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TOPIC:

**LINES AND SPACE IN
HUMAN AFFAIRS:
MINORITIES AND
MARGINALS**

By

PROFESSOR RUFUS TAIWO AKINYELE

LINEs AND SPACE IN HUMAN AFFAIRS: MINORITIES AND MARGINALS

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by

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PREAMBLE

The Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Research), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Management Services), Registrar, Librarian, Provost of the College of Medicine, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Deans of other Faculties, Members of Senate, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to start this lecture by saying that History, defined simply as the study of the past based on the analysis and interpretation of available evidence, is like a good product that needs only a little advertisement. The interesting thing is that some of the best salesmen of History have come from the Sciences rather than the Humanities. For instance, Francis Bacon extolled the virtue of history in these glowing words:

Histories make men wise, poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend.¹

Our own Professor Akin O. Adesola, in the Commonwealth Day Lecture delivered on 14 March 1983 argued in favour of the continued existence of the Commonwealth which many people at the time had described as obsolete or outdated. In making his point, the eminent Professor of Medicine did not mesmerize his audience with the catalogue of scientific benefits that the member states would derive from the Commonwealth but simply reminded them of the danger of a sudden break with the past, in spite of the political independence. To press home the point, Professor Adesola quoted the words of Will and Ariel Durant in *The Lessons of History* which reads:

No one, however brilliant or well-informed, can come to such fullness of understanding as safely to judge and dismiss the customs or institutions of his

society, for these are the wisdom of generations after centuries of experiment in the laboratory of history. The sanity of a group lies in the continuity of its traditions. To break sharply with the past is to court the madness that may follow the shock or sudden blows or mutilations.²

Unfortunately, one of the tragedies of our time was the replacement of History with Social Studies in the secondary school curriculum. This was done in the mistaken belief that a developing country like Nigeria ought to focus on Science and Technology and not on disciplines like History that has no direct utility value. The case for the restoration of History was recently amplified by Professor Peter Nwangwu, of the Department of Pharmacology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria, he remarked that "The study of history nurtures a spirit of critical inquiry and assists the young learner in the formation of historical consciousness". He added that by studying history, students would gain 'vital understanding of chronology and the dynamics of change over time'.³

This observation agrees perfectly well with the view expressed by Jeremy Black and Donald D Mac Raild, two professional historians, on the purpose of studying history. According to them, history "provides societies and individuals with a dimension of longitudinal meaning over time" and "allows us to peer into the future by providing precedents for contemporary action, forewarning against the repetition of past mistakes".⁴

Although we have highlighted the importance of history, many people fail to see the broader utility because of their narrow conception of the subject. They see the subject only from the point of view of political history. Hence, the popular reference to the Department of

History as the Department of “Oba ku, Oba je” – the department of kingship succession. While I am quick to admit that political history has not been displaced from the mainstream of historical scholarship, the discipline has become, to use the words of Black and Mac Raild “an industry that reflects the wider needs and desires of the nation, of the people and of society, as well as those of the practioners.”⁵ There has been a paradigm shift from the traditional history to the New or Total History which is concerned with virtually every human activity. As J.B.S. Haldane, a scientist, once noted, ‘everything has a past which can in principle be reconstructed and related to the rest of the past’.⁶

Accordingly, topics that had previously been considered ‘peripheral to the interests of real historians’, such as climate, gender, burial etc are now considered as part and parcel of history. Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, if the inaugural lecture of today appears more like a topic in geography or sociology, it is all because history is dynamic. Having created this wider platform for appreciating this lecture, we can now move to the major business of the day- Lines and Space in Human Affairs.

Lines and Space in Human Affairs

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, it is no longer news that we live in the age of globalization that has impacted significantly on territorial boundaries. Some aspects of this will be highlighted. First, Information and Communication Technology, which is a key component of globalization, treats geographical and national boundaries as if they do not exist.⁷ Under globalization, regional integration, whether it is perceived as a condition or a process, is seen as a necessary condition for development. The form it takes or the degree of success achieved is of secondary consideration. However it is defined, regional

integration refers to the merger or union of adjacent territories or states to form an integrated community. The ultimate goal of the African Union, (AU) for example, is to create an Africa without borders. While the international community is still doing everything possible to strengthen the United Nations to find practical solutions to problems common to mankind, a former President of the United States, George W. Bush, popularized the twin concepts of global governance and global leadership.⁸ The rationale is that many of our contemporary problems, especially those relating to war and peace, and sustainable development, cannot be tackled by individual governments, no matter how richly endowed. In an academic community such as ours, the force of globalization is driven forcefully home through the varieties of international linkages and partnerships. The University of Lagos, like several others in Nigeria, has an office of linkages and partnerships directly under the Vice-Chancellor. Whether the products end up with "globalised" or "canned"⁹ certificates, what is important is that the whole process comes under what educators call cross-border education. Jane Knight defines it as "the movement of education – whether it be people, programmes, providers or projects – across a jurisdictional or national boundaries"¹⁰

Paradoxically, while globalization aims at the effacement of boundaries, or at least to whittle down their barrier effects, the upsurge of identity politics and strident separatist movements in virtually every part of the world underscores the fact that man is constantly engaged in boundary creation and the ordering of space.

Although many have argued, and not without justification, that the historian is not a scientist or a prophet who could correctly predict the future, the benefit of hindsight

nevertheless places him in a vantage position to "inform the present and guide the future".¹¹ Within this acceptable margin, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I make bold to affirm that the issues of war and peace in the foreseeable future would be determined by the extent to which the world itself is able to appreciate the importance of lines and space in human affairs.

Indeed, the concept of territoriality, that is lines and space, has exerted a strong influence on man's activities since the beginning of time. For instance, man invoked this concept in making a claim to land, as illustrated in the case of the Kikuyu and Maasai of Kenya. While the Kikuyu whose main occupation is farming claimed that all the arable land in Kenya had been given to them by Gikuyu their ancestor, the Maasai similarly claimed divine ownership over all the grassland in the country. Whichever way one looks at it, the central issue is the control of some identifiable geographical space suitable for their traditional occupations.

At any rate, in the course of centuries of migration and settlement, man has carved the world into distinct political and administrative units – local, national and regional units. And as Richard Griggs rightly observed, the boundaries of these units are not mere lines in the dirt but fulcrum around which the activities of man revolved.¹² These boundaries indirectly determine our currencies, the laws we obey and even our national identities. Those who are not satisfied with the mode of their incorporation into the existing units are constantly fighting for the revision of the boundaries as we shall see later. It is not only the reasonable and rational that fight over space. The flotsam and jetsam of the society also have territorial space which they guide with all the powers at their disposal. Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, the demons that terrorize mortals are not

only arranged in hierarchical order but also operate on territorial basis; hence the popular reference to the "Prince of Persia" and the "Queen of the Coast".¹³

The concept of lines and space is basic to our engagement as academics in the university. We can illustrate this with examples from the different disciplines beginning with Philosophy the queen of all disciplines. Indeed, philosophers, since the time of Zeno and Aristotle, have ruminated over the nature of space. Others, including Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz and Samuel Clarke, have similarly postulated on the ontological status of space. As at the present, the philosophical debates have produced two schools of thought – the Absolute and the Relational Theories of Space.¹⁴

Another discipline that is close to man and society is Sociology. The Advanced Learners' Dictionary defines it as 'the scientific study of societies and the behavior of people in groups'. The study of how humans and spaces interact is now widely recognised as a sub-discipline in sociology. It is an interdisciplinary field that draws from various theoretical traditions including Marxism and Postmodernism and overlaps with academic disciplines such as Geography and Architecture.¹⁵

Scholars who have done substantial work in this area include Georg Simel, Michel Foucault David Harvey, Manuel Castells, Edward Soja, Martina Löw and Henri Lefebvre who argued that the social space is where the relations of production takes place and that the dialectical contradictions which Karl Marx talked about are spatial rather than temporal.¹⁶

The importance of lines and space in Architecture is glaring enough. This is largely because it is the size of an area that ultimately determines the structure that can be erected on it. This was the basic assumption of August Schmarsow who first made the subject a major issue in his Inaugural Lecture titled, *The Essence of Architectural Creation*. In this lecture and his other works, he emphasized the role of space and the significance of its expression in a particular period of history. While commenting on August Schmarsow's works, Roy Malcolm Porter says that such emphasis reminds us "to focus on the essential aspect – the creation of space – which affirmed our humanity".¹⁷

In recent times, the literature on the public and private space has increased significantly. A good example is the work of Alex Wall titled "Movement and Public Space: Equipping the City for a Mobile Centre" in which the author proposed 'a situation in which cars and people would mix in comfortable proximity'. To stress that the roadscape is not just the outcome of the work of civil engineers, he wrote:

What distinguishes these places from the civil engineer artifact of the roadway is that these spaces are social – the streetscapes or roadside strips where people and cars mingle in an informal way.¹⁸

In Political Science, the subject of lines and space is no less important. Recently, I stumbled on a call for papers on "The Spatial Epistemology of Politics". According to the Announcer, the edited volume will seek to explore "how spaces are political and how politics is spatial".¹⁹

In addition, Margaret Crawford argued that to keep the homeless, the vendors and some undesirables off some streets and public parks is to deny them "the rights to

have rights.” Such move, she added, raises “complex political questions about the meaning of economic participation and citizenship of our cities”.²⁰ The implication of this for research in Nigeria is that scholars would have to go beyond the current focus on ethnic marginalization to the study of “spaces of insurgent citizenship”, to use the term coined by anthropologist James Holston.²¹

The notion of lines and space is central to research in Surveying and Geography. Many of us have grown accustomed to seeing students of the Department of Surveying and Geo-informatics with the theodolite and measuring tapes all over the campus. Tim Umwin cited several empirical and theoretical works on social space produced by scholars with background in Historical and Cultural Geography. Among them are David Harvey and Ed. Soja.²²

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, I have so far concentrated on the Humanities because it is a familiar terrain. This does not mean that the concept of space is irrelevant to Science and Engineering. I am aware that space is important in Algebra in Mathematics and that Motion, Time and Space constitute an important topic in elementary physics. I can still recall that Boyles Law states that the pressure of a gas tends to decrease if the volume increases, that is, the absolute pressure and volume or space are inversely proportional. And since Engineering is essentially applied science, and space is important in Science, it can therefore be inferred that the concept of space is critical to the disciplines in Engineering.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, I have deliberately left out the discipline of History until now so as to link the discussion with my own research interest.

History is essentially the study of past events in time and space – whether the topic is in Economic History, Social History, International Relations, Administrative/Political History, Historiography or Biographical Studies. Natural inclination seems to have pushed me to aspects of History where the concept of territoriality is particularly well emphasized. My Ph.D thesis was on “States Creation and Boundary Adjustments as a solution to the Problems of Ethnic Minority Groups in Nigeria, 1900-1987”.²³ Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, that thesis earned me an automatic employment with the National Boundary Commission at the Convocation Ceremony of January 1991, in this same auditorium. Even though I was transported by the current Registrar to Dodan Barracks on two occasions at the instance of the Vice President, I never took up the appointment due to civil service bureaucracy. Since then, I have written on all the six states creation exercises in Nigeria and commented on the on-going state agitations.²⁴ Apart from merely putting states creation at the centre of the political process in Nigeria, I have also tried to assess the limits of the application of the territorial approach to minority problems in other parts of Africa.²⁵

From boundary studies, I have moved to the wider area of ethnic/inter-group relations. One of my articles, titled Ethnic Militancy and National Stability in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Oodua People’s Congress, published in *African Affairs*, at Oxford in 2001 has earned me recognition as a leading authority on ethnic militia all over the world. This singular article earned me an invitation to the International Workshop on “Networks of Uncertainties” held at the African Studies Centre, Leiden, Netherlands, 15-17 May, 2002. It also paved the way for my selection as a member of the Editorial Advisory Board

of *African Affairs*, the top ranked Africanist journal published at Oxford since 1901. Curiously too, sometimes last year, I received an e-mail message from a U.K solicitor inviting me to testify in a court in England in a case involving his client, a Nigerian seeking asylum in the U.K because of the fear of the OPC!

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, the University of Lagos is different from other universities in Nigeria largely because of its metropolitan location. Accordingly, the Department of History has adjusted its curriculum to include the study of Urban History. Apart from teaching 300 level students Introduction to African Urban History, I have conducted research in the areas of informal security and access to land in Lagos. The paper I presented on the Omo Onile Syndrome in Lagos at the AEGIS Thematic Conference on African cities at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, on 16 June 2006 attracted considerable attention on account of the high degree of insecurity that characterize the land tenure system in Lagos.²⁶ Shortly afterwards, I received an invitation to speak on the same subject at the University of Witwaterstrand in Johannesburg. This second paper, titled "Urban Experience in Lagos: White Cap Chiefs, Land Grabbers and Victims" was immediately placed on the reading list of a Postgraduate Class in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of Witwaterstrand.²⁷ As of the moment, I am in the International Research Network on The Politics of Xenophobic Exclusion in Africa. My focus is the agitation of indigenous Lagosians against their marginalization in a city that many people have come to regard as a no-man's land.²⁸ Mr. Vice-Chancellor, you can now see why I have titled this inaugural lecture, Lines and Space in Human Affairs: Minorities and Marginals.

In this lecture, our focus shall be restricted to the territorial dimension of ethnic relations, particularly the manipulation of geographical and political space to create the social categories called minorities and marginals. At the same time too, we shall explore the attempts of the two groups to eliminate their subordinate status through the same spatial process.

Evidence from different parts of the world suggests that the minorities and marginals are increasingly being propelled by the spirit that inspired the French Revolution songs that says:

We must cut down the giants,
And make the small folks taller
Everything at its true height
This is real happiness²⁹

Almost 200 years after this song gave impetus to the French Revolution of 1789, the Hutu of Rwanda implemented its content literally by amputating the legs of their Tutsi victims just to reduce their heights to normal size in the ethnic cleansing that attracted worldwide condemnation.³⁰ The question then is, is it necessary to cut down the giants to promote cordial inter-group relations or is there an alternative strategy that may not involve violent bloodshed? The fingers on our hands point to the fact that there could be a more natural way to solve this human problem. Although the fingers are not of equal height and size, no one has attempted to trim them to the same size to improve their efficiency or for some other reasons. Each of them is satisfied with its size and role. Yet, if one is mistakenly injured, the rest feel the pain. This is where the search for the solution to the problems of ethnic relations should start from. But before proceeding further, it is important to clarify the meanings

of the key concepts and to bring out the conflict potential of minority/dominant relationships.

Clarification of Concepts

Minority

Ordinarily, minority is a concept of numerical relations. It usually refers to a small group of people or things within a larger unit. It is in this primary sense that one can talk of minority report, religious minorities etc. In inter-group relations, size alone is not sufficient to label a group as a minority. Gearth and Mill have warned that a group that is smaller than another "may not always behave or be treated as a minority, depending on the absence or presence of other factors".³¹ Hence, the emphasis shifts from the consideration of number to attitudes in inter-group relations. Accordingly, a minority group has been defined in several ways. According to Louis Wirth, a sociologist, a minority group is:

A group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore regard themselves as object of collective discrimination.³²

In 1950, the United Nations defined minorities as:

Those non-dominant groups in a population which possess and wish to preserve ethnic, religious and linguistic traditions and characteristics markedly different from those of the rest of the population.³³

Ugbana Okpu, from his study of ethnic minority problems in Nigeria's First Republic, defined a minority group as:

An ethnic group which does not constitute a majority in a region, which does not have access to political power and to the resources and technology necessary for socio-economic development and modernization; and which considers itself

dominated, discriminated against, neglected or
oppressed by the major ethnic group in its region.³⁴

For Minority Rights Group International, minority groups are "disadvantaged ethnic, national, religious, linguistic or cultural groups who are smaller in number than the rest of the population and who may wish to maintain and develop their identity."³⁵

From the above, we can see that the elements of size, territory and power are important in the definition of an ethnic minority group. We can therefore define a minority group as a segment of a population which has limited access to platforms that can make them participate equitably in the political, social and religious lives of their societies. A small group which enjoys this privilege will, therefore, not be considered as a minority in the proper sense. This is why majority is often replaced with dominant as the converse of minority. For, as Morton B. King pointed out, a minority situation exists only where the majority inputs to itself or exhibits the air of inherent superiority and looks down on members of the minority as inferior beings.³⁶ Rodolfo Stevenhagen notes that the uneven and exploitative relationship between the dominant and minority groups may take the form of:

... unequal regional development or differential access to positions of privilege or power, or of different forms of segregation and discrimination in social, economic and political life.³⁷

A minority spokesman, who appeared before Nigeria's Minorities Commission in 1958, expressed the same point graphically when he remarked that the minorities have been condemned to eat the crumbs from the master's table.³⁸ The inferior status commonly imputed to ethnic minorities explains the crisis potential in minority/dominant relationship. Unfortunately for us in Nigeria, the majoritarian character of Nigerian politics

seems to have conferred an undue advantage on the majorities. This is precisely why majority has become equated with dominance in our political equation.

Marginals

The term marginal is derived from marginalization, a process of relegating a person or group to a lower or outer limit. As can easily be seen, minority groups are also marginalized in the sense of being denied the degree of power they require to compete favourably with others in the same state or administrative unit. At other times, they are denied the material development that others are entitled to. But in this lecture, we shall use the term 'marginal' specifically to refer to two distinct social categories. The first is the indigenous groups who, as Tedd Gurr observed, "live in peripheral regions, practice subsistence agriculture or herding, and have cultures sharply distinct from dominant groups."³⁹ Such groups are often concerned with the protection of their lands and cultural rights. Vital Bambanze hit the nail on the head when he wrote that:

One of the overriding threats facing minorities and indigenous peoples in every region of the world is the risk of being driven from their land and natural resources, which are vital for their livelihoods, their culture and often their identity as a people. Many communities have been closely tied to their territory for centuries. Yet once their land is targeted for development – mining, oil and gas, dams, agribusiness, tourism or conservation – they are deftly and often violently evicted with little or no compensation.⁴⁰

Globalisation and new extractive technologies seem to have worsened the situation in recent times.

Secondly, the term marginal is also used to describe those segments of the population in a culturally homogeneous state which nevertheless desire a state of their own or some form of autonomy that can give them accelerated material development. For instance, the Yoruba communities now agitating for the creation of new states in southwestern Nigeria will come under this category.

Minority Problem: A Global Phenomenon

Minority problem has existed at every stage of world history. It is not a product of our contemporary civilization. The age of the problem is attested to by this account from the book of Esther, written around 460 B.C. Chapter 3 verses 8 and 9 read:

And Haman said unto King Ahasuerus, there is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the kings profit to suffer them (i.e. permit them to continue to exist)⁴¹

The break up of the ancient empires in Europe, largely on account of the force of nationalism in the 19th century, seems to have accentuated the problem, especially since minority/ dominant relationship is contextual and has meaning only within a given geographical entity. As Raymond Pearson noted, the traditional imperial phenomenon of the 'dominant minority' yielded place to the new 'dominant majority' which became a common feature of the successor nation states.⁴² Not only did exploitative relationship exist between the minority and the dominant groups in each of the new states, every negative event in Europe seems to have affected the minorities badly.

Pearson has shown that the national minorities of Eastern Europe suffer more from the economic depression of the 1930s, since they were denied employment opportunity by their dominant neighbours. And, that during the world wars, minorities were used as canon fodder as a way of reducing the scale of minority problems in Europe.⁴³ His comments on the sign posts of European history in the century after 1848 is particularly instructive. He wrote:

... 1848 promised that all minorities might be winners under idealistic nationalism; 1919 warned that while stronger minorities could secure promotion to majority status and political independence, others would not; and 1945 demonstrated that not even national majorities were necessarily winners and minorities could only be losers. With politics becoming 'the art of creating majorities', the national minority became an inevitable victim of the development of modern east European society.⁴⁴

The seminal work of Tedd Gurr showed that by 1990, 223 groups with an estimated population of 915 million, representing 17.3% of the global total fell within the category of "minorities at risk."⁴⁵ The study showed that all the six regions of the world are affected as shown below:

- Western Democracies – Canada and USA
- Eastern Europe and Asia – Yugoslavia, USSR, Czechoslovakia, Taiwan, Burma and India.
- North Africa & Middle East – Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Morocco, Jordan and Pakistan.
- Africa South of the Sahara – Burundi, Zambia, Zaire, Uganda, Nigeria etc.
- Latin America & Caribbean – Bolivia, Peru, Guatemala & Ecuador

The 2012 report of the Minority Rights Group International still shows that most of the problems are prevalent in Africa.⁴⁶ The plight of the marginals are not in any way different from that of their minority counterparts. Again like the latter, they are found in all parts of the globe. They include the Ogiek of Kenya, the Buela in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Mapuche in Chile and the Maori in New Zealand. Two examples will be cited to illustrate the common experience of the marginals. The first is the case of the Tonga of Binga District in Zimbabwe. According to Ivor Marowa, the district has only ten secondary schools that are more than sixty kilometers apart. The entire district also suffers from lack of infrastructure including good roads. In 1957, the situation of the Tonga was complicated by their relocation from their homeland to pave way for the construction of a dam on River Zambezi. Ivor Marowa summarized the net effect of this as follows:

The dam which caused their displacement is producing electricity but has not benefitted Binga villages. Although it has massed great amount of water, the water does not irrigate their land, and they have continued to endure drought. The boating and fishing have not contributed meaningful developments to Binga, even though they bring in foreign currency. The Tonga have helplessly watched efforts to pump water to Bulawayo while Binga, closer to the dam has no water even to drink. The Tonga have watched their heritage being usurped by colonialists both white and black. The Tonga have become frustrated from the impoverished life they lead, and their survival is punctuated by hardships, which the government has failed to address.⁴⁷

The high illiteracy rate, poor infrastructural facility, lack of job opportunity and being looked down upon – naturally make the Tonga feel isolated and alienated.

The second example relates to the Mans of Burma, now Myamar. This group, numbering only about 100,000 had been integrated into Burma since the eighteenth century. The shrinking economic opportunities in the country and the centralizing policies of the government made them to become dissatisfied with the government. They complained that although their ancestors had built the temples and Pagodas of Burma's golden age, they had been rewarded with an inferior status.⁴⁸

Approaches to Minority Problems

Several methods can be adopted to deal with or ameliorate minority situations. These include assimilation, genocide, ethnocide, constitutional safeguards and the creation of separate regions or states.

Assimilation refers to the process of absorbing one group into another, just as the French tried to do in the Francophone colonies. This policy allows the minorities to adopt the language and values of the dominant group at their own pace. The policy could be adopted where the minority situation has resulted from immigration and where the minorities accept the authority of the dominant group as legitimate. This policy is embedded in the concept of the melting pot adopted in the United States. But while some minorities have successfully faded into the dominant white Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture, others have remained indissoluble. Today, there are more hyphenated – Americans than in the 1960s. Hence, the complaint that the melting pot has since been replaced with the salad bowl.

Genocide and ethnocide are closely related. Genocide is the physical extermination of one group to create space for the other. The ethnic cleansing in Rwanda and

Kosovo are good examples. On the other hand, ethnocide may be defined as the destruction of the cultural identity of ethnic minority groups. The Russification of the non-Russian ethnic groups in Tsarist Russia and the experience of Brittany and Corsica in France in the late 1980s are illustrations.⁴⁹ Simpson and Yinger observed that genocide and ethnocide are founded on the principle that when fate has cast two people upon the same territory, one must inevitably be the hammer and the other the anvil.⁵⁰

Another strategy is the use of constitutional safeguards to protect the interests of the minorities. The Indian and Chinese Constitutions acknowledge the cultural and educational rights of minorities. Lebanon has experimented with proportional representation while a specific number of seats is reserved for the scheduled castes and tribes in India. Joseph Stalin, the architect of the Soviet National Policy, expressed a strong faith in the efficacy of the approach when he argued that:

A minority is discontented not because there is no national union, but because he does not enjoy liberty of conscience, liberty of movement, and so on. Give him these liberties and he will cease to be discontented.⁵¹

Attractive as the approach may appear, the minorities, including those in Nigeria, have always preferred other arrangements for many reasons. The first is that the protective clauses are difficult to interpret and enforce. Second, the dominant groups who control the apparatus of government can always set the safeguards aside using the excuse of national security and development as camouflage. Third, there is the disagreement on whether the equality guaranteed under protective clauses should embrace affirmative action in favour of minorities as

illustrated in the case brought by Greek Albanians to the World Court in 1935. The Greek Albanians wanted their private schools to remain open when the Albanian government said all schools in the country should be closed. The dispute centered on the interpretation of equality – equality in law or equality in fact? The court granted the prayer of the Greek Albanians.⁵²

Ethnic pluralism or multi-culturalism is increasingly receiving the endorsement of the international community as a solution to ethnic minority problems the same way democracy is now accepted as the ideal form of government. This is based on the realization that ethnic and political boundaries rarely coincide. Indeed, a minority situation can only arise when two or more groups are brought under the same political or administrative umbrella. The degree of minority consciousness will however depend largely on the nature of the treatment received from the dominant group and the forces generated in reaction to this. Brazil is one country that has officially adopted this policy. To a large extent too, this approach is enshrined in our own slogan of 'Unity in Diversity'. Our own national experience has shown that peace is more than the absence of war. This approach has not in any way allayed the fears of ethnic domination in the country.

Lastly, we come to the territorial solution which is most preferred by ethnic minorities. The territorial approach to resolving the ethnic minority problem could assume the form of revision of boundary, creation of autonomous regions or the granting of outright independence to minorities. The ethnic minorities in Nigeria have always preferred the creation of states along ethnic lines in the belief that this will shield them from their dominant neighbours. The assumption has always been that there

is no better way to allay the fears of the lamb that finds itself in a zoo with the lion than the iron cage.⁵³ The fact that is often overlooked is that minority is a contextual term and the alteration of the administrative boundary is capable of reproducing the 'we' versus 'they' category with the associated fears and grievances. Hence, the unending agitation for more states in Nigeria.

On the whole, a combination of measures is necessary to reduce minority problem to a manageable level. The ideal solution is recommended in the Report of the Minority Rights Group International quoted below:

The only system that would appear to work in the long-term is one that does not create boxes which minority representatives have to fit themselves into, and which enshrines minority rights in the Constitution; operates affirmative action, but not rigid quotas, where necessary to overcome entrenched historic discrimination; promotes understanding and knowledge of all communities in society through the education system and media; and guarantees a voice to all parts of society, including minority women.⁵⁴

Ethnic minorities can go to any length to press for the creation of their dream states. Two examples will be cited as illustration. One from Sri-Lanka and the other from China. The root of the problem between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil minority in Sri Lanka can be traced to 1958 when the Tamils demanded recognition of their language. The aggressive self-determination and government repression resulted in the assassination of the Prime Minister, W.R.D. Bandaranaike. Consequently, the Tamil Federal Party was banned and the leader of the movement incarcerated or executed. In the course of the struggle, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was born to fight for the creation of an independent

country called Eelam in the Northern part of Sri Lanka, with Capital at Kilinochchi. From guerrilla warfare, the crisis degenerated into a civil war in July 1983. By the time Velupillai Prabhakaran, the LTTE warlord, was killed on 19 May 2009, U. N. report indicated that more than 70,000 people had been killed in the 26 years war in Sri Lanka.⁵⁵

The case of the Uyghurs (Uighurs) in China is particularly instructive. The People's Republic of China (PRC) officially recognizes 55 ethnic minority groups collectively referred to as Shaoshu Minzu. The dominant group is the Han. In China, ethnic minorities live in autonomous regions and have freedom to use and develop their languages and preserve their cultures and traditions. In addition, since 2001 the Ethnic Development Plan (EDP) was instituted to accelerate the development or modernization of the autonomous regions particularly through the construction of roads and the establishment of industries. The belief is that this special treatment will facilitate their integration into the larger Chinese culture. The gains of this policy have however been eroded by persistent Han chauvinism that has become a source of irritation. Reports indicate that the groups that are less willing to assimilate, such as the Tibetians, the Uyghurs and Mongols are ridiculed as violent and backward. Besides, it is argued that the execution of the development project has increasingly paved the way for the influx of the Hans into the indigenous homelands, ostensibly in search of employment. Worse still, the strict control of religion – radical Islam and Christian Pentecostalism – since 2005 has heightened the tension between the Uyghur Muslim population in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and the government in Beijing. In 2008 alone, more than 1,300 people were arrested and detained in the region. The crackdown

resulted in the riot of July 2009 in which 197 people died and hundreds of others were injured. Although the repressive measure has stopped the open rebellion, the Uyghurs have continued their agitation for the creation of an independent state called East Turkestan by other means. First, I wish to recall that on 7 March 2008, a 19-year old girl had attempted to hijack a commercial aircraft on a flight from Urumqi, the capital of China's Muslim Xinjian region, to Beijing. The plane had to be diverted to Lanzhou in Western Ganzu Province after she was found with suspicious liquid.⁵⁵ And, since 2009, the Uyghurs have unleashed "silent terror" on the Han population. For instance in September 2009, there was the widespread report that the Uyghurs were secretly stabbing the Hans with hypodermic needle in the crowd. The needle assault precipitated demonstration that led to the arrest of several suspects in Hotan, Altay and Kashgar in the South, North and West of the country. Reports indicated that although more than one hundred people showed evidence of being pricked, no death or strange sickness was recorded.⁵⁷ The cat and rat war has continued and it is not clear how it will be resolved.

CONTEXTUALIZING MINORITY PROBLEMS IN NIGERIA

Origins and Dimension before 1954

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country and the fear of ethnic domination is one of the major obstacles to nation building. Although the huge size of the country has endowed her with abundant human and material resources that can be harnessed for growth and development, Nigeria's multiple ethnicities have provoked the fear of sectional domination that has repeatedly threatened the stability of the country.⁵⁸ This explains why the country has remained a nation space instead of a nation state. A nation space is essentially a country

stripped of nationhood. In essence, this is a new way of saying that Nigeria has remained a mere geographical expression.

As Professor Wole Soyinka, the Nobel Laureate argued, Nigeria is a nation space because it lacks the "coherent philosophy of reproducing our existence, of harmonizing co-existence, or integrating the constituent parts into a discernible, functional whole – all of which transforms a mere nation space into a true nation state."⁵⁹

The division of the country into administrative districts, provinces and states, at different stages of Nigerian history, created minority problems for which the different groups demanded territorial solution. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, sir, it is the study of this phenomenon in historical perspective, particularly before 1954, that is my main contribution to boundary studies in Nigeria. Before I submitted my Ph.D Thesis in 1990, the popular view was that the genesis of minority problems in Nigeria can be traced to the adoption of the federal system of government in 1954 and the subsequent regionalization of sources of wealth and power. This view, articulated by James Coleman, was amplified by succeeding generations of historians and political scientists.⁶⁰ The error stemmed from the optical illusion of confusing the genesis of the problem with the period it ascended into the centre stage of the political process. Admittedly, the pair of words, 'minority' and 'states creation' gained currency in Nigeria in the 1950s. I equally share the belief that the latter was intended as a solution to the problem created by the former. The point that was not appreciated is that minority separatism did not become a central issue in national politics before 1950 because it manifested itself on a limited scale and in particular instances. The root of the crisis can be traced to the creation of the country and the Indirect Rule System imposed on the

country by the British during the colonial period. While the Indirect Rule system granted local autonomy to homogenous communities that were constituted into separate districts under their own rulers, it jeopardized the interests of others that were merged with other ethnic or linguistic groups. These other groups actively canvassed for the redrawing of the boundaries.

The list includes the agitation of Remo for a separate division from 1922 to 1938. The goal was realized on 1st April, 1938, when Remo was separated from Ijebu Ode Native Authority on the recommendation of the Martindale Commission of Inquiry. There was also the demand of the Western Igbo for the creation of Western Igbo Province, initiated in the Legislative Council in 1941. The relationship between this separatist movement and the Mid-West and Anioma State Movements of subsequent years, suggests that some of the contemporary issues in minority/dominant relations may have been in existence earlier than presumed. There was also the agitation of the Bende Ofufa for a transfer from Bende District of Owerri Province to join their Ibibio kinsmen in the Ikot Ekpene District of Calabar Province between 1910 and 1923.

The separatist agitation of the Ika-na-Annang, also an Ibibio community in the predominantly Igbo populated Aba Division of Owerri Province, illustrates the influence of material attraction on the development of minority situation. The main reason given by the Senior District Officer (S.D.O.) Aba for authorizing the transfer of eleven of the villages to Calabar Province in 1953 was that "their departure will solve one of the problems of minority groups in the division."⁶¹

The agitation of the Ekiti of Ilorin Province for a transfer to Southern Nigeria spanned from 1901 to 1938. Two of the

villages, namely, Ilofa and Odo-Owa, in the protest petition of 1911, described their association with Ilorin as the "alignment of a fox with sheep"⁶² The attempt of the British to subjugate the Tiv under the paramount ruler of their Jukun neighbours resulted in the creation of the office of the Tor Tiv in the 1930s.

The objective of the Bata separatist movement in the Adamawa Province was to replace the Hausa Fulani oligarchy with the rule of the "son of the soil". The issue was at the centre of the relationship between the Jirai Bata and the colonial government from 1950 to 1955. Ethnic self-determination was similarly at the root of the crisis that rocked Zangon Kataf district of Zaria Province from 1914 to 1946. The campaign was spearheaded by Usman Sokop Kaje, who the colonial administrators described as "an agitator of the worst kind". By 1946, the Kataf were up in arms against the Hausa in Zangon Kataf. The spread of the revolt to all the southern districts formed the basis for the demand for a separate division in 1952.⁶³

The geographical spread of the cases cited above suggests that minority agitations were not confined to a section of the country in the period under review. Particularly interesting is the variety of strategies employed by the groups under discussion to pursue their separatist goals. The commonest method was protest petition, sometimes accompanied by deputation. A few of the communities also engaged lawyers to argue their cases. This was helpful in the case of the Remo in 1935 but failed to achieve the goal for the Kataf in 1942.⁶⁴

The boycott of tax, services and institutions was sometimes adopted by the communities to show their dissatisfaction with their state under the existing

arrangement. For instance, the Bata and Ekiti of Northern Nigeria were extremely reluctant to pay their tax in their provincial headquarters, since such payment was customarily interpreted as an outward sign of subjugation instead of a civic obligation. The village of Uto Uso in Eastern Nigeria even refused to participate in the election of 1950 and refused to accept sacrament from the priests from Umuahia until they were transferred to Calabar Province.⁶⁵ More dramatic is the case of protest migration. When the adjustment to the protectorate boundary failed to place all the Ekiti in Southern Nigeria, the Ore of Otun, and his supporters embarked on a protest migration to Ado Ekiti where they remained from March to May 1914.⁶⁶ A similar protest migration, led by one Ogunbiyi a Prince of Obbo, resulted in the establishment of New Obbo which incidentally was found to be half mile into the territory of Northern Nigeria when the provincial boundary was demarcated in 1928.⁶⁷

On the whole, the numerous instances of agitation encouraged the colonial administration to embark on a policy of re-aligning administrative boundaries with ethnic frontiers, especially after 1929. The Aba Women's riot of 1929 apparently encouraged the colonial administration to pay more attention to the ethnic configuration of the districts and the way they were administered. This approach kept minority agitations at a manageable level before 1954. The gradual transfer of political power to Nigerians in the last decade of colonial rule created a new situation. The enfranchisement of the masses encouraged political aspirants to define themselves as ethnic champions in the competition for offices.

This, in turn, encouraged the expansion and fusion of communal groups resulting in the emergence of modern identities that were not known to the people of the past.

The idea of a Yoruba race and an Igbo nation emerged in this way.⁶⁸ The effect of this on the body politic was aggravated by the structural imbalance of the Nigerian federation. Not only was the North larger than the East and West put together, each of the regions also had a majority group that controlled the machinery of government. The ethnic politics of the period convinced the smaller ethnic groups that independence would confer the status of slaves on them, except the map of the country was redrawn. In the Memorandum submitted to the Minorities' Commission in 1958, the traditional rulers of Calabar wrote:

We informed the Governor-General of the Federation that we would even like to be carved out a territory directly under the Colonial Office rather than to enjoy Nigerian freedom in the East (Eastern Region) which is a license to do abominably.⁶⁹

This was the basis of the states agitations that led to the setting up of the Willink Commission in 1957 to examine the fears of the minorities and propose the means of allaying them.

The minorities complained of marginalization in elite recruitment, disrespect of their custom and tradition by their dominant neighbours and of discriminatory neglect in the distribution of government amenities such as roads, schools, water projects and scholarships.⁷⁰ As could be expected, the in-built majority of the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani conferred an advantage on them because of the bloc voting. This linkage has made Nigerians to associate number with power and dominance with the majority groups. On the whole, the number of state requests rose to fifteen. The important ones include the request for a Middle Belt State from the North, the Mid-West from the West, Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State (C-O-R)

from the East, in addition to the request for constituting each of the provinces in the C-O-R area into a state.

The minorities opted for state creation in the belief that the creation of such new states will transform them into new majorities or shield them from the direct influence of their dominant neighbours. However, the Willink Commission turned down all the state requests either because it judged that the case of domination had not been proved or that the creation of the states proposed will initiate fresh problems. Philip Mason expressed this point lucidly:

Neither Ogoja nor Rivers showed themselves very anxious to be subject to Calabar; enthusiasm for a state that would have revived the old Benin empire dwindled as one moved away from Benin; the areas that displayed any interest in the Middle Belt State were few and scattered and their total inhabitants fewer than those who were either indifferent or, as one of them put it, preferred Fulani rule to Tiv.⁷¹

The stand of the Commission on the creation of the Mid-West, even when restricted to Edo culture area, showed a strong disapproval of the ethnic criterion of state creation in the belief that "it would underline tribal divisions which a wiser statesmanship would seek gradually to obliterate".⁷² Nevertheless, the Commission recommended that the Calabar and Edo areas should be recognized as "Minority Areas" to preserve their distinctive cultures within the regional setting. The difficult terrain of the Niger Delta also encouraged the recommendation that the Ijaw homeland should be classified as a "Special Area" for the purpose of development. A Niger Delta Board was also to be created to facilitate the coordination of the development efforts.

Apart from recommending the insertion of the bill of rights to protect individual liberties in the constitution, the Commission believed that the democratic system would help to reduce the scope of the problem particularly when the major ethnic groups would have to court the regional minorities for their votes in the hegemonic contest to control the centre.⁷³ Paradoxically, the system of political repression continued as the dominant group which was in control and regional governments sought the support of the minorities in the other regions for the desired votes.

For instance, the Action Group (AG) of the West became the major ally of the Middle Belt State Movement just as the Mid-West State Movement enjoyed the backing of the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). The minority group politics of the First Republic accentuated the problem. Even when the Mid-West was created in 1963, it was to spite the AG and weaken its support for the minorities. The inability of the political class to find an acceptable solution to the crisis contributed to the collapse of the First Republic.

The regional structure was terminated in 1967 not just to weaken the support for the Biafran secession but also because of "the minority origin of Gowon and the minority alliance which dominated the army and the bureaucracy at the period."⁷⁴ Consequently, the twelve-state structure that emerged was a minority federation. For instance, the minorities of Eastern Nigeria were constituted into South Eastern and Rivers States while those of the Middle Belt were grouped into Kwara and Benue-Plateau States. Each of the three large ethnic groups was balkanized to reduce their preponderant status. The North/South political equation was maintained by creating equal number of states from both regions.

That state creation exercise ended the practice of looking at Nigeria from only the focal points of North, East and West. Many thought that the exercise will put the last nail in the coffin of minority problems in Nigeria. But while the creation of states helped to defuse tension, it also played up the differences between the groups that were constituted into new states. For instance, the Efik, Annang and Ibibio had joined the Ijaw to canvass for the creation of a Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State. But no sooner was the Southern Eastern State created than the Efik and the Ibibio began to tear at each other. Even the Ibibio College, built in Ikot Ekpene in 1946 has since been renamed State College in response to the protest of the Annang that it is ridiculous for an Ibibio College to be sited on Annang soil.⁷⁵ This later resulted in the creation of Akwa Ibom State in 1987. The people of Benue also saw the need to ask for the termination of their association with Plateau because of the fear of the unknown. The effect of this segmentary opposition led the Irikefe Panel to say, in 1975, that "more minorities seemed to have emerged with the creation of the twelve states."⁷⁶

At any rate, by the time Gowon was overthrown in 1975, states creation had become too important for government to ignore. The subject received the immediate attention of his successor. General Murtala Mohammed set up the Irikefe Panel which expanded the criteria of states creation to include the goals of bringing government closer to the people and promoting accelerated and even development.⁷⁷ Altogether, 28 major state proposals were presented to the Irikefe Panel for consideration. Of these, 14 were motivated primarily by the fear of domination. These were the requests for the creation of Enugu/Wawa, Cross-River, Niger, Ondo, Delta, Abakaliki, Port Harcourt, Katsina, Nasarawa, Plateau, Warri, Zaria, Oyo and Lagos

States. Five others, namely Ijebu, East Central, Benue, Katsina and Sokoto States emerged basically in reaction to or irritation of the minority agitations directed at their advocates. The consideration of minority fears of domination proved weighty in the recommendation and decision on the case of Imo, Borno and Adamawa/Sardana States.⁷⁸

Era of the Marginals

By 1976, nearly every sizeable ethnic group in the country had been constituted into a separate state. The addition of Katsina and Akwa Ibom States in 1987 made it difficult to justify demands for more states primarily in terms of allaying the fears of ethnic minorities. As I argued elsewhere, Nigeria gradually moved from the Era of the Minorities into the Era of the Marginals. The latter is defined as a collection of communities which is not necessarily different from the others in a state in matters of language and culture but which nevertheless desire a state of their own to ensure rapid or accelerated material development.⁷⁹

Accordingly, "marginalization" displaced "domination" as the key concept in state agitations in Nigeria. For instance, the Ekitis constituted 52.8% of the population of Ondo State and controlled twelve of the twenty two local government councils in the state. Their request for the creation of a separate Ekiti State was based on the claim that the area of the proposed state was marginalized, particularly in the location of industries.⁸⁰ The request for the creation of Osun out of Oyo State, like the requests from Igboland, involved the partition of monoculture areas. In response to the requests, the Babangida Administration added nine new states on 27 August 1991, thus bringing the total to thirty. The new states were Kebbi, Jigawa, Yobe, Taraba, Kogi, Abia, Anambra, Delta

and Osun. The importance attached to the criterion of accelerated development in the state creation exercise was evident in the choice of small settlements as capitals of some of the new states. The official explanation was that their new status would attract development to these hitherto neglected areas.⁸¹

The current thirty-six state structure emerged from the restructuring programme of General Sanni Abacha in 1996. He divided the country into six geo-political zones and created one state in each of the zones (out of the 55 requests).

The unending agitation for creation of new states was encouraged by the adoption of the distributive pool revenue allocation formula in 1979. This transformed state creation to an instrument for appropriating substantial part of the national cake. The interplay of forces explains the restiveness of the Niger Delta communities over the issue of resource allocation, the increasing wave of communal clashes and the logic that has made each of the three largest ethnic groups to define themselves as minorities under the current democratic dispensation.⁸²

As at the moment, the Igbos believe that they are yet to be fully integrated into the mainstream of the political process in Nigeria. For some of them, the actualization of the Biafra dream remains a reality. The Yoruba have repeatedly cried foul over their marginalization. The Chairman of the Afenifere Renewal Group (ARG), Wale Oshun, had this to say recently:

The Yoruba nation is clearly disadvantaged under the present administration, especially in terms of appointment into the civil service, which ordinarily is governed by a subsisting rule, set up by the Federal

Character Commission. The latest example of instances of discrimination against the Yoruba nation is the recent recruitment into the Customs Services. Of the 792 cadet officers recruited, the six states in the Southwest got 45 cadet officers, representing 5.8 per cent. The North West alone has 263, representing 33.1 percent. In the same exercise, the North East got 157, North Central 168, South East 68 and South South 91. There is a report of ethnic cleansing going on in the Aviation Ministry; this is now reaching an alarming proportion. Recently we got reports that most of the people sacked in the Ministry of Aviation are of Yoruba extraction. Findings have also indicated that out of the 75 appointments recently made, 59 are from the South East zone".⁸³

Extent of Fulfillment of Minority Aspirations in Nigeria

As earlier indicated, states creation was traditionally conceived as a means of allaying the fears of ethnic minorities in Nigeria. However, the outcome of the six states creation exercises in Nigeria has confirmed the prediction of the Willink Commission that irrespective of the number of the states that may be created, "minorities would inevitably remain."⁸⁴ As at present, there are as many as forty seven states requests before the National Assembly for consideration.⁸⁵ Hence, contrary to the claim once made by some prominent Nigerians, state creation has not ended nor can it eliminate, the fears of ethnic domination in Nigeria.⁸⁶

On the other hand, opinion varies on the extent to which the aspirations of the minorities have been fulfilled in Nigeria. There are those who believe that the minorities are "the hostage of the Nigerian federation."⁸⁷ Some of them have even formed Minority Rights Groups – such as Akwa Ibom Forum, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni

People (MOSOP), Ijaw Ethnic National Conference – to press for their rights. Analysis has also shown that some of them prefer confederacy to federation as the form of government that can protect their interests.⁸⁸ Some of them, particularly MOSOP and the Southern Minorities Forum, associate self determination with control over land and mineral resources. For example, the Ethnic Minorities Rights Organisation of Nigeria (EMIRON) once canvassed a revenue sharing formula that gave 60% to derivation and 40% to other factors.⁸⁹ The late Ken Saro Wiwa argued:

We must seek a formula which allows all ethnic groups in Nigeria to achieve self-determination and self-respect, to develop at their own pace and according to their traditions and religions, and using their resources – human and natural, while at the same time permitting them to hold hands with the other groups which form the nation.⁹⁰

The minorities were also in favour of zoning and rotational presidency among the geo-political units as a formula that could guarantee power sharing in Nigeria. The Ika Group wrote:

Such an arrangement based on equity and fairness, would give all the areas of the country a sense of belonging and a sense of fulfillment, thus enhancing the peace and stability of the nation. This zoning formula should be applicable to all strategic and vital federal portfolios, such as Defence, Finance, Internal Affairs, Secretary to Government; Service Chiefs and Inspector General of Police. Zoning should also be adopted within the State and Local Government administrations to achieve geographical equilibrium.⁹¹

In essence, there are those who believe that the minority problem has persisted because government has continued to treat Nigeria as the sum total of its three largest ethnic groups. On the other hand, there are those

who believe that the 'traditional minorities' are behaving like Oliver Twist. This claim can also be substantiated. In the pre-1954 era, the minorities were not mere victims of history since their agitations compelled the colonial administration to amend its policies, especially through boundary adjustments to accommodate their interests. On the eve of independence, the Willink Commission had discovered that the Mid-West, with two provinces, had greater share of government schools and water projects than the "Yoruba West made up of five provinces"⁹² In the North, the Middle Belters dominated the top cadre of the civil service and interpreted this as the reward for their cultural enslavement in that region.⁹³ Even at the height of the Ogoni Crisis, the statistics released by OMPADEC showed that the share of Ogoniland in the special fund reserved for the oil producing communities far exceeded its production quota.⁹⁴ The thesis of the "tyranny of the minority" which the Irikefe Parel had noted in 1975 was amplified by M. Dukor who remarked:

If the majoritarian political theory of democracy, is sometimes threatened by the tyranny of the majority, a new development, however bizarre and challenging, is the minority tyranny which has not only threatened democracy and pluralism but also the state and current thought in political philosophy.⁹⁵

He noted that the minorities, who paradoxically are in the majority, are blessed with oil which has placed them in a position to dictate to the State what should be accruing to them as the "landlord of the national wealth." To the best of his judgement, the rights which the oil communities claim over the natural resources is the primitive natural right applicable to the Hobbesian state, and runs contrary to the idea of sovereignty and the constitution which puts all natural resources in the custody of the State. He concluded, "the anarchic society which the minority

problem is drifting the Nigerian Society to either has root in the poor conception of state or in the lack of civility of the minorities.⁹⁶

Matthew Kukah has argued that the minorities had found a way of neutralizing the numerical advantage of the majorities in democracy through coup d'état, particularly from 1966:

With the entrance of the Presidential Villas firmly shut to the minorities, it became evident that the best way to attain power was subverting the democratic process since it offered them no prospect. After all, it is, they argue their blood that has held Nigeria together in her war and crisis. Why should they do the dying only for the big three to merely produce the distributors and do the living? The military, therefore, has become an aphrodisiac for the minorities.⁹⁷

It must however be recognized that the military had been in power for the greater part of the post independence period. If the military had been in the saddle for that long why then is the minority question not yet resolved? Kukah again provides the answer:

A fatal flaw in the operational methods of these minorities in power is that they suffer inferiority complex and they sooner than later betray the popular mandate of their people. Their inferiority complex compels them to seek legitimacy by seeking integration into the ruling classes to whom they feel they owe acceptance. With the new wealth, they gradually buy their way into the league by patronizing the traditional and intellectual elite, by giving out bloated contracts in exchange for dubious titles, symbols of their recognition ... but paradise remains lost for the majority of Nigerians, especially the minorities because when the merry go round ends, they find themselves back at the starting blocks again.⁹⁸

The communiqué of the Ijaw National Congress touched on this same subject:

The conference noted that the Ijaw nation is replete with Ijaw sons and daughters who having got into top government positions on Ijaw quota turn around to distance themselves from the Ijaw people and their aspirations. The conference contended that the trend must be reversed and that henceforth all such proven cases will be heavily sanctioned.⁹⁹

It was not only under the military regimes that the minorities had access to top positions of government. Since Alhaji Shehu Shagari became president in 1979 with the support of the minorities, he had no choice than to reward them. The minorities produced the Senate President (Joseph Wayas), the Deputy Speaker (Wash Pam) and eight ministers.¹⁰⁰ The trend continued under the Obasanjo regime which adopted a policy of appeasement towards the minorities. The Service Chiefs and the Secretary to the Federal Government were all minority candidates. The reading of the situation led Jubril Aminu to say that the "Minorities" have moved far from their position of forty years ago but have continued to shout the slogan of domination because the tactic has so far paid off and that the so-called majorities have been successfully led into pleading "guilty" without a fair trial.¹⁰¹

First, it is clear from the two positions that the Minority Question is yet to be satisfactorily resolved. Everywhere in the world, the minorities usually want to claim parity or equality with the dominant or majority group irrespective of size or population. The wholesale adoption of this principle in the allocation of resources will evidently infringe on the rights of the majorities. A spokesman of the Ibibio/Annang group rejected the proposal that power and government amenities in the former South Eastern

State should be shared on provincial basis for this same reason. He argued:

We wish to submit that there is no such thing as equality of ethnic groups because ... Calabar Division or Province with 267,014 people will never, repeat, never be equal to Annang Province with 646,851 people...¹⁰²

The same reluctance to accept equal deal for all ethnic groups, irrespective of size and population, was echoed in 1976 by a member of the Constitution Drafting Committee of Hausa/Fulani extraction in expressing objection to the adoption of ethnic or linguistic criterion of state creation:

I would not say equal ... because I would not want my group of 10 million to be given equal treatment with any other group of one thousand. In fact, they are not equal ... I am sure members of the major ethnic groups, medium ethnic groups, and minor ethnic groups have all agreed to the fact that we should live together happily, peacefully, in unity, faith and progress. In that spirit, while safeguarding the interests of the minority, this does not detract from the right of the majority.¹⁰³

Secondly, constitutional safeguard has very little chance of succeeding in Nigeria unlike India and other places. To start with, the option was widely rejected when the Willink Commission touted it as a viable option. Even if special provisions were to be inserted into the Nigerian Constitution for ethnic minorities, virtually every Nigerian group will claim to be a minority in one sense or the other. The struggle of the states in the south-east to be included in the political definition of the Niger Delta is a case in point. Besides, the elastic nature of the concept is bound to raise some problem as Alhaji Tatari Ali noted in his contribution to the debates in the Constituent Assembly in 1977:

Mr. Chairman, lastly I come to the question of minority. For the last 18 years I have been hearing of minority. Why should people think of minority? Is it because of size or population? At district level also they talk of minority and at village level also they talk of minority and where do we stop... even in the so-called minority area you will find that within themselves there are minorities.¹⁰⁴

The pervasiveness of the problem made him to argue that no special provision should be made for the minorities.

The Way Forward: An Unfinished Business

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, the question we should ask ourselves at this stage is, why has the Minority Question remained unresolved? In Peace and Conflict Studies, we know that some conflicts can be resolved while others can only be managed. Have we then been trying to resolve a crisis that can only be managed? Our experience with the states creation exercises suggest that minority problems can never be eliminated but can be managed to a level that it would not pose a serious threat to the political stability of the country. This is because the multi-ethnic composition of the Nigerian Federation has created a necessary condition for the development of minority consciousness. The degree of manifestation at any time, as we have earlier noted, depends on the dynamics of intergroup relations. I wish to recall the argument of the Ibo State Union, while admonishing the Willink Commission to exercise restraint on creation of states in Nigeria. The observation of the Union has an eternal ring of truth about it:

... for as long as humanity are sorted into races, tribes, clans etc... there must always be majority and minority elements since mathematical equation cannot be applied to such human affairs.¹⁰⁵

Below are some of the suggestions to reduce the problem to a manageable level.

Moratorium on States Creation

There are those who still believe that states creation is the only way to solve minority problems in Nigeria. They are quick to argue that this will promote even and accelerated development, thereby eliminating the material basis of minority agitations. This was the position taken by the National Association of State Movements in a paid advertisement on 8 March 2010.¹⁰⁶ The reality on the ground no longer supports this conclusion. To start with, more states have been created in the North than in the South. Yet, the North has continued to lag far behind the South in terms of development. Not only that, Nigeria has a population of about 150 million people and an area of 923,768 sq kilometers. Yet, it has more states than China and India with 34 and 28 states respectively. Even Cameroun and Kenya have not progressed beyond ten states or regions. The United States, with its huge size and population has only 50 states.

Admittedly, the number of states in a federation is always a reflection of the balance of political and social forces operating in a country at any point in time.¹⁰⁷ Evidence suggests that the creation of new states would be a cog in the wheel of progress of the country. The creation of states has diverted attention from real growth and development to the duplication of offices and political appointments which many people mistakenly equate with development. It is common knowledge that more than eighty percent of the existing states are not economically viable. Hence, their dependence on the federal government has distorted the practice of true federalism. Additional states would mean the appointment of more state governors, more senators, more advisers without

portfolios and more first ladies with the profligacy that goes with such offices. If the main purpose of the creation of states is to create more development centers, Nigeria's interest can be better served by adopting the existing 774 local governments as units of operation. Besides the problem of sharing of assets, which will aggravate the indigene/settler crisis, Nigeria should also brace up for intractable boundary disputes. The level of complication is illustrated in the comment of E.C.M. Akamobi on the nature of the state agitations from the South-East zone. He noted that:

The scenario being peddled for a new state is a situation where some local governments would be carved out from three or four adjoining states to create a new state without minding their affinity and cultural background.¹⁰⁸

Elsewhere, I have shown that inter-state boundary disputes have adverse effects on the unity and integration of the country.¹⁰⁹ Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, I sincerely believe that majority of those actively campaigning for the creation of new states are merely looking for power and position that had eluded them under the existing arrangements. The only way to curb this is to impose a ban of at least 20 years on the state creation business in Nigeria. This moratorium will compel Nigerians to learn to live harmoniously together.¹¹⁰ The hollowness of the argument of those still canvassing the state creation approach to minority problem is further demonstrated in the case of the Ekitis of Northern Nigeria.

In the early part of this lecture, we have seen how the Ekiti group agitated for a transfer from the Northern Region to Southern Nigeria from 1901 to 1936. Some were transferred, others were not. Yet, when the opportunity came for the rest of the group to join their

kinsmen in Ekiti State that was created in 1996, they chose to remain in Kwara state where they believe they have a comparative advantage.¹¹¹ Whether the "Ekiti Kete" of Ekiti State refers to these other Ekiti as Igbomina Ekiti or 'Ekiti Taiwan', the point has been made that they would remain where their bread is buttered, the factor of cultural affinity notwithstanding.

Federal Character

It has already been noted that various communities rejected the option of constitutional safeguards in 1959. The closest to this in the Nigerian Constitution is the principle of Federal Character introduced in 1979. The original intention of the government for introducing it was to ensure that the affairs of the government and its agencies at any level is not dominated by a few people from a particular group or a section of the country. When the implementation of the principle began to generate concern during the Babangida Administration, the Political Bureau recommended that the Federal Character Principle should not be implemented in a way to "convert historical accident into a permanent advantage." To prevent this, it recommended that the implementation should be strictly monitored and the policy abandoned as soon as the gap narrows to a point when such a decision could be taken.¹¹² Although the Federal Character Commission, created by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999, has the power to monitor and enforce compliance, even to the point of prosecuting offenders, the Commission, appears to be the least visible of all the federal government agencies. One watches in vain for the periodic publication of employment figures that the implementation requires. And to the best of my knowledge, no one has been prosecuted for deliberately flouting the provision. Today, it appears that the post of the Chairman of the Federal Character Commission has

been reserved for conservative Northerners. The implementation of the Federal Character Principle will continue to provoke crisis until the Federal Character Commission wakes up to its responsibilities. The Commission can borrow a leaf from the implementation of the Affirmative Action in the United States.

Power Sharing

Studies have shown that minorities that are excluded from political participation are likely to adopt extreme measures to seek redress.¹¹³ In Nigeria, rotational presidency and zoning of political offices are recognized as a strategy to prevent sectional domination of the country. Although the formula was included in the Draft Constitution of 1995, it was not inserted into the 1999 Constitution. Nevertheless, the different political parties have since adopted zoning as an "article of faith". The implementation has become a big issue.

We would recall that in the Second Republic, the National Party of Nigeria [NPN] had implemented zoning in a way that emphasized the political supremacy of the North. In November 1978, the party divided the country into four zones – North, West, East and Minorities. Not only did the Minorities become subsumed under the East, the party eventually dumped the formula when it allowed President Shehu Shagari to run for a second term of office. Similarly, the genesis of the current political crisis in the North is not totally unconnected with the difference of opinion on whether President Goodluck Jonathan should have been allowed to contest the last election.

Therefore, the constitutions of the political parties should clearly specify the posts that should be rotated, the order of rotation and the duration to prevent unnecessary controversy in the future.¹¹⁴

Purposeful Leadership

The issue of leadership is also crucial to the search for a solution to the minority question in Nigeria. This is because government policies can reduce or accentuate minority fears. Purposeful leadership in plural society should entail the building of bridges across ethnic and religious divides to foster the spirit of togetherness. General Ibrahim Babangida expressed the point succinctly in a lecture:

Our role as Nigerian citizens, particularly of the leadership category, is to work relentlessly to trim down the sharp edges of divisiveness and retrogression and to increase (social and national integration) by expanding and deepening the economic, political and cultural spaces so as to foster the ingredients of growth, development, progress, unity and good governance."¹¹⁵

Ironically, Nigerian leaders habitually pay lip service to the unity of this country but indirectly fan the ember of disunity when their sectional or regional interest is threatened. A newspaper columnist recently condemned this hypocrisy in strong terms:

The leadership of this country is a dishonest bunch. They preach the gospel of unity; they discourage ethnicity and tribalism; condemning the activities of ethnic militia and cultural nationality groups. They even put down their feet on the territorial integrity of the nation. But when it comes to distributing the benefits of political associations such as ministerial appointments, they think zonal, each trying to get the choicest portfolios for their zone or state nominees. No one then thinks of what is good for the country.¹¹⁶

Nigerian History

The only cure for the lack of a national leader is History Education. This is why the ancient Greeks believed that the best education for a statesman is History. In the recent past, some of the political appointees have made inciting and inflammatory statements that betray a poor understanding of the pre-colonial pattern of inter-group relations and the history of the nationalist movement in Nigeria. This is why I have suggested that an orientation programme should always be organized for new legislators and political appointees, many of whom sing the 'labour of our heroes past' without adequate understanding of what these heroes actually did.¹¹⁷

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, the orientation programme should include lectures on Nigeria history with special emphasis on Nigeria peoples and cultures, and constitutional development. This will help to project the similarities among the different ethnic groups, instead of the current revisionist history promoted by state agitations.

At the same time too, Nigerian historians should be encouraged to go into the areas of Contemporary and Administrative History for them to be of greater relevance to the task of nation building. If Nigeria is not making progress as it should, Nigerian historians should take part of the blame. This is because they are suitably placed to study events that are likely to influence public policies. While I do not subscribe to the positivist doctrine that historians should end their research in universal laws, I believe that a research that is problem-driven and ends with policy recommendations would be of greater value than a mere historical narrative that contains no lesson that can be harnessed to solve basic societal problems.

Prayer

Vice-Chancellor sir, in addition to the foregoing, I also believe that Nigeria requires divine intervention to overcome the myriad of problems confronting the country. Not only do serving presidents repeatedly call on Nigerians to pray for the peace and development of the country, the "Nigeria Prays" programme of General Yakubu Gowon (Retd.) indicates how central prayer is to the Nigerian project. Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, but can we remain in sin and expect God to continue to bless us? This is why I have remained fascinated by the prayer of repentance by a concerned Nigerian, Ike Nwejike. It is titled "Prayer for Nigeria in distress". Although published in one of the dailies on 8 March 2009, I leave this distinguished audience to judge its contemporary relevance: It reads:

All powerful and merciful father, you are the God of justice, love and peace. You rule over all the nations of the earth, including our dear country Nigeria. You have blessed our country Nigeria with rich human and natural resources for the well being of every Nigerian. Power and might are in your hands, and not in the hands of our corrupt leaders, who loot our treasury to develop the white man's land.

No one can withstand you, not even President Yar'Adua or Baba Iyabo. We present the numerous problems of our dear country, Nigeria, before you, including the current administration, which is still groping in the dark two years after, lacking in focus, direction, commitment, will and strategy. We pray for our dear President Yar'Adua who has decided to fill his government with some sycophants, political jobbers, and great grand fathers with questionable democratic credentials.

We praise and thank you for you are the source of all that we have, even the oil that is now a nightmare, and we are sorry for the sins we have committed, including the sins of our leaders, and for the basic things our leaders have failed to provide like water, electricity, roads, housing etc.

In your loving forgiveness, keep us safe from the punishment we deserve, and forgive our past leaders like Baba Iyabo, Baba Aisha, and other Babas that have ruined, pardon me I mean ruled Nigeria.

We confidentially turn to you in these times of our needs, oh God of infinite goodness, our strength in adversity, our health in weakness, our comfort in sorrow, be merciful to us and our corrupt and insensitive leaders.

Spare this nation, Nigeria, from the hands of the PDP which has vowed to rule for 60 years and also from the armed criminals who have made us sleep with our two eyes wide opened.

Save us from chaos, anarchy and doom and bless us with a nation where justice, love and peace prevails like what we have in America.¹¹⁸

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, with this supplication for divine assistance, I believe we can look forward to a better future.

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Sola Bankole, Gboyega Adebayo, Femi Ayeni, and Funmi and Wale Odunayo.

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I thank you all for listening.

NOTES

1. See J.M and M.J. Cohen, *Penguin Dictionary of Quotations*, Penguin Books, 1962, 16.
2. Professor Akin O. Adesola, Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos, Commonwealth Day Speech, 14 March, 1983 (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, Information Unit, 1983), 28.
3. See *Punch* (January 24, 2012): 40 captioned "Don faults removal of History from school curricula".
4. Jeremy Black & Donald M. Mac Raild, *Studying History*, (New York: Palgrave, 2nd Edition, 2000), 3.
5. Ibid 6.
6. See J.B.S. Haldane, *Everything has a History*, London, 1951 cited in "Overture: the New History, Its Past and Its Future", in. *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, Peter Burke, ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 5th edition, 1997), 3.
7. See R. T. Akinyele, "Cross-Border Provision of Higher Education in Africa: A Focus on Nigeria", in *African Integration: Images and Perspectives*, R.T Akinyele, ed. (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 2006), 150-151.
8. See Nile Gardiner "10 reasons why George W. Bush was a smatter world leader than Barack Obama," *The Telegraph*, <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/nile/gardiner/100022714/10-reasons-why-george.w-bush-was-a-smarter-world-leader-than-barack-obama>. (2001-08) accessed 18/4/2013. George Bush was president from 2001-2008.
9. See Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Rethinking Africa's Globalization, Intellectual challenges*, (New Jersey: Africa World Press), 2003.
10. Jane Knight, "Cross-Border Education in a Trade Environment: complexities and policy implications"

Background Report for Discussion at the workshop on Implication of WTO/GATS for Higher Education in African Association Universities, Accra, Ghana, April 27-29, 2004, 10.

11. For instance, when Thucydides wrote the account of the Peloponnesian war between Athens and Sparta, 431-404BC, it was in the belief that the findings would be useful to future generations. According to him, "... an exact knowledge of the past is an aid to interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it" – see R. M. Adams, "the Great Conversation", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 1 (Herefordshire, 1959), 713.
12. See Richard Criggs "Boundaries for an African Renaissance: Reshaping the Continent's Political Geography". File <http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/archive/two/3/p21.htm> accessed on 18/4/13; see also International Boundary Research Unit, (IBRU) Boundary and Security Bulletin, Summer, 1997, 64 – 68.
13. See *The Holy Bible*, Kings James Version, Daniel 10:13 for reference to the Prince of Persia.
14. See Absolute and Relational Theories of Space and Motion in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* in <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spacetime-theories/>. First published on Friday August 11, 2006 accessed on 06/02/13.
15. See John Urry, "The Sociology of Space and Place", in *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology*, Judith R. Blau [ed.] (Oxford: Blackwell Company), 2004, 3-15.
16. Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism: Reproduction of the Relations of Production*, Allison & Busby, 1973, 17-19.

17. See Roy Malcolm "The essence of architecture: August Schmarsow's theory of space", <http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php?v=250&pubid=bepress> accessed 06/02/2013.
18. Alex Wall, 'Movement and Public Space: Equipping the City for a mobile culture', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 49/1, 1995, 22-28, especially page 23 for the quotation.
19. The deadline for the submission was April 08, 2013 via the website www.spaceandpolitics.org. The book is to be co-edited by Delia Wendel and Fallon Samuels Aidoo, and to be funded by Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Harvard University.
20. Margaret Crawford, "Contesting the Public Realm: Struggles over Public Space in Los Angeles", *Journal of Architecture Education*, 49/1 Sept 1995, 8-9.
21. See James Holston, "Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship", *Planning Theory* 13 (Summer 1995); 30-50 cited by Crawford, 8.
22. See Tim Unwin, "A Waste of Space? Towards a critique of the social production of Space ...," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (Trans Inst Br Geogs) 25, 2000, 11 – 29.
23. The Thesis was defended on 13 August, 1990.
24. See R. T. Akinyele "Administrative History and the Crisis of Governance in Nigeria", *Network of Nigerian Historians Monograph Series* No 1, 2012. This was the paper delivered to inaugurate the Network of Nigerian Historians at University of Ibadan, 13 October, 2010. See report in *Punch* online, Wednesday 13 October, 2010 captioned "Varsity teacher asks NASS to ignore requests for state creation."

25. R.T. Akinyele, "States Creation in Nigeria: The Willink Report in Retrospect," *African Studies Review*, 39 No. 2, 1996, 71-94, especially page 75.
26. See R. T. Akinyele, "Contesting for Space in an Urban Centre: The Omo Onile Syndrome in Lagos", in Francesca Locatelli and Paul Nugent (eds). *African Cities: Competing Claims on Urban Space* (Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 109-134.
27. One of the students wrote to me to clarify some of the issues raised in the paper.
28. The paper is scheduled for presentation at the conference slated for mid-December 2013 at Cambridge.
29. This is the English Translation of the songs cited in R. Le Marchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970) facing p. 92.
30. A. F. Press Clips, Washington D.C., 5 June 1987, 16.
31. H. H. Gearth and C. W. Mills, *From Marx Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 190.
32. Cited in A.C. Helpburn, *Minorities in History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978).1.
33. Ibid.,. 2.
34. Ugbana Okpu, *Ethnic Minority Problems in Nigerian Politics, 1960-1965*, Uppsala, (Sweden: Acta Universities Upsaliensis, 1977), 11.
35. Minorities Rights Group International, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, 2012, edited by Beth Walker, 236. MRG was founded in 1960 by a group of activists and academics who were concerned about the infringements on the rights of minorities. The headquarters is in London.

36. Morton B. King, "The American Course", *American Sociological Review*, 21 (1956), 80-83.
37. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, "The Ethnic Question and the Social Sciences", *Journal of Culture and Ideas*, 1 No 1, (Dec. 1983), 122.
38. Several other reasons were also advanced to support their separatist agitations. For instance, for some groups the different way the neighbours arranged their row of yams was enough reason to demand for another State, See Roland Oliver, *In the Realms of Gold, Pioneering in African History* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1997), 185-186. One group sought separation from the Igbo on the grounds that the favourable conditions that allowed it to produce a world boxing champion in Hogam Bassey no longer existed. See NAI/CA/1/11 in CE/W3/F6: Memo of Oron, Okobo and Effiat People of Eket Division in Calabar Province to Minorities Commission.
39. Tedd Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: a Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 20.
40. Foreward to MGR 2012 report by Vital Bambanze, Chair of the U.N Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 7.
41. *The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Esther 3:8-9
42. Raymond Pearson, *Minorities in Eastern Europe, 1848-1945* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1983), 149.
43. Ibid., 194-195.
44. Ibid., 130.
45. Tedd Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk*, 10
46. MRG Report for 2012.
47. Ivan Marowa "The Tonga People of Zimbabwe: Historical Memories and Contemporary

- Challenges of a Minority Society” in *Minorities and the State in Africa*, Michael U. Mbanaso and Chima Korieh, eds. (New York: Cambria Press, 2010), 171-194.
48. See “Centrifugal Factionalism in Asia, Burma and the Mons,” in Louis Leo Snyder, *Global Mini Nationalisms* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), 244-245.
 49. See *Daily Times*, 24 April 1989 for the report on the frenchification of Brittany and Corsica.
 50. G. E. Simpson and J.M. Yinger (eds.) *Racial and Cultural Minorities: An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 38.
 51. See B. J. Stern “Soviet Policy on National Minorities,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1944), 231.
 52. This shows the distinction between negative and positive rights.
 53. See Memo of evidence by Biase and Aro Districts and the neighbouring clans of Ito, Iwerre and Ikpanja to Minorities Commission in NAC/CA/1/3 in CE/W3F6.
 54. Clive Baldwin, Chris Chapman and Zoë Gray, *Minority Rights: The Key to Conflict Prevention* (London: Minority Rights Group International, 2007), 17.
 55. See Ravi Nessman, “Sri Lanka says war over, rebel leader killed,”
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090518/ap_on_re_a/s/as_sri_lanka_civil_war accessed 18/05/2009.
 56. The story was captioned, “Woman confesses to China Plane attack” in
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080327/ap_on_re_a/s/china_terror.

57. See http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090911/ap_on_re_a/s/as_china-protest captioned, "New needle attacks reported in Chinese cities," accessed 11/09/2009.
58. Nigeria has an area of 923, 768 square kilometers and more than 250 ethnic groups. See CIA – The World Factbook, <http://www.cia.gov/library/publication/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>.
See also T.N. Tamuno "Separatist Agitations in Nigeria Since 1914", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 8, No. 4 (1970), 566.
59. See Text of the lecture delivered by Prof. Wole Soyinka to mark the Centenary Anniversary of the Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo in *This Day*, 9 March 2009, 20.
60. See J. S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 385; E. Osaghae, "Ethnicity and Federalism in Nigeria" (Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1984), 21; Samuel Egwu, "Strategies for Minority Relevance in Nigerian Politics", Paper delivered at the Seminar on Promoting Minorities Rights and Social Cohesion in Nigeria", United Nations House, Abuja (25 September, 2006), 3.
61. A. E. Afigbo, *The Igbo and their Neighbours: Inter-Group Relations in Southeastern Nigeria to 1953* (Ibadan: University Press, 1987), 114.
62. NAK Olofa to His Excellency in SNP 17/22000 Vol. Ekiti of Ilorin Province (1) Report on (2) Awtun Dist-Transfer of to Southern Provinces 1934-36.
63. See NAK/C8/1946 Zangon Kataf Dist-Unrest in, 1946; NAK Zarprof 3465: "Usman Sokop Kaje: Petition by (1940-1949)."

64. See R. T. Akinyele, "Strategies of Minority Agitations in Nigeria, 1900-1954", *Nigerian Journal of Inter-Group Relations*, Vol. 1 (1995). 5-6.
65. Afigbo, *The Igbo and their Neighbours*, 113.
66. See memo in NAK SNP 17/22000C(26).
67. See Akinyele "Strategies of Minority Agitations," 8.
68. See R. Melson and H. Wolpe, *Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism* (East Lansing: Michigan University Press, Michigan, 1971), 22.
69. NAI/CA/1/13 in CE W3F6: Memorandum of the Traditional Rulers of Calabar to Minorities Commission.
70. See Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying them (London, Hinson, 1958) (Willink Report), 18, 30, 47-48. See also Record of Daily Proceedings, Minorities Commission, Benin, 13th December, 1957.
71. *West Africa* (22 November, 1958). 115.
72. Willink Report, 33 & 88.
73. Willink Report, 30.
74. Gowon is an Angas, a small group in the Middle Belt. See M. J. Dent, 'Tarka and the Tiv: A Perspective on Nigeria Federation,' in Melson and Wolpe(eds.), *Nigeria: Modernization and Politics of Communalism*, 458.
75. See Edet A. Udo, *Who are the Ibibio?* (Onitsha: Africana-FED publishers, 1983), xii-vi for comments on the negative effects of state creation on the Ibibio.
76. See Report of the Panel Appointed by the Federal Military Government to investigate the Issue of Creation of More States and Boundary Adjustments in Nigeria, (Lagos: Federal Government Press, 1975), 13.

77. See R. T. Akinyele, "Growth Pole Theory, Marginals and Minorities: States Creation in Nigeria in a Period of Military Transition", *Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (November, 1993), 293-312 for the effect of this on state agitations.
78. See Akinyele, "States creation in Nigeria: The Willink Report in Retrospect," 86.
79. See Akinyele, "Growth Pole Theory," 300.
80. Ibid, 301.
81. See *Daily Times* (20 September 1991). 1
82. Since every group is now complaining of marginalization, we can say that Nigeria has become a federation of minorities.
83. See for instance *The Guardian*, 17 January 2013 for the complaints of the Yoruba against the Jonathan administration.
84. Willink Report, 14
85. See *Saturday Punch*, Dec 3, 2011, 6 captioned "Senators set to clash over 47 new states demands."
86. See Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, Vol. 11, 1977 Col. 6803 for the view of Chief Sam Mbakwe at the National Assembly. The same view was echoed by Chief Ume Ezeoke, Speaker of the House of Representatives on 29th November, 1979.
87. See cover story, *African Guardian*, 23 September, 1991 for details. Minority activists such as late Ken Saro Wiwa created this impression.
88. See Ada C. Okwusa, Innocent K. Ogbonnaya and Olushola J. Magbadelo, "Minority Rights and the Constitutional Question in Nigeria," "Nigerian Journal of Democracy," Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oct 1994), 39-58 but page 47 in particular.
89. Ibid. 47.

- 90 Ibid. 48
- 91 Ibid. 50
- 92 See Willink Report,. 30
- 93 NAI/IL/1/23 Memo of Ilorin Talaka Parapo to, Minorities Commission.
- 94 The bulk of the development fund allocated to the oil communities was not collected because of disagreement over the production quota. See *Vanguard*, 26 June 1996,. 16. See also R. T. Akinyele, "Institutional Approach to the Environmental Problem of the Niger Delta", in *Current Issues in Environmental Problems in Nigeria* ,Akinjide Osuntokun,ed.(Ibadan: Davidson Press, 1998), 76-91.
- 95 See M. Dukor (ed) *Philosophy and Politics Discourse on Values and Power in Africa* (Lagos: OOP, 1998), 117-123.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Matthew H. Kukah, "Minorities, Federalism and the Inevitability of Instability," Paper presented at the Legal Research and Resource Development Centre organized Pre-Constitutional Conference Debate, Lagos, 14-15 February 1994,. 7.
98. Ibid. 7-8.
- 99 See Resolution No. 22 of the Ijaw National Congress, *The Guardian*, (10 Sept, 1998), 39.
100. See the *African Concord*, (24 April 1989), 14-15.
101. Jubril Aminu, "The Nigerian Leadership Crisis and Lapses in Leadership" in *Nigeria's Bumpy Ride into the 21st Century*, Akinjide Osuntokun, Olufemi Eperokun et al (eds.) (Ibadan: The House of Lords,1999), 68.
102. See Cross River State Movement: The Case for a Cross River State of Nigeria: An Anthology of select Memoranda, 1968-70, Sept 1970, 8.

103. Cited in Osaghae "Ethnicity and Federalism in Nigeria", 458.
104. See Proceedings of Constituent Assembly, Vol. 1, 1997 Col. 1884.
105. See NAI/PH/1/23 in CE/W3/F8 Memo of the Ibo State Union to Minorities Commission. The Union was established in 1933 and federated in 1948.
106. See *Punch* (8 March 2010.), 66.
107. Report of the Panel Appointed on Creation of States (Lagos: Government Press, 1976), 12.
108. Eugene Uzum, "State Creation: How wise will the South-east be,?" <http://www.gamji.com/article/5000/News/5718.html> (accessed 24/08/2010).
109. R. T. Akinyele "Boundary Disputes and National Integration in Nigeria" in *Contemporary Issues in Boundaries and Governance in Nigeria*, R. T. Akinyele, ed. (Lagos: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2005), 18-39.
110. President Ibrahim Babangida, in the announcement of the creation of Akwa Ibom and Katsina States in 1987, had noted that the mixture of states and population in some meaningful proportion is necessary for the growth and development of the country. See *The Guardian* 24 September 1987, 10-11 for details of the broadcast.
111. This is a serious argument against those who are calling for the restructuring of the Nigerian State
112. Federal Military Government of Nigeria, "Federal Government views on the Report of the Political Bureau" (Lagos: Federal Government Press, 1986), 66-69.
113. See *The Nation* (22 April 2010), 10 captioned "For the Records,"
114. See Raphael Zariski, 'Ethnoterritorial Minorities in Eastern Europe; Dimensions, Causes and

- Institutional Responses', in *Comparative Politics*, Vol.21.3 (1989) 253-272; G. Alan Tarr, Robert F. Williams, and Josef Marka. *Federalism, Sub-national Constitutions and Minority Rights*. (Westport, Connecticut London: Praeger, 2004).
115. See R.T Akinyele, 'Power Sharing and Conflict Management in Africa: Nigeria, Sudan and Rwanda.' *Africa Development*,_Vol_ xxv._Nos. 3&4. 2000. 199-223.
 116. See Segun Gbadegesin, "The Use and Abuse of Political Power," *The Nation* (2 April, 2010). 40.
 117. See R. T. Akinyele, "From 'Geographical Expression' to 'Nation Space': Nigeria and the Challenge of Nation Building," Paper presented at the Faculty of Arts Conference, University of Lagos, 2-4 December, 2010, 21-22.
 118. Ike Nwejike, "Prayer for Nigeria in distress", *Sunday Punch* (8 March 2009), 15.



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