

INTER-GROUP CONFLICT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

By

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Abstract

Conflict has been part of human existence from time immemorial. The contemporary Nigeria state is characterized by perennial conflicts, ranging from political, ethnic, and religious to mention these few. These conflicts have hindered attempts at achieving stable democracy to ensure socio-economic development of the country. Nigeria's rural and urban communities have been turned into battle fields leading to unimaginable displacement of persons and materials. As human and economic capitals are frequently destroyed, large-scale poverty and underdevelopment becomes the order of the day. Using secondary data, the study attempts the analysis of the problems of intergroup conflict and the prospects of overcoming or reducing the frequency of these conflicts. It is the conclusion of the study that amongst other things, the lack of true and fiscal federalism, the dichotomy between indigene – settlers, poverty and illiteracy are factors contributing to those frequent inter-group hostilities. It is recommended that, there is an urgent need to address the issues of citizenship and to make political offices less attractive.

Keywords: Intergroup, Conflict, Development, Citizenship, problems, Prospects.

Introduction

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and a multi-linguistic country in that modern Nigeria was cobbled together from diverse ethnic groups numbering over three hundred and seventy (370) (Ottite 1990, Abba & Okwori, 2002; Abah, 2003). Each ethnic group considers itself autonomous, self-conscious and to some degree independent. The major ethnic groups are: Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba demonstrating a sense of superiority

over other ethnic groups that are considered as minorities. These minority ethnic groups frequently complain of neglect and marginalization in the area of distribution of the common good of the nation, which are: juicy political office appointments, appointment into boards of parastals and other positions of influence that confers power, prestige and wealth. These neglect and marginalization have frequently led to inter-group conflicts hindering development and leading to loss of lives and properties.

A social group is a gathering of at least two people who have a shared purpose and interact on a regular basis (Alubo, 2012). This may stretch from simple to complex and includes family, friends, age group, football team, ethnic group to mention these few. Roles in a group are linked in a systematic, recurrent and predictable way. In this study, a group is seen as either an ethnic, religious or political groups who interact in a systematic, recurrent and predictable way, necessitating an inter-relationship between and within each other. This inter-relationship which is also inter-group relations sometimes lead to intra or inter-group conflicts with varying degrees of implications. However, this paper focuses on inter-group conflicts in contemporary Nigeria.

The unresolved dichotomy between indigenes (native owners of land) and settlers (migrants who have co-existed with the native owners over long period of time); the snag here is, how can one be treated as a foreigner in his own country because he migrated from a place to another place and settled down with people who were also migrants only that they had settled there before the later arrived.

Here the inter-group conflicts manifest in several fronts, first, it manifest between majority and minority ethnic groups, second, it manifest between indigenes and settlers

and third, it manifest between the two dominant (Christianity and Islam). Hence most inter-group conflicts becomes ethno-religious, ethno-political and sometimes, ethno-religious cum political conflicts; making the conflictthe conflicts complex colossal and detrimental to development. Development means addressing the basic questions of poverty, unemployment and inequality (cited in Todaro, 2000) or the continuous improvement in the quality of life and existence in which improvement is increasingly and evenly distributed among the overwhelming majority of the population (Odekunle, 2012). So long as there are incessant inter-group conflicts these ideals of development will never be achieved in Nigeria

Foundationally, these conflicts are all traced to an unholy marriage between the north and south in what some writers have referred to as the mistake of 1914. Though the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate in 1914 seem to provide the basis for inter-group conflicts, it is the considered opinion of this work that the inability of the post-colonial Nigeria leaders to provide governance anchored on true and fiscal federalism, widespread poverty, illiteracy and the indigene-settler question are among several factors that have contributed to the frequency of inter-group conflicts impinging negatively on the development of contemporary Nigeria. To address these issues the paper is divided into four main sections which are introduction, remote and immediate causes of inter-group conflicts in Nigeria, prospects of harmonious inter-group relations and the development of Nigeria, conclusion and recommendations.

Remote and Immediate causes of Inter-group Conflicts in Nigeria

This section discussed both the remote and the immediate causes of inter-group conflicts in Nigeria. The paper first examines the remote and then concludes with the immediate causes of inter-group conflicts in Nigeria.

Remote Causes of Inter-Group Conflicts in Nigeria

As stated in the introduction, Nigeria is a plural society where each ethnic group considers itself autonomous, self-conscious and to some extent independent. Three major ethnic groups (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) demonstrate a sense of superiority over other minority ethnic groups. This leads to cries of neglect and marginalization of these minority ethnic groups as the big three (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) dominated both political and social spheres since gaining political independence in 1960. Integrating the minority ethnic groups to foster national development was not seriously addressed by the political leadership. It is important to also note that, Nigeria has several kinds of pluralisms, the central ones ethnic, religious and political (Otite, 2005, Alubo, 2011).

As a state, Nigeria evolved gradually under British administration from the establishment of the crown colony of Lagos in 1861, through a series of extension and incorporations, to the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates by Lord Frederick Lugard in 1914 for administrative convenience (Falola, Mahadi, Uhomoibhi & Anyanwu, 2006). This amalgamation and the colonial legacy of divide and rule are considered by many scholars as part of the remote cause of intergroup conflicts in Nigeria. Another factor quickly referred to as a remote cause of intergroup conflicts is the ruling elites that took over power immediately after independence. These ruling elites failed to make critical decisions as to how the Nigeria state will be structured and governed. Rather than focused on national integration and development, they focused more on regional

development, promoting ethnicity and further balkanized the Nigeria state along ethnic, religious and political lines (Kaur, 2002).

The last factor in this section is the choices made immediately after independence by the leaders of the Nigerian nation. One of these choices is the abandonment of agriculture which was the main stay of the colonial economy after the discovery of oil shortly after independence. This made us to run the country on unproductive mono-economy based on oil. This unproductive mono-economy is inelastic in its ability to absorb the increased pressure brought upon it by the economic crisis witnessed in 1980s. This lack of capacity translated into several crises of unemployment, underemployment, retrenchments and several other civil unrest in the body polity; laying the foundation for the immediate causes of intergroup conflicts in Nigeria.

Immediate Causes of Intergroup Conflicts in Nigeria

The 1970s and 1980s marked a watershed in inter-group relations in Nigeria. Nigeria witnessed religious conflicts mostly between Christians and Muslims. Today religious competition between Christians and Muslim is without doubt the single most significant political issue in the country (Gwamna, 2006). Some of the causes of inter-group conflicts in Nigeria as identified by Jibrin, (1991) are colonial factor which we have discussed as a remote cause, elite manipulation, the collapse of the oil boom, effects of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), role of the military, internal colonialism, urbanization, land question, identity contests, poverty, ethnic pluralism, bad leadership and the rise of religious fundamentalism. Some other factors includes quest for political power which is often tied to competition for scarce resources. These conflicts are most often related to the national question of citizenship as noted by Alubo (2003) thus:

The various eruptions are related to claims and contestations over identity as a basis of determining who is included or excluded from participation is or benefiting from opportunities in particular situation (cited in Alubo, 2011:3).

There is basically a division of Nigeria citizens into indigenes and settlers and such claims are used as bases for access to, or denial of opportunities (Alubo, 2011). Evidences in other works such as Otite (1990), Agaba, (2006), and Ibrahim (2006) supports the factors identify by Jibrin (1991) and Alubo, (2011) as the immediate cause for inter-group conflicts in Nigeria. It is important to mention the implication of the long stay in power by the military especially the General Babangida and Abacha military regimes. The regimes of these generals are characteristic in every respect in that state apparatus became the exclusive preserve of the generals, their families and cronies. Ethnic and religious identities became the footstool from which they operated. A scholar has lent credence to this by noting that:

The escalation of ethnic and regional symbolism can also be connected to the patronage of sectarian ethnic and religious organizations and the extension of largess to their leaders by the regimes of General Babangida and Abacha, which went around circle looking for legitimacy even at the expense of undermining national unity. They made ethno-religious bases relevant in the recruitment of their agents (cited in Ayodele & Onu, 2006:643).

From the foregoing it is very clear that the democratic dispensation that emerged in 1999 was built on a faulty foundation of ethnic and religious symbols. Therefore the new found democracy could not bring lessened ethnically motivated agitations rather, Nigerians (especially the youths), across ethnic and tribal boundaries have become more restive than ever before. The citizenry have not been able to make a clean break from the hangovers of military (mis) rules.

In concluding in this section, it is important to note the profound negative impact the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) had on intergroup relations in Nigeria. In an attempt to address economic crisis of 1980s an International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic package was implemented which had calamitous consequences on the economy. Manufacturing industries were closed down including textiles industries, leading to retrenchment, downsizing, rightsizing, unemployment to mention but a few. Workers were owed salaries for months, there was embargo on employment, prices of goods skyrocketed in the market as a result of inflation due to the phenomenal devaluation of the naira. All these had negative implications on the social bonding of the people, weakening of national integration and intolerance in several fronts leading to intergroup conflicts.

Intergroup Conflicts and the Development of Contemporary Nigeria

The Nigeria states have witnessed a lot of intergroup crisis. Nigeria is divided into six geo-political zones, North-East, North-West, North-Central, South-East, South-West, and South-South. But for the purpose of this paper, the discussion is limited to the inter-group conflicts in the north-central region of Nigeria also known as the middle Belt. The choice of the north central is strategic for two reasons. One, it has witnessed more intergroup conflicts in recent times and second, the north central zone is the buffer zone between the North-Eastern and Western regions and the South-Eastern, South-Western and South-South regions of Nigeria. So a conflict in the north-central region has potential to spill-over to other regions of Nigeria compounding the intergroup relation in those regions. However, we shall discuss these conflicts in relations to the development of contemporary Nigeria.

The North-Central region also called the Middle Belt comprises of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba, Southern Kaduna and Southern Bauchi states (Alubo, 2011, Gwamna, 2006). Though in official records the north-central is made up of six states which are: Benue state, Nasarawa state, Niger state, Plateau state, Kogi state and Kwara state. The north-central region seems to have been over-represented in the cases of inter-group conflicts since May, 1999. Civil disturbance and the broader contests for citizenships, identity and politics of inclusion and exclusion are more ferocious and persistent in the north-central zone than any other zone in Nigeria. This is because there is no state in the north-central zone that has not experienced a number of violent conflicts since the return of democracy in May, 1999. This region has the largest number of ethnic groups in Nigeria meaning it harbours more battle fronts than any other region in the undeclared civil war in Nigeria (Alubo, 2011).

Table 1.1: Intergroup (Communal) Conflicts between Settlers versus Host Communities in the Middle Belt i.e. North-Central Nigeria

S/N	Date	Location	Principal Actors
1.	1980	Kasuwan Magani Kaguru LGA Kaduna State	Land dispute between Kadara host Communities and Hausa settler community
2.	1983	Jere Town-Kagarko LGA Kaduna state	Land dispute between the Gbagyi and Koro host communities and the hausa-Fulani settler community
3.	1984 (June)	Gure/Kahugu in Saminaka/Lere LGA Kaduna state Filin Dabo, Ramin Kura	Land boundary dispute between the Kahugu autochthonous community of the kaura high land complex and Gure immigrant community
4.	1984	Yarkasuwa in Saminaka/Lere LGA Kaduna state	Land dispute between the Kurama host community and hausa-Fulani settler community
5.	1984, 1992, Feb. May	Zango Kataf in Zango Kataf LGA Kaduna state	Land dispute between the kataf host community and the Hausa-Fulani settler community.
6.	1985	Pushit District-Mangu, Fier	Land and boundary disputes

		District-Pankshin LGA. Plateau state: Mararaba, Rafin kuku Rafin Tabo, popnap, Dungchi' in, Itachi Hudu Litkum Manok (Kurmin Tsafi	between the pushit people of pankshin LGA and the Fier Mwaghavul people of Mangu LGA.
7.	1996 Dec. 1997	Umaisha, Toto, Gadabuke District of Toto LGA Plateau State; Kenyego, Zana, Ugya, kanyehu, zainaku, Igwa-pati, ukya, Kuru Adadu, Ittu Nasarawa State	Chieftaincy disputes between the Igbira on the one hand, and the Bassa, Gbagyi, Gade and Agatu on the other on Ohinoye Chieftaincy in Toto and Umaisha and the perceived domination and the perceived domination and hegemonic control of the chieftaincy by the Igbira
8.	1987 March	Kafanchan: College of Education Jema'a LGA, Kaduna state	Clashes between Muslim and Christians as a personification of the conflicts between Fantsuan, Bajju and the Hausa-Fulani settlers of Jema'a Dororo now in authority in Kafanchan
9.	1987	Kaduna: Ungwar Kanawa, Tudun Wada, Ungwar Rimi, Bandarawa, Unguwa Dosa, Kaduna State	Muslims burnt down numerous church buildings and damaged property belonging to Christians and inversed personification of the conflict between settler and host community conflict.
10.	1987	Lere Twon, Saminaka/Lere LGA Kaduna state	Communal conflict between Kurama local inhabitants of Lere and the Hausa settler community
11.	1988 Feb.	Kaduna, Kaduna Polytechnic Kaduna state	Religious riots between Muslim and Christian students resulting in the destruction of the Christian Chapel foundation walls.
12.	1989	Awe, Jangarrgari, Barkoro, Gidan Donga, Abuni in Awe LGA of Plateau state not Nasarawa state	Land and boundary disputes between the Tiv-settler community of Awe LGA: Alago, Mighili, Gwandara, Hausa and Fulani.
13.	1989	Tingno, Waduku, Kabawa, Gyanawa in Numan now Larmude LGA of Adamawa state	Land disputes between the Bwatyne-Bachama host community and the Hausa settlers of Tingno and Waduku, Kabawa, Gyawana.
14.	1991	Tafawa-Balewa Bauchi state	Communal violence between the Zar-Saiyawa host community of Tafawa Balewa later Bauchi town.
15.	1992 May	Zangon Kataf, Samura	Land and chieftaincy (Chieftaincy)

		Kataf, Zonzon, Ungwar Wakili in Zangon Katab LGA Kaduna state	demand) between Kataf host community and the Hausa settler community of Zagon Katab town.
16.	1992	Kaduna: Tudun wada, Ungwar Dosa, Ungwar Kanawa, Ungwar Rimi, Badarawa, Sabon Tasha, Television village Kaduna state	Inter-religious war between Muslims and Christians in Kaduna town spilling over Zaria and Ikara.
17.	1993	Awe: Jangargari, Barkoro, Gidan Donga, Abuni in Awe LGA of Plateau state not Nasarawa state	Communal conflict between the Tiv settler communities and the Alago, Mighili, Gwandara, non- Tiv host community of Awe LGA
18.	1994	Awe, Plateau state	Inter-ethnic violence between the Tiv-settler community and the non-Tiv host communities of Awe LGA
19	1993/4	Wukari/Ibi, Bali, Bantaji, Chinkai, Dampaor, Dan Anacha Taraba state	Communal conflict between the Tiv-settler community and the Non-Tiv host community in the Wukari, Ibi, Bali, Bantaji, LGA of Taraba state
20.	1994	Jos North-Jos Town Plateau State	Inter-ethnic conflict between the Hausa-Fulani settler community and Bero, Afizere and Anaguta host communities over the appointment of Sanusi Mato as the Chairman Jos North LGA
21.	1995 Feb.	Knyego, Zano, Ugya, Ukya, Zainaku, Kanyabu, in Toto and Umaisha District of Toto LGA	Communal conflict between the Igbira, on the one hand, and the Bassa, Gade, Gbagyi and the Agatu over the chaintaincy title of the ohinoyi of Toto
22.	1996 March	Ungwar rogo, Rikkos Sama of Jos Town Plateau State	Communal conflicts between the Berom, Afizere and Anaguta host communities and the Hausa-Fulani settler community of Jos Town over Local Governement Chairmanship election
23.	1997	Takum town, Lissan town, Bassang, Buka, Jenuwa, Kwambai, Muji, Rufu, Mbiya, Tati Kwesati, Rukwentunum etc of Takum and Ussas LGA of Taraba State	Inter-ethnic conflict between the Chambas/Jukun versus the Kuteb in Takum Local Government Chairmanship elections
24.	1997	Toto Umaisha and	Inter-ethnic conflict between the

		Gandabuke district of Toto LGA Nasarawa state	Igbira and the Bassa, the Gade and Gbagyi over control of Toto LGA of Nasarawa state
25.	1997	Gero-Bukuru in Jos South LGA of Plateau state	Communal conflict between the Hausa-Fulani settler community and the Berom host community over the control of Fadamaland personified by the dispute over “garden eggs” or yallo
26.	1998	Toto-umaisha and Gadabuke in Toto	Inter-ethnic conflict between the Igbirra and the Bassa in LGA of Nasarawa Gbagyi over control of Toto and Umaisha

Source: Ibrahim James (The settler phenomenon in the Middle Belt and the problem of National Integration in Nigeria) pp 115-117

Table 1.1 shows clearly the continuous struggles over identity occurring in the most strategically important region in Nigeria’s geo-ethnic calculations because the central region is a buffer zone between the north, the east, the west or the three major ethnic groups, and as such a stabilizing factor because the region is crucial and strategic for the Nigeria project (Alubo, 2011, Maier, 2000 & Tyoden, 1993).

Intergroup conflicts in the North-Central form 1999 to date are captured in literatures state by state. Efforts are being made to capture them on a single table as table 1.1 in this paper. It should be noted that the frequency of this crisis especially from 1999- 2015 is quite alarming.

Table 2.1: Recent Intergroup (Communal) Violence in Plateau State

S/N	Date	Scenes and Communities of Violence	Parties Involved
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1.	April 1994	Jos North LGA	The Berom, Anagutas and Afizeres versus Hausa/Fulani
2.	22 nd Feb. 1999	Lokmak and Sabon Layi communal clash, Langtang North	Taroh
3.	10 th April 1997	Jos South LGA	Berom/Hausa/ Fulani
4.	10 th April, 1997	Mangu LGA	
5.	27 th March 2001	Qua'an-pan LGA Kundun in Bakin ciyawa Kwande district	Kwall, Tiv and Gausa/Fulani
6.	30 th March, 2001	A spill over from Qua'an-pan, Shendam Lgas, Gidan Zuru village	Tiv/Hausa/Fulani
7	11 th -5 th April 2001	Wase LGA	A Toral Christian and Bogghom Muslim
8.	20 th May, 2001	Reprisal attach langtang North	Langtang Versus Wase
9.	12 th June, 2001	Barkin Ladi LGA	Fulani Versus Berom
10.	7 th – 12 th September, 2001	Jos riots, Barkin Ladi, Jos South, Riyom and Bassa LGAs	Christian Versus Muslim
11.	30 th December, 2001	Vom, Jos South LGA	Berom Christians Vs Hausa/Fulani Muslim
12.	31 st December, 2001	Vwang district of Jos south LGA Turu and Chugwi village, Kwal district in Bassa LGA	Fulani ethnic militias attacked the natives
13.	12 th February, 2001	Jos Main Market guttered by fire	Hausa/Fulani were suspected
14.	May, 2002	Kwi, Barkin Ladi	Berom Versus Hausa/Fulani
15.	2 nd May, 2002	Eto Baba, Jos North LGA	Hausa/ Fulani Versus Natives
16.	12 th June, 2002	Kwi, Kassa, Sho, RakotW	Hausa/Fualni versus
17.	22 nd June, 2002	Wong-Barkin Ladi LGA	Hausa/ Fulani versus Berom
18.	26 th June, 2002	Yelwa, Shendam, Dadin Kowa, Mabudi, Langtang, Quan'an pan	Hausa/Fulani Vs Christians
19.	27 th June, 2002	Reprisal attacks over Yelwa, Shendam killings in Shendam and Langtang South LGAs	Hausa/Fulani Vs Taroh

20.	28 th June, 2002	Wase LGA	Hausa/Fulani Vs Taroh
21.	28 th June, 2002	Wase LGA	
22.	1 st July, 2002	Kadarko, Wadata, Farin Ruwa in Wase LGA	Natives Vs Hausa Fulani
23.	4 th July, 2002	A reprisal attack was carried out Wase after the killing of four prominent Taroh elders. 100 settlements belonging to Tarohs in Kadarko and Yeshi in Langtang South wer razed down	Taroh Christians Vs Hausa/ Fulani
24.	5 th July, 2002	Kurmi Gajere, Pako, Mampyen, Bwarat, Yaudara, kumbur, Timewat, Chuwi, Barkin Rejiya, Wase and Langtang North LGAs	Hausa/Fulani Vs Taroh, 250 people were killed
25.	10 th July, 2002	Zunzukur, Karashi, Gbak, Dabino, Ruwan Corggo, hamale, Wadara Arewa, Nasarawa Kuka, Wase LGA	Hausa/Fulani attacked the natives, agricultural produce were destroyed, 50 people killed
26.	28 th July, 2002	Four villages in Bachit district in Riyom LGA were attacked in church attending Sunday service	Fualni herdsmen
27.	11 th August, 2002	An attempt to blow off a colonial bridge on Riyom fails. The bridge built around 1929 is the major link between the community of Rim and Bachit in Riyom LGA two of the palnted explosives exploded causing damage to the bridge	Hausa/ Fulani were suspected
28.	21 st Septembr. 2002	Wunko a village in Langtang North was attacked by people suspectedto be suspected to be fulanis	Most assailants were in military uniforms.
29.	4 th Oct. 2002	Mabur and Kunkwan in Kanam and Langtang LGAs	Taroh Vs Dengi people
30.	4 th -7 th Oct. 2002	Fagul, kofia, Yelwa, Bejak Langtant LGA	Over two hundred armed ethnica milita from Chad and Niger Republics
31.	16 th October, 2002	Ibi LGA in Tarab state and west/ langtang/Lantang in	Fulani Vs. anakwagawa and Taroh

		plateau state	
32	23 rd	Fifty people were arrested over an attack and Maza in Jos North	Anaguta Vs Hausa/Fulani of those arrested were Muslim
33.	24 th October, 2002	Fajui, Langtang-South LGA	Hausa/Fulani believe to be in company of mercenaries, killed forty persons, raped women and ambushed 17 polices raped woment and ambushed 17 policemen sent quell the attack
34.	8 th Dec, 2002	Jos North, three areas were ransacked including rikkos, Yan Dankali and rafin-pan	Police raided suspected Maitasine cells
35.	12 th Dec, 2002	Vwang district of Jos south LGA, Turu and Chugwi in Kwal Bassa LGA	Suspected Fulani ethnic militias
36.	4 th April 2003	Fobour, Fajul and Langtang South	Hausa/Fulani ethnic militias
37.	13 th and 16 th , 2003	Timshat, Fajul and Langtang South	Hausa/Fulani militia with mercenaries from Chad and Niger republic Vs Taroh, 64 persons were killed
38.	3 rd June & Nov, 2003	Limun in Bwarat district langtang South	Hausa/Fulani Vs. Taroh
39.	10 th June, Nov. 2003	Hamale, Wase LGA	Displaced Taroh returnees were reconstructing their burnt houses Hausa/ Fulani raided and burnt down all the houses
40.	8 th February, 2004	Wase	Hausa/Fulani Vs natives
41.	9 th February, 2004	Wase LGA	One Mr. Lipdo Wapven was killed in cold blood by some youths in Wase-hausa/Fulani were suspected
42.	12 th February, 2004	Border village of Duwi, Yaudara Kirim, Hamale and Tsamiya in Wase LGA were attacked	Ethnic militias dislodged the heavy security in those places
43.	15 th February, 2004	Shimakar Shendam LGA there was an unusual movement of strange faces and goods noticed by the locals who reported to the police	Four of the policemen sent to investigate the reports later became victims of the attacks
44.	22 nd February, 2004	Fulani herdsmen in pursuit of cattle rustlers raced down yamini village completely in	Fulani herdmen Vs Natives

		shendam LGA	
45.	20 th – 24 th , February, 2004	150 houses burnt including Nshar village that gave birth to Yelwa over 250 were killed including the village head of Yemini and over 1000 displaced	Duben, Yemini, Tumbi and Yelwa Hausa/Fulani Vs Taroh
46.	24 th February, 2004	Eight Christians places of worship were completely razed down and 48 people were slaughtered in a church in Yelwa-Shendam	Hausa/Fulani Vs. Christian Natives
47.	26 th February, 2004	Fighting in Garkawa, Mikang LGA over 200 reportedly people killed and over 300 injured	Involving the Youm Taroh and Hausa/Fulani
48.	12 th March, 2004	Njaju Dolori and Ndualak village sacked	
49.	15 th March, 2004	Yelwa	3 Christians women were killed when they went to retrieve their belongings
50.	50 th March, 2004	Yelwa-Shendam	3 Igbo traders returning from Garkawa to Shendam were killed and their pick-up vehicle destroyed
51.	2 nd April 2004	Yelwa-Shendam	
52.	3 rd April 2004	Yelwa-Shendam reprisal attacked by the Christians natives from surrounding areas	Hausa/Fulani Vs Christian Natives
53.	23 rd April 2004	Durka Barkin Ciyawa, Biem-Biem, Rafin baba (Hambang)	Several houses burnt including local government staff
54.	30 th April 2004	Karbang husband and wife were killed	Karbang
55.	2 nd May, 2004	Two Christians women were murdered in Yelwa Shendam while making attempts to return back to their homes	This led to Yelwa crisis of 2 nd and 3 rd May, 2004
56.	3 rd May 2004	Reprisal attack carried out by combined team of the Akwagawas from Shendam, the Torahs from Langtang North/South and the Garkawa people of Mikang LGA. All neighbouring LGA to Yelwa	Hausa/Fulani Vs. Akwagawas

		Shendam, houses belonging to the Hausa/Fulani were completely razed down	
57.	Tuesday May 18 2004	Sabon Gisa makera, Ngat, Jibrin, Gidan Sabo, Saminaka	Militia men from Atiri and Azara villages in Nasarawa state attack was carried out on the day the state of Emergency was being declared
58.	Thursday May 20 2004	Quan'an-pan LGA	Suspected Fulani insurgents killed 30 persons
59.	Sunday May 22 2004	Tenewed fighting in five Gamai villages of Quan'an-pan LGA	Casualty figures reached 74 people
60.	Tuesday May 2004	Lyangjit village in Wase	Five person were killed by suspected Hausa/Fulani militia
61.	9 th July 2004	A station-wagon taxi purportedly driven by a Yelwa resident carried five men and three women. They were on their way to Shendam and other neighbouring towns. Aji kamai/Yamini enroute Yelwa. The driver diverted to Yelwa where the men and women were abducted. The men were killed and their private parts removed. While the women were beaten drugged and reportedly rape by 4 men for 8 days (July 9 th – 16 th)	About 40 people dressed in security uniforms with arms whose identity is uncertain
62.	20 th June 2004	Two people feared killed and five others seriously injured	Mabudi, Langtang South LGA

Source: Bagudu 2004: 314-316

These inter-group conflicts lead to large scale migration of people and attendant refugee problems as well as disruptions of social, political and economic lives especially of those directly involved in the various conflict zones and also in the region of influx (cited from Ibeanu, 1999, Okoh, 2002, Avav 2000 in Alubo, 2011). All these have negative implications for the development of contemporary Nigeria. What is then development which intergroup conflicts have negative implications for?

Development is the continuous improvement in the quality of life and existence in which improvement is increasingly evenly distributed among the overwhelming majority of the population (Odekunle, 2012). To stress further, development should contain the element of sustainability whereby the continuous improvement and its increasingly even distribution can be maintained, upheld and nourished over an appreciable period of time. This should be anchored on generally-shared values of fairness, equality, justice and to which succeeding leaderships of the society are committed. Where these are in acute short supply, intergroup conflicts becomes a common denominator most especially where the country is abundantly resourced and has witnessed progressive phenomenal growth over the years. Akin to this is a patent increase in the manifestation of the absence of real development in terms of the quality of social existence and of social relations of majority of the population or the so-called average Nigerian citizens (Odekunle, 2012).

To stressed further, Odekunle, (2012) argued that in terms of economic relations and existence, there has been, for a significant proportion of the population, especially the youth (and their aged-parents by existention) patent/absolute/entrenched poverty, unemployment/meaningless employment and relative/unaccepted poverty in the context of obvious socio-economic inequalities that is, “poverty in a rich economy in contrast to poverty in a poor economy” (Odekunle, 2012:19).

Similarly, in defining development, Dudley Seers cited in Tadaro, (2000) posed the basic question about the meaning of development when he asserted that:

The questions to ask about a country’s development are therefore: what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt

this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development even if per-capital income double (Todaro, 2000:15).

Basically, seer cited in Todaro, (2000) and Odekunle (2012) are on the same page in examining and assessing development in Nigeria. It is a basic truth that what Nigeria has been experiencing is growth without development in that we cannot answer Seer's basic questions in the affirmative because poverty, unemployment and inequality have grown worst in Nigeria.

As submitted by Otaki, (2012) Nigeria is a paradox of poverty and affluence, development and underdevelopment, peace and violence and misplacement of priority. He stressed further that most of the religious and ethnic conflicts are a function of social deprivation, exacerbated by unequal access to land as a major productive force. The basic reason for the frequent clash between the peasantry and the cattle herdsman another dimension of intergroup conflicts in Nigeria.

Form the foregoing, analysis our regressively-low development output and its increasing consequence for most of our population is largely responsible for our progressively high level of insecurity by extension frequent inter-group conflicts. Other than the lack of development, bad governance and ostentatious life style of the ruling elites produces as by-products of poverty and illiteracy which are weapon in the hands of the elites to manipulate the poor, illiterate, semi-literate and non-literate into taking up arms against themselves in frequent inter-group battles.

The consequences of these inter-group conflicts on development are: destruction of lives and properties, unmanageable humanitarian crisis, citizens becomes refugees in their own

country, schools are destroyed and academic calendar distorted, large sums of money are devoted to emergency management, to mention these few. The implications of all these are that development agenda is actually put in reverse gear by frequent inter-group conflicts. The situation is even worsened by lack of development in Nigeria using the working definition of development by Seers cited in Todaro (2002) and Odekunle (2012) adopted by this study.

Prospects of Harmonious Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria

As we discuss this section it is important for us to peep into history because “a contemporary state may escape the mistakes of the past if and only if the policy makers care to learn from history” (Akinwumi, 2009:9).

Historically, no Nigerian group can be treated in isolation of the others. It was neither possible nor realistic for any community to ignore its neighbor because the economic and political survival of a community depended on the relationships whether friendly or hostile, which it had with its neighbours (Falola et al, 2006). All Nigeria groups took measures to ensure good relations with one another. Among the most important measures were the recognition of the territorial integrity of other states, promotion of trade, inter-state tours by the rulers or their representatives, inter-state marriages and the establishment of diplomatic relations.

These factors that promoted inter-group relations are examined briefly: Relations promoted by trade. Trade was one of the most important factors which linked many groups together. No community was self-sufficient in the production of agricultural and manufactured goods which it required either for its necessities or luxuries.

Relations promoted by trade routes, markets and traders. Trade routes, markets and traders contributed to interactions among different groups, thus further promoting inter-state cooperation. Trade routes linked the whole of Nigeria together. For example in the north central, traders from Awe area passed through Keffi and Karu to Abuja, Kuta and Bida (Filaba, 1994).

Relations promoted by religious, social and cultural institutions that brought people together are age-grades and secret societies, oracle practice and marriage ties.

Relations promoted by migration. Nigeria history is full of examples of migrations from one area to another for political, economic and security reasons. Even within the same region or ethnic groups there were continuous and profuse migrations caused by disputes over succession to thrones, quarrels over chieftaincy titles, escape from threats of or actual, invasions, and flights to avoid being punished for a criminal offence.

Relations promoted by diplomacy. In order to maintain the links existing among states and to derive the benefits of peaceful co-existence, many Nigerian states deliberately maintained diplomatic ties with one another and were also conversant with the intricate art of diplomacy.

Finally, relations promoted by war. All the factors mentioned to sustain peaceful inter-group relation often broke down and wars had to be fought among the states. War was an integral part of a state's relation with other states and can thus be rightly characterized as an evidence of inter-group relations. War has also been described as diplomacy by another means.

These six factors of inter-group relations provided us the basis to submit that harmonious inter-group relations is still achievable in contemporary Nigeria because Nigerians are not strangers to themselves and have been relating whether peacefully or otherwise before the colonial creation of the country, (Akinwumi, 2009).

Nigeria is not only plural country in the world. Some of these countries have been able to manage or contain the various centrifugal forces. This paper hopes that Nigeria can emerge victorious from these inter-group conflicts. Finally, for purposes of existing citizenship (voting and being voted for, access to opportunities) residency should be the operative principle. It will enable for integration where all group can still maintain their ethnic identities but without being excluded from participation in decision-making and other citizenship issues (Alubo, 2011). Until the recent rise of ethnicity, individual members of the community were recognized for their talents and were put for political and other offices irrespective of whether or not such individuals were outside the ethnic homeland. For example the first Major of the city of Enugu, Umaru Altine, was a Nigerian but of Hausa ethnic group in this predominantly Igbo homeland (Nnoli, 2001:232 cited in Alubo, 2011:297). In the same vein the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) elected a Mallam Ibrahim Iman, a Kaunri fellow (also called Beri-Beri) to represent Jemgba constituency of Gboko Division in Tivland during the first Republic (Jibo, 2003). Very recently an Idoma man Mr. Utu Ali from Benue state was elected into Federal House of Representatives from Kaduna state constituency where he resided in 2003 general elections. These are prospects of harmonious inter-group relations in Nigeria.

Conclusion

It is an established fact that Nigeria is a plural country. Therefore most of the inter-group conflicts are as a result of the leader's inability to manage these pluralities, driven by equity, justice and fairness. Similarly, the inability of the leaders to re-distribute the abundant wealth of this nation in order to reduce poverty, unemployment, true and fiscal federalism where citizens are not discriminated upon on the basis of indigene-settlers dichotomy and where each federating units brings something to national coffers – are factors contributing to frequent intergroup conflicts.

It is recommended therefore, that Nigeria needs more visionary, purposeful and selfless leaders. Two, that there is an urgent need to restructure, the present fiscal structure of the country, so that each state can contribute to the national economy rather than waiting to receive only. This means that, the abundant agricultural and mineral resources should be exploited and the dependence on oil be reduced. Also citizenship of the country should be by place of residence rather than tie the citizenship of a person to some ancestral origin.

The need for good governance cannot be over emphasis because when governments becomes more even handed in the allocation of facilities and meeting the people's basic needs there will be little recourse to ethnicity and/or religion or other exploitations of identity.

Political positions should be made less attractive, that is more of service delivery rather than means for power, wealth and prestige.

Finally, people in government at all levels should show much sense of accountability to the citizens rather than project themselves as “Messiahs” placed in the office by God and

to whom the people should show gratitude and unquestioning loyalty and followership; all these leading to rapid development of contemporary Nigeria.

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