

ETHNIC POLITICS AND THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR: RE-EXAMINING THE YORUBA-IGBO INTERGROUP RELATIONS IN IBADAN, 1945 -1970

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Abstract

The Igbo and Yoruba are part of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. Both ethnic groups are noted for their achievements in different human endeavours in Africa and across the globe. Historically, the Igbo and Yoruba have been interacting even before the colonial rule in Nigeria. Through intergroup relations, both groups have had ‘considerable robust’ relationships in Ibadan, yet scholars are yet to examine this reality but rather largely focus on the aspect both group failed in their relationship. Over the years, due to the nature and pattern of Nigeria’s politics rooted in ethnicity, the Igbo and Yoruba are portrayed as ‘imaginary enemies’. The objective of the paper is, therefore, to examine the ‘Ibadan Igbo-Yoruba interaction’ from 1945 up to 1970 with a view to analyzing the broad Igbo-Yoruba inter-group relation in Nigeria. Unlike Lagos State, Ibadan has not recorded any major fracas between Ibadan people and the Igbo people since the beginning of their interaction. Historical-analytical method is adopted. Both primary and secondary sources were utilized. The perceived acrimony between the Igbo and Yoruba is a mere creation of the political class and product of insecurity in some instances as the case may be. The Nigerian civil war was not a war waged against the Igbo by Yoruba people. The Yoruba in Ibadan shielded a good number of Igbo from their attackers in those troubling days of 1966 up to the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970 as examined in this paper. In another hand, it is pertinent to assert that the interactions between both groups have enhanced the socio-economic development of Ibadan to a large extent, thereby providing sources of livelihood for both groups: Igbo and Yoruba.

Keywords: Ibadan, Igbo, Yoruba, Nigerian civil war, Ethnic politics

Introduction

At the end of the Second World War, the wave of nationalism swept across the globe, especially in the African continent held bound by the colonial powers and multifaceted imperialistic forces. Within this period in Nigeria, various ethnic nationalities united in voice and action in combating the alien forces as well as demanded for political independence. Though the ethnic consciousness of Nigerians was intact but the ultimate desire to regain political control became a uniting factor for self-determination as it were.¹

With the atmosphere created by the collective pursuit of a national aspiration and goal, the general atmosphere of Nigeria was engulfed with the spirit of brotherhood and ‘one-Nigerianess’. The shared ‘brotherhood and love’ amongst Nigerians propelled and sustained by the pursuit of self-rule triggered the migration of people from one geographical location to another. Following the emergence of new cities around this period which collided with hunger

and thirst for an improved social standard of living among Nigerians, large number of Nigerians fervently searched for social status in places like Ibadan, Enugu, Lagos, Kaduna and Port Harcourt. This social reality in essence, brought about the rise in migration from rural areas to urban centres.²

In view of the foregoing, therefore, the Igbo from different parts of Igboland began to migrate to Ibadan. However, with the post-independence politics rooted in ethnic rivalry, Ibadan as the political capital of Yorubaland witnessed all shades of politics, activities and histories of which most did not represent the ethos and wishes of the Ibadan people. In this case, the event, such as; the infamous July 29th 1966 counter coup, 1966 pogroms/ massacre of the Igbo, and the Nigerian civil war, were the products of political class and not the conception of the Ibadan people.³ The crux of this paper is to historically establish the neglected aspects of intergroup relations between the Igbo and Yoruba outside the corridor of betrayal and hatred. Apart from the constantly motivated gimmicks of Nigerian politicians from both Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups, both ethnic groups have benefited immeasurably from their interactions in the same environment. Put differently, Ibadan stands out as an avenue where both ethnic groups explored their fraternization since 1945 as considered in this paper. The incident of Igbo intellectuals being maltreated at the wake of the Nigerian civil at the University of Ibadan cannot be used as a sole basis to assert that the Igbo are ‘enemies of the Yoruba or vice versa.’ This paper clearly established the ‘considerable robust interactions’ between the Igbo and Yoruba neglected by scholars.

Ethnic Politics among the Yoruba and Igbo in Ibadan from 1945

Ibadan is one of the largest cities in Nigeria that has attracted large number of people across Nigeria. Since 1945, there has been sense of nationhood developing in Ibadan. Ibadan as one of the cities with a vibrant socio-economic advantage in Nigeria also had a vibrant political consciousness. It is this political reality among other reasons that made Ibadan the political headquarters of Yorubaland. Although there are other places in Yorubaland that were prominent like Lagos and Ile Ife, but Ibadan has remained an important political zone of the region.⁴

In view of the focus of this paper, 1945 was a very active and interesting era for the politics in Ibadan. 1945 witnessed so many waves and moves on nationalistic politics. Ibadan being a very active political city, different ethnic groups were represented in Ibadan who also played their politics according to their convictions. Be that as it may, despite the ethnic consciousness of Nigeria in 1945, various interest groups were more interested in the independence of Nigeria. Nevertheless, the leaders of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria still played ethnic politics. But that was carefully done in a way their actions did not jeopardize the over interest of securing Nigeria’s independence.⁵

Having established the fact above with regards to ethnic politics among the Yoruba and the Igbo, it is important to state that the Igbo and Yoruba as major players in the Nigerian politics used the politics of ethnicity for political gains. Before the Nigerian independence, the two major political parties among the Igbo and the Yoruba were the Action Congress and NCNC. The Action Congress was known as a Yoruba political party in Nigeria. This was because the party was largely populated by the Yoruba and the party ideology was deeply concerned with the aspiration of Yoruba people. This fact was the same with the NCNC among the Igbo people.⁶

In view of the above, it is a fact that the ethnic politics existing in Nigeria has been in existence as far back 1945. Despite the collective effort of the nationalists from different ethnic groups of Nigeria at combating colonialism, the problem of ethnicity also played out among them. Some people have blamed the colonial masters for infusing this sad trajectory into the politics of Nigeria but one would also agree that Nigeria is not the only country colonized in Africa and in the world. Many countries in Africa and across the world have moved passed the issue of ethnicity.⁷

Basically, the ethnic politics in Ibadan around 1945 among the Igbo and the Yoruba was a reflection of the ethnic consciousness among all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. This kind of politics continued till 1960 when Nigeria got her independence. The NCNC and the Action Groups were very prominent in Ibadan given the population of the two ethnic groups in Ibadan. In Ibadan, the leaders of Action Group such Obafemi Awolowo and Bola Ige influenced the opinion of their followers. At this point, it is also important to state that despite the ethnic colouration of the two political parties, there were also members of the parties that were not necessarily from those two major ethnic groups.⁸

As a result of the nature of politics of Nigeria within the period being considered here, the process of nation building has become very rough and turbulent till date. What transpired between the Igbo and the Yoruba in Ibadan did not only affect the political atmosphere, it also affected the intergroup relations between both groups. Samuel Mba further explains:

The ethnic politics in Nigeria did not start today. I can recall that even before Nigeria got her independence, the tussle and bitterness expressed in our politics has always been unfortunate. Here in Ibadan, the Yoruba and Igbo have had serious misunderstanding with one another because of simple politics. Igbo people have always lived and enjoyed Ibadan even before Nigeria got her independence. You can see that the Igbo are found in different parts of Ibadan such as Mokola, Okoro village, Onireke, Dugbe among others. Looking at their settlement and their numbers, you can tell that they have been there. Ordinarily, the Igbo and the Yoruba do not have serious problem in terms of their relationship. The problem one can notice is the problem of politics. The Nigerian politicians know how to use politics to bring division among the two ethnic groups.⁹

Another interviewee from Ibadan also reiterated that the Yoruba and the Igbo are brothers and sisters. He asserted that after all, the Igbo and the Yoruba worship together in churches and even have relationship in marriages. He further explains:

It is true that the politicians from both Igbo and Yoruba used politics to achieve their personal goals and interest even before Nigeria got her independence. Here in Ibadan, political parties like Action Group and NCNC in those days saw themselves like competitors. This kind of bad blood even affected some people's relationship. For those that were wise, the activities of politicians or political parties were not taken serious to the extent it affected how they related with one another. What we see today happening are seeds sown by selfish politicians who promoted ethnic hate against national unity. I am not saying that this kind of thing only happened in Ibadan. It also happened all over Nigeria. In the

north in the first republic of Nigeria and even before Nigeria got her independence, the north had her own political party called Northern People Congress. The party also behaved like other political parties in the south.¹⁰

The 1966 Pogrom in Ibadan

As established in this paper, the ethnic politics of Nigeria started even before Nigeria got her independence. This shows that Nigeria got her independence while the nation lacked form and shape in terms of national unity. At the independence of Nigeria, various ethnic groups were more concerned with their ethnic groups far more than their interest in the progress of Nigeria or nation building. With this reality, the independence of Nigeria met a people not ready for true nation building.¹¹

The whole political atmosphere and situation in Nigeria gave birth to the political problem that erupted in 1966. The issue of pogrom of 1966 was a national problem that led to the killing of the Igbo all over Nigeria.¹² As noted, it was the ethnic politics played in Nigeria that led to the first coup in Nigeria and also the killing of the Igbo all over Nigeria. The dimension of the killing was different all over Nigeria. According to various historical accounts, the Igbo were targeted and killed randomly as a result of the first coup carried out in Nigeria which was said to be an 'Igbo coup'.¹³

At Ibadan, a number of Igbo were killed during this restive period. It should be observed that the killing of the Igbo all over Nigeria was not just a matter of the coup. People cannot just wake up one day and start killing their fellow human beings in the same country. The rate and degree of killings is an indication that there was a continued hate that spread all over Nigeria around that period. Chinua Achebe in his book, *There was a Country*, described such disposition against the Igbo as Igbophobia.¹⁴

Furthermore, during the pogrom, Ibadan people exercised some restraint. Generally, the Ibadan people are known to be humane and have so much love for their guests. Those who got involved in those senseless killings of their fellow human beings in that manner did not represent the wishes of Ibadan people. Most of them were miscreants and hoodlums who were only waiting for such opportunity for their personal and selfish ends.¹⁵ According to Bola Yusuf, the killing of the Igbo was quite unfortunate. He further asserts:

The Igbo and the Yoruba were living in peace before this period of killing. The killing was just motivated by politicians. Ibadan had a lot of Igbo even before Nigeria's independence. Why must somebody kill his fellow human being for whatsoever reason? The pogrom was unfortunate and that incident really brought about distrust between the Igbo and the Yoruba. It is actually very painful to wake up one day to discover that somebody who you lived with for years suddenly became an enemy or someone who wants to take your life. This is actually the result of bad politics. That kind of bad politics played in Nigeria has not been addressed till date. If you removed bad politics in Nigeria, you will discover that Nigerians are good people. Ibadan is part of Nigeria. So what happened in Ibadan is the same or almost the same thing all over Nigeria.¹⁶

The pogrom in Ibadan really affected the relationship between the Igbo and the Yoruba people in Ibadan. Ibadan people or the Yoruba people as it were, are peace loving people. Before the introduction of the Western politics in Nigeria, there was no record of Yoruba people collectively attacking visitors in their midst. Having guests in Yoruba tradition is a blessing. This is the reasons why there have many settlements of non-Yoruba in Ibadan. For example, in Ibadan, places like Sabo, Mokola, Eleyele, Okoro village, Dugbe and a host of others have existed since colonial era. Ibadan people have been welcoming visitors since the pre-colonial era. The University of Ibadan started in Eleyele area in Ibadan before it was relocated to its present location by the colonial government¹⁷

The 1966 Counter Coup in Ibadan and its Effects on Yoruba-Igbo Relations

The 29th July 1966 counter coup was actually a military action carried out by some military officers from the Northern Nigeria who felt that the first coup of 15th January 1966 was an Igbo coup since it was believed that the coup was dominated by the Igbo. As it were, the counter coup of 29th July 1966 was carried out in Ibadan when Aguiye Ironsi visited Ibadan. The then Governor of Western Region, Fajuyi was his host.¹⁸

The manner in which Aguiye Ironsi was killed was very brutal. For some days his where about was hidden before he was declared death which led to the ascension of Yakubu Gowon as the President of Nigeria in 1966. During this period, majority of Ibadan people sympathized with the Igbo people. It should be noted that the host of Aguiye Ironsi, Fajuyi was killed alongside his superior, Aguiye Ironsi. The killing of Aguiyi Ironsi in Ibadan was a serious concern for the Ibadan people. Both the Yoruba and the Igbo felt the pain of the death of their prominent sons in the hands of northern military officers who carried out the counter coup as stated earlier.¹⁹

The pain of the death made both the Igbo and the Yoruba to mourn at that moment. It was a feeling of betrayal and injustice that both parties experienced at that moment and at the same time. Such feeling made both the Igbo and the Yoruba to begin to reconsider their loyalty to nation building. It actually affected their trust in the process or project of building Nigeria.²⁰ The inter-group relation between the Igbo and the Yoruba was affected in 1966 due to the death of two prominent leaders of Nigeria from both ethnic groups. Both the Igbo and the Yoruba felt bad about the death of their two prominent sons. The two groups grieved over the unnecessary death of their sons. The counter coup really affected the Igbo more due to their previous experience in Nigeria. In Ibadan, the Igbo felt betrayed. It should be noted that the Yoruba were seen as partners with the Hausa people who believed that the first coup was an organized coup by the Igbo.²¹

In the real sense, the Yoruba only played safe because the military powers were in the hands of the Hausa and Fulani people. Moreover, the troops posted to Ibadan were dominated by the Hausa and Fulani people. So, the Yoruba people did not have what it required confronting the military that was then dominated by Hausa Fulani people. The Igbo people did not see it that way. They actually wanted the Yoruba people to fully give them support in terms of confronting the Hausa and Fulani headlong.²²

It was quite unfortunate that the plotters of the counter coup chose Ibadan as the venue to execute the coup. Ibadan people, according to their tradition, do not like attacking visitors for any reason. This kind of very sensitive issue at the early stage of nationhood has unfortunately affected the process of nation building in Nigeria. A nation cannot grow in the midst of constant and repeated injustice, bloodsheds and all manner of callousness.²³

The counter coup brought about mutual suspicion between the Igbo and the Yoruba such that the Igbo began to think twice on how they invest in Ibadan. Of course, such development affected their motivation in terms of believing in one Nigeria. Eric Okafor further explains:

The counter coup and the killing of the Igbo in Nigeria really brought a setback for Nigeria as a nation. The loss of Igbo's investment is a setback to nation building. We should not see it as just an Igbo affair or how it affected the Igbo people and the Yoruba people. No, it is not so. Agreed, the first coup affected the Hausa/ Fulani people more, but it is unfair to kill a huge number of military officers from the old Eastern region. I learnt that over 300 military officers were killed from the old Eastern region. The Yoruba did not give the Igbo people full support during this period up till the time the war eventually broke. After all, it was the problem in the Western region that led to the first coup. With that incident, the Igbo were demoralized. This, of course, affected several socio-economic activities in Ibadan. The very incident also affected the process of nation building. We still see this kind of ugly situation still taking place in Nigeria. It is also very important to state that the counter coup was purely an affair of the Hausa /Fulani people. The good people of Ibadan or Yoruba people did not have hand in it. Whenever I remember all of these sad developments in our nation, I just feel sad.²⁴

This historical development on counter coup in Ibadan is a very important issue in Nigerian national discourse. It is because even after over 60 years of Nigerian independence the issue of mutual trust is still reverberating as a national discourse instead of discussing more important issues on how to advance the nation to compete with advanced countries. The Igbo people sometimes see the Yoruba people as their 'enemies' and the Yoruba people also sometimes see the Igbo people as their 'enemies'. It is very important for the stakeholders of Nigeria to begin to look into these burning issues that inflame emotions and end up pitching Nigerians themselves.²⁵

The counter coup in Ibadan has nothing to do with Ibadan people. The Northern military officers who carried the counter coup only chose Ibadan as a venue for the execution of the bloody coup. The Ibadan people or the Yoruba did not support such action in any way. However, based on the outcome of the counter coup, the Yoruba and Igbo have misunderstood themselves.²⁶

Yoruba-Igbo Relations during the Nigerian Civil War in Ibadan

The intergroup relation between the Igbo and the Yoruba was not stable after the 1966 pogrom which claimed the lives of so many Igbo people living in Ibadan. As established, the pogrom or killing of the Igbo cannot be completely attributed to the relationship between the Igbo and the Yoruba in the post-independence era. However, it could be said that the political undertone of the post-independence era of Nigeria was the major reason that led to the killing of the Igbo.²⁷

During the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970 a lot of Igbo people ran back to their place of origin.²⁸ The shock and trauma of the pogrom was fresh in their minds at that time. It should be noted that the trauma and loss of relatives in Ibadan made Igbo people to be more careful on how they related with other Nigerians. During the Nigerian civil war, some Igbo people

had already gone back to their ancestral home in the present South South and Southeast of Nigeria while some could not go back home due to some reasons.²⁹

In the course of the Nigerian civil war that lasted for three years as it were, the Igbo in Ibadan were faced with the most troubling moment of their lives. As it were, the Igbo were seen as targeted group for many reasons. One of the propagandas used against the Igbo was that they wanted to divide Nigeria because of the oil discovered in their region. In other words, some Ibadan people had sympathy for the Igbo people in Ibadan while some of them did not. For those who had sympathy for the Igbo in Ibadan, they really took care of them for the period the war raged in the Eastern region.³⁰

It is very important to establish that those who decided to accommodate the Igbo people during the war really made an important sacrifice. This is because throughout the period of the war, these 'good Samaritans' from Ibadan took upon themselves all the responsibility of those Igbo people they accommodated in their houses. In addition, this commitment was not made alone by the Yoruba indigenes in Ibadan alone. There were other Yoruba non indigenes in Ibadan who also took upon themselves the responsibility of taking care of the Igbo that could not go back to their places of origin during the war.³¹ Tolu Oluwaseun has this to say:

I was a small boy during the Nigerian civil war. But I was told the story of the Nigerian civil war by my parents. My mother happened to an Igbo women. You see, during the war, Igbo people suffered so much. It was not all of them that went back to the former Eastern region. At Ibadan, some of them were accommodated by good people in Ibadan. Ibadan has always served like a home for the Igbo people. My own father also accommodated the Igbo. As I have told you, my mother was an Igbo woman. So we could not just reject our own people. Igbo people are our own people too. As far as I know, the Igbo people were treated well based on the stories my father told me. This does not mean that our own people did not treat them badly in some cases because human beings are not perfect.³²

One very important thing to also state in this narrative is that what happened to the Igbo people also happened to the non-Igbo ethnic groups in the present South South region. At this time, during the Nigerian civil war, there was no South South geo-political zone in Nigeria. What was available then was the Eastern Region. So places like Rivers State, Cross Rivers States, and a host of others were all under the old Eastern region. Therefore, other ethnic groups in such places were all given the same treated like the Igbo all over Nigeria. In other words, the political situation that brought about the ethnic profiling really badly affected the relationship of Nigerians. Nigerians during this period began to treat one another based on ethnic group.³³ In Ibadan, it is a fact that the Ibadan people did not out rightly condemn the Igbo like in some other places. Unlike in some other places in the North and even in the so called South South region, the properties of Igbo people were kept. Their properties were not considered as abandoned properties. There were stories of how Ibadan people kept the house rent of Igbo people till the war ended. Such gestures were not common all over Nigeria. This is the reason Igbo people found it easy to return back to Ibadan immediately the war ended.³⁴ An Igbo man in this regard further buttresses this point made here:

My name is Chukwuka Madu, I hail from Owerri in Imo State. I was born in Ibadan. My grandparents lived in Ibadan immediately after the Nigerian civil war in Mokola area of

Ibadan. I was told by my own parents that the Ibadan has been a home to our own people before and after the Nigerian civil war. I am aware that Ibadan people could be serious on issues that concern tribe or ethnicity. You English people call it tribalism. But as far as taking the life of someone is concern, the Ibadan people are not known for killing people. The issue of tribalism is actually a general issue found among all ethnic groups in Nigeria, though there might be some dimensions to that.³⁵

The issue of the Nigerian civil war really affected the Igbo people in so many ways. After the Nigerian civil war, the Igbo generally felt betrayed and cheated by their fellow county men and women. In Ibadan particularly, the rate Igbo people longed to be integrated was affected. At the post war era, it took some years before Igbo people started building their personal houses again in Ibadan. This was the same thing all over Nigeria.³⁶

As observed above with regards to the disposition of the Igbo people in Nigeria, it therefore suggests that Nigeria as a country needs to have a rethink on inter-group relations between different ethnic groups in Nigeria. The problems that led to the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970 are still much alive in Nigeria. Unlike some other African countries, Nigeria is yet to learn her lessons of problem of ethnicity. This dangerous sentiment is being passed to the younger generation. This is why even the youths are also involved in the issue of ethnicity or tribalism through the operation of social media and other dangerous means.³⁷

In Ibadan and elsewhere in Nigeria, the issue of trust among different ethnic groups has become national malady. The Igbo in Ibadan and their host, (the Ibadan people) relate well but sometimes the issue of trust also plays out. There is, therefore, no doubt that the Nigerian civil war has created serious problem of trust. Some Igbo people in this regard, find it difficult to trust Ibadan people while Ibadan people also in another hand find it difficult to trust Igbo people too.

Considering the numbers of years the Igbo people have been living in Ibadan even before the independence of Nigeria, it is therefore expected that a level of integration would have taken place in Ibadan. Till date the Igbo have not been well integrated into the Ibadan society.³⁸ The Igbo man is still seen as a settler in Ibadan. Nevertheless, is not actually peculiar with Ibadan or the relationship between the Igbo and the Yoruba people. It is true that the Nigerian civil war added to the division in Nigeria but that does not mean that it is only the event of the Nigerian civil war that has caused Nigeria to be divided and disunited. The problems of Nigeria are many and could be traced to the type of constitution Nigeria is having.

On a whole, it is apt to state that the Ibadan people treated the Igbo better than other ethnic groups or even their immediate neighbours during the Nigerian civil war. Apart from some isolated cases of harassment and killing by some persons in Ibadan known as hoodlums, there was not any case of state sponsored attack on Igbo people during the Nigerian civil war. Their properties were not confiscated during the war. The period of the war was not like the period of pogrom. The pogrom was actually like a mob action which some persons took advantage of and unleashed mayhem on the Igbo.³⁹

Many Ibadan families accommodated some Igbo people within the period of the Nigerian civil war. This should be commended. At the period of the war, Ibadan was a notable city in Nigeria and Africa. The University of Ibadan was also a very vibrant tertiary institution in Nigeria,

Africa and the world. Those intellectuals in the University of Ibadan spoke against the crisis during that period. It is a fact that Kenneth Dike was an Igbo man and was the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan as at the time the war broke out. However, during the war, all the Igbo lecturers at the University of Ibadan ran for their lives. Most of them returned to their places of origin in the defunct Eastern region of Nigeria.⁴⁰

In a nutshell, this research work has, therefore, established that Ibadan people treated Igbo people well in Ibadan in the course of the Nigerian civil war. This fact cannot be disputed as there are many Igbo people who have affirmed the fact. However, it is also a reality that there were some people in Ibadan who saw the Igbo people as competitors or threat to their personal or collective progress. A good number of these types of people were found among the elites. The elites were the ones who occupied the civil service where Igbo people worked also. For example, before the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war, Igbo people were found in large number working at the University of Ibadan. Following the political crisis that erupted within 1966 and 1970, some Yoruba person started promoting ethnic hatred. These persons as far as they were concerned believed that Igbo persons were dominating some juicy positions in the civil service, especially at the University of Ibadan. So, this kind of ill feeling led to propaganda around Ibadan. Many people especially the illiterate were easily brain washed.⁴¹

As seen above, such kind of thinking cannot be attributed to the Ibadan people. After all, the civil service was not necessarily occupied by the indigene of Ibadan. Some of these people were even non Yoruba people across different places in the Yorubaland. Some of them must have come from other regions not even necessarily from the Yorubaland. Moreover, the issue of tribal sentiment is a general phenomenon in Nigeria.⁴² This study on the inter-group relations on the Yoruba and Igbo in Ibadan is just a case in point on the reality taking place in Nigeria. This particular historical fact could be found in any part of Nigeria. John Obi, on this account asserts that:

Nigerian people are generally good people irrespective of tribe and religion. The relationship between the Igbo and the Yoruba has been cordial. You should note that the political class used politics to divide the Igbo and the Yoruba people at different times. Before the pogrom of 1966 and the Nigerian civil war, the Yoruba and the Igbo were living peacefully. There is no way such incident like the killing associated with the pogrom and the Nigerian civil war will take place and you expect that the relationship between the two groups will remain the same. The Igbo for example have really been treated unfairly generally in Nigeria. Anybody in their position will not feel happy. That is the truth. What is important for us as a people living together in one country is to treat one another well except we are not ready to live as one nation under God. This is the lessons history teaches. My worry is that Nigerians do not utilize the lessons of history. I am happy that a young girl like you is studying History as a course in the University. I pray that you will put the lessons to action and that you and other young people will be given the opportunity to lead in Nigeria.⁴³

Conclusion

The Yoruba people are known for their diplomacy driven by peace. They are peaceful people and dislike any form of violence or conflict. In the history of Ibadan people or the Yoruba as it

were since the pre-colonial era, there are no records of Yoruba people attacking visitors in their midst. It is a taboo to maltreat visitors in Yoruba culture. The clashes between clans in the Yoruba history in the pre-colonial era are normal historical occurrences that take place in human society and not a deliberate corporate attack against other ethnic groups or visitors on the account of politics of bitterness.⁴⁴

At Ibadan, the Yoruba people comported themselves as peace makers in the post Second World War era. This very culture of peace attracted people from all walks of life to Ibadan. The Igbo people as one of the adventurous people in Nigeria had settled in Ibadan as far back as 1945. The proximity of Ibadan to Lagos was an advantage to Ibadan such that many non-Yoruba migrated to Ibadan from Lagos on discovering the peaceful nature of Ibadan and how the people welcomed visitors. The immediate post Second World War era was a period of nationalism in Nigeria and Africa which stirred the spirit of brotherhood in Nigeria and also encouraged different ethnic groups to move from one end of Nigeria to another without fear of molestation, harassment or discrimination.⁴⁵

Within 1945 up to 1965, the Yoruba and the Igbo did not record any major clash or dispute.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the Nigerian politics rooted in ethnicity complicated issues politically which led to pogrom, first coup in Nigeria, counter coup which eventually led to the bloody Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970.⁴⁷

The findings of this research reveals that the Igbo and the Yoruba loved themselves and lived in peace within the period of this study except for those conflicts as noted above motivated by politics of ethnicity by Nigerian leaders.

The politics of ethnicity, bitterness and hatred was used by the political class from all the ethnic groups of Nigeria which invariably exposed the Igbo people and the Yoruba people to misunderstanding and unnecessary bad blood relationship in their intergroup relations.

As observed in this study, the tradition of the Yoruba in Ibadan discouraged any act of maltreatment or betrayal of visitors in their midst. This was demonstrated by Adekunle Fajuyi who preferred to be killed rather than live with the dishonor of handing over his Igbo guest (Aguiyi Ironsi) to the Hausa Fulani military officers who came to Ibadan to kill Aguiyi Ironsi during the counter coup.⁴⁸ This great act of sacrifice by one of the greatest Yoruba sons clearly shows the perception of the Yoruba on Igbo people. The Yoruba see the Igbo as their brothers and sister. Anything contrary to this fact is a product of politics.

The Yoruba and the Igbo have things in common with respect to their belief system on the value of human life. Both the Yoruba and the Igbo dislike the act of shedding of human blood. Throughout the intergroup relations between the Igbo and the Yoruba in Ibadan from 1945 to 1970, there was never a time both parties in engaged in what one can call ethnic fight that led to a wide spread killing or shedding of blood.⁴⁹ The pogrom that took place in 1966 was not a Yoruba affair.⁵⁰ Also, the execution of the Nigerian civil war was purely a political agenda and not a Yoruba agenda. The Yoruba at that time in showed so much sympathy for such dastardly act against their fellow Nigerians.

The Yoruba and the Igbo see themselves as brothers and sisters in Ibadan. This explains the reasons; Igbo people were protected in Ibadan during the Nigerian civil war even better than their immediate neighbours and some other places in the Northern Nigeria. The properties and house rents of Igbo people were preserved in Ibadan during the Nigerian civil war.

In view of the above, the challenge in the intergroup relations between the Igbo and the Yoruba is simply the creation of politicians or political class for their selfish interest against the vast majority of Nigerians.

Endnotes

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- ¹⁰ Oral interview Babatunde Lawal, aged 70, 22nd December, 2022 at Dugbe Area, Ibadan, Oyo State
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- ¹² National Archives Enugu, MM/X9, Proclamation of the Republic of Biafra
- ¹³ F. Forsyth, *Emeka*, Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, 1982
- ¹⁴ Oral interview with Ikenna Ugochukwu, aged 75, 22nd December, 2022 at Dugbe Area, Ibadan, Oyo State
- ¹⁵ Oral interview with Yetunde Ola, aged 75, 22nd December, 2022 at Dugbe Area, Ibadan, Oyo State
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- ²⁵ Oral interview with Eric Okafor...
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- ³⁰ Oral interview with Emeka Darlington, aged 80, 22nd December, 2022 at Dugbe Area, Ibadan, Oyo State
- ³¹ Oral interview with Emeka Darlington...
- ³² Oral interview with Tolu Oluwaseun, aged 60, 22nd December, 2022 at Mokola, Ibadan, Oyo State
- ³³ Oral interview with Chukwuka Ekene, aged 71, 4th January, 2023 at Mokola, Ibadan, Oyo State
- ³⁴ Oral interview with Chukwuka Ekene...
- ³⁵ Oral interview with Chukwuka Madu, aged 75, 4th January, 2023 at Mokola, Ibadan, Oyo State
- ³⁶ Oral interview with Chukwuka Madu...
- ³⁷ Oral interview with Chukwuka Madu...
- ³⁸ The issue of full integration is not peculiar to Ibadan alone in Nigeria. It is one of the problems Nigeria is grappling with as a national question. The constitution of Nigeria is therefore required to address such problem. All over Nigeria, Nigerians who settle in places outside their places of origin face one form of discrimination or the other. Issues like 'non indigenes and settlers' are powerfully encouraged by Nigeria's constitution. Someone could live in a particular place in Nigeria for over 50 years and the same person is still being discriminated on the basis of ethnicity or place of origin. Some are born in such places and lived there for decades as well as pay all their political and social obligation including payment of taxes, yet they are treated like strangers or foreigners due to this problem identified here. Some persons even have connections twith such places by parentage yet they are treated like strangers. Nigerians are actually treated like strangers in their countries as a result of such ugly reality not properly handled by the Nigeria's constitution which the politicians grossly exploit at the detriment of the people and the process of nation building.
- ³⁹ Oral interview with Chukwuka Madu...
- ⁴⁰ Oral interview with Johnson Uchenna, aged 64, 1st February, 2023 at Onireke, Ibadan, Oyo State
- ⁴¹ Oral interview with Johnson Uchenna...

⁴² Oral interview with Johnson Uchenna...

⁴³ Oral interview with John Obi, aged 60, 1st February, 2023 at Onireke, Ibadan, Oyo State

⁴⁴ Oral interview with Kayode Ogundele, aged 80, 1st February, 2023 at Onireke, Ibadan, Oyo State

⁴⁵ M. crowder, The Story of Nigeria, Faber and Faber, 1962

⁴⁶ National Archives Ibadan CWC/1/2/1/ Ibos in United Nigeria

⁴⁷ National Archives Ibadan, CWR2/1/ Crisis 1966: Eastern Nigeria View Point

⁴⁸ National Archives, Enugu, NIE/FRP/D2 The Biafran possibility, 1966. Pp 2-6

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