Resolving Indigene- Settler Conflicts in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
The security challenges bedeviling Nigerian had been enormous in recent years. These conflicts are generated through the disagreements of some socio/political, and economic groups in various regions of the nation. The Presidency and their apologists have continued to defend him in her response to the killings across the country. All Progressives Congress (APC) National Chairman Adams Oshiomhole said the party was concerned about the killings. He called on security agents to prove to Nigerians that they can defend them and ensure the safety of lives and properties. The Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) advised Nigerians to stop blaming President Buhari for the killings, by positing that Nigerian lawmakers should take the lion's share of the blame, followed by the citizens and the media. It added that politicians, tribal bigots and a section of the media, which has been spreading wrong information about killings, should also take the blame. This paper examines the ways by which these indigene- settler conflicts can be eradicated for peaceful coexistence. Documentary and qualitative method was used for data collection and analysis. The paper recommended that government should prohibit the use of sophisticated weapons by those concerned and peace education.
Keywords: Conflicts, National Insecurity& Peace challenges, Indigene- Settler, Nigeria .

INTRODUCTION
Conflict, generally is a reality of social relations. Conflicts at any level arise from divergences of interests, desires, goals and values aspirations in the competition for resources to meet imposing demands on social life in a defined socio-physical environment (Otite, 2001). As a matter of fact, Man in a socio-physical environment lives in continuous process of dependence and interdependence which often produces contradictions and conflicts. Communal conflicts constitute one of the major recurring problems bedeviling the socio-political landscape of Africa. To be sure, communal conflicts are not new, particularly in socio-cultural complex societies defined by a high number of ethnic nationalities and language groups such as Nigeria. Pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria experienced inter-kingdom dynastic feuds, and inter-community conflicts (Ogban-Iyam, 2005). Many contemporary Nigeria communities have experienced several cases of communal conflicts. Some of the notable examples include the Zango-Kataf conflict in Kaduna State (1999-2001); Tiv-Jukun Wukari conflict in Taraba State(1999-2001); Itsekiri-Urhobo Warri crisis, (1999-2000); Yelwa-Shendam conflict (2003-2005), Mangu-Bokoss crisis(1988-1999), the Ife-Modakeke crisis (1999-2000) (Otite, et al, 1999; Imobighe et al, 2002; Ubi, 2001; Omatayo, 2005; Best 2007). One of the common features of these conflicts has to do

with their confrontational and violent dimension which led to the loss of lives and property of people who hitherto lived together in relative harmony.

Put differently, communal crisis, religious, ethnic, inter and intra-state conflicts appear to have remained the most destabilizing feature of politics in the third world countries especially in Africa. In Nigeria, since the return to civil rule in 1999, domestic instability arising from ethnoreligious, inter and intra communal conflicts of varying degrees and dimensions have been recorded. The implications of these crises to national security, development and democratic survival and consolidation are well captured in the works of Jega, (2002); Osaghae and Suberu, (2005); Nwaomah, (2011); Egwu, (2013); Nwanegbo (2012); Salawu, (2010); Osaghae, (1992);Fawole and Bello, (2011); Imobighe, (2003); and Egwu (2003). The humanitarian tragedies that have accompanied these ethno-religious violence have been prohibitive (Egwu, 2013:26; Nwanegbo 2012:29). Studies over the years have shown that indigene/ settler dichotomy and issues of citizenship that is rooted in the nebulous national constitutional misconstruction and discriminatory tendencies of elitist politics have been the reinforcing factors for ethno-communal violence in Nigeria (see Ojukwu and Onifade, 2010; Aluaigba, 2008).

Thus, the political use and misuse of citizenship and indigeneship has promoted dual conceptual explanations and application of the notion of indigeneity. In this regard, a Nigerian citizen may be excluded or denied opportunities in Nigeria owing to his/her parental genealogy. Nigerians, who have their ethnic genealogy elsewhere, even if they were born in a particular state or lived all their lives there, are regarded as "settlers" (Ibrahim, 2006). This discriminatory tendency especially at the local levels has been a major and potential source of conflict. For instance, discrimination on the basis of indigeneship or citizenship is quiet problematic because it is directly tied to individual or group access to societal resources including political opportunities. This has served to further sharpen the "we" and "them" divide. It should be noted that ethnic conflicts in 1959, 1980, 1990, 1994, 1991, 1992 and 2001 between the Jukuns and the Tivs, Kutebs and Hausa settlers have had far reaching impact on the Jukuns people (see Mustapha 2002). Today, the popular use of indigene/settler as a means of discriminating against other ethnic groups or separating owners of the land from migrants has become an important factor in the socio-political life of the Jukun society.

RESEARCH METHOD
Sources and Method of Data Collection
In this study, we shall collect data from secondary sources. The secondary data comprise information collected from books, journals, government publication, internet and other electronic sources. Secondary data is referred to as data obtained form an existing data bank or publish literature. These data shall be obtained from books, journals, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, government publications/documents, symposia and workshop papers, communiqué, unpublished seminars and theses, and on line materials.

THE INDIGENE AND SETTLER CONUNDRUM: A THEMATIC EXPOSITION
With a land area of about 923, 768 square km which works out at about 1 person per 16.2 sq km, on the average based on a population of 150 million people, many of which are concentrated in the urban areas, (NPC 2006 census), it would appear that there is enough land space for every citizen to use for productive purposes. However, the contrary is the case. The indigene and settler conundrum is far wider than land space or its adequacy. Udo (1999) posits that Nigeria is largely a tribal society in which various ethnic groups lay claims to territories to the exclusion of other groups.

In 10 January 2002 clashes which broke out on New Year's Eve between Fulani herders and local people in Mambilla Plateau, northeastern Nigeria, were the latest in a string of violent conflicts between so-called settlers and indigenous people that have rocked the north and centre of the country in recent years. Disputes over land between older communities and presumed newcomers

accounted for much of the ethnic and religious unrest which claimed hundreds of lives last year and left tens of thousands displaced. Land ownership claims were central to the violence involving Tivs and Hausa-speaking Azeris that broke out in Nasarawa State in June. Clashes between local Christians and Hausa-Fulani Muslims in Jos, capital of the central state of Plateau, in September, and between Tivs and Jukuns in Taraba State in October were also rooted in similar disputes. Recognising this, former President Olusegun Obasanjo tasked a special commission he set up last October to investigate the causes of ethnic and religious unrest, to work towards a solution to the problems posed by the settlers-indigene issue.

However, some analysts trace the problems to the nature of modern Nigeria: an agglomeration of various ethnic nationalities that is yet to become a nation. "While contacts among its at least 250 ethnic groups predated colonial conquests, Nigeria of today is a patchwork of sometimes disparate peoples stitched together by imperial Britain more for administrative convenience than for any other purpose," historian Nengi Gbalafuma told IRIN. Indeed, Nigeria was once described by the politician Obafemi Awolowo as "a mere geographical expression". But whatever its shortcomings, the inheritors of this modern nation-state of over 120 million inhabitants have had to face the difficult challenge of welding a cohesive nationhood out of its kaleidoscope of peoples. This task has been made even tougher because the various ethnic groups have tended to guard their pre-colonial territory jealously. And what state leaders needed most to facilitate integration turned out to be what they sorely lacked, a clear definition of citizenship rights. With colonialism in retreat in the 1950s, Nigeria was administratively split into three autonomous regions, corresponding to the spheres of influence of its biggest ethnic groups: the Hausa-Fulani in the Northern Region, the Yoruba in the Western Region, and the Igbo in the Eastern Region. The central region, with more than 150 ethnic minorities, was part of the northern region, and therein lay the seeds of much of the future conflict.

The British had forged a strong alliance with the Sokoto Caliphate, formed by the leaders of a Fulani jihad early in the 19th century, under their system of indirect rule that ceded authority to local monarchs. Through the creation of the Northern Region, control over the central minority groups, including many that had successfully resisted Islamic conquest for centuries, fell to the emirates. The colonial rulers also actively discouraged the activities of Christian missionaries in the north as well as the introduction of Western education. On the other hand, southern Nigeria - the eastern and western regions - acquired Western education relatively early as a result of long years of contact with Europeans. By the early 1950s, most of the administrators helping the colonisers to run the civil service in the Northern Region were southerners. However, as soon as the regions gained self-rule in 1954, the north began a "northernisation policy", which resulted in a massive purge of southerners employed in the region. "Between January 1954 and August 1958, a total of 2,148 southerners were dismissed from the northern public service and encouraged to seek employment in the south where they belong," writes Olawale Albert in a recent book, 'Federalism and Political Restructuring in Nigeria'. The policy continued through the 1960s and served further to reinforce the concept of holding on to one's indigenous area to the exclusion of 'outsiders'. "Even under the present political dispensation," adds Albert, "there is no specific law or policy which makes it mandatory for any state of the federation to employ 'strangers' from other states."

The subsequent breakup of the three-region structure and creation of more states not only freed the minority groups of the central region from immediate Hausa-Fulani influence, but also restored to them the concept of their own, exclusive homeland. This was made even more acute by the migratory tendencies of the Hausa-Fulani, who are mainly traders and farmers. Over several decades, they have formed large communities among the original inhabitants of the central region. Since they have often been richer and wielded greater political influence than the local people, it was not difficult for resentment to brew. One of the first indications that tempers had reached explosive levels was violence that broke out in 1992 in Zangon Kataf in the northern state of Kaduna between the local Kataf people and Hausa-speaking settlers. It was sparked by an

attempt by the Kataf to reclaim the community's main market by moving it away from the Hausa quarters. In the past two years this type of violence between so-called settlers and indigenes has become more frequent. Some analysts find an additional catalyst for such conflicts in the introduction of strict Islamic or Sharia law since late 1999 by several predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani states in northern Nigeria. This is perceived by the non-Muslim minority groups as a move to achieve cultural hegemony over them. "With the advent of Sharia the non-Muslims have simply raised their guards and any slight misunderstanding could lead to violence.

Other analysts see an additional factor at play: the southward march of the Sahara Desert. "There is increased pressure on land as farmers and herders leave the arid belt and move further south ahead of the desert into the central Guinea savannah," Usman Bako, who studied agriculture at the University of Zaria in Kaduna State, told IRIN. Hardest hit by encroachment of the desert are the Fulani herdsmen who for centuries had freely roamed a previously greener Sahel in search of pasture for their cattle, he said. Unlike the urban Fulani, who embraced Islam, conquered the old Hausa city states, merged with their ruling classes and assumed their language - eventually becoming indistinct from their Hausa hosts - the nomadic Fulani continue to roam.

According to Nnoli (2003) the third phase of ethnic conflict in Nigeria is characterized by conflicts arising from the contradiction between indigeneity and citizenship in the 1979 and subsequent constitutions. This phase followed from the dynamics of the second phase, the struggle by and for the minorities. New States were created in 1967 and 1976. Yet the problem of minorities persisted because the problem was not the desire for autonomy but for privilege. An attempt to address the latter led to the formulation and implementation of the principle of federal character in the 1979 and subsequent constitutions. The principle no longer addressed the genuine grievances of the minorities per se but the aspirations of all ethnic groups for material advantage. It did not distinguish between majority and minority ethnic groups as in Malaysia and India (Jinadu, 2001). And unlike these other countries its affirmative action clauses were not intended as ad interim measures, to operate for a number of years, after which they would be reviewed and then renewed, modified or dropped (Jinadu, 2001: 24-25).

For understanding ethnic conflict during this phase the critical provision of the federal character principle is section 135 (3) of the 1979 Constitution. It stipulates that in the appointment of Ministers, the President shall reflect the federal character of Nigeria "provided that, in giving effect to the provisions aforesaid, the President shall appoint at least one Minister from each State, who shall be an indigene of such a State" (Nigeria Constitution, 1979). Article 210 of the Draft Constitution defines who is an indigene of a state: "belong to' when used with reference to a state refers to a person either of whose parents were a member of a community indigenous to that state" (Nigeria, 1976). In practice the difficulty has been to decide what constitutes a "community indigenous to a state".

In any case, the Federal Character provisions in sections 14 (3) and (4), section 135 (3), section 203 (1) (b) inadvertently created three types of Nigerian citizens. The most privileged are those citizens who belong to the indigenous communities of the state in which they reside. Others who are indigenes of other states are less favoured. The least privileged are those citizens who are unable to prove that they belong to a community that is indigenous to any state in Nigeria. Associated with these provisions is the right of each state not only to organize its own affairs in its own way and develop at its own pace, but also the right if necessary to do so by excluding indigenes of other states from full participation in its activities, and discriminating against them in jobs, land purchase, housing, admission to educational institutions, marriage, business transactions and the distribution of welfare services.

One of the consequences of this exclusionist and divisive system of citizenship has been a number of violent ethnic conflicts. The violent conflict in Zango-Kataf is illustrative. Claims by the indigenous Kataf against the immigrant Hausa community exploded into violence in February 1992. The government set up a commission of inquiry into the disturbance. But in May before the commission's report was released, a new out break of violence led to the sacking and burning of

the town and some neighbouring villages. In sympathy with their Hausa kith and kin the Hausa majority in Kaduna and Zaria rioted. At the end of the violence over two hundred people had been killed in Zango-Kataf while over one thousand others died in Kaduna, Zaria and elsewhere in the North (Egwu, 1993: 20-24).

A similar violent conflict erupted in 1990, 1991 and 1992 between the indigenous Jukun and the immigrant Tiv communities in Wukari and its environs. This violent conflict is still going on, albeit, with occasional peaceful interludes. Any time it erupts, thousands are killed and wounded and hundreds of houses are burnt or otherwise destroyed (Egwu, 1992 28-29; Best, 1999). The violent conflict that erupted in Toto, Nassarawa state between the (Bassa) and Igbira ethnic communities has a similar character. Dispute over who should pay allegiance to whom in relation to who was indigenous precipitated the violence. The violence that erupted in 1983 and continued intermittently in 1986 and 1995 and culminated in the unprecedented violence of 1997. In this last uprising alone thousands were killed while the whole Bassa ethnic community were displaced. As of today they are still to return permanently to their homes (Alli, 2002).

Similarly, the Tiv immigrant community in Nassarawa state has been displaced in large numbers as a result of the violence that attended the death of a chief of an indigenous community in the state in 2001. The death was blamed on the Tiv. Another illustrative example is the inter-ethnic conflict between the Bachama (Western Bwatiye) and the Hausa immigrants that raged with intensity in 1988. Although the conflict had its immediate origin in land, it was part of ethnic minority politics, the struggle between the northern ethnic minorities and the majority Hausa-Fulani ethnic group. About sixty years ago, Hausa settlers came to Tingo-Wadugu in Bachamaland as farmers and fishermen. Bachama chiefs and village heads gave them land. The land grant was in accordance with customs and tradition. Therefore, it was not sold out as private property but to be held in trust for the community. The two communities lived in peace and cooperation until the early 1980s. However, when demobilized soldiers began to return to the villages in the course of the late 1970s and some others responded to the governments 'return to the land' policy, the Bachama need for land became acute. Around the same time, there was evidence of the commercialization of land and land speculation with respect to the land allocated to the Hausa according to custom.

Bachama-Hausa skirmishes over farmland began in 1980 (Egwu, n.d). The conflict reached a threshold of irreversibility in 1987 when Hausa settlers following a disagreement over farmland allegedly killed the Bachama village head of Wadugu in an ambush. To ward off inter-ethnic violence, the government of Gongola State set up an inquiry into the killing. But nothing was done to bring the investigation to a speedy conclusion. The result was a bitter inter-ethnic clash between the two groups. For three days mass killing and destruction of property took place. It took strong measures by the 15th Battalion of the Nigerian Army from the state capital, Yola, to restore peace. Many Bachama were detained and twenty were imprisoned. This incarceration continued to anger the Bachama who accused the authorities of unfair treatment (Egwu, n.d, vanguard, 30 August 1990).

For emphasis, the contestation arising from the indigene-settler problematic stems from the conception, definition and perception of who is an indigene and who is not or who is a settler and what right does one have which the other should not have. The batch of identity also structures indigene-settler relations. Osaghae and Suberu (2005:27) define identity as "any group attributes that provides recognition, definitions, reference affinity, coherence and meaning for individual members of the group acting individually or collectively". These values shape the attitude and behaviour of settler communities. According to Egwu (1999) and Best, et al. (2001), the settlers import their culture and tradition into their new-community to the discomfort of the host communities.

The settler (non-indigene) communities latch on the Constitutional provisions on human rights and the problem of definition of status to assert their rights in their places of settlement. For instance, many National Constitutions and Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees

free movement, free association and ownership of property but at the same time enshrine the Principles of Federal Character and Quota System (FRN, 1999). On the other hand, Mandami, (2001: 4-22) opines that the history of migration before slavery, during slavery and after slavery makes yesterday's immigrants today's indigenes, and yesterday's settlers today's natives. Who qualifies as an indigene, a citizen or national of a particular place in Nigeria is an important debate especially in the spate of various violent conflicts which have affected thousands of lives, economic activities, and human development.

The Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, NIALS (2011) defines an indigene as a person who is a native (first people) to a territory as opposed to a settler (Later comer). Indices such as length of time, settlement in that location, exercises of control over the land and other resources in that location; successful effort at forging a sense of separate distinguishing identity defined indigenship. On the other hand, citizenship refers to nationality, the possession of formal legal membership in specific nation recognized under both international and domestic laws (Gibney 2006). The nexus between citizenship and indigenship creates an identity dilemma which often breeds hostile relationship between host communities and settler-communities as has been demonstrated in the Ezillo-Ezza-Ezillo conflict of Ebonyi state, the Tiv-Jukun conflict in Taraba state, and the Ijaw and Itskeri crisis in Delta State (See Ebonyi State Government White Paper, 2008; Best et al, 199l; Imobighe et. al, 2002).

The scenario poses strategic question on citizenship and multiculturalism: Is a person a citizen of a place of domicile, an indigene of a place of birth or both? Is it so, if the order of priority and loyalty is reversed?(Mclemore,1981:1).This self and institutional dilemma breeds conflicts in human Relations. Nnoli (2003) posits that ethnic conflicts derive from the constriction between indigenship and citizenship in the 1979 and subsequent constitutions evident in such institutional requirements as, place of birth, quota, state of origin, catchment area, among others. The problem is compounded by the inability of the Settler or migrant communities to fully integrate themselves with the host indigene/native communities through acculturalisation. Rather what obtains is retribalization and marginal personality (see Osaghe, 2007 and Mclemore,1981).The allegation and counter allegations of desecration of cultural symbol and tradition such as the naming of markets, schools in the dialect of migrant communities illustrate this view clearly.(Memo to the Ebonyi State Government Peace Committee on Ezillo-Ezza conflict, 2008).

 Citizenship is here defined as a relationship between the individual and the state in relation to mutual rights, duties and obligations. Citizenship is also a form of participation in the running of the state and society, and in this sense an agency and subject. 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. The problem is not however, the constitution but the translation of its provisions to reality. Part of this complication is the division of Nigerian citizens –in daily experiences—into *indigenes* and *settlers*. As used in common parlance, an indigene is synonymous with native, autochthon 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 native land is in a local council or state. The Federal Character Commission has defined indegeneity in the local council 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 council in a state s/he is automatically an indigene of that State (Federal Character Commission ND: 16). This position is more trenchantly expressed by Sam Egwu who asserts that "Indegeneity" of a state is conferred on a person whose parents or grandparents were members of a community indigenous to a particular state" (Egwu 2003:37; 2009). Thus Nigerians, who have their ethnic genealogy elsewhere, even if they were born in a particular state or lived all their lives there, are regarded as "settlers" (Alubo 2006; Ibrahim 2006). A settler is regarded as a stranger, a sojourner who may have been born in a location but is regarded as a bird of passage who would ultimately go "home". Indigenes insist sojourners have a home where they periodically visit for celebration and where prominent members of the former are conveyed for burial. Herein lies an illustration of the nature of identity as both self defined and other imposed. Most of the people defined and treated as settlers do not regard themselves as such. In the Nigerian experience, being an indigene or a settler is a permanent identity, as there is no provision for the latter to convert to the former.

In the daily experiences, the classification of Nigerians into indigenes and settlers only indicates who is native to particular locality and who is not. It creates problems because the classification is a basis for citizenship rights, entitlements and access to opportunities. Nigerians' daily experiences are replete with tales of denial, exclusion and discrimination of some groups on the one hand, and access, inclusion and a sense of belonging by other groups on the other. The more common forms of discrimination against settlers include the following:

- Employment—available jobs are often reserved for indigenes and where non-natives are employed at all, they are placed on contract appointment. This form of employment has no provision for pension benefits. Sometimes, advertisements for employment are run with the proviso that "only indigenes need apply".
- Since the return of civil rule, all non-indigenes who were employed have been dismissed from many state civil services, obviously to replace them with indigenes. Increasingly, settlers are perceived as snatching food from the mouths of indigenes, a perception which becomes more telling because of the uneven development. Only few centers (such as the former regional capitals, oil producing areas and state and federal capitals) have thriving organizations and easier opportunities for employment.
- Admissions to secondary and higher institutions—these too are reserved for indigenes and only few non-indigenes are offered places. The issue here goes beyond quota and catchment considerations; there is a clear sense of who receives or is denied priority opportunities.
- Scholarships –this is exclusive to indigenes; non-indigenes are required to "go home", even where they may not have another home.
- Higher schedule of fees for the non-indigenes in educational institutions such as Polytechnics and Universities. This is enforced without distinction to who may have lived for decades and paid all taxes in the state.
- Standing elections—while non-indigenes can vote, they are frequently not allowed to stand elections. Married women also suffer similar discrimination. The only exception is the Federal Capital Territory where Nigerians qua Nigerians can run for office. I will return to this issue in the discussions of implications below.

There are other forms such as headships of federal institutions and establishments which, since the period of Late General Abacha (1993-1998), have gone to indigenes even where the so called settlers are better qualified. Nigeria's is in a situation where federal establishments such as universities, colleges of education, research institutes seem to have been appropriated by the

states where these are located. But since the appointment of headships is made by the federal government, there is an apparent complicity of the central government in knuckling to the pressures of indigenes. Some of these forms of discrimination have been formalized through certificates of indigene (Alubo 2004, Ibrahim 2006, and Human Rights Watch 2006). These certificates have become prerequisite for admission to tertiary schools and employment, including into the federal civil service. The experiences point to a two tier citizenship structure, the first for indigenes and the second for settlers.

In daily encounters, identity and its politics are the bases of contestations for inclusions in opportunities and rights as are available to others. Many of these contestations result in violence. In such conflicts, holders of particular identities as defined by the attackers are singled out for liquidation, forced to relocate and their properties torched. The collective nature of the violence is perhaps serving to strengthen geo-political solidarity. Also important is the near absence of material benefits attached to Nigerian citizenship. This gap is filled by ethnic and religious development associations and thus serving to reinforce divisions. The rise in geo-ethnic movements also serves to weaken national integration as the first priority of various associations such as the *Afenifere* is the Yoruba, the *Ohaneze* is the *Ndigbo*, and the Arewa Consultative Forum is the Hausa-Fulani. Similar geopolitical associations exist from the Middle Belt Minorities as well as for oil bearing Niger Delta Region.

These geo-regional movements were preceded by identity construction and reconstruction which provided the bases of further divisions into new majorities and minorities. This was particularly true each time state and local council creation exercises were carried out. Yet, agitations for the creation of more states and local councils, or simply spaces over which groups could exercise more control and influence, are unrelenting. However, the creation of states and local councils has not in themselves, solved the problems of a sense of belonging and integration, nor have they allayed the fears of domination (Alubo 2004). Instead, these exercises create additional theatres for contestations, as new majorities and minorities are created in the process. Illustrations include Kogi, where the Igala as a national minority are the majority; the same is true of the Tiv in Benue and the Uhrobo in Delta. In some states, a few national majorities find themselves as ethnic minorities such as the Yoruba in Kogi and the Hausa/Fulani in Plateau. Indeed, as Obaro Ikime has argued:

> …each time a state is created, there is a new majority nationality and new minorities, and relations within the states have been more acrimonious since states were created than before because the struggle for resources and development become more localized and so more intense (Ikime 2002: 65-66).

One only has to recall the relationships after new states were carved out of existing ones to appreciate how an exercise meant to "solve" a problem really creates further fractionalization. Much more than creating new majorities and minorities, new states also reconfigure the indigene-settler structure. Thus, whenever new states are created, some who were hitherto indigenes of the previous states cease to enjoy that status. In this way, the creation of states, *ipso facto*, redraws the borders and also reconstructs identities. From past experiences, people who lorded it over others as fellow indigenes became bitter enemies. State and local council creations construct and re-construct identities because indegeneity is based on claims to having an ethnic territory within a state. Furthermore, in daily life indigene/settler status assumes different dimensions, depending on the locus of the contestations: federal, state and local councils. The terrain widens and narrows and the criteria change accordingly. At the federal level, for instance, ethnic groups from the same state are indigenes who unite against contestants for other states. The same "indigenes" in solidarity at the federal context become divided into specific ethnic—and sometimes religious—groups at the state level. This same fission and fusion take place at the local council levels where indigenes break into clans and lineages.

The exclusions and denials of rights and opportunities on the basis of identity have resulted in many cases of violence, especially since the return of civil rule in 1999. It appears that military jackboots more effectively kept the lid on the situation. Secondly, as civil rule returned many politicians are fond of ethnic mobilization during electioneering campaigns and thus whipping up sentiments. The North central region is overrepresented in the table of identity based violence. Here, the conflicts are frequently over the control of spaces such as a state (Alubo 2008) and local council areas. In many instances, religion is deployed and rather than focus on believers, the entire swathes of territories are redefined as "holy land" to be purified and sustained through new religious codes (Casey 2007; Abdu 2005). This is the genre of violence which attended the *sharia* in most states in the North. Wherever *sharia* was imposed, the state governments became enforcers and through its new police, the *hisbah*, offenders—including non-Muslims— were apprehended and disciplined (Abdu 2005, Kuna 2005; Casey 2007). There were also other conflicts such as disputes over land, chieftaincy and the perennial disputes between pastoralists and agriculturalists. More vicious are conflicts over denial and exclusion of some groups from rights and opportunities enjoyed by others. Identity conflicts have been experienced in Ife-Modakeke, Umulerei Aguleri and virtually all over the country (Federal Government of Nigeria 2003; Otite and Albert 2001; Nnoli 2001; Oshagae etal 2001).

Taming the indigenes-settlers dichotomy
Communal clashes are fast becoming a regular feature of the political landscape in some parts of the country. Some of these places have become permanent black spots on the country's security map. The government must find a permanent solution to the problems responsible for the crises in the affected areas of Taraba and Nasarawa states, so that they do not join the league of places noted for bloody communal clashes in the country. For some years now, bloodletting has become a regular feature of the relationship between Fulani settlers and the indigenous community in Plateau State. A similar scenario obtains in Nasarawa State between the Eggon, Fulani and Alago people, while the native Jukuns and Hausa settlers clash frequently in Wukari area of Taraba State.
There is no doubt that the recurring clashes between some ethnic groups in the country have their origin in the nation's inability to resolve the vexed issue of citizenship. The divide between indigenes and settlers in some Nigerian communities is at the root of these crises. This problem is also both political and economic. While the undue emphasis on indigeneship and struggles for political power play their role in many of these crises, the insistence of settler Fulani herdsmen on the right to graze their cattle wherever they find grass also contributes to the clashes. It is in the best interest of Nigerians to begin to behave like one. As long as we continue to emphasise our differences, focus on those things that divide us and create an "indigene" and "settler" scenario, these ethnic crises will continue to rear their ugly heads with disastrous consequences for the affected communities and the nation. At the same time, the right of farming communities to protect their crops from the rampaging cattle of Fulani herdsmen must be protected.
The solution to the problem should, therefore, involve the modernization of animal husbandry in Nigeria to include the establishment of grazing reserves in the home states of cattle owners and herdsmen to end the perennial fights between farmers and herdsmen in different parts of the country. Modern animal farming in developed countries is done within the confines of dedicated reserves, where cattle are given special feed that increase their productivity and profitability. The idea of driving cattle across large swathes of the country to eat up plants wherever they are found is anachronistic. We must do away with such an outdated system. Let state governments of cattle rearing communities ensure the establishment of adequately equipped farming settlements for herdsmen, and also educate cattle owners on modern feeding methods to end the perennial fights over farmlands.
The National Assembly should wade into the Taraba and Nasarawa communal clashes. The lawmakers should not watch while Nigerians are subjected to avoidable deaths in their own

country. The law enforcement agents should be up and doing in ensuring the safety of lives and property. Nigeria should not be turned into a killing range by unscrupulous elements operating under different guises. There is no doubt at all that these communal clashes recur because their perpetrators are never punished. It is necessary to punish those behind these communal killings to ensure that they do not recur. It is also necessary to advise those responsible for the killings to desist from it because there can be no development without peace. Nigerians should learn to live peacefully with one another. This vicious cycle of perennial violence and bloodletting should be broken. Government should do something urgently to nip these attacks in the bud. Politicians should also desist from fomenting trouble in their domain because some of these crises are political in nature. There should be civil ways of handling political issues without violence. What-ever political crises are fueling these killings should be resolved forthwith so that peace can be restored to the troubled areas.

We appeal to all the tribal leaders in the troubled states to eschew violence and allow peace to reign. Moreover, the relevant governments should consider the reports of the committees that were set up in the past to resolve the crises in the troubled areas, and not only publish, but implement their recommendations. For the recent killings, we advise the setting up a judicial commission of inquiry to establish those behind them and ensure that they are severely punished. This is the only way to put an end to such mindless killings in the country.

While it is pertinent that every well-meaning Nigerian would want the obnoxious indigene-ship clause abrogated from our statute books, the only thing that will make this laudable idea possible is the removal of the Federal Character Principle and Quota System from the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. If this is done and it is conspicuously enshrined in the Constitution that a Nigerian born in any part of the country or who has lived in any part of the country for a specified number of years has automatically become an indigene of such locality or state, the issue would have been taken from a coordinated perspective. This way, no one would read impunity or double standard into it since it would be stated clearly that a Nigerian born in any part of the country or who has lived in any part of the country for a specified period of time, by virtue of having become an indigene of his domicile, is qualified to run for any elective position or appointment as the case may be.

In fact, without such deliberate steps, the controversy surrounding the indigenes/settlers dichotomy in the country will simply not give way. The resolve of the Federal Government to address this issue especially in the wake of the worsening security situation in the country as expressed recently by no less a personality than the Special Adviser to the President on Political Affairs, Alhaji Ahmed Gulak, is commendable. But it should be done in such a way that it would not be seen as an attempt to pacify one ethnic group at the expense of others. Nigeria is a heterogeneous society. With over 150 million population with about 450 recognised languages and over 250 ethnic groups, the country passes for one of the most complex societies in the world. Both oral and recorded histories agree that most of these groups migrated into their present abodes from within and outside the country's present geographical region.

Greed and maladministration by corrupt council officials all the more deprived many of their right to self determination and social justice. Thus, the persistent absence of democratic reforms encouraged a legion of unemployed youths to resort to violence as a means to vent their bottled up grievances. Hence, the fierce and devastating communal clashes which we have witnessed in recent times between the Ife and Modakeke people, Ijaw and Itsekiri, Zango and Kataf, Tiv and Jukun, Izzi and Ezza, Fulani and Berom, to mention just a few. In these clashes, several people have either been killed or injured, others rendered homeless while economic activities have suffered the greatest debilitating effects. With the escalation of crisis all over the country, many now live in perpetual fear while foreign investment has been drastically reduced. Nevertheless, the only way to check the rising incidents of communal violence and the unnerving weight of insecurity in the land is to give every group a sense of belonging. Even the United Nations Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (UNCHPR) recognises the right of self-determination by

all peoples of the world. Given such a situation, every group will be better protected in the polity while their right to freedom of expression is adequately guaranteed. Again, in a world where democratic governance has become the norm, we certainly have to redefine the role of our traditional institution vis-à-vis the civil society. This is to ensure that traditional rulers do not become a cog in the wheel of progress. Only in a true democracy is individual freedom certain to be respected and social justice convincingly secured. This entails the massive development of all parts of Nigeria to ensure that the well-being of the average Nigerian is adequately guaranteed. Above all, the idea that Nigerians should come together and discuss the basis for their continuous existence is long overdue. All we need is a national conference where matters relating to the generality of the Nigerian people, their fears and complaints could be critically addressed. This way, we could settle permanently all these issues that divide us and Nigerians of all ethnic and language affiliations would cohabit in peace as indigenes of the geographical entity call Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Addressing the indigene versus settler divide is further complicated by the practice of what may be called double homes: where one actually resides and earns a living and a more remote ancestral space visited on special occasions. Many Nigerians in the large urban centers for instance travel "home" for festivities. In effect, because Nigeria is not an immigrant country, there would be double homes, and by the same token, indigenes. Indegeneity for purposes of identity and sense of self poses little problems for citizenship so long as the sphere of indegeneity is kept separate from the issues of citizenship. It is in this sense that Nigeria's diversity and cultural pluralism are best appreciated. My position is that citizenship criteria must be based on the individual and equality before the law rather than collective "native" or "tribal" identity as has continued since the colonial era.

All must belong to a civic rather than an ethnic space. For considerations of citizenship, residency must constitute the operative term, such that wherever Nigerians live, their citizenship rights would be guaranteed. At the moment, the current distinction between indigenes and settlers is in effect a two-tier structure of citizenship. The situation is a denial of inclusive citizenship rights leading to the reality that "...as one moves out of his/her local government of "origin", where he/she can lay claims to and authenticate his/her "indigeneity" of a state, the quality of citizenship diminishes" (Egwu 2003: 37). As the contestations rage about full citizenship, a mediating condition would be more responsive government which attends to basic needs as well as provides more opportunities for education, employment, etc. If and when this happens, many of the bases for exclusion would have been eradicated. However, where the *status quo* remains, the prognosis points to more intensification of the identity politics and the potentials for violence because there is no alternative to full and inclusive citizenship for all. But where this does not obtain, the situation points to one Nigeria of many citizenships where some are citizens of some locations and not of others.

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