

The Amalgamation Story and Misrepresentation of the Making of Nigeria: Periscoping Nigeria since c.1914 A.D.

Akubor Emmanuel Osewe, Ph.D.

*Department of History,
Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife,
Osun State, Nigeria*

Abstract

On 1st January, 2014, Nigeria marked one hundred years since the Southern and Northern part of the country were brought together to form a single entity under the Imperialist Amalgamation Policy. However, various explanations have been given as to why it became necessary for the Amalgamation; the most popular being that it was for administrative convenience. This paper argues that on the contrary the amalgamation became necessary so that the colonialist could tap the resources of the people more easily as well as tie their economy into the capitalist economic (exploitative) web. The paper using historical document is of the view that, that period marked the beginning of another phase of colonial exploitation in the history of the people, as instead of uniting the people, the colonial amalgamation began the process of the balkanization of the area by sowing the seed of hatred and discord among the people, thereby dividing them along ethno-religious lines, and destroying the internally developing amalgamation built through historical process over time.

Keywords: Amalgamation, Misrepresentation, Nigeria, Balkanisation

Introduction

The story of Nigeria, has since the colonial period been portrayed as one whose emergence would have been impossible but for colonial intervention. In line with this the picture often painted is one which was technologically backward, economically stagnant and politically ungovernable. However, studies have shown that this has not been the case over the years, that rather there has been meaningful interaction

among the various peoples that occupied the area. In an attempt to give a clear picture of the pre-colonial situation in the area and the relationship among them, Hodgkin (1960:105), opined that the study of Nigerian history is not essentially an enquiry into the past of a conglomeration of the peoples whose association with one another are purely artificial, the product of the colonial epoch. He argued that on the contrary a variety of links existed between the various states and peoples which were the predecessors of modern Nigeria. He further argued that although these relationships sometimes took the form of war and enslavement, they also expressed themselves also through diplomacy, treaties, the visits of wandering scholars, the diffusion of political and religious ideas, the borrowing of techniques and above all trade (Hodgkins, 1960:105).

Conceptual Clarification

An understanding of what constitute history and historical process, will help in the complete understanding of the factors and actors which were really involved in the making of Nigeria. It is in line with this that the paper will take the pain of clearly defining history as applied here. The paper will be looking at History at two levels i.e, History as a Process (as reality outside one; events and actions that together make up the human past) and History as an academic discipline. At the first level, it has been conceived as the relationship between man and man on the one hand and man and his environment on the other hand. History at this level refers to events; the episode – the totality of the changes and experience which humanity has undergone ever since the emergence of human society. History at the second level (academic discipline) is the reconstruction, study and explanation of these changes which humanity has undergone. In a more stricter sense it has been conceived as a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past (Carr, 1967:17). It is in this way that history is considered an organized critical study of such past activities of human beings as had produced significant effects on subsequent course of events.

Nigeria: The role of Geography in Historical Process

An understanding of the true making of Nigeria especially before 1914, begins with an understanding of the geography of the area and how this

has aided the historical process. This has been clearly pointed out by both Ajayi and Alagoa (1980:224-5), when they pointed out thus;

Nigeria is not a self-contained geographical unit....In spite of the openness of its borders, however, there is a compactness about the Nigerian geographical environment which encouraged greater movement and interaction of peoples within it than with people outside it. The compactness comes principally from two factors. The first is the complementarity of the Sudan Belt and the Forest Zone with the intervening transitional Middle Belt dominated by the Jos Plateau.

They argued further that:

The second factor engendering compactness has been the essential unity of the river systems. Nigeria is really the basin of the lower Niger south of the Bussa rapids with the Benue, their tributaries and the enormous delta spreading out into several creeks and lagoons. The unity of these waterways encouraged a network of relationship within the basin. The river networks provided routes of contact between people cutting across the north and south axis and supplementing it. Accordingly, one must recognize east and west movements of peoples and ideas as well as the north and south movement already suggested by the vegetation zones. It is because of this compactness that despite the fortuitous manner in which the political unity of Nigeria came to be achieved, culturally and economically Nigeria was not really an arbitrary creation.

Emphasizing the role of geography in integration, with specific reference to the southern part of Nigeria, both, Agiri and Barnes (1987:30), wrote

....the migrant fisher folk who frequented the lagoon and camped on the shores of Lagos and Iddo Islands no doubt stemmed from many sources, spreading their way of life in the course of their movements. After them the Awori and the Benin peoples added new layers to the population. These influences were neither a beginning,

nor an end. The hallmark of Lagos was and still is its ability to absorb many peoples, many languages and many cultural influences. It has done so from time immemorial and it is a process to which there is no predictable end

Nigeria and its Composition up to the eve of British Conquest

The conquest of the Nigerian territory started with the bombardment of Lagos and environ, however, before this activities, historical evidence shows that the area was occupied by people and groups who were not locked up to each other as they related freely and meaningfully. Thus, when the British conquered and established their administration in Nigeria, they met various cultural, religious and linguistic groups who co-existed and meaningfully interacted with one another (Ikime, 1980).

The above position is supported by historical documents as well archaeological and linguistic evidence, which have shown that although there are evidence within the Nigerian region that homogenous communities existed, there are also evidence that in most instances, diverse groups overlapped, interlocked and intermeshed. There are also indication to show that as a result of the absence of natural barrier to movement, there were no fixed and lineal boundaries but zonal and fluid, expanding and contracting (Okoduwa, 1997:1, Asiwaju, 2005:6). There was in cases of warfare, the partial or wholesome incorporation by the conquerors of the subordinated groups. Another factor was the migration of segments of an ethnic groups and the mingling with, and, in some cases, absorption into other groups, producing new communities and languages (Asiwaju, 2005:6-7). Thus when the British conquered and established their administration in Nigeria, they met various cultural, religious and linguistic groups who co-existed and meaningfully interacted with one another. It has been estimated that were over two hundred of such language groups in the Nigerian area; some of which included Nupe, Hausa, Fulani, Isoko, Yoruba, Kanuri, Kutep, Kulere, Kukele, Ibibio, Igede, Tiv, Jukun, Jarawa, Igala, Irigwe, Itsekiri, Gbagyi, Fali, Chamba, Bassa, Igbira, Efik, Edo, Eggon, Idoma, Esan, Fyam, Ikwerre, Ijaw, Igbo, Mumuye, Ngas, Goemai, Margi, Mbembe, Ososo, Oruma, Obolo, Oduval, Ogbah, Okobo, Okodia, Oloma, Oro, Tula, Ubang, Uhami, Urhobo, Iyala to mention a few (Abba and Usman, 2005: 95-100). Scholars have opined that each of these groups did not see

themselves as belonging to one tribe or the other, but saw themselves in term of their contributions towards the development of the place they are located, hence they referred to themselves in term of economic occupation or geographical location. For example, Dike and Ekejiuba (1980:6), in their study on the Aro of South-Eastern Nigeria, clearly demonstrated this, when they posited thus

...it is often forgotten, or merely mentioned in the footnote, that Igbo is a modern ethnic category which many of the constituent groups have only recently and often reluctantly accepted as their ethnic identity, often on political and administrative grounds. During the period covered by our study, the now twelve million or more 'Igbo' distributed over 30,000 square miles of territory east and west of the Niger were variously referred to either as cultural groups (e.g. the Nri, Isuama, Ezza, or Otanzu), or by the ecological zones in which they are found (e.g. Olu \ Oru i.e. the riverain people or Adagbe , people of the flood plain); Enugu, people who live on the hills, Aniocha , people who live on heavily leached and eroded soil; Ohozara , people of the savannah; or as occupational groups such as Opi egbe (people who fashion guns), Ndi uzu or Umudioka (blacksmiths, artists and carvers).

And that:

Since Igbo was used at this time pejoratively to refer to the densely populated uplands, the major sources of slaves, and by extension to slaves, it is not surprisingly that many of these groups have been reluctant to accept the 'Igbo' identity.

The import of the above is that, it connotes mingling and intermingling among the various people, so much so that each impacted on one another. It is therefore not surprising that although the Uthman Dan Fodio Jihad of the 1804, took place in the northern part of the country, but the effect spread to part of the country, to the extent that, in the northern part of Edo, the Jihad led to the spread of Islam. It was during this period that the Afenmai area came under the influence of Islam, so much so that today,

large chunks of the people profess Islamic faith. Isichei (1983:313), documented that testimony of an observer thus:

It is interesting to note how Mohammedanism is gradually extending itself over these territories. The present King Agbedi's father was a fetish worshipper, his son embraced Mohammedanism with most of his people. The King of Irua married to the King Agbedi's sister and influenced by him also became converted to the latter's faith. Many other natives in Ishan although not professing Islamic religion have adopted a similar dress and literally the same habit as the Hausa.

The implication of the above is that contrary to the claim that the Nigerian area had been close to the flow of ideas, before the emergence of European, the area and people have for a long time before the advent of colonial rule, enjoyed rewarding relationship. This is evident in the fact that apart from the spread of religious idea from the north to the southern part of the country, there are also evidence of borrowed words. For example, It has been argued that the use of the word *zaki* as a praise title for kings in Esan area is a result of Nupe incursion around the 1830's. There was migration from the northern area and the establishment of settlements such as the Ago-Hausa settlements in parts of Esan area. Emaudo village in Ekpoma is said to have been founded by a small band of marauders from the north whom the Onogie of Ekpoma used as mercenaries.(Bradbury, 1957:64)

Historical Process and Internal Amalgamation in the Nigerian Area up to Circa 1914 A.D.

As indicated earlier, the geographical differentiation of the Nigerian region created a conducive atmosphere of interaction between the various peoples. In term of economic activities, it created commodity difference and commodity exchange, thus creating inter-dependence of one region on the other, and the establishment of various forms of commercial relationships. In this way, the continuous mingling of people leading to the establishment of a complicated network of inter-group relations was not limited to movement across land, as the River system of the Nigerian landmass has also played a vital role in this unity. This was because, the basins of the Rivers Niger and Benue as well as their numerous

tributaries, which cut across a greater part of the Nigerian area encouraged a strong network of relationship, providing routes of contact between peoples, cutting across the north and south axis (Dike, 1950, Ajayi and Alagoa, 1980, Usman, 1999, Abba and Usman, 2005) .

In term of network and connectivity through land, there existed several important land routes which cut across and connected the various regions. Statistics shows that the most prominent among these routes were Kano-Badagary route which crossed the Niger at Rabat and the N'Garzamu (Borno) - Yola route which linked the people in the Borno area to the Jukuns and the Ibos, Efiks and Ibibios. The connectivity of this route linked through Bauchi and connected Panda, Abinchin, Ibi, Wukari and Muri. Both Clapperton (1829:135-9) and Lander (1830:181-3), argued that it was through this route that natron or salt from the Lake Chad region was transported and traded in the Efik area at the coast. The river system of the area complimented these routes, especially in exchange of goods and idea. Thus the river systems not only served as a means of communication and protein in the harvest of fish which was one of the major occupations of the riverine people, but also served as a carrier of trade (Ukwedeh, 1979). The importance of these rivers can be seen in the fact that three major kingdoms flourished on its bank. Among these is the Jukun Empire which extended its influence as far as Kano and was known in the south as far as the estuary of the Cross River. The Igala Kingdom also emerged to control the trade around the confluence of the Niger-Benue, and the Nupe Kingdom being the third. (Ajayi and Alagoa, 1980:229)

The above is in relation to the role which both the rivers Niger and Benue played in inter-group relation especially as it relates to the cosmopolitan nature of the markets that developed at points around the rivers, as exemplified by Yola and Rabat. In a more specific term Rabat, a Nupe town around the Niger was the location of an ancient market where Nupe traded with the Bariba (Borgu or Yoruba), the Hausa, the Igbo, and the Ibibio. Although most often the convergence was for the purpose of trade, however, there was an awareness of each other and other forms of inter-group interactions. The market of Kulfu near present day Kontongora was also cosmopolitan in nature. Up to c 1830, it attracted all sections of the communities in the present day Nigeria. The Edo went there to sell their camwood to the Nupe in exchange for

products from the northern area, while the Yoruba also traded with the Ijo and Ibibio. Merchants from Yawuri, Borgu, Sokoto, Kebbi and Borno also traded here (Clapperton, 1829:135-9) and Lander, 1830:181-3, Ayandele, 1979:4).

The Igbirra towns of Panda and Koton Karfe, further east also had markets which were melting pots of most groups inhabiting the Nigerian area (Ohiare, 1980:3). Available historical evidence shows that Panda was well known as far as Sokoto, that the colonial authority first heard of the area through the explorer, Captain Clapperton first heard of the town and its fame, while in Sokoto. Clapperton testified that it was in this market that the northern part of the Nigerian area especially Hausaland got its supplies of goods from the sea. In his 1824 testimony, Clapperton reported that when he was leaving Sokoto, Caliph Bello requested that the British Government send some of its merchants to do business with his people at Panda (Mahdi, 1978:46-8). In the course of trade, most traders especially the Hausa traders, settled permanently with the indigenous communities (Ohiare, 1980). In support of this, Laird (1971:214-35), had earlier testified that he found a community of settled Hausa traders and that the Hausa language had become the major language of commerce there (Ayandele 1974, Ohiare, 1980). Baikie (1856), in a similar manner argued that another important area of contact between the people was Gbobe, situated at the confluence of the Niger and the Benue, (close to present day Lokoja). He argued that Gbobe had an important market which attracted merchants from all over the Nigerian area. Samuel Crowder on his third expedition on the Niger and William Baikie on his exploration noted that Igala, Igbirra, Nupe, Kakanda, Hausa, and Yoruba languages were spoken there (Baikie, 1856:274). And that the Doma, Jukun and Igbo traders as far as from the delta were also present in this market. (Isichei, :268). Describing the volume of traffic and exchange that took place between this people of Gbobe and those as far as Igalaland and Asaba up to part of the 19th Century, it was noted thus;

there appeared to be twice as much traffic going forward here as in the upper parts of the Rhine.... They go to the Eggarah market (at Igala bank near Asaba) directly after the new moon....At the upper one they receive the produce of the interior brought by the Eggarah people...., this produce they exchange at the lower

market with the traders from Brass and Bonny ((Baikie, 1856:274)

In establishing the pre 1914 relations between the people of Kasar Hausa and Yoruba, Mahdi (1978:123-4) noted that before the middle of the 19th century, the main contact between Hausa traders and Yoruba traders was along the northern edge of the forest zone where the Yoruba towns of old Oyo (Katunga), Kishi, Igboho, Shaki, Ikoyi, Ogbomosho, Ilorin and Rakka were situated and the second contact was along the coast where Lagos and Badagry provided the meeting points. As a result of the collapse of the Oyo Empire which led to the movement of people from the northern edge of the forest into the centre Hausa traders were provided with the opportunity to trade in the heart of Yorubaland with Ibadan and Abeokuta becoming the focal point. Trading commodities consisted mostly of horses, clothes and slaves which the Hausa, Nupe and Beriberi traders took into the area. Horses became very important because Oyo Empire placed emphasis on its cavalry in the attempt to boost its military strength. This made Oyo very dependent on the large scale importation of big horses from the north in the place of the short (kuru) horses bred around the area. Since the imported horses were not adapted to the forest condition, they needed special care to survive and this was provided for by procuring both free men and slaves from the northern area.

The Igbo speaking communities also had trading relations with their southern neighbours, the Ijo speaking people. The stimulus in trade rose as a result of their ecological differences. The Ijo resided in the marshy delta region with very salty rivers which did not support agriculture. Thus the Ijaws were mainly fishermen and salt makers as a result of which they were dependent on their Igbo neighbours for other items. Trade here was dominated by the states around the Delta, the people of Aboh at the head of the delta, and Igala kingdom further north. Aboh traders took goods from Brass and Bonny to Igala bank near Asaba where they exchanged them with produce from the interior brought by the Igala (Dike, 1956, Northrup, 1978, Usman, 1999)

Oguagha (1989:50), focusing on the Igbo people, argued that the Igbo speaking communities (as early as that period) established trade relations with their northern neighbours the Igala Kingdom as well as the Idoma

people, for both consumable and implements for agriculture. The Igala farmers depended largely on the Igbo blacksmiths (Akwa blacksmith) for the production of farm tools such as cutlasses, hoes and diggers. From the Igala, the Akwa purchased slaves, ivory, textiles, coral beads, leather goods and potash (Shaw, 1969, Ukwedeh, 1979, Oguagha, 1989). Both the Igala and Nupe merchants were able to establish long time trading contact in Igbo territories, with the Nupe people providing horses to the Igbo. The Igala also bought these horses from Hausa merchants who brought them across the River Benue to Oguma. These horses were displayed at a horses fair in Ejule market, one of the most important commercial centres of the Igala kingdom. It was from this market that the Igala traders took horses into other mini horse fairs in the Igbo areas. As a result of the demand for horses which were usually used for ritual and chieftaincy purposes, Igbo traders no longer waited for Igala traders to bring them the supply of the commodity but went into Igala territories to purchase them (Abdulkadir, Oguagha, 1989:50). Another trading item which was very important was salt. The Igbo purchased salt from the Delta people and in turn sold it to the Igala. To further show that there was established contact and trading relationship between the various Nigerian groups long before the establishment of the Nigerian state, Lander reported that he saw some Hausa traders even in Ibo country during their 1830-32 expedition.

It has been established that from the late 17th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the west bank of the River Niger, the market at Oria (Egga-Oria) became a very important centre of exchange, bringing together people of different origins. During this period, the riverine people of south-western Ibaji district brought dried fish, palm produce and yams to the Oria market in exchange for banana and livestock. Apart from perishable produce, the Igala people depended much on the Esan industry for their textile materials popularly referred to as Ukpon-ododo. Through this means of interaction and exchange, some varieties of banana and plantain were introduced to Igalaland from Edo (Ukwedeh, 1979:6-10). According to Bradbury (1957:62-3), farm and palm products were sold in these local markets at the trading stations on the Niger, an evacuation point for much produce from Esan and southern Kukuruku. Apart from the exchange of farm and palm produce as well as textile materials, the Esan have been credited with the introduction of cowries as a medium of exchange to that part of Igalaland. The Esan people who

had acquired it from Benin (after the 1515 importation from the Indian Ocean and Sao Tome trade) introduced its use to the Igala people through the Egga-Oria trade centre near Ojigolo on the Niger, where they traded with both the Ighalan (Igala) and the Ekhen – Irhuen trade with the Iybiosakun country of Afenmai (Igbafe, 1979:32, Ukwedeh, 1979:6-10)

These trading relations led to other developments for instance, migration in some cases led to the establishment of settlements by some of the emigrants, the spread of culture and diplomatic relations between Kingdoms and communities. It was reported that as a result of horse trading activities in the Igala Kingdom, some Hausa traders settled down permanently in Akwache and Ejule which were important centres of trade. They acted as caretakers of the unsold horses while other went back to Hausa land to procure more horses (Okeme, 1975:36, Mahdi, 1978:46-8, Abdulkadir, 2006: 57).

Diplomatic relations were also established among the various Kings in the precolonial Nigerian area as a way of ensuring peaceful coexistence. From the works of Afigbo (1981), *Alagoa* (1970), and *Ikime* (1972), it is evident that this relationship existed between the people of Ogane, Igala and northern Igbo land This they presented thus:

The Nri ritual specialists of Northern Igboland used to officiate at some critical stage in the coronation ceremonies of the Oba of Benin and the Attah of Igala... It is also known that the Oba of Benin on ascension, used to send to the Ogane (whoever he was and wherever he was located) for “a staff” a cap of shining brass and a cross like that of Malta as the insignia of royalty (Ryder,1965, Afigbo, 1981).

It has also been argued that among the Igala and Igbo people the popular brass pectoral mask credited to the Benin people have a place in the royal regalia of the ruling houses. For example, the brass pectoral mask worn by the Ata of Idah as part of his official regalia, has been stylistically dated to the 16th Century. A.D and referred to as *ejubeju ailo* (Ukwedeh, 1979). The relevance of this evidence is that this same pectoral mask is part of the official royal regalia of the *Ezi Nri*, who have been established to have some form of relationship with the Benin royal house. In another

instance, there was an incident where a European, Mr. Carr disappeared along the River Niger and the Obi of Aboh suspected the King of Brass, King Boy of involvement in the death. He solicited the help of the Attah of Igala Kingdom to carry out a punitive expedition on Brass to serve as a deterrent of such occurrence and keep the route open and safe for business. The Attah of Igala in turn solicited for help from Etsu Nupe Masaba because he did not have enough soldiers for the expedition and the Etsu Nupe promptly came to his aid. Ayandele, (1979:5), had earlier argued that as early as 1842, that the royal house of both Sokoto and Abeokuta had well established relationship, so much so that the Sultan had one of his messengers with Sodeke in Abeokuta. He also maintained that the Sultan tried to intervene in the civil war in Yoruba land persuading the parts involved to maintain peace, while at the same time Balogun Ogundipe, the uncrowned King of the Egba for nearly a quarter of a century offered advice to the Etsu of Nupe in 1870 (Barth (1858:507). This indicates that, although relations were sometimes hostile and competitive, in other instances, they were cordial. (Okeme, 1975:36, Abdulkadir, 2006: 57.). Historians have opined that this type of relationship represents a form of amalgamation between the various groups, with each still maintaining its independence. Thus the existence of close, regular, meaningful and peaceful contacts supported the brotherhood and cemented tie of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria before the colonial period.

The 1914 Episode in History: Amalgamation or Beginning of Balkanisation of Nigeria

By the 1914 Amalgamation story, the impression created is that before 1914, there was a fundamental dichotomy between the North and the South, and that Nigeria is an arbitrary creation of the British. It is this impression that formed the basis of the position as portrayed by Abba and Usman (2005:), when they opined thus;

This outlook arises from the powerful position which three myths about Nigeria and Nigerians have acquired in the minds of those reporting on Nigerian affairs, and even of some of those participating in them. These are, firstly the myth about what happened in 1914; the myth that Nigeria is an arbitrary creation of the British; and the myth about Nigeria international boundaries. The

myth about 1914 is the basis of a number of assumptions. Firstly, the existence of a fundamental dichotomy between the North and the South of Nigeria supposedly rooted in the nature of the 1914 amalgamation. Secondly, the inevitability of competition and conflicts between supposedly monolithic and distinctive ethnic groups, which are said to have existed as distinct racial entities for millennia, and which are said to be the constituent units of the country. And, thirdly the supposedly inherent antagonism between the Muslims and the Christians of Nigeria

A critical study of the history of what today constitute Nigeria indicates that the polarization of the territories that became Nigeria (which the amalgamation claimed to heal) actually began with the country's creation and administration as two separate colonies, namely Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria (Akinola, 2009). Akinola (2009), opined that this initial polarization was a deliberate action by the imperial power in the interest of the North, especially in the Sokoto Caliphate and its institutions (an interest which was not unrelated to British objectives) and which seems to have induced the colonial administrators in the North to treat that colony as special. In line with this both Suberu and Osaghae (2005:12)

Regional cleavages and identities evolved from the structures created and consolidated by the colonialists in the process of state formation in Nigeria. The most fundamental of the cleavages is that between the North and South, these being the initial structures of the colonial state which were administered separately even after the two units were amalgamated in 1914. The other cleavages emerged with the introduction of a three-region structure (North, East, and West) in 1946. A fourth region, Mid-West, was created in 1963, but partly because of its status as home to minorities, the creation did not fundamentally alter the tripartite regional structure existing before the First Republic was sacked by the military in 1966. The ethnic majority-minority cleavage and the majoritarian basis of politics took roots

within these structures. The emergent elite were regionalized from inception, and especially after 1946 when the political space was opened to more Nigerian participation, the majority elite segment deployed strategies of ethnic mobilization and exclusionary politics to establish hegemonic control of the regions.

It is based on the above assumption that, the paper questions the use of the term Amalgamation to describe the activities of 1914 under the colonial government in Nigeria. In the view of the paper, what took place under the British government in 1914, seems more like the beginning of the process of balkanization of the Nigerian region. This is because in an attempt to capture the area, the colonial state used its apparatus to support one group, against the other, during which those seen as the opposition groups were brutally suppressed. In Northern Nigeria, the Native Authority police were simply the instrument of indigenous ruling oligarchy and their colonial collaborators. In the southern part of the country, the force which comprised people from other tribes was used as instruments of brutalisation. Generally, the local police (who were mainly indigenous people), were used to suppress civil insurrections against colonial oppression and subjugation. People were killed on behalf of the colonial authorities. For instance, Tamuno (1970:7), gave the composition of the Niger Coast Protectorate Constabulary of the 1894-95, as comprising 450 rank and file, the majority who were Yorubas, while about 40 were Hausas. All these were used to fight against the people who questioned the intrusion into their sovereignty by the Colonial power as in the case of the Ekuris, Igbos, Asigas and Arun people. In the case of the Ekuri people, the expedition sent to the town destroyed the town and looted properties (Tamuno (1970:8). In the case of the destruction of Benin Kingdom, Ryder specifically mentioned the role played by those he described as Hausa Spies. In his analysis of the assemblage of men and weapons, he wrote,

.. Two hundred and fifty protectorate troops, **150 Hausa recruits (to act as spies and guides)**, two "seven pounders", one Maxim and other ammunitions were supplied; Others were seven warships from various locations, 82 Navy Officers, and ratings, 123 officers and Men of the British Marine, 9 Medical personal and

29 medical unit attendants, and stewards and a detachment of the West Indian Regiment to take charge of garrison duty in the protectorate alongside the Niger Coastal Protectorate administration forces. (Ryder, A, 1969)

People of the Esan territory, their Afenmai and Igala neighbours have continued to blame the conquest of their area as well as the losses they incurred during the colonial invasion to the support provided by Yoruba and Hausa who escorted the British army into their territory. Rott (1968:114), documented the testimony of the people thus;

While in the forest, the people (Edo and their neighbours) used the trees as covers, while at the same time making blind bush tracks, from where they launched guerrilla attack on the advancing British forces. This locally invented tactics, continued for days, until the Yoruba and Hausa who escorted the British army into the area later foiled it. Their success in foiling these blind bush tracts tactics is believed to have been due to their familiarity with the area and with such method, which was very common among hunters.

Although, the above took place years back, but the event is still recalled with great hatred among the people of the Edo area, who up till date have referred to those from the northern part of the country as betrayers, coward and those who would sell out at the slightest opportunity.

Both Abba and Usman (2005) argued that this process of the beginning of Balkanisation, which the colonialist prefers to term Amalgamation saw the earnings of the people being used to procure the necessary weapons to destroy them. They argued that in line with this, out of a total annual expenditure of £305,000 by the colonial administration in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, in the years 1906-1909, the sum of £260,000, that is 85% of the annual expenditure, was on military expenditure (on the Royal West African Frontier Force), whose imperial military responsibilities extended far beyond the protectorate, as its name makes quite clear.

Once the colonial power was done with the capture of the area, which lasted up to the end of the first decade of the 20th century, attention was now focused on the maximum exploitation of both human and natural resources of the area. It is important to note that in an attempts to exploit the economic resources of the conquered territories, apart from employing the people to fight against themselves, the colonial state had to use a system of rule that divided the people along some primordial sentiments. At various levels policies were formulated to deepen social distance among the different ethnic groups instead of creating room for national integration. Egwu (2001), posited that in Northern Nigeria, the colonial racial segregation policies through its *Sabongari* settlement structure; contributed to a greater extent in creating social distance between “indigenous” and “settlers” communities in Northern Nigeria. In the opinion of the scholar, this act aborted the process of integration that was taking place before colonialism.

The origin of this is traced to the colonial state promulgation of the Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1910. Available evidence shows that this Land and Native Rights Ordinance Act formally proclaimed all land in the North (with certain exceptions) as native land to be controlled and administered by the colonial governor (Nnoli, 1978: 115-116). This was purposely done and the law manipulated to ensure that a limited number of those regarded as Southern Nigerians migrated to the North. This action was based on the fact that the imperial power believed that the southerners were capable of undermining the alliance between them and the Fulani ruling class that they deemed crucial for colonial enterprise in Nigeria. In this way, the Sabon gari quarter policy came into being, as a provision for southerners, who were bent on living in the northern part of the country. The result was that while the colonialist were celebrating the Amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, the same system had succeeded in creating three different settlements of the people, viz, (a) the walled city, housing the indigenous population (b) Tudun Wada, housing non-indigenous northerners, and (c) Sabongari for southerners whom the colonialist referred to as “native foreigners”. This ethnic polarization of northern towns facilitated ethnic mobilization and manipulation. Writing on the system of rule that divided the people along some primordial sentiments, Osuntokun (2009:2) opined thus;

... in practice, the northern provinces of Nigeria were administered almost separately. The British administrators carefully protected their turf by keeping qualified southerners from being posted to northern Nigeria. Even ordinary southern artisans working in mines or the railways or as clerks or those who were traders were kept in isolated quarters – Sabongaris outside the traditional northern cities with some kind of cordon sanitaire maintained to keep the Northerners from being contaminated by their Southern counterparts who were open to nationalist feelings garnered from and promoted by the Southern based newspapers, many of which were owned by Nnamdi Azikiwe

It was therefore the introduction of the system of rule that divided the people along some primordial sentiment, that sealed the process of the Balkanization, so much so that by the period of the amalgamation, the people that have seen themselves as partners in both economic, social and political sphere, had divided loyalty. Thus, the residential segregation of the Kanawa from southern Nigerian immigrants engendered hostility between members of the two groups. They both found it very difficult to tolerate, understand and positively adjust to each other. To the highly Islamized Kanawa, Sabon Gari was nothing but a settlement of infidels (*harna* or *kafiri* in Hausa). The southern Nigerians, who were more concerned with their economic prosperity in most part of northern Nigeria, worked hard and succeeded in gaining effective control of the formal and informal sectors of the economy, and are today seen as opportunists, treated with great hatred and seen as interlopers (Albert, 1994:96). This situation had continued into the period after independence, so much so that between 1960 and 2014, Nigeria has undergone series of ethnic crises and cleansing.

The situation presently is such that people in different parts of the country treat each other with suspicion. Scholars have noted that Hausa-Fulani Yoruba relations since the early years of independence have been very much strained leading to a point of open confrontation before the return to the present political dispensation. In the middle belt too, agitations and excessive fear of Hausa-Fulani domination persisted, as exemplified by the Zangon Kataf crises, Kaduna Sharia crisis, Islamic/Christian skirmishes

and riots in Jos and environs. All these breakdowns of intergroup relations, poses monumental challenges to corporate existence of the Nigerian nation. Analyzing the frequency of these crises and the danger it posed to the country, Sa’ad A (2008:41) submitted thus;

In many of our state today the issue of ‘indigene’ or ‘host’ and ‘settler’ or ‘stranger’ is fast becoming a serious destabilizing factor and potent threat to the unity and stability of this country. The conflicts in Kaduna State between the Hausa and Katafs, in Jos Plateau state between Beroms and Hausa and between Tarok and Muslims; in Benue /Taraba states between Jukun-Chamba and Tiv, in Bauchi between Sayawa and Hausa/Muslims, in Nasarawa state between the Tiv and non Tiv, in Osun state between Ife and Modakeke stand as good examples. Behind most of these conflicts is the question of identity of Nigerian groups in the environment they had lived in for generations and have come to see themselves as part and parcel of the area against that of the group which had from time immemorial lived within the same environment and therefore see themselves as owners of the land therein and therefore landlords on whose pleasure others had entered and settled

The position as maintained by Sa’ad (2008), above is better appreciated when viewed in the light of the table below.

Table I: Selected Cases of Ethno-religious Conflicts in Parts of Nigeria

S/N	Date	Location	Principal Actors
1	May 01, 1980	Zaria (Kaduna State)	Disturbances in Zaria which property belonging to mainly Christians were destroyed.
2	Dec. 18-29 1980	Yan-Awaki Ward in Kano (Kano State)	Riots by Maitatsine Sect 4,177 people died. Extensive damage to property.
3	Oct. 29-30,1982	Bullumkutu, Maiduguri (Borno State)	Kala-Kato and Maitatsine sects, 118 people died. Extensive damage to property.

4	Oct. 29-30, 1982	Kano (Kano State)	Muslim demonstrators burnt down churches.
5	Feb. 27-March 5, 1984	Dobeli Ward	Maitatsine Sect. 568 died. Wanton destruction of property.
6	Apr. 26-28, 1984	Pantami Ward, Gombe (Bauchi State)	Maitatsine Sect. 105 died. Extensive destruction of property.
7	March, 1986	Ilorin (Kwara State)	Muslims and Christians clashed during a Christian procession at Easter.
8	March, 1987	Kafanchan (Kaduna State)	Clash between Muslims and Christians at the College of Education, Kafanchan. Loss of some lives and burning of some mosques by Christian and natives Kajes.
9	March, 1987	Katsina, Funtua, Zaria, Gusau and Kaduna (Kaduna State)	Wave of religious riots in which Muslims burnt down numerous church buildings and damaged properties belonging to Christians. And natives Kajes.
10	February, 1988	Kaduna Polytechnic (Kaduna State)	Religious riots, ostensibly among students, destroyed the foundation walls of the Christian chapel.
11	April, 1991	Katsina (Katsina State)	Religious violence spear headed by Mallam Yahaya Yakubu, Leader of the fundamental Shite sect in Katsina. It was protest over a blasphemous publication Fun Times. Several lives were lost and property destroyed
12	April, 1991	Tafawa Balewa (Bauchi State)	Started as a quarrel between a Fulani man and a Sayawa meat seller in Tafawa Balewa. Escalated into full blown violence and later took the colouring of a religious war in Bauchi. Several lives were lost and property valued over hundreds of million naira was destroyed.
13	October, 1991	Kano (Kano State)	A peaceful procession initiated by the Izala sect to halt. Rev Reinhard Bonnke from having a crusade in Kano later degenerated into a very violent and bloody religious confrontation. Thousands of lives were lost and properties valued in millions of Naira were destroyed.

14.	Oct. 1991	Tiv-Jukun ethnic crisis	conflict over land ownership and political domination
15	May, 1992	Zangon Kataf (Kaduna State)	A command feud between the Katafs and the Hausa later took the dimension of inter-religious war between Muslims and Christians in other major cities of Kaduna State. Several lives were lost and properties were destroyed.
16	January, 1993	Funtua, (Katsina State)	A Kalakato religious sect assaulted the village head and burnt down the police vehicle. Lives and property were also lost.
17	December, 1994	Kano (Kano State)	Command violence triggered off by the beheading of a Christian who had allegedly desecrated the Quran.
18	May, 1995	Kano (Kano State)	Communal violence triggered off by quarrel between Hausa and Igbo led to the burning of houses, churches and shops and killing of innocent people.
19	July 22, 1999	Kano Reprisal Killing	Hausa/Fulani youth took vengeance for the killing of their Kith and Kin in Sagamu. Their target was the Yoruba community.
20	Feb. 28, 2000	Kaduna Maryhem (Kaduna State)	Kaduna city exploded in violence as Muslim and Christian extremists and other hoodlums clashed over the proposal to introduce Sharia.
21	April 14, 2000	Ageragu Crisis (Nasarawa State)	Communal clash that started with a protest against the location of Local Government Headquarters. The militant youth group started the riot and later took to the streets killing and destroying.
22	July 2000	Tsagari Crisis (Kwara)	Clash between Tsagari and Share communities of Kwara State which claimed several lives.
23	Sept. 8, 2000	Kaltungo religious (Gombe State)	A religious violence that was sparked off by the presence of the states Sharia implementation committee.
24	October 17, 2000	OPC-Hausa/Fulani (Kwara)	A face off between the militant members of OPC and Hausa/Fulani community over supremacy of Emirate system in the state.

25	October 21, 2000	Minna reprisal (Niger)	Violent ethnic crisis erupted after the OPC assaults in Kwara and Lagos States.
26	December 02, 2000	Hadejia crisis (Ugawa)	A secretarian disturbance that was caused by a debate between Muslim and Christians in Hadeja (Jigawa). There was wanton destruction of worship places.
27	June, 28, 2001	Azara crisis (Nasarawa)	An ethnic conflict between the Tiv and the Azara indigenes. It started with gruesome killing of an Azara traditional leader, and later spread to the Tiv village with the Tiv community on the defense.
28	Sept. 07, 2001	Jos crisis	A violent ethnic/religious crisis between the Muslim/Hausa Fulani and Christian/Indigenes. The subject of discord between the Jasawa Development Association and Plateau Youth council was over political appointment in Jos North.
29	October 12, 2001	Kano Riot	A peaceful anti-American protest over the bombing of Afghanistan turned violent, taking ethnic and religious dimension, it degenerated into uncontrollable violence which claimed lives and damaged properties and places of worship.
30	Oct. 29, 2001	Tiv-Jukun/Fulani Conflict	An ethnic clash between Tivs and Jukun/Fulani which was an extension of the May 2001 clash and could be linked to the protracted dispute between both sides. Newswatch reported that 16 soldiers were killed which later led to the gruesome revenge on the Tivs, by the Nigerian Army.
31	Nov. 02, 2001	Gwantu crisis	A clash that started on a political ground (over the relocation of LG Headquarters later took on ethno-religious dimension in which places of worship were destroyed.
32	Dec. 30, 2001	Vwag crisis	A violent command conflict in Vwang district between the indigenes and non-indigenes, exploded in the backdrop of the September 7 Jos crisis. It started when an illegal group of 40 men attacked the District Head of Vawang. It also had religious colouration.

33	January 18, 2002	Awe crisis	A renewed communal clash between two indigenous communities in Awe Local Government of Nasarawa State. The cause was not certain but two people were killed and several others injured.
34	May 2, 2000	Jos mayhem	Another mayhem that followed PDP congress but later took an ethno-religious colour.
35	May 27, 2002	Fulani-Irigwe crisis	An ethnic clash between the Hausa/Fulani and the Irigwe indigenes in Basa, Plateau which was said to be a reprisal attack.
36	June 01, 2002	Yelwa-Shendam Mayhem (Plateau)	A religious-cum ethnic fracas between the native people (predominantly Christians) and Hausa settlers (predominantly Muslims). This violence extended to about four Local Government Councils in Southern Plateau.
37	July 01, 2002	Wase (Plateau)	The Yelwa-Shendam riots spilled over to Wase.
38	July 01, 2003	Edo/Kogi	Communal clash between border communities in Edo and Kogi State Ekepedo and Ogori over land ownership
39	January 1, 2004	Ganye, Adamawa	Clash between Fulani herdsman and farmers over grazing lands
40	January 1, 2004	Yobe	Militant Islamic group operating under the name of Muhajiran launched a Taliban-like attack on police. Men of the Nigerian Army killed five and arrested several others.
41	February 1, 2004	Wase/Kanam (Plateau)	Violent clash between Mavo and Taroh communities, which claimed 11 lives. Suspected Taroh youth were alleged to have raided Mavo villages.
42	Feb. 1, 2004	Wase/Kanam (Plateau)	Communal clash over land ownership between minda and Kparav groups. Several lives were lost.
43	April 11, 2004	Makarfi, Kaduna	Religious protest in Makarfi town over the desecration of the Quran by a Christian teenager

44	April 11, 2004	Lantang South, (Plateau)	Communal clash that led to the sacking of Taroh villages in Lantang South LGC by suspected Hausa-Fulkani insurgents.
45	April 26, 2004	Barkin Chiyawa (Plateau)	Renewed hostilities launched by suspected displaced Fulani herdmen. The conflict was believed to be spill over the ethno – religious crisis that has bedeviled southern Plateau Local Governments of Lantamg South LGC by suspected Hausa-Fulani insurgents.
46	May 1, 2004	Yelwa Shendam, Plateau State	A fresh ethno-religious mayhem that claimed over 650 lives and over 250 women abducted by suspected Tarok militia.
47	May 12, 2004	Kano	Kano mayhem following the Yelwa Shendam ethno – religious crisis in Palteau. Non-Muslims were attacked in reprisal of the Plateau crisis. Over 200 lives were lost and the traditional ruler of the area deposed.
48	June 8, 2004	Konshisha/Gwer, Benue	Boundary disputes between negnouring Konshisha and Gwer communities. Thirteen lives were lost.
49	June 8, 2004	Numan, Adamawa	Ethno-religious crisis in Numan over the construction of a mosques minaret over the Humma Bachamas palace. Over 50 people were feared killed and the traditional ruler of the area deposed.
50	August 3, 2004	Quanpam, Plateau	Fresh outbreak of violence in Lankaka village. Suspected armed milita from neighbouring state alegely stormed the village community killing two and razing twenty houses.
51	Sept. 27, 2004	Limankara, Borno	A self-styled Taliban group hiding on the Goza hills an Madara mountains on the north-eastern border with Cameroun raided station killing officers and stealing ammunition
52	Since 2009	Boko Haram Insurgency	A self-styled Radical Islamic group operation in Northern Nigeria

Conclusion

From the discourse so far, the paper is of the opinion that what the colonialist in 1914 described as Amalgamation of Nigeria, was nothing but a charade, used to cover up for the atrocities which were committed during the period of colonial invasion of the Nigerian territory. The paper also submits that the problem of ethnic cleansing and frequent violent clashes between the various people are results of the seed of discord and segregation which was planted in the creation of various settlements to put the people apart from each other. All these call for a reconsideration of the Nigerian intergroup history and how it could be tailored in such a way that would guarantee a future for the country.

Bibliography

- Abdulkadir, M.S. (2006), "The Effects of the Extension of the Sokoto Caliphate on the Igala Kingdom" Bobboyi H. & Yakubu A.M. (eds), *The Sokoto Caliphate: History and Legacies, 1804-2004*, Vol. I, Kaduna: Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University.
- Afigbo, A, (1981), "The Beni Mirage and the History of South Central Nigeria", *Nigeria Magazine* no 137.
- Agiri B.A and Barnes S (1987), "Lagos Before 1603", Adefuye A et al (ed), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State*, Lantern Book, Lagos
- Akinola, G.A.(2009), *Leadership and the Postcolonial Nigerian Predicament*. A publication of the Department of History, University of Ibadan. Monograph Series No.1
- Albert, I.A (1994), "Violence in Metropolitan Kano: A Historical Perspective", Osaghae O et al (ed), *Urban Violence in Africa*, Institut français de recherche en Afrique
- Asiwaju, I.A.(2005): "Boundaries and Governance in Nigeria" Akinyele, R.T., *Contemporary Issues on Boundaries and Governance in Nigeria*, Lagos: Frankad Publishers.
- Ayandele, E (1979), *Nigerian Historical Studies*, Frank Cass and Company, London
- Barth, H (1858), *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*; Vol 2, London.

- Bradbury R.E., *The Benin Kingdom and the Edo Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, London: International African Institute, 1957, p 64.
- Clapperton H (1829), *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo*, London.
- Dike, K and Felicia Ekejiuba, F, (1990), *The Aro of South -Eastern Nigeria , 1650-1980: A Study of Socio-Economic Formation and Transformation in Nigeria*. Ibadan University Press
- Egwu, S (2001) *Ethnic and Religious violence in Nigeria*, Abuja, Afrigov.
- Erim O. E and Uya, E. O (eds) (1984), *Perspectives and Methods of Studying African History*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Hodgkins, T (1960), *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Isichie, E (1983), *A History of Nigeria*, London: Longman Group Ltd.
- Laird M and Oldfield, (1971), *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa by the River Niver*, Vol. I, Frank Cass, London.
- Lander R (1830), *Records of Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa*, Vol.I, London
- Mahdi A, (1978) *The Hausa Factor in West Africa*, Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press.
- Oguagha, P. A.(1989), "Pre-Colonial Trade in the Igbo-Igala Borderland" *ODU* Nos 36, July.
- Ohiare, J.A, (1980), The Role of Trade in the History of Opanda in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Some Considerations. Postgraduate Seminar Paper, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria., June, 21.
- Okeme T A (1975) *The Spread of Islam in Igalaland from the Earliest time to 1957*, (Unpublished B.A. Project,) Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, 1975
- Okoduwa,A.I (1997), "The Geography of Esan", Okoduwa, A.I (ed), *Studies in Esan History and Culture: Evolution of Esan Politics*, Vol.I, Uwessan Press, Benin
- Osuntokun J, (2009), A Discourse on Obafemi Awolowo, <http://thenationonlineng.net/web2/categories/columnist>.

- Rott Ling H, (1968), *Great Benin: Its Customs, Arts and Horror*, London, Routledge and Regan Paul Ltd.
- Sa'ad A (2008), "The "Challenges" of Nation-Building: Nigeria, Which Way Forward", Ogbogbo C and Okpeh O,(ed), *Interrogating Contemporary Africa: Dike Memorial Lectures 1999-2007*. Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Ibadan
- Suberu R and Osaghae E (2005), *A History of Identities, Violence and Stability in Nigeria*. CRISE Working Paper No. 6, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity. CRISE, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford. Obtained from <http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk/>
- Usman, Y.B (1999), History and its Challenges to the Peoples and Politics of Africa in the 21st Century. Paper presented at the 1999 Dike Memorial Lectures, 44th Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Abuja, 22nd November.
- Usman, Y.B and Abba, A; (2005),*The Misrepresentation of Nigeria: The Fact and The Figures*. Zaria, Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training.