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### **Internal Population Displacement and Its Aftermath on Nigerian Political Economy: An Enduring Colonial Template**

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#### **Abstract**

The paper interrogated the corporate existence of Nigeria and raised some fundamental questions regarding reasons for discontent, violent conflicts and internal population displacement in Nigeria given her enormous resources, both human and material. The paper through intensive content analysis provided answers to these questions. Some of the findings include that the issue of discontent is because the political class refused to delink from the exploitative orientation of the colonial past. They siphon public fund for private use, the same way the colonial lords exploited Africa's resources for their home industrialization. Consequently, quality infrastructure and economic empowerment elude Nigerians. As a result of the discontentment and people's urge to fend for themselves, violent conflicts often erupt which always result to mass displacement of people. The paper suggested among others that, government should prioritize and provide to the citizenry public consumption goods such as roads, health facilities, education, shelter, pipe borne water, occupational inputs, etc.

#### **Introduction**

Nigeria as a political community presupposes a protective shield for her inhabitants because of their shared citizenship under one sovereign authority and without any

recourse to their ethnic, cultural and religious inclinations. As a responsible political community, it becomes incumbent upon the political leadership to provide the enabling environment for her citizens to realize their full potentials (Niworu, 2007). This can be achieved through the legal framework of constitutionalism, which without mincing words, Nigeria has designed one even though under the tutelage of the military dictatorship.

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), proclaimed respect for the inherent dignity of human person, respect for the sanctity of life and inalienable rights of individual members of the society, guarantee their rights to personal and physical integrity, freedom, equity, justice, security and peace. Provision of opportunities for gainful employment, education and general enlightenment as well as opportunity for all citizens to participate meaningfully in the affairs of their nation.

These basic rights were also proclaimed in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and in the Organization of African Unity Charter on Human and Peoples Rights to which Nigeria is a signatory. These are the foundation stones for establishing a just and democratic social order capable of engendering national integration, unity, faith, peace, progress and a deep sense of patriotism among citizens of Nigeria.

However, what is of paramount importance here, is to understand how colonialism came and left with the resultant effect of a tutored minority bourgeois class whose role at independence was to continue with the colonial exploitation. This is largely responsible for the disconnect between the lofty ideas in the Nigerian constitution and the practical reality of her citizens. To buttress this, Clark (1982) described that

The European colonial influence brought to the peoples of the Southern and Western hemispheres the social intellectual and material inventions that had allowed Europe to break out of its own dark ages. The introduction of these cultural inventions would prove to have much the same effect on the so called backward peoples of the globe. But, the introduction of these inventions has not brought to the third world similar levels of material prosperity and progress as it did for Europe. This is due partly to the colonial experience itself, partly to its remnants, which still characterize third world relationship with the industrialized west and partly to the inability of the third world elites to exploit the enormous value of European ideas.

In consonance with Clark's submission on colonial experience, when political independence eventually came, the citizens of the third world countries of Africa and Nigeria in particular could not differentiate colonial subjugation from political independence because it does not make any meaningful difference to them. Fanon (1968) declared that the masses had been frustrated, neither their material nor moral conditions had improved. They still did not eat meat, nor did they have peace of mind.

They had discovered that fighting for independence had yielded no fundamental change. Fanon declared that French Revolution benefited the smallest farmer, but in Africa, the flames of discontent threatened to burst out again. Africans sat in the National Assemblies, in councils of state, they manned the bureaucracies and ran corporations. All of this looked new, yet seemed familiar.

Why was there this discontent? There was discontent because of the greed of the ruling elites that sat in the National Assemblies and other political offices misappropriating public fund for their personal interest leading to conflicts, resulting to displacement of people from their natural abodes.

### **Theoretical Framework: Conspiracy Theory**

This paper is predicated on Conspiracy Theory which significantly supported the attempt of the paper in tracing the root cause of incessant crisis in Nigeria with its aftermath of population displacement. It is, therefore, significant to see how conspiracy in the Nigerian political process stimulates violent conflicts and internal population displacement.

Conspiracy theory attempts to explain the ultimate cause of an event, usually a political, social and historical event as a covert alliance of powerful people or organization, rather than an overt activity or as natural occurrence. Researchers in the ranks of Edward Griffin concluded that most major events in history have been dominated by conspirators who manipulates political happenings from behind the scene.

Conspiracism, according to Mintz (1980), is a world view that sees major historic events and trends as the result of secret conspiracies. Mintz went further to say that, conspiracism served the needs of diverse political and social groups in America and elsewhere. It identifies elites and assumes that things will be better once popular actions can remove them from positions of power. Throughout history, political and economic leaders have genuinely been the cause of enormous amount of deaths and misery. They engage in conspiracies and at the same time promote conspiracy theory to meet their targets. Hitler and Stalin are most prominent examples and there have been numerous others, according to Mintz (1980).

### **Conceptual Reviews**

**Population:** Population is a number of persons, males and females, old and young, nationals and residents living in a given area at a specified time. The population of Nigeria as at 2016 is over one hundred and seventy million (170,000,000). Adebusoye (1985) enunciated that population increases through the influence of more births over deaths and or immigration. While a population decreases through the influence of more deaths over births or through emigration. Therefore, population is subject to the changes caused by vital events of birth, death or migration. The population of a country, settlement or household is said to be a demographic population because it is subject to

changes through births and deaths. On the other hand, the crowd at a football match or at a political rally are not subject to vital demographic events (Adebusoye, 1980, Jhingan, 2005).

There are two categories of population in economic terms. They are working or productive population and the ageing or declining population. The productive population is a number of people from eighteen (18) years of age and above, who work for pay or gains or registered themselves as available for such work. While the ageing or declining population is an increasing number of people who are unproductive and largely depend on the working population (Tawiah, 1989).

**Internal Displacement:** This is the forceful eviction of people from their natural abodes to a temporary, unconventional and uncomfortable camp.

**Peace:** This is a state of tranquillity, a state of nonviolence in which the grievances among various groups in the society have been mediated in the interest of all concerned.

**Conflict:** Conflict is a situation of interaction involving two or more parties in pursuit of divergent objectives or interest which eventually results to various degrees of discord. Max Weber is of the opinion that peace is nothing more than a change in the form of conflict or in the antagonism or in the object of the conflict or in the final chances of making a choice. (NOUN, 2006). Conflict could be violent or nonviolent. In the case of Nigeria, there are three major types of conflicts. The conflict between state actors and non-state actors such as Boko Haram Insurgency, Niger Delta Militancy and Indigenous Peoples of Biafra Agitators (IPOB). While the second type is communal clashes between neighbours who have lived together for a long time. The third one is ethno-religious conflicts usually between the adherences of Islam and Christianity.

**Boko Haram:** *Boko* means western education in Hausa dialect, while *haram* means forbidden. It is important to note that Boko is a bastardized word for Gboko in Benue State. The concept of Boko came about during the 1960s when unity schools' students exchange programme was very effective in Nigeria. Under this programme, students were sent to unity schools in some selected towns of Nigeria to acquire western education. Such unity schools include, Barewa College Zaria, Government Colleges in Kefi, Bida, Gboko, Katsina, etc. Against this back drop, students sent to Gboko were referred to as "Yan Boko" the Hausa pronunciation of Gboko, meaning students from Gboko Government College.

It is also significant to note that, the rejection and relegation of western education in Northern Nigeria has its root since the inception of colonial rule that came with the three "R" Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. Northern Nigerians that have embraced Islam saw western education as conflicting with their Islamic religion and civilization. With the white man's superior power, the acceptance of western education, according

their initial conviction, can lead to the total extinction of their Islamic belief and by implication, they will become Christians (Kafir) which is an abomination.

As such, they refused to enrol their children in western schools and discouraged it in its totality through songs, dances and folklores. For example, the lyrics of a song for people attending western education schools in Muslim dominated Northern towns and villages reads thus,

*Yan Makarantan Bokoko*

*Ga Karatu Baa Sallah*

*Sai Yawan Zagin Mallam*

Literally meaning, “Students of western education, reads a lot, but they do not observe daily prayers as Islam preaches. Rather, they insult Mallam”. Mallam is mentioned in this song to paint western education as completely against Islam because it did not spare any aspect of Islam including the Mallam that teaches the Qur’an.

However, the real name of Boko Haram sect is “Jama’atul Ahlis Sunna Lida’awati Wal Jihad.” Meaning adherents of the teachings of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and advocates of religious war for reform (Jihad). Boko Haram is an offshoot of Maitatsine group that terrorized Kano State in the early 1980s. The founder and pioneer leader of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf inherited terrorism from his biological father who was an active member of Maitatsine group in the 80s (see Niworu, 2013).

### **Historical Regurgitation of Violent Conflicts and Internal Displacement of Population in Nigeria**

Given the multi-cultural nature of Nigeria and her involuntary fusion by the British colonial lords into one political community, the re-occurrence of violent conflict and population displacement cannot be exonerated because an average Nigerian wake up every day to face new realities of deprivations. According to Enahoro (2010).

Some eighty-four years ago, British empire-builders created the country we now know as Nigeria as part of their empire on all the five continents of the globe on which we proudly said that the sun never set. The territories unified as Nigeria had existed as independent African nations, empires kingdoms, principalities and republics with distinct cultures, languages and constitutions long before the imposition of British rule.

It is important to note that, this complex dynamics of Nigeria was exploited by some countries of Europe, and America in dividing Nigeria’s military along religion, tribal and regional lines which led to coups and counter coups that eventually culminated into civil war. On January 15th 1966, five army majors of southern origin with faith in

Christianity staged a military coup that eliminated prominent and charismatic politicians of northern extraction with Islamic belief in the ranks of Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto and Premier of Northern Nigeria and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria.

The Muslims saw the coup as the handiwork of Zionist Israel supported by America. While on the other hand, the Christians became comfortable with the tribal, regional and religious differences in the Nigerian army that eliminated Sir Ahmadu Bello, whom they considered as the political think-tank of Northern Nigeria. However, the Northern Muslim officers of the military could not hide their anger over the killing of their leaders. Therefore, they avenged in July 1966 by killing officers of southern extraction who are predominantly Christians. Prominent among them was Aguiyi Ironsi. Similarly, innocent civilian Igbos resident in Northern Nigeria were massacred in their large numbers which eventually led to three years' civil war with over two million casualties and internally displaced people mostly Igbos of Eastern region.

Apart from the civil war, there were several violent political clashes that bedevilled the nation soon after independence in 1960. Typical example of these riots were those that engulfed Tiv province of North central Nigeria. It all started during the 1959 Federal elections where NPC candidate was beaten up and dumped into a pond. There was open deviance and resistance to law enforcement agents and constituted authorities including traditional authority. For example, in August 1960, the efforts by the Tor Tiv to impose unpopular kindred heads on local inhabitants were resisted violently. In the kindred of Mbativave clan, an armed crowd gathered to meet the Tor Tiv to protest against the imposition of an unpopular kindred head. The Tor Tiv had to give way and return to Gboko (Yusuf Bala Usman, 2002).

In the 1960s, the Tiv Division in Northern Nigeria and the whole of Western region became a riot prone zones that claimed lives, destroyed properties and displaced a significant number of people. The western regional crisis emanated from the allegations of electoral malpractices. The election took place on 11th October 1965 in a very tense atmosphere with allegations of gross irregularities perpetrated by NPC that formed the government at the centre.

The allegations were made by UPGA the opposition party against the NNDP that formed coalition government at the federal level. Alhaji Adegbenro, the opposition leader announced himself as the Premier of Western region and appointed eight other ministers on the ground that UPGA under which he contested won sixty-eighty out of the ninety-eight seats contested. Alhaji Adegbenro's self-imposed government was superseded by the swearing in of Chief S. L Akintola as the new Premier of Western region. This action sparked off violent demonstrations and rioting throughout the region killing about 1,000 people, including the electoral officers. Five thousand houses were burnt down leading to internal displacement of large population of western region.

In 1970s through 1990s, violent political and communal clashes re-surfaced again in Nigeria in almost all the six geo political zones. In Taraba State, North central Nigeria, Tiv- farmers and Fulani herdsmen clashed in 1999 and left over six hundred people dead with over one thousand cattle lost in the communal clash with scores of people displaced. Felicia in *Crystal magazine* (1999) revealed her ordeal in tears saying, “This is not something I want to remember. They killed my husband and my five children. Oh, I am finished. I have been stripped naked. I want to die”.

Abu, Abdullahi, Abiola, Kidzu and Mbah (1999) wrote that, in Igbokoda, Ondo State, South West Nigeria, the story is not different where two ethnic groups “The Ijaws and Ilajes” engaged in an endless battle for over a year on ownership of an oil rich land. From July 29, 1999 through September of that same year, Ijaws- Ilaje towns and villages of Ondo states such as Ilowo, Obe, Adun, Magbe, Ugbo, Obeenla, Okejedo and Ikongbo among others have been completely destroyed displacing over three hundred thousand people (300,000).

The twelve years old Kafanchan crisis started in 1987 and sustained the temple to 1999. In total, one hundred and twelve (112) persons were killed, fifty-nine (59) of them were Hausa/Fulani, while fifty-two were from Kaninkon/Fantsam ethnic group. Several others sustained various degrees of injuries. Two hundred and twenty-four (224) buildings, two hundred and eighty-nine vehicles, machines and other equipment worth over one hundred and sixty million (160 million) were destroyed.

In 1994, deadly communal clash between age-long neighbouring communities of Umuleri and Aguleri left over one thousand people dead including twenty-five policemen and two journalists. This violent clash left over two hundred thousand people living as refugees in neighbouring towns and villages in Anambra State

### Figures of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) from 1999 to 2008 by Geopolitical zones

#### North Central Nigeria

S/No	Year	Cause of violence	IDP	Location
001	2001	Ethno-Religious	60,000	Jos
002	2002	Inter-Ethnic	Hundreds	Nassarawa
003	2002	indigene-settlers	Hundreds	Jos
004	2002	indigene-settlers	Hundreds	Benue
005	2002	Political crisis	Hundreds	Taraba
006	2004	Indigene-settler	298,000	Plateau
007	2007	Pre & Post-Election Crisis	1,250	Kogi
008	2007	Pre-Post-Election Crisis	1,415	Asakio Nassarawa
009	2008	Electoral crisis	7000	Jos

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**North West Nigeria**

001	2000	Ethno-Religious	63,000	Kaduna
002	2000	Ethno-Religious	Thousands	Kano
003	2002	Ethno-Religious	30,000	Kaduna
004	2004	Ethno-Religious	10,000	Kano
005	2007	Inter-Ethnic	Hundreds	Sokoto

**North East Nigeria**

001	2001	Ethno-Religious	22,000	Bauchi
002	2003	Communal	20,000	Adamawa
003	2003	Communal	3,700	Gombe
004	2004	Communal	2,000	Numa Adamawa
005	2007	Ethno-Religious	3,000	Bauchi

**South-South Nigeria**

001	1999	Violent clash	60,000	Odi Bayelsa
002	2003	Political Crisis	12,000	Warri
003	2003	Political Crisis	4,000	Delta
004	2004	Political Crisis	6,000	Port Harcourt
005	2007	Pre & Post-Election Crisis	2,000	Ukwale Delta
006	2008	Violent clash	20,000	Port Harcourt
007	2008	Communal clash	Not mentioned	Akwa Ibom

**South East Nigeria**

001	2001	Communal clash	1,000	Ebonyi
002	2006	Communal/Political	50,000	Onitsha
003	2008	Land Dispute	Thousands	Ebonyi

**South West**

001	2002	Inter-ethnic	5,000	Lagos
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Adapted from Adeola and Ola 2015 and modified in 2016 by the author of this paper.

**Boko Haram Insurgency and Internal Displacement of Population in North East Nigeria**

It is a truism that Boko Haram sect emerged in the North Eastern Nigeria as reformist movement in response to the politics of neglect orchestrated by the political elites at all levels of governance. This political neglect is more glaring and pathetic in the North Eastern part of Nigeria. The region prior to the emergence of Boko Haram sect, had suffered a lot of deprivations in terms of social amenities such as good roads, good schools, efficient and affordable health centres, portable drinking water, accessible credit facility. This deprivation has long history in Northern Nigeria generally, dating back to colonial era when urban centres were developing fast in South Western Nigeria while North was walking at a chameleon face.



According to Cohen (1981), nearly half of the population of the pre 1967 Western region were living in urban centres such as Ibadan, Lagos, Ogbomosho, Oshogbo, Ile-Ife and Owo. Most of the urban centres defined by the 1952 census were in western Nigeria with 88%. The Eastern region had about 14% of their population living in urban centres. While in the Northern region, the percentage of urbanized people was as low as 9%. This low percentage may not be divorced from the rigid autocratic traditional political structure of Northern Nigeria. It is this exploitative central political structure that aided and abated the impoverishment of ordinary Northern Nigerian citizens.

In a core welfare survey conducted by National Bureau of statistics in 2006, about 63.9% households were considered poor in Nigeria with the highest percentage in rural areas. About 67.0 percent poor people were living in the rural areas and 57.9 percent in the urban areas. Across the geo political zones of the country, North Eastern zone had the largest proportion of poor people. This study revealed about 77.5% poor people in North East. This is followed by South East with 76.8% poor people. South West had 66.1% poor, North Central had 62.8% poor people, North West 50.2% poor.

It is important to note that it was the poor background of North East Nigeria that exposed energetic youths to the deadly ideology of Mohammed Yusuf popularly known as Boko Haram. This sect has unleashed terror on innocent souls in North East Nigeria leaving scores of people dead and properties worth billions of Naira destroyed. For example, in January 2010, Dala Alemderi ward of Maiduguri was attacked killing four people. In September 2010, they raided Bauchi prison and freed over one thousand prison inmates. In December 2010, they bombed Maiduguri market killing several people. In January 2011, ANPP gubernatorial candidate was killed with his brother and four police men in Maiduguri. On 16th April 2013, Boko Haram clashed with security agents in Baga killing over one hundred and eighty people. In fact, during the regime of president Goodluck Jonathan, Boko Haram had taken over about 27 local governments in North East displacing over two million population living in various Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) camps across the country.

### **The Impact of Internal Displacement of Population on Nigeria's Political Economy**

Nigeria is a treasure island harbouring varieties of solid minerals and natural resources such as crude oil, gypsum, marble, iron ore, tin, limestone etc. This presupposes contentment and happiness in the Nigerian political economy. But nay, large proportion of her population in rural and urban centres of all geopolitical zones of the nation are affected by violence conflict and instability changing their fortunes provided by rich natural endowment to extreme destitution, poverty and misery. For instance, Knight, Loayza and Villanueva (1996) have estimated that civil wars lead to an average to a permanent income loss of around two percent of GDP. In similar vein, collier (1999) have calculated, using cross sectional evidence for 92 countries between 1960 and

1989, that national incomes following a seven-year civil war will be roughly 15 percent lower than if the war had not happened.

It is instructive to note that re-occurrence of violent conflicts in Nigeria has created an insecure socio-economic environment that has forced large proportion of vulnerable people into deprivation and distress. In fact, the insecure situation further increases insecurity because the mob, rioters or insurgents, as the case may be, deliberately destroy natural farm lands and all strategies through which people survive such as existing social networks and family ties, all agricultural assets.

People who have been displaced in all refugee camps across Nigeria have lost productive members of their families, therefore, they have limited access to employment and income even after resettlement.

The violent conflicts that caused displacement have also destroyed houses, utensils, cattle and other livestock. Consequently, the displaced persons have no assets to access markets. Also, more dangerous to their lives in the North East is the improvised explosive devices detonated on their roads to market. Private investments in the economy have decreased because of instability and fear of loss.

The displaced persons in the North East have adopted very risky coping strategy such as child trafficking and prostitution to feed their family which further have made them more vulnerable.

Education is also grossly affected in the North East. Northern states that were initially educationally disadvantaged have been negatively affected by the abduction of over two hundred Chibok school girls.

### **Conclusion**

Conclusively, this paper is of the opinion that violent conflicts and internal displacements of population are sustained orientation of colonial influx. British colonial lords did not come with the intension of making any meaningful change in the local areas they colonized. They only conspired with the local bourgeoisies and shipped out local resources for their country's development. Similarly, the indigenous Nigerian elites they natured and handed over political power to, have not substantially changed the fortune of the country since independence. Succession of political elites hold public offices in trust for the people, but behind the scene conspire to loot public fund for their private gains, the same way colonial lords did. This politics of neglect has the potency to aggravate discontent with resultant effect of conflict and internal displacement of population.

### **Recommendations**

- Public consumption goods such as roads, schools, health facilities, portable water should be prioritized in the annual budgetary allocation. This means that

successive budgets will be tied to a project or selected projects using available public fund to execute the project from start to successful completion. This should be handled with the highest level of sincerity and utmost fear of the Almighty God.

- If quality public infrastructure is provided, the government should invest in the primary production of each productive group in their natural abodes. For example, clusters of yam, rice or sugarcane producers should be encouraged to produce more with less difficulty associated with their age long back breaking traditional method.
- If Agricultural production is boosted, government deliberate policy should encourage the formal sector of the political economy to invest in agricultural produce processing companies to create available market for the rural farmers.
- Rule of law should prevail in the political economy. The judiciary and other law enforcement agencies should be strengthened and allow to operate without undue influences. Anybody found wanting should be punished immediately regardless of political, religious, family or marital affiliations.
- Mobility of labour should be encouraged. Meaning, the members of IDPs should be mobilized to relocate to other buffer states of their choice and be assisted to integrate with their host communities pending when their natural homes would be reconstructed and safe for return.
- The political class should de-link from the negative orientation of colonial rule and adopt leadership styles that are people centred.
- Individual Nigerians should always check his conscience and ask himself fundamental questions such as what am doing, is it right, is it fair to all concerned.

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