

Blurring ‘the Other’: Transforming relations in the management of the 1992 ethno-religious conflicts in Zangon Kataf, Kaduna State, Nigeria

*Philip Adémólá Oláyokù**

Abstract

Nigeria, as a multi-ethnic state, has been rife with perennial conflicts resulting from struggles for territorial dominance, administrative and political legitimacy and resource control. This study thus explores the relational contexts of these conflicts, which are often subtended by contours of ethno-religious differences as was the case between the Hausa and Atyap in the Zangon Kataf Community of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study details the historical context of manipulation of these differences by state actors in asserting and changing the dynamics of political legitimacy and control. The latter part of the paper describes qualitative research supporting earlier assertions. It employs a qualitative methodology with

* Philip Adémólá Oláyokù has a Ph.D. in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Ibadan where he taught as an adjunct. He is a Senior Research Fellow of the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA-Nigeria), and his research interests include transitional justice, ethno-religious conflicts, and Afro-Asia relations.

the use of key informant interviews and personal observation involving major stakeholders within a three year period between 2011 and 2014. It subsequently contends that the restoration of peace in the community was dependent on the transformation of relations between hitherto belligerent parties through the adoption of the joint-problem-solving approach and a mediating 14-member reconciliation committee, which created a blueprint for political inclusion. It thus recommends an all-inclusive stakeholder approach in the transformation of relations for the management of resurging ethno-religious conflicts in the region.

Keywords: Zangon Kataf crises, history and management, transforming relations, politics of inclusion

Introduction

Inter-ethnic/religious conflicts have been prevalent features in scholarly discourses on the political and socio-cultural relations among the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria. These discourses examine conflicts (among ethnic groups who either co-habit or share boundaries), which result from claims of victimisation, neglect, oppression, discrimination, domination, exploitation amongst other causes (Salawu 2010:348). The occurrences of these conflicts usually take the ethnic and/or religious dimensions which cut across the different geo-political regions in the country; prominent among which have been the Ife-Modakeke crisis (1997), Tiv/Jukun crisis (2001), Umuleri/Aguleri crises (1995, 1999), Jos crises (since 2001) and the Zangon Kataf crises (February, May 1992) (see CLEEN Foundation 2002; Toure 2003). Literature on these conflicts have focused on investigating the causes of ethno-religious violence as well as proffering possible solutions based on the conflict dynamics. While a lot of documentation has been done in respect of the historical sources of the indigene/settler¹ crises within

1 The indigene/settler dichotomy, within the context of this discourse, means a situation where a group attempts to state claims of legitimacy and territorial control as the first group to settle in a community (indigenes) while the other group (settlers) is regarded as coming later to share the same geo-political space.

the Zangon Kataf² context, the purpose of my research was to advance scholarship on the political dynamics and temporal trajectories of the crises as they show the effects of the relational approach to conflict management. It entailed an investigation of the intermittent roles of the state in the manipulation and management of difference within the contexts of the events leading to the Zangon Kataf 1992 post-conflict scenario. The study, in the subsequent sections, historicised the context of relations between the Hausa and Atyap of Zangon Kataf within the political, social and economic spectra from the precolonial through to the postcolonial era. It concludes that the mutual identification of sources of violent conflicts is fundamental to managing them by transforming relations as showcased by the efforts of the fourteen-member reconciliation committee in Zangon Kataf. This all-inclusive stakeholder model is thus important in managing historical communal conflicts between belligerent groups as it is fundamental to the restoration of social relations for stability in troubled communities.

Methodology

The methodology for this research involved key informant interviews with 5 lawyers, 30 adult male and 25 adult female Atyap and Hausa indigenes of Zangon Kataf, who included the Hausa district head, members of the Atyap Ruling Council, elders in Zangon Kataf Community, and youth leaders. The interviews were held between April 2011 and September 2014. Four legal counsel involved in the legal proceedings of the post-1992 Zangon Kataf conflicts were also consulted. The interviews were corroborated with personal observations and visits to significant sites such as the market, the Agwatyap's palace, community boundary locations, the farms, a mass grave site and the central meeting point. The research was conducted using an interview guide with semi-structured questions and a recorder where permitted. The identity of some interviewees have been protected, based on their requests and in line with the ethical guide for the research. Archival materials from the National Archives and grey literature, including

2 Zangon Kataf is located in Kaduna State, North-central Nigeria.

correspondence and reports of various commissions of inquiry, were also consulted. Field research was conducted during a period of security apprehensions within Kaduna State, with sporadic attacks by Boko Haram insurgents in various parts of the state. This restricted access to state sources as there were lots of bureaucratic bottlenecks due to security concerns. A major challenge for this research was the lack of official documentation of the crises in National and State libraries, and other research centres. This made it necessary to rely on individual collections in private chambers and libraries for the collation of written sources which served as grey literature. The major challenge with this was that some of the documents were not well preserved, while other vital documents had been lost to fire outbreaks, as was the case with work by a renowned researcher on Zangon Kataf at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria. In spite of these challenges, relevant gatekeepers were identified to help with the snowball sampling of respondents and this aided the collection of data for this study. A research guide also helped in facilitating the interview sessions with non-English speaking respondents.

Historicising the Atyap/Hausa political and socio-economic relations in Zangon Kataf

The well documented crises of February and May 1992 emanated from the initial resistance of the Hausa, on 6 February 1992, against the relocation of the central market to Magamiya Road. The socio-economic implication of this territorial redefinition was the potential power shift from the Hausa to the Atyap regarding the control of the economic relations in Zangon Kataf. As some Hausa respondents recounted, the decision by a newly elected Atyap-led Local Government administration was aimed at displacing them from the market; thereby denying them their major means of livelihood. Beyond the underpinning economic argument, the age-old religious rivalry between both groups was also a mobilisation factor during the crises. The Hausa maintained that the new market encroached on their place of worship, and that this implied an attempt of the Christian Atyap to defile their religion. As Ahmed, one of the Hausa respondents recalled:

You cannot blame people for protecting a place where they worship. They flouted a court injunction because they were in charge (of the local government). That was it We told them to obey the court injunction and they refused. The law is the law. Who do you blame for that?

As was observed during the research, the historical context of inter-ethnic relations in Zangon Kataf is one in which ethnic identity is synonymous with religion, which remains a significant factor in the creation and maintenance of relations with the other. Thus, religion was 'a sign post for group boundaries' (see Caselli and Coleman 2012:29). An understanding of the intersection between religion and identity is thus fundamental to situating the roles of state actors in the management of the Zangon Kataf crises within the right ethno-political context. While the narratives on economic cum religious causes are quite informative as regards the immediate causes of the May 1992 Zangon Kataf crises, there have been studies which indicate that the crises were rooted in a history of hostile social relations between the Hausa and the Atyap, the two major ethnic groups in the area.³ Toure (2003) traced the history of antagonistic relations among the groups to the 1897 military raids of an Emir of Zazzau, Mohammed Lawal, which were carried out in his bid to extend the Zaria Emirate south-eastwards to Atyapland. The resulting hostilities led to the evacuation of the Hausa residents from the area in the same year, for fear of reprisal attacks by the Atyap. The Hausa reportedly did not return until the British invaded the area in 1903, though the raids continued between 1900 and 1902. Animosities between the two groups further escalated with the appointment of a Hausa district head (from Zaria) in Zangon Kataf at the introduction of the District System in 1907 (Kazah-Toure 2003). The appointment, according to informants, led to several acts of resistance

3 Zangon Kataf, as a district under colonial rule, is reputed to be cosmopolitan with other notable groups in the area namely the Ikulu, Tacherak (Kachecere), Fulani, Angan (Kamatan), Bajju (Kaje) and Fulani. See Re-assessment Report on Katab District Zaria Province by Mr H.M. Brice-Smith (Source: National Archives Ibadan-NAI) and Kazah-Toure (2003). However, the town's cosmopolitan outlook today encompasses people of different ethnic extractions including the Igbo, Edo, Ijaw and Tiv as was discovered during the fieldwork.

by the Atyap against what they perceived as a political disenfranchisement within their homeland. One such action was the refusal to pay taxes via the official channels, and intermittent questioning of the educational competence of the district head. During this period, an administrative solution was devised to douse hostilities through the appointment of some Atyap indigenes as chiefs or village heads at the lowest cadre of governance within the new political structure.

The political structure in the Zangon Kataf District, as documented in 1922, included the district head (also known as Katuka), assisted by a district mallam (teacher/instructor), a messenger, three dogorai (palace/district guards), a forest guard and a cattle inspector, who were all Hausa.⁴ The judicial system of the district was also altered with the introduction of area courts, which were being run by Islamic Law. According to the 1922 assessment report, the courts were headed by the Hausa Alkali and administered with three other Hausa assistants who sat along 'pagan assessors'. The label 'pagan assessor', used in reference to non-Hausa/Muslims, who practised the traditional religion at the time, corroborated the claim that the political structure in the North discriminated against non-Hausa/Muslim groups (including the Atyap). As such, their inclusion in the administrative and judicial systems of the district logically resulted from their continuous agitations against what they considered Hausa oppression. According to Buba Mannasseh, a member of the Atyap Youth Forum:

...There was never a time we have accepted subjugation in our history ... an Atyap man is a strong willed individual with dignity, but also peace loving. That was why it was easy for the missionaries when they came here. We are (majorly) Christians and the Hausa are not comfortable with this. Jihad never got to us, we fought them back before the white men imposed the emirs on us

Several Atyap informants referred to the documented continuous resistance of their forebears to the census being conducted by the Hausa on behalf

4 Re-assessment Report on Katab District Zaria Province.

of the British colonial administration as evidence of their protests against policies of socio-political exclusion. The reason generally adduced for this was that they considered themselves more competent than the Hausa in terms of carrying out this task, as figures were often manipulated in favour of the Hausa who count non-humans as part of their number. These census-based controversies were also captured by the 1922 re-assessment report which reflected irregularities in figures, wherein boys were counted as men in the Zangon Kataf District, apparently for the purposes of taxation. Following from this, the Atyap resisted the census because they felt they were being over-taxed since censuses were conducted to monitor the taxation regime. In certain instances, the Atyap were reported to have resisted disproportionate tax charges which they considered unjust. The Atyap resistance to the Native Authority administration continued till the post-independent era as violent demonstrations involving them and other groups were reported to have taken place between 1946 and 1966 (Suberu 1996:50).

The Hausa in Zangon Kataf are well renowned as traders. Little wonder there is a historical link between the profession and their earliest presence in the town. The first Hausa to arrive in the town is identified as Mele, a successful trader who contributed significantly to the market activities in the town. Mele is said to have invited his kinsmen to join him at Zango, a town renowned for its commercial significance dating as far back as the early 20th century. The blossoming economy thus conferred a cosmopolitan status on the town, which has residents from different parts of the country. The Zangon Kataf market was the largest in the district, situated 'on the main trade routes from the North to Jemaa, Keffi, Abuja and Bida in the South and from Bauchi and Jos to the South and West'⁵. Due to its geographical centrality, it was a stop where traders, either travelling northward or southward, took breaks from their journeys. The market retains its historical significance as a viable centre of economic activities till the present, giving credence to economic undertones of the root causes of

5 Re-assessment Report on Katab District Zaria Province.

the 1992 crises in addition to religious, ethnic and political undercurrents. From a historical perspective, the political marginalisation of the Atyp under the colonial structure further punctuated the hostilities between them and the Hausa, resulting in intermittent clashes that climaxed in the well documented 1992 market crises which left over 1 528 people killed, 518 injured, 133 houses destroyed and 26 farms vandalised (Akinteye et al. 1999; Kazah-Toure 2003; Madugba 2001; Suberu 1996). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to detail the crises, it is important to note that the historical context of antagonistic relations between the two groups guided the interventions of the 14-member reconciliation committee which emphasised transforming these relations to restore sustainable peace in the community.

The State and the exploitation of difference in Nigeria

The roles of the state in the manipulation of difference among indigenous ethnic groups in Nigeria were aptly captured by Awe (1999:4–13), who traced the shift from the inclusive accommodating pre-colonial politics through the emergence of exclusive colonial politics to the corrupt and oppressive political climate in post-independent Nigeria. The assertion of Awe that there had been political structures (either centralised or decentralised) in pre-colonial Nigeria, which were altered through the introduction of new social political orders by colonialists (both Mediterranean⁶ and Western), has been well corroborated in extant literature by renowned politicians, historians and scholars such as Lugard (1922), Stride and Ifeka (1971), Ikime (1980), Ade Ajayi (1989), Alagoa (1992), Falola and Heaton (2008). The introduction of the indirect rule system (as shown in the Zangon Kataf scenario above) was a paradigmatic shift in the content, focus, nature and methods of political rule in hitherto independent communities which became a conglomerate on 14 January 1914 in the bid to create a modern Nigerian state (Lugard 1922; Awe 1999:8; Nast 2005:140).

6 Kazah-Toure (2003) well documented the pre-British colonial antecedents of raids by Jihadists in Southern Zaria.

Similarly, Heidi Nast's historical analysis of slavery and concubinage within the political institution in Kano concluded with instances of how Kano's political and economic structures were replaced with the advent of colonial rule, despite the seeming respect for and preservation of traditional institutions (Nast 2005:139–165). Awe, from a broader spectrum, categorically stated that 'What was supposed to be an indirect rule was in reality a direct one that ignored the traditional institutions of government'. She exemplified this with the Northern Emirate System within which emirs became 'colonial agents' in Muslim communities, while the Non-Muslim areas of the North had 'British supported chiefs' imposed on their hitherto independent political heads (Awe 1999:8). This is akin to the redefinition of political leadership contexts in colonial Francophone Africa as discussed by Geschiere (2009:15). Therein, though autochthonous groups (people of the land) were identified with particular territories, the control of these territories was reassigned to imposed non-indigenous chiefs (allogenes) considered to be more industrious than the 'backward locals'. This colonial method of governance was thus a violence-based power relation which was purportedly meant to prevent the African from degeneracy and vice, thus redefining his socio-political identity as well as geography for economic benefits (Mbembe 1992:18). Subsequently, this defined relations as the masses became further separated from governance whereby the state became embodied in autocratic individuals in post-colonial contexts, as hitherto well defined identities became fluid in well-manipulated incoherent socio-political climates (Mbembe 1992:7, 5). It is important to note that this alien operational model of the colonialists, which made the governed unconditionally submissive, never gained legitimacy among Africans. The introduction of the indirect rule system in Northern Nigeria was thus significant in the creation of fears and suspicion among the other indigenous groups against the ruling hegemony of the Hausa, Fulani, Nupe and Kanuri, as noted by the Willinks Commission in 1954.⁷ The change

⁷ See *Nigeria: Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying Them*. Presented to the Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Colonies by command of Her Majesty, July 1958.

in the political atmosphere subsequently led to the colonial redefinition of identity and space along the indigene/settler paradigm, which further crystallised the struggles over land ownership, self-determination and socio-cultural control (Nwosu 1999; Osaghae and Suberu 2005:17).

The importance of clarifying the historical context of the shift in relationships between the state and the governed in Nigeria follows from Mamdani's (2002:766–767) argument against the cultural theory of politics, which interprets political actions and their consequences synchronically as opposed to the diachronic interpretation of realities within the historical context. The latter helps in the proper placement of events within the right politico-historical context; thus providing an objective basis for understanding such events and their root causes. Within this diachronic context, one could clearly understand that the indirect rule policy, rather than provide an inclusive social ambience, which was fronted with the inclusion of indigenous regents and chiefs within a new political order, resulted in further fractionalisation of communities. This was because people felt alienated under the new governance regime of compulsion, as opposed to the precolonial participatory politics where leaders prioritised accountability to their community.

This distortion of political administration changed the political destiny and right to territoriality of indigenous groups of Northern Nigeria, bred dissension among the Hausa and non-Hausa groups, led to crises and the breakdown of peace processes within the broader context of 'ethnic stereotypification' as it was in the case of Zangon Kataf. As against the manufactured stereotypes of Hausa domination in Zangon Kataf, Hausa residents decried the fact that they were also politically excluded as most political decisions were taken from Zaria without their knowledge or participation. This contradiction thus presents them as being both politically (having no say in governance) and socially alienated (as they were not considered indigenous to Zangon Kataf). Within the broader Nigerian context, the alienation of the governed from administration also had socio-economic implications as colonialism bred class distinctions between the educated elites and the so-called unlettered people, with

new identities of the sophisticated urbanised and the less developed rural populations.

Identity, space and the management of difference within the Zangon Kataf context

Awe (1999:10–13) identified ethno-religious sentiments, corruption and the ‘oil curse’ as responsible factors for further exclusion of the masses from governance in post-colonial Nigeria. The politics of elite recycling and self-perpetuation in power, which included a long interjection of military dictatorships, has further distanced the ruled from governance. In particular, ethno-religious manipulations remain ready tools in the hands of political elites through which they hunt down rivals in attaining and maintaining political power and wealth (Ibeanu 2000; Ukiwo 2005; Stewart 2009). The emergent post-colonial relations from such manipulations could well be described with Mbembe’s (1992:5) ‘mutual zombification’ whereby political actors and the governed coexist in separate but interrelated spaces – with changing identities to fit into specific socio-political contexts often driven by interests and benefits beyond their design and control.

The dynamics of these constantly changing identities and relationships, within the Nigerian context, is such that they have overlapping macro (national) and micro (state and local government) layers. An understanding of the interrelatedness and interdependence of group relations at these three governance levels is thus significant in the management of hostile relationships among warring ethno-religious factions. It is the formation of such ever dynamic and complex relations that validates the need for a transformation of hostile relations by integrating the conflicting parties within the conflict management process. This approach probes beyond framed positions to redressing societal structures and institutions within a gradual process of attaining win-win outcomes for parties in conflict (Miall 2004:3). This is premised on the fact that root causes of violent conflicts are not usually limited to the immediate location of the conflicts, with relationships having degenerated over time. The context of the

Zangon Kataf conflict scenario as presented above consequently reiterates the degeneration of relations over time between the Hausa and the Atyap (see Kazah-Toure 2003; Osinubi and Osinubi 2006; Adeleye et al. 1999; and Adebaniwi 2007), which needed to be reversed in restoring peace to the communities. The inclusive approach of the Kaduna State Government in inaugurating a fourteen-member reconciliation committee to unearth the remote and immediate causes of the crises was accordingly a significant step at transforming relationships through dialogue, in order to restore peace to the area. Going beyond the framed immediate causes⁸ of aggression by each of the opposing groups, the committee explored the underlying effects of political exclusion that bred violence over time, so as to help both parties trade mutually beneficial concessions to allow for a more inclusive socio-political climate in Zangon Kataf.

This intervention validated the importance of an inclusive space for a stable polity as underscored by Malpas (2004) who advocated the need to unpack cross-cultural intersections of place and identity in conflict contexts. This is because the self is defined according to experiential relations with other 'subjects' and 'objects' within a particular space (Malpas 2004:4–10). The link between place and identity in Zangon Kataf was captured by Adebaniwi (2007:216, 238) in describing the space-dependent power relations among the Hausa/Atyap groups as a battle for territoriality. He defines territoriality as the enlivening or empowerment of space in which 'possession', and by implication control, of a territory empowers individuals or groups with ownership claims to dominate and control others within that particular territory. The potentiality for such control enhances ethnic mobilisations among groups who are often engaged in political, economic, demographic, ecological and cultural competitions within shared spaces (see Wilkes and Okamoto 2002:3–4). These competitions expand the dimensions of relations beyond those between persons and communities, to their interactions with land and the environment.

8 The market relocation (in February 1992) and the uprooting of crops from farmlands (in May 1992) were immediate causes but not the root causes of the crises, as the interventions of the Rahila Cudjoe Commission of Inquiry showed.

The factors highlighted intermittently emerged during interviews with both the Hausa and Atyap residents as the bases for ethno-religious mobilisation in the build-up to the 1992 market crises in Zangon Kataf, with the overarching themes of identity and territoriality underlining the spill-over of violence to other parts of Kaduna State. The struggle for political control of the Zangon Kataf District (and subsequently the local government), between the Atyap and the Hausa, is linked to the perceived demographic threats of the Hausa whose number significantly increased over time resulting in the encroachment – with the help of the British – into land belonging to the Atyap. With the Hausa dominating Zango town, a space located in the heart of the Atyapland central to their economic existence and survival, the Atyap suspected a conspiracy to further disengage them from their land.⁹

The Atyap, like other predominantly agro-economic cultures, regarded land as central to their economic existence. In line with their tradition, they do not give out land permanently but lease it to visitors for an agreed period of time, after which they are expected to return it.¹⁰ From a cultural perspective, there were also conflicts regarding the belief and legal systems, linguistic dominance, and inter-ethnic marriages amongst others. For instance, with the Islamic religion considering traditional religious practice as paganism, the introduction of the Sharia legal system by the colonial administration was resisted by the Atyap, who considered it a defiance of their traditional legal culture. This religious otherness was further accentuated when the Atyap embraced Christianity. The Atyap particularly complained against the condemnation of their local alcoholic drink (*Burukutu*), and the impossibility of having daughters-in-law from Hausa extraction. The dominance of Hausa as the lingua franca in Zangon Kataf, as in most parts of the North, was also considered as a threat to the Atyap language and culture with the younger generations losing touch. Suffice it to state that the dichotomy in the relations between

9 Interview with Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Jury Ayok (retired).

10 Interview with Maj. Gen. Zamani Lekwot (retired).

these two groups extended beyond the microcosm of Zangon Kataf local government to the macrocosm of Hausa/non-Hausa distinctions in other parts of Northern Nigeria.

The State and identity politics in the management of the 1992 Zangon Kataf crises

The macro dimension of the Atyp/Hausa stereotypical relations was one of overlapping identities in the post-February/May 1992 violent crises. The Kaduna State government, which had set up a commission of inquiry named *The Zangon Kataf (Market) Riots Commission of Inquiry* after the February crisis, extended the mandate of the commission to examining the causes and actors of the May crises, which began while the commission was yet to submit its report. Within the historical circumstances of prevailing differentiation, the Atyp considered the composition of the commission and its procedures as very unfavourable to their cause. This was, firstly, because the seven-member commission¹¹ was composed of 6 Muslims and only one Christian, Mr William Shera, who was not trusted to be capable of representing their interests.¹² As some informants opined, the second reason was hinged on territoriality, with claims that the location of the commission's hearing in Kawo, Kaduna State, was deliberately chosen to prevent them from attending the proceedings, given its distance which made accessibility difficult for aged and maimed witnesses. There was therefore an interplay of territoriality, ethnic sentimentality and religious biases trailing the perception of this state-led intervention by both groups. Thus, while the Hausa were pleased with the initiation, procedures and outcomes of the sittings of the commission, the Atyp refrained from making official representation at the commission's public hearings. For them, the Hausa had their kith and kin (in government) controlling the whole intervention process, and this did not guarantee justice.

11 The Commission was chaired by Hon. Justice Rahila Hadea Cudjoe and the other members were Massoud A. Oredola, William P. Shera, Ja'afaru Makarfi, Garba Galadima, Abbas Usman and Musa Gaiya.

12 Interview with Anonymous Atyp Respondent.

At about the same period, the federal military government under General Ibrahim Babangida set up two judicial tribunals under Section 2(1) and (2) of the Civil Disturbances (Special Tribunal) Decree No 2. of 1987 as amended. These tribunals were to focus on the causes of the civil and communal disturbances of Zangon Kataf town. The first tribunal, which was chaired by Hon. Justice B. O. Okadigbo, a retired high court judge, comprised six members and tried twenty-three suspects; while the second, headed by Mr. Justice E. A. Adegbite, was made up of seven persons and tried thirty persons.¹³ It is important to note that those tried were part of a total of about sixty-two Atyap elites (that included chiefs, high ranking civil servants, retired servicemen, intellectuals and senior pastors) who were arrested by security agents and kept in custody. Sources of this study did not reflect any major Hausa personality arrested in the aftermath of the crises.¹⁴

Consequently, the arrest of key members of the Atyap group by the federal government was considered a macro dimension of Hausa injustice within Northern Nigerian politics. It was indeed emphasised, during interview sessions with some of the arrested victims, that the then president, General Ibrahim Babangida, visited the scene of the crisis on 26 May 1992, and wept. He was credited with the assertion that ‘all those arrested in

13 See Confirmation of the Judgements of the Judicial Tribunals on Civil and Communal Disturbances at Zango-Kataf, Kaduna State. A Memorandum presented to the National Defence and Security Council by the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida on 14th June, 1993.

14 The creation of the tribunals of Inquiry by the Federal Military government which sat at the same period with the state commission on inquiry indicated the possibility of a special interest by the government in the crises. The creation of two tribunals sitting simultaneously reflected the government’s intention to hasten its decision-making process as the case was practically ‘hijacked’ from the state commission, which could not interrogate the suspects and had to take its decisions without their representation as was contained in its final report. A similar approach was adopted by the Okadigbo-led tribunal who took its decision without the representation of the defence counsel for the accused Atyap since they had to withdraw from the case with the promulgation of retroactive decrees by the federal government to further indict the suspects. These procedural challenges on the part of the government, both at the federal and state levels, were largely responsible for the little impacts of their interventions.

connection with the crisis will be declared guilty until they are proven innocent'. This statement was regarded as malicious and is believed to have impacted the outcome of the tribunal's proceedings. It was reported by Akintunde and others (1993), that along with the president's interest, the secretary to the state government, Aliyu Mohammed, also took personal interest in the proceedings having lost two of his nephews during the crises. The reason given by the then president when asked for reacting differently to the Zangon Kataf crises was that 'the mode of destruction in Zangon-Kataf (sic) did not allow for compliance with the normal procedure of dissolving a local government council' (Akintunde et al. 1993:13). The dissolution of the Atyap-led Zangon Kataf local government inferred the loss of territorial influence of the Atyap in local politics. For the Hausa, the removal of the then local government chairman was justified, having suffered major casualties during the crises. The Hausa informants maintain that the arrest of the Atyap ought to be considered appropriate since they were responsible for initiating the crises and they (the Hausa) were only defending themselves. Without attempting to delve into the debate on the root cause(s) of the crises, what could be deduced is that the utterances of people in government (considered to have strong affinity to the Hausa) and the imbalance in the composition of the membership of the commission and tribunals (which were dominated by Muslims) further instigated ethno-religiously motivated hostilities between both groups.

The manner of arrest of some of the later convicted suspects was also one that left the feeling that the Atyap would not get justice from the federal government's interventions. For instance, Major General Lekwot, the most prominent arrested suspect in connection with the violence, recounted in an interview that on 19 May 1992, he had been invited to the police headquarters in Kaduna by Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Uba Ringim, who was sent from the force headquarters in Lagos. On getting there, he was taken to the Wuse police station in Abuja where he was eventually thrown, with no opportunity for discussion or defence, into a cell close to hardened criminals. Likewise, a day later, ACP Jury Baba Ayok (retired) (the displaced local government chairman) and Major Atomie Kude

(retired) alongside nineteen other Atyap elites were invited for a meeting in Zonkwa, only to be conveyed in waiting buses by the Police Commissioner Simeon Adeoye to Gabasawa police station in Kaduna without any warrant or explanation. From the Atyap account, the continuous victimisation of their elites around Kaduna town lasted for about two months with the total number of those detained in Kaduna prison put at sixty-two.¹⁵

Sourcing for sustainable peace: The Committee for Reconciliation and the search for lasting peace for the Zangon Kataf community

The government of Kaduna State subsequently initiated steps to ensure the restoration of sustainable peace to Zangon Kataf after initial attempts failed to restore stability to the area. In doing this, they adopted a non-adversarial means of inclusive dialogue by holding a series of meetings with representatives of both Atyap and Hausa communities. The informants, from both ends, expressed how this was a welcome development as an all-inclusive dialogue was crucial to reversing the strained relationships between them. As one of the committee members opined:

...The committee was balanced. The government ensured this through consultations and by bringing in equal representations based on the recommendation of both us (Hausa) and the Atyap. You must know that it was a thorough process in making these choices; the governor was careful in choosing the mediator (Late Air Vice-Marshall Mu'azu) to coordinate the committee But again, it is all about the implementation. Go through our recommendations, some have yielded results, others did not see the light of the day. In any case, we sat together to discuss the crises and make recommendations

This joint problem-solving approach encapsulated an agreement by the representatives of both ethnic groups on 14 November 1994 that each would submit seven names for the formation of a fourteen-member reconciliation committee with a 'neutral, responsible and impartial' person within the

15 See The Addendum to the Kataf Community Memorandum of 30th July, 1999, p. 9.

state to serve as an arbitrator.¹⁶ The Military Administrator of Kaduna State, Col. Lawal Ja'afaru Isa, in a letter dated 30 November 1994, formally informed the Late Air Vice-Marshall Usman Mu'azu (then retired) about his nomination as arbitrator to facilitate the meetings of the committee.¹⁷ The chairmanship of the committee was to be alternated during the various sessions while Alhaji Hussani Hayatu served as the secretary of the committee. A Hausa committee member, in an interview, stated that the balance in the committee's representation was sufficient to make it credible, as it allowed for detailed considerations of the perceptions of both groups on the remote and immediate causes of the crises.¹⁸

The terms of reference of the committee were thus highlighted as follows:

- Explore the possibility of addressing both the remote and the immediate causes of the disturbances of Zangon Kataf in February and May 1992.
- Determine the ingredients for lasting peace in Zangon Kataf.
- Determine and suggest strategies on how this desirable lasting peace can be achieved.
- Submit findings and recommendations within three weeks of inauguration.

The committee was inaugurated on 15 December 1994 at the Igabi State House Lodge, Kawo, Kaduna State. The committee adopted a methodology, which took cognizance of incorporating major stakeholders within the intervention process. It included fact-finding visits to eminent personalities such as traditional rulers, representatives of affected communities and religious organisations, as well as esteemed personalities and leaders of thought in the Zangon Kataf Local Government, and Kaduna town.

16 Letter on Committee for Reconciliation and the Search for Lasting Peace at Zangon Kataf Ref: GH/KD/S/268/S.1/T/1 dated 30th November, 1994.

17 The other members of the committee stated in the letter included Dan Kato, Zakari Sogfa, Francis Mutuah, Joshua Bityong, Ninak Shekari, Jury Ayok and Duniya Bungon for the Atyp Community; and Ibrahim Zango, A. T. K. Lawal, Muhammad Inuwa, Mohammed El-Idris, Aliyu Magaji, Kabiru Mato and Ibrahim Bisallah for the Hausa community.

18 Interview with Dr Kabir Mato in his Office at Emeka Anyaoku Street in Abuja, 20 November 2012.

The second part of the methodology involved the analysis of findings from the above engagements; and the third part focused on the treatment of the terms of reference.

This initiative was also given legitimacy by residents of the state as reflected in their various feedbacks to the secretariat of the committee. Notable among such feedbacks was the letter of the Emir of Birnin Gwari, Mallam Zubair Jibril Maigwari II, which he entitled 'Proposal on Zangon Kataf'. Writing from his experience as a vice-principal of a secondary school in Zangon Kataf at the time of the crises, he articulated the politics of difference as a root cause resulting from ill-feelings introduced by the civil-servants, businessmen, and retired and serving soldiers. These actors, for him, had inordinate cravings for wealth, political and territorial control. In his view, the solution may not be merely rebuilding the communities and resettling the victims, but also ensuring fairness to all the parties. Among other things, he proposed that the farms in contention should be rebuilt, expanded and transformed into a national village where people of different ethnic affiliations could live alongside members of the community who remain behind.¹⁹

The representatives of the Zangon Kataf Local Government Communities also submitted a joint memorandum to the committee which contained three resolutions. These representatives comprised the Bajju Development Association, Ikulu Development Association, Kamatan Development Association and the Kataf (Atyap) Youth Development Association. From this coalition of the non-Hausa indigenes in the area, the first request was the immediate unconditional release of all those arbitrarily jailed in connection with the crisis to allow for meaningful negotiations. Secondly, they demanded equal recognition of all the ethnic groups in the area through the creation of chiefdoms to ensure political inclusion through self-determination, and thirdly that efforts at restructuring the

19 Letter of the Emir of Birnin Gwari, Mallam Zubair Jibril Maigwari II, entitled 'Proposal on Zangon Kataf' to Air Vice-Marshal Usman Mu'azu (retired) dated 24 January 1995. BGEC/PER/VOL.1/54-95.

community and reintegrating different ethnic and religious groups be made following the examples of Zonkwa, Unguwar Rimi, Samaru-Kataf and Kagoro in which hitherto hostile relations have been transformed.²⁰ Some points were also made by the Igbo community's leader, Chief Cyprian Ihejiahi. He corroborated the need for an Atyap chiefdom, the creation of an integrated settlement for all residents of Zangon Kataf with its own community development association, cooperative unions and social clubs. He finally pleaded for equal compensation for all victims of the Zangon Kataf February/May Crises, and the release of all the innocent convicts in prison.²¹ These recommendations took cognizance of the importance of creating a safe space through integration, by which territoriality and ethno-religious disparities are downplayed.

The committee sat and submitted its report in March 1995, which contained their terms of reference, ingredients for reconciliation and some cardinal points. The first part of the report dealt with the immediate and remote causes of the instability and disturbances in Zangon Kataf. The four immediate causes identified included the manipulation of the vulnerable youth population; negative reactions of individuals, communities and interest groups to the February crises; the Government/Emirate Council's attitude to the February and May 1992 crises; and the market relocation to the new site.

It emerged that the failure of the political leadership to provide economic security in Nigeria had disempowered the youths and made them vulnerable to elite manipulation. In the bid for political and territorial control by the elites of the warring groups, the media was identified as a tool for instilling negative sentiments among members, especially the youth, through bias

20 Letter of the Zangon Kataf Communities entitled 'The Stand of Zangon Kataf Local Government Communities on the Zangon Kataf Peace Committee', dated 19 January 1995.

21 Letter by the president of the Igbo Community Welfare Association Kaduna, Chief Cyprian Ihejiahi, entitled 'A Brief Written Confirmation of Chief Cyprian Ihejiahi's Oral Statement as a Witness to the Zangon/Kataf Reconciliation Committee Meeting in State House, Kawo', dated 14 February 1995.

and sensational reportage. The committee affirmed Awe's (1999) argument on the contradictions between post-colonial political administration and the governed by identifying the quartet of the Federal government, Kaduna State Government, the Zangon Kataf Local Government administration and the Emirate council as culpable parties in the aftermath of the February crises. The post-violence reactions from these political actors were specifically criticised based on the ethnicisation and politicisation of their interventions. In addressing the root causes, the committee emphasised the need to educate the populace on de-emphasising ethno-religious sentiments and struggle over territoriality. This was to be done through an all-inclusive educational system which bridges the inherited Islamic/Missionary educational divide. It affirmed the need for the new market in addressing its requisite expansion, but its establishment should allow for social and administrative inclusion of all stakeholders. The committee also identified the importance of addressing the feelings of dissociation of the people from their political affairs, and afterwards recommended self-determination for the Atyap through the creation of the Atyap chiefdom.

The Atyap Chiefdom was restored under the government of Alhaji Ahmed Makarfi, alongside about twenty-five other chiefdoms belonging to non-Hausa indigenous groups. The Chiefdom is headed by the Agwatyp III, currently Mr Dominic Gambo Yahaya,²² alongside the Atyap ruling council that includes representatives of residents from other ethnic extractions. The numerical strength of the Hausa population was also considered in choosing a Hausa district head for Zango town, who is also incorporated into the Atyap ruling council. This inclusive politics has been critical to maintaining peace in the town. The Hausa and Atyap groups, in the aftermath of the committee's intervention, developed alliances through the Atyap/Hausa Youth forum, a gathering of youths from both ethnic extractions where discussions on security and developmental projects in the chiefdom are made. This forum was adduced as the reason for the

22 HRH Sir Dominic Gambo Yahaya was the local government chairman of Zangon Kataf during fieldwork for this study and served as a major respondent, having being arrested after the 1992 crises. He was installed on 12 November 2016.

non-occurrence of the deadly Boko Haram attacks in Atyapland, despite the fact that some neighbouring communities were affected. From the political perspective, the late Agwatyp II, HRH Dr Harrison Yusuf Bunggwon, was credited for ensuring the peaceful conduct of the 2011 and 2015 elections in the chieftdom, through a series of community meetings with residents on the need to avoid violence during the elections. As a way of sustaining smooth relations among the Hausa and Atyap, their children are made to attend the same primary and secondary schools where they are taught to inculcate a culture of acceptance and peaceful coexistence.

In the committee's report, the historical, social, cultural and religious antecedents of the Hausa were identified as responsible factors for the kind of secluded pattern of settlement which to some extent alienated them from the Atyap. In managing this, the committee urged the government to expand the Zangon Kataf town to accommodate the integration of other ethnic groups. The expansion was to be done through a new layout which includes the provision of facilities that will aid social interactions. During the fieldwork, some residents of the town confirmed that plans for the new layout have been approved by the state government to cover areas surrounding the Agwatyp's palace, and the goal is to ensure the integration of all resident ethnic groups into the community.

In concluding its report, the committee acknowledged the willingness of both communities to restore serenity and cordial relationships in Zangon Kataf. It however drew attention to three areas in which there was stalemate and therefore needed the government's urgent attention. These were the resolution of ownership of the disputed farmlands, the release of the white paper on the Justice Cudjoe Commission of Inquiry, and the release of the detainees. With the benefit of hindsight, the informants maintained that the government, through a series of meetings with stakeholders from both parties, was able to amicably resolve the disputes on land ownership. This largely entailed the Atyap conceding to accommodate the Hausa within the Atyap Chieftdom. The whitepaper on the Justice Cudjoe Commission of Enquiry was also released, though the procedures and recommendations of the commission remain unacceptable to the Atyap. It is currently

available online on the website of the Kaduna State government. Suffice it to state that the verdict passed by the Okadigbo tribunal included death sentences on six prominent members of the Atyap community including Maj. Gen. Zamani Lekwot (retired), a former military administrator in Rivers State from 1975 to 1978. The sentence, which was a subject of both national and international appeals, was subsequently commuted by the Supreme Military Council to five years imprisonment; a term which was fully served by them. Therefore the demand for the unconditional release of the Atyap elites was not met and this has an outstanding implication of their stigmatisation as ex-convicts in spite of several criticisms against the process of their conviction.

Conclusion

This study has been able to historicise the 1992 Zangon Kataf conflicts while examining the colonial roots of the state's role in the manipulation and management of difference among co-habiting ethnic groups struggling for the assertion of identity and territorial control. The state interventions through a federal tribunal and state commission under the military entailed an exclusive process of convictions without fair hearings. These were insufficient in transforming perennial hostile relations, which led to the February and May 1992 crises. This study thus contends that the transformation of relations in the management of the crises was enhanced through an all-inclusive dialogue adopted by the reconciliation committee. This was very vital in engaging key issues that underpinned the emergence and escalation of conflicts in Zangon Kataf. The legitimacy of this approach is palpable through the involvement of different community leaders and associations in the reconciliation process. The effectiveness of this transformative method is reflected in the creation of the Atyap Chieftdom with an inclusive political composition which entails representation of non-Atyap groups in the Agwatyap's advisory council. The council had facilitated the creation of an Atyap/Hausa joint consultative forum among the youths of the community, which is a community-based association for dealing with issues of security and development. Thus, the participation of

members of the community further contributed to blurring of the lines of otherness, thereby helping to build trust and restore peace in the Chieftdom.

Recommendation

The on-going clamour for restructuring in Nigeria is indicative of the fact that the political arrangements of the post-modern state present certain historical challenges of ethnic and religious crises in the region. However, the government has not taken appropriate cues from history, especially in terms of the management of the crises – as they often use the military to inject quick fix solutions in conflicts where there is need to transform relations. The resurgence of agitations in the South-east, for instance, have been met with a military operation labelled ‘Exercise Egwu Eke’ (Operation Python Dance), which has been bedevilled with allegations of human rights abuses by the military. While this agitation is not in isolation, there is also the predominantly middle belt challenge of the Farmer/Herder conflicts which has recently occasioned the resurgence of crises in Zangon Kataf, underscored by the age-long struggle over economic and territorial control within the context of ethno-religious suspicion. While curfews and deployment may have helped in restoring cold peace to these troubled regions, sustainable peace can only be restored through the transformation of relations. It is therefore imperative that the government revisits its approach and embrace dialogue with all stakeholders in devising lasting solutions.

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