The Catholic Archdiocese of Jos Face to Face with the Aftermath of the Jos Ethno-Religious Crisis", Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria. (2010) Available at www.cbcnng.org/article_detail. Accessed 12/06/2021.

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areas to avoid being recognized as not belonging to either of the faiths. In this outfit, we have personnel from both faiths and tribes, and we do our work according to specifications. If there has been any case of taking sides by any security personnel in the line of duty, I'm yet to hear or discover it. Our job here is to protect lives and property by complimenting the established security agencies in the state.²⁸

Lastly, the *Jasawa* community, which comprised the Hausa/Fulani and other Muslim groups from the far north, was formed to agitate for equal recognition of indigeneship rights in Jos and other parts of Plateau North. The aim and objective of the association were to fight for the integration of the Hausa/Fulani into the politics of Jos and Plateau North. They argued that historical antecedents of their migration to Plateau State when Jos Plateau was yet to develop and their contribution to the development of the city informed the needs for this integration. Despite their majority status in Jos after the creation of the Jos North Local Government Area in 1991, they still experienced marginalization in appointments, scholarships, jobs, and admission into schools. Unlike in the former Northern Region, where they constituted the majority group, the transformation of regions to states relegated them to minority groups in the area, even though numerically they constituted the majority ethnic groups in the Jos North Local Government Area.²⁹

Commenting on this development, Mudi stated thus:

Before the British came to Jos, the Hausa/Fulani had dominated the traditional institutions in Jos and were fully integrated into the politics of the state. We had streets named after us and markets bearing Hausa names, and we had the *Sarkin* of Jos until the later part of colonialism before we were schemed out due to politics. Even in the early post-colonial era in Nigeria, we were recognized as indigenes of Jos. The last time the Hausas were given a scholarship in Plateau State was in the 1970s, and yet we pay taxes and contribute immensely to the economic development of the city and the state at large. Politics, especially elections, has always led to crisis in Jos. Even

²⁸Yakubu Nash Bot 48+, Oral Interview, at Operation Rainbow, Aliyu Makama Road, Jos, Jos North LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria. 23/07/2021

²⁹Salisu Hassan: "Ethnicity and Political Integration in Nigeria: A Study of Jasawa Community in Jos, Plateau State (Thesis Draft), (nd), Available at www.academia.edu>Ethnicity. Accessed 20/06/2024.

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when we won in the areas we dominate, they changed everything to favor the indigenes. We have now been seen as settlers in the city we helped to build.³⁰

They complained that the alliances between the Berom, Afizere, Anaguta, and other tribes, who are mostly Christians, led to this development. This development informed the need for the *Jasawa* socio-cultural identity to be fully recognized as indigenous to Jos. This inequality to them underscored the trends of the bitter indigenous/settler identity manifestation between the indigenous groups and the Hausa settlers in Jos and in other parts of Plateau North.³¹

The Social Impact of Indigene/Settler Conflict in Plateau North

Firstly, the crisis resulted in widespread instability and deep divisions due to the loss of lives and property, as well as the persistent fear of reprisal attacks within the area and across other parts of the state. Nearly every episode of violent conflict in Jos produced ripple effects in surrounding communities in the zone, often intensified by ethnic conflict profiling carried out by either the indigenous groups or the Hausa/Fulani settlers.

There was also significant displacement from volatile areas, as residents typically fled locations prone to recurrent violence. Elaborating on this experience, Rogo recounted that the 2008 violent conflict in Jos not only displaced him and his family but also destroyed his sole source of livelihood:

“I lost everything I had worked for since I came to Jos about twenty-six years ago. We had to abandon our family house and a flourishing printing press business in Tudun Wada, a Christian-dominated neighborhood, when the crisis spread to the area in 2008. When I realized that my family and I were no longer safe, we sought refuge at a nearby police station. The following day, we received information that my printing press office and all the machines had been set ablaze. Since then, I have struggled to

³⁰ Sanni Mudi, 60+, Oral Interview, Publicity Secretary, Jumatu Nasru Islam (JNI), 59 Bauchi Road, Jos, Jos North LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria, 7/7/2023.

³¹ *ibid*

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provide for my family. In 2016, I had no option but to sell the burnt building to an Igbo man at a give-away price.”³²

Thirdly, there was the diversion of scarce resources for the rehabilitation of victims of violent clashes, resettling the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), providing for their daily needs, health care and restoration of damaged infrastructures. These resources could have been channeled into developmental projects and programmes in Plateau North.

In Jos Plateau, indigene/settler conflict assumed ethno-religious form as was seen from the character of the parties in the conflict -- the indigenous communities, the non-state actors, the state actors (state and federal). The Federal government of Nigeria on many occasions denied Plateau State indigenes their constitutional rights, as enshrined in the Constitution, Federal Character Principle. This was seen in the appointment of Aminu Mato, a Hausa/Fulani as the Chairman of Jos North Local Government Area in 1994, the appointment of Ado Ibrahim as Jos North local government area Education Secretary in 1996, the appointment of Muktar Mohammed as Jos North Local Government Area as the National Poverty Eradication Programme Coordinator (NAPEP) in 2001.³³

Lastly, in 2009, former President, late Musa Yar’Adua nominated a Hausa/Fulani resident in Jos as a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, a slot meant for Plateau indigenes. This was in violation of section 14 (3) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The relative dominance of the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group in politics at the central government accounted for why federal government in its attempts to jeopardize the efforts of the state government, always constituted parallel Judicial Panel of Inquiries for all the crisis in Plateau State.³⁴

³²Abdulahi Rogo, 51+, Oral Interview, at Rikkos, Jos, Jos North LGA, Plateau State. Nigeria. 15/07/2021.

³³Ejikeme Jombo Nwagwu, “Indigene and Settler Conflict in Nigeria: A Negation to National Integration and Nation Building”, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 7. No 4. (July, 2016), pp. 218-220.

³⁴*ibid.*

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Efforts at Resolving the Indigene/Settler Conflict in Plateau North.

From 1994 to 2012, there were serious efforts aimed at conflict resolution and peace-building in Plateau North. Among these were:

Justice Aribiton, Fiberesima, and the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the 1994 Jos crisis; the reversal of the appointment; and the restoration of peace and order by the security agencies. The Commission affirmed that it was the indigenous groups such as Berom, Afizere, and Anaguta, and not the Hausa/Fulani, who were the rightful owners of Jos, the Plateau State capital.³⁵

Following the September 2001 Jos crisis, there was the deployment of security forces to stop the crisis and the restoration of peace; the imposition of a curfew; a presidential visit to assess the extent of damage and console the victims; and the Niki Tobi Judicial Commission of Inquiry, which recommended the dismissal of the then Commissioner of Police in Plateau State, Alhaji M. D. Abubakar, for negligence and derelictions of duty before and during the crisis.³⁶

The November 2008 Jos crisis led to the imposition of a 24-hour curfew in the city of Jos and its environment, the setup of the Hon. Justice Bola Ajibola-led Commission of Inquiry by the state government, the Emmanuel Abisoye Paul panel of investigation into the Jos crisis by the federal government, and the Commissions of Inquiries enjoined residents of Jos and its environs to ensure peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims as it was before the crisis and the setting up of an ad hoc panel by the National Assembly to investigate the cause of the crisis.³⁷

In January 2010, the Jos crisis led to the creation of a special joint task force for the maintenance of peace in the city and the imposition of a twenty-four-hour curfew in the city of Jos until normalcy returned to the city. In March 2010, the Jos crisis led to the setting up of a presidential committee to look into the cause(s) of the crisis and make recommendations for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. It was headed by former governor the late Solomon Lar. About 313 cases were identified, but

³⁵See the White Paper on the 1994 Violent Conflict in Jos.

³⁶See the White Paper and Recommendation on the September, 2001 Violent Conflict in Jos by the Niki Tobi led Commission of Inquiry. Available at www.hrw.org. Accessed 17/06/2024

³⁷*ibid*

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no arrest and persecution were made. The December 2010 Jos Christmas Eve bombing led to the appointment of a special adviser on terrorism by the federal government and the passing of an anti-terrorism bill by the National Assembly.³⁸

Conclusion

Violent conflict between indigenous groups and Hausa/Fulani settlers in Plateau North, leading to wanton destruction of lives and property, came with its trends and dynamics. To the indigenous groups, allowing the Hausa/Fulani to become indigenes of Jos vis-à-vis Plateau State will amount to allowing them to have dual indigeneship since they are already indigenes of other states where they came from; hence, the introduction of settler certificates. The formation of *the Jasawa* association by the Hausa/Fulani in Jos was to fight for the integration of the Hausa/Fulani into the politics of Jos and Plateau State. The role of government, security agencies, and conflict patrons in mitigating or exacerbating conflicts cannot be overemphasized in this regard. Interestingly, the institutional mechanism of government played a crucial role in conflict avoidance, prevention, and resolutions, as the maintenance of peace and orderliness was very essential in ensuring the security of lives and property. Security agencies and other governmental institutions must prioritize their concerns, remain vigilant, exhibit empathy, and collaborate effectively to prevent conflicts from escalating into crises. In doing this, the indigene/settler dichotomy shall not serve as a political tool to whip up and mobilize ethnic sentiments in the already conflict-ridden area.

³⁸Funmi Josephine Para-Mallam. "Introduction to Finding Durable Peace on the Plateau", *Peace and Security Research*, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru Plateau State, (November, 2012). Available at www.researchgate.net/. Accessed 12/06/2021.

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