

## Settlers and Indigenes Issues in Nigerian Federalism

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### Abstract

*Nigeria like many countries in the world operates a federal system of government whereby Nigerians can reside in any part of the country and enjoy the right and privileges of being a citizen of a country. However, experiences of the citizens across the country have proved that this ideal is not true in all instances leading to settlers/indigene dichotomy. Complicating settlers-indigenes question in the country is seen in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Constitution frowns at discrimination, yet it upholds indigene ship. The aim of this study is to examine the settlers-indigene issues in the Nigerian federalism. Secondary source of data collection was adopted as our methodology. Through this method explanatory and deductive analysis was made. The findings of the paper revealed that settlers-indigenes issues had resulted to different crisis across Nigeria which is negatively affecting Nigerian federalism and peaceful co-existence of citizens. Its therefore recommended that section 147 of 1999 constitution (as amended) which encourages indigeneship should be expunged or amended as it reinforces division and heightens settlers-indigenes issues in country and there is a need to enlighten Nigerians about elite manipulation through the National Orientation Agency (NOA). The Agency should begin to educate Nigerians on things that unite them and sensitize them about the essence of unity in the country. Nigerians should be informed about political elites' manipulation of ethnic differences for self-centered political ambition.*

**Keyword:** *federalism, settlers-indigenes, issues, Nigeria, 1999 constitution (as amended)*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Federal states all over the world vary in many ways such as nature, character and significance of the underlying political economic culture and social diversities. Consequently, Nigeria as a nation of extraordinary diversity is a home of more than two hundred ethnic groups whose federal system is confronted with a lot of complex challenges which may on many occasions have shaken the Nigerian state to its foundation. The chief among the strange thing about Nigerian federalism is the 'definition' of who is a Nigerian. Everyone born in the country is practically a citizen of the country, but not everyone given birth to in a state (the second tier of government in Nigerian federation) is truly regarded as a bona fide Nigerian in that state. This gives birth to settler-indigene lexicon in the political vocabulary of Nigeria. Thus, settlers- indigenes question has been one of the greatest

challenges confronting Nigerian federalism. Complicating settlers-indigenes question in the country is seen in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Constitution frowns at discrimination, yet it upholds indigene ship. By implication, the Constitution encourages unity – one Nigeria – and paradoxically, it encourages the disintegration of the country. The focus of this paper, therefore, is to examine the issues relating to settlers-indigene question in Nigeria. The focus of this paper is to analyze how the movement of people across the geo-political zones and ethnic divides (in history and at present) has not only affected the practice of federalism in Nigeria, but also has a significant impact on the political development of the country. This study therefore makes use of the secondary sources of information such as internet, journals, and articles as data sources.

## II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION: CONCEPT OF FEDERALISM

An understanding of the concept of federalism, its basic features and its applicability in the Nigeria context is paramount to the discussion of the Settlers-indigenes issues in Nigerian. Federalism according to Tekena (2011) is that form of government where the component units of a political organization participate in sharing powers and functions in a cooperative manner through the combined forces of ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity, among others, which tends to pull their people apart. To Suberu (2009) 'Federalism' involves constitutional and irrevocable division of governmental powers and functions on a territorial basis within a single country. It entails the division of power between central and constituent authorities. Although the arrangement of functions and responsibilities within a federal state is usually based on some constitutional or legal framework, the constitution may be a poor guide in determining whether a political system is federal or otherwise. To this school of thought, federalism should be understood not just from the narrow perspective or confines of legal formulation but from the general and systemic interaction of socio-cultural and political factors. Nigeria is a federation with 36 States and 774 local governments existing in a coordinate and autonomous relationship. Power are shared among the federating unit that makes up the federation i.e. federal, state and local government and each unit has it own autonomous power within it area of jurisdiction usually the federal government have a greater bound of unity with power in the center.

## III. CONCEPT OF INDIGENE AND SETTLER

The indigene principle first appeared in the Native Authority Law of 1954, which defined an indigene as “someone whose genealogy can be traced to particular geo-ethnic space within a local council or state in which he/she is resident” (International Crisis Group Africa, 2012). In contrast, a non-indigene, settler or stranger is a “native who is not a member of the native community living in the area of its authority” (International Crisis Group 2012). An indigene is one who claims to be the ‘son’ of the soil, a recognized citizen of a given space while a non indigene or settler is a stranger, a migrant who does not have rights of occupancy (Ojukwu and

Onifade, 2010). In the post colonial Nigerian society, indigene could be seen as one whose lineage is traced to a specific place or community and as well being recognized by others as one of the legitimate owners of the place. In fact, place of birth, conferment or naturalization can only guarantee citizenship of Nigeria but does not actually offer someone the status of an indigene. It is no surprise that in many communities where people have migrated or settled for more than three decades in Nigeria, the people are hitherto addressed as settlers. And they are persistently discriminated from other rights and privileges due to them as a citizen. These practices often nurture lots of grievances among the people especially at the rural areas, semi-urban communities where these crises emanate and have serious negative consequences. On the other hand, citizenship according to Gauba (2003) denotes the status of an individual as a full and responsible member of a political community. He further states that citizenship is the product of a community where the right to rule is decided by a prescribed procedure which expresses the will of the general body of its members. While ascertaining their will, nobody is discriminated on grounds of race, religion, gender, place of birth (Gauba, 2003). Thus, citizenship is a relationship between the individual and the state in which both are linked by reciprocal rights and duties (Ifesinachi, 2010). For him, citizenship in the modern state seems to proceed from the continuum of individualism and communalism. Liberal citizenship advances the principle of ‘citizenship right’ and places particular stress on private entitlement and the status of the individual as an autonomous actor (Heywood cited in Ifesinachi, 2010). Marshall in Egwu, (2009) further explains that it is much easier to define citizenship as a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. For him, all those who possess the status of citizens are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed”. Following from the above, one could make sense of major problems associated with citizenship related issues in Nigeria. This is because it appears increasingly difficult to determine who is a full member of a particular environment in Nigeria especially when the major variable in determining such is tied to land ownership in most places thereby reinforcing the indigene/settler crisis. Thus, Nigeria in it’s over half a century independent existence and over a decade of democratic practice is still grappling with plethora of ethno-religious and communal conflicts arising from citizenship, indigene-settler feud.

The constitutional uncertainty and controversy surrounding the definition of citizenship in Nigeria seems to have stalled scholarly efforts at achieving accepted definition of the concept as many are concerned with rights and obligations of a citizen. Indeed, misconception or misuse of citizenship and indigene ship/settler ship in Nigeria has provoked numerous violent conflicts across the country (Egwu, 2013). Hence, such violence tends to undermine the importance and relevance of citizenship especially within the context of migration, national integration and development. Explaining the major cause of indigene/settler crisis in Nigeria, Aluaigba (2008) posited that a more plausible explanation lies in the failure of the Nigerian state to web its numerous ethnic nationalities through the conscious creation of a national structure that will enhance equal rights and justice and access to social welfare for all individuals and groups. For him, these centrifugal identities built around religion, ethnic groupings, indignity, settler ship, nativity, migrants, no indigenes, southerner, northerner etc have

collectively sharpened the dividing line between Nigerians thus making cohesive nationhood a more convoluted task. The 1999 constitution seems to be clouded in providing explicit legal direction for the Nigerian citizenship. For instance, Section 42 of Chapter IV of the Constitution provides for the right to freedom from discriminations. It also states that, a citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not (a) be subjected to disabilities or restriction to which citizen of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religions, political opinions are not made subject or (b) be accorded any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to citizen of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religious or political opinions (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). However, the federal character principle tends to pose serious threat in determining the functionality of the above provisions. Beyond the issue of fetching average to leadership positions, federal character principle tends to have encouraged denial and discrimination among Nigerians. For instance, the appointment of former finance minister from Lagos was keenly contested by the Lagos state government based on his indignity. In his view, Aluba (2009), argued that: the current constitution is duplicitous in dealing with the indigene/ settler questions. It espouses universal criteria for Nigerian citizenship but also recognizes indigenes for purposes of appointment of ministers. In daily existence, residency is discarded in favor of indigene/ settler. Again, where is the national unity, especially that there is no opportunity for settlers to convert to indigenes? The experience underscores the nature of one country where citizens have different structures of opportunities not because of any objective criteria but due to ethnic origins.

This situation perhaps explains why previous peaceful coexistence between ethnic and religious groups is now devastated by regular bout of violence (Alubo, 2009). Indeed, the problem of citizenship in Nigeria today largely stems from the discriminations and exclusion meted out to people on the basis of ethnic, regional, religious and gender identities (Adesoji and Alao, 2009). This according to them is because those who see themselves as “natives” or “indigenes” exclude those considered as “strangers” from the enjoyment of certain rights and benefit that they ought to enjoy as Nigerians upon the fulfillment of certain civic duties, such as the payment of tax. The implication is that the political system has continued to witness ethno-religious, communal and political conflicts of immense proportion that posed serious threat to unity, peace and development in Nigeria. The inability of the Nigerian state to evolve a legal framework that would effectively resolve the uncertainty surrounding citizenship could be well explained with Marx’s conflict theory. The mode of production, for Marx determines the super structure and the corresponding social relationships i.e., polity, and religion, law, etc. Similarly, social structure and the forces of production and social relations of distributions constitute the foundation for understanding the nature of human society (Ritzer, 1996). One of Marx main assumption is that the emergence of modern state has reproduced irreconcilable differences among men and made conflict inevitable. This is because the state has created different classes with inherent contradictions which produce class struggle with political derivations (Akpuru-Aja, 1997; Ritzer, 1996). Thus, the citizenship, indigene/settler crisis in Nigeria and particularly in Wukari cannot be divorced from colonial policy of divide

and rule consolidated by post colonial elite drive to exploiting ethno-religious gap for political reasons and to sustain class competition among the various ethnic elite groups. The struggle by the different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria over scarce national resources has necessitated the manipulation of indigenism/citizenship issues by individuals, groups to gain political and economic advantage and to exclude others. The attempt by those excluded to assert or integrate themselves into the mainstream of social, economic and political life of their community against the resistance of those at the mainstream has been the major factor in explaining most of the ethno-religious and communal violence in Nigeria.

#### IV. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

The elite theory was adopted as the theoretical basis of the analysis of this paper. This theory was advanced in the early twentieth century by three famous sociologists: Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Robert Michels. According to Gauba (2003), the term 'elite' as a category of sociological analysis was introduced by Pareto, while the idea associated with the theory was floated earlier by Mosca. The term 'elite' was derived from French where it meant to be something excellent (Gauba, 2003). Pareto, in his book titled "The Mind and Society" (1915), used the term to indicate a group of people who show the highest ability in their field of activity whatever its nature might be. However, to Mosca in his work titled "The Ruling Class" (1896), the people (the society or a political system) are divided into two groups: the rulers and the ruled (Gauba, 2003). The rulers are the elite and they control most of the wealth, power, and prestige in the society. The ruled are referred to as the masses and are said not to be able to replace the elite. It is worthy to note is the fact that classical elitists make use of the inevitability of elite rule as a premise to counter argue with political liberalism and Marxism. Lopez (2013) stated that classical elitists claimed that both democracy (as the government of the people or *demos*) and socialism (as a classless regime) were impossible outcomes because society is necessarily elite driven. These theorists believe that elites could only be substituted by another set of elites. However, this means that the majority is necessarily ruled by a minority. This notion was expressed in Pareto's (1935) *law of elite circulation* and in Mosca's (1939) notion of *political class*.

According to Lopez (2013), the principle or law of elite circulation holds that elites alternate in power as a result of either peaceful or violent competition. In Pareto's (1935) terms, history is (and could only be) nothing but a 'cemetery of elites' (cited in Lopez, 2013). The notion of political class, which is currently less frequent in elite studies, defines elites as a class of political rulers- in opposition to a mass of followers.

Furthermore, in the classical elitist literature, elites were often (but not only) defined through capacity, personality, and skill. It was submitted, for instance, that Pareto (1935) distinguished elites between those who resembled the lion (domination by force) and those who resembled the fox (domination by persuasion and skill). Therefore, it was a typology that resembles Machiavelli's political philosophy. Mosca (1939) made mention of material conditions and the intellectual and moral superiority of elites (Lopez, 2013).

In its classical formulation, elite theory seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in contemporary society. The theory posits that the minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and policy-planning

networks, holds the most of the power. This power is independent of the state democratic electoral process. Elite theory was developed as an alternative paradigm to pluralism. It rejects the pluralist view concerning the distribution of power in society. Mosca argued that a minority group, as against the pluralist perspective, performs all political functions, monopolizes power, and enjoys the advantages that power brings (cited in Sambo, 1999). As a minority group within the society, the elite have many manipulative devices they use against the masses, the majority. They use manipulative skills, including oratory, persuasion, and playing upon the sentiments of the people to perpetuate themselves into power (according to Robert Michels in his 'Iron Law of Oligarchy', Gauba, 2003). Consequently, power is concentrated in the hands of the few. These few, therefore:

*Occupy the strategic command posts within the social structure. Power elites constitute a self-conscious class whose members help each other on the basis of mutual understanding, tolerance and cooperation in order to strengthen each other's power and position (Gauba, 2003).*

Based on the argument of the elite theorists, settler-indigene dichotomy in Nigeria is actually the manifestation of the manipulative skills of the elites in the country. The dichotomy itself is an objective reality that could be managed for political development in Nigeria. Nevertheless, this is used to play upon the sentiments of the Nigerian masses, especially the one attached to ethnicity. Settler-indigene issue, therefore, has become one of the national questions that are difficult to manage in the country. The Nigerian political elite are doing this in order to perpetuate themselves in power and keep the masses, the Nigerian citizens, divided against each other instead of being united against the parasitic elites.

Since Nigerian political elites have been "sentimental, uncontrollably dependant, greedy or materialistic, and in most cases non-nationalistic" (Azeez and Ibukunoluwa, 2015), they have become self-centred. Thus, they are only concerned about their welfare and that of their immediate families. As against "elite consensus" (Lopez, 2013) that guarantees democratic consolidation, the attitude of the Nigerian elites reinforces 'no permanent enemy (in politics) but permanent interest'. The interest is, however, not that of the corporate development of Nigeria but that of the individual elites. They, therefore, use settlers-indigenes dichotomy among Nigerians to achieve their permanent interest, which is to remain relevant in politics and perpetually occupy political posts. And this therefore is a danger to Nigerian federalism.

#### **V. 1999 CONSTITUTION (AS AMENDED) & THE SETTLERS-INDIGENES QUESTION**

Ideally, a constitution, which serves as a basic institutional framework of government, is supposed to define the relations between rulers and the ruled, the rights and duties of citizens, and many important procedures are to be followed in connection with those matters in which all are carefully set out (Anifowose, 1999). However, as if the challenges Nigeria has with settlers-indigenes dichotomy were not enough, the promulgation of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) makes the issue worse. The definition of a Nigerian is clearly spelt out in the 1999 Constitution, but the clarification on an indigene and a settler is still a bone of contention. The citizenship of

Nigeria can be acquired by birth, by registration, and by naturalization (Sections 25, 26 and 27 of the 1999 Constitution, as amended). Consequently, as a citizen of Nigeria, every Nigerian has a right to freedom from discrimination. In Section 42, Subsections 1 and 2, it is stipulated unequivocally that a citizen of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by any reason only that he is such a person –

(a) be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizen of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religious or political opinions are not made subject; or  
(b) be accorded either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to citizen of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religious or political opinions. 2. No citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or derivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth.

In essence, the Constitution does not accord any special privileges to any Nigerian living in any part of the country. Also, it does not allow any Nigerian to be discriminated against because the individual comes from a specific part of the country. This therefore means, according to Omotoso (2014), that a Nigerian regardless of where he lives is a citizen of the country as long as the parents or grandparents are Nigerians. Apart from this, as a citizen of the country, such individual is free to live and work anywhere in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In practical terms, this is not the situation in the country. Unfortunately, the Constitution recognizes, by implication, an indigene in a state of the federation. Being an indigene of a state in the country is one of the main criteria to be appointed as a Minister of the Government of the Federation. In Section 147, Subsection 3 of the Constitution, it is stated that “the President shall appoint at least one Minister from each State, who shall be an indigene of such State” (emphasis authors’). However, there is no mention of anything like settlers in the whole document. With this, it is glaringly clear that Nigerian federalism recognizes *indigeneship* at the state level but citizenship at the federal level. This has been one of the banes of Nigerian federalism.

In reality, whether it is spelt out in the constitution or not, the happenings in Nigeria have made the settlers-indigenes question a burning issue in the country. The supporters of the dichotomy between indigenes and settlers would easily contend that one is mostly an indigene of a particular place. The argument is that one can only belong to a particular ethnic group and by virtue of that, one might not be in a position to enjoy those benefits associated with settling in a place or among groups with different history, tradition, and language (Adesoji&Alao, 2009). Pushing the dichotomy further is the argument of Rinyom (2011) that:

*Whereas indigeneship is a natural link between a person and a geographical location – his ancestral home – where he traces his roots through a blood lineage and genealogy that puts him in contact with his kin and kindred, citizenship (herein referred to a*

*Nigerian in another state) is a man-made arrangement that seeks to confer on a person in a certain geographical location (an ownership of the place).*

In most cases, this is how Nigerian citizens from different states perceive those who have no ethnic origin in the state of their settlement. However, as the so-called “settlers” live in a particular state for a long time, defining their indigeneship becomes blurred. An example is given of one Alhaji Ismail Babatunde Jose. In his x-ray of the genealogy of the man (Alhaji Ismail Babatunde Jose), Oyeweso (2006) contends that the idea of ethnic purity is neither illogical nor impracticable. Jose’s genealogy is first traced to Ikare-Akoko, where his great grandfather was born and later to Ijebu-ode where his grandfather got married to a royal family. His genealogy was also traced to Sokoto and Bida, the roots of her great grandmother and grandmother respectively and finally Lagos where Ismail was born. Also his grandfather residency at Calabar where Hamza Jose, his father, was born was also considered relevant. Therefore, some pertinent questions raised here are; Is Alhaji Jose an indigene or a settler of Lagos? Does he have a right or legitimate claim to Owa-Ale Chieftaincy in Ikare? Can he embrace or will he be embraced by the royal household of Ijebu Ode? Can or should he be discriminated against by the Nupe or Fulani based on fixed and unchanging notions of ethnic identity or *indigeneity*? Arguably, the meaning one could make out of this development is the fact that there could be multiple indigeneships (Adesoji&Alao, 2009) Therefore, the best would have been to emphasize Nigeria but not indigeneship or settlers syndrome. On the contrary, settlers-indigenes dichotomy has limited Nigerians who are living in states different from where they trace their ancestral home. They have access to social good such as education, employment opportunities, land, and political right to produce representatives or the chief or head of a community. The Jukun-Tiv scenario in present day Taraba State gives a vivid picture of this. Jukun and Tivs constitute the population of Wukari Local Government in Taraba State. They had been living peacefully together since the pre-colonial days with the Tiv (the migrants to Wukari areas). They are predominantly rural farmers who did not interfere with Jukun (who traced their ancestral origin to Wukari) administration. Although the Tiv had arrived in the region far back as the 1840s when the present Wukari was established (Best et al., 1999), political and social relations began to change for the worse in the early Twentieth Century.

The advanced reasons for the change in relations between these two ethnic groups are the introduction of party politics and the increase in the population of the Tiv (Agaba&Akintola, 2012). In fact, in the 1940s, the Tiv were not only the largest ethnic group in the Middle Belt, but they were also three times more numerous than the Jukun in the Wukari Division, which the Jukun considered as their homes (Agaba&Akintola, 2012). Consequently, the Jukun started to impose their political supremacy; this was the beginning of settlers-indigene dichotomy in Taraba State. Despite all the efforts made by the colonial government to recognise the Tiv as part of the society where they lived, the Jukun essentially saw them as settlers. More importantly, the political reversals suffered by the Jukun at different times not only woke them up from their slumber; they also became more rigid in refusing or denying the Tiv access, relevance, entitlements, political participation and power on the ground that they were settlers (Best et al., 1999). Therefore, this has led to violent clashes in Taraba State.

Examples of these ethno-political crises include Tiv riot of 1959-60, the 1964 'head breaking', the 1979-83 fracas, the local government election crisis of 1987, 1990-92 local government election crisis, the 2001-2002 clash, and August 2010 riot (Agaba&Akintola, 2012) and the 2019 crises. The bone of contention has always been on rights or privileges only meant for those who can trace their ancestral origin to Wukari. The statement credited to the paramount ruler of Wukari, Dr ShekarauAngyuMasa-IbiKuvyo II, represents the sentiment of almost every Jukun man and woman. He stated, during the 2001-2002 Jukun-Tiv Clash that:

*They (the Tiv) came here to farm; we (the Jukun) allowed them, gave them chieftaincy titles...Now that their population has increased, they believe they are many enough to colonise us (Asuni, 1990).*

The Tiv, like many settler groups in different parts of the country, have consistently maintained that having settled in a place for a long period is not proper to refer to them as settlers, but rather as indigenes. Their contention is that while their kiths and kins could be located elsewhere, they could not really trace their root appropriately neither could they fit properly into the old society they or their forbears left several years ago (Adesoji&Alao, 2009). 'True' federalism can be referred to a situation in which all Nigerians, regardless of where he/she traces his /her ancestral origin to, will be able to enjoy every social good available without discrimination as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution (as amended)(Olusola&Akumka, 2017)

## **VI. WAY FORWARDS ON SETTLERS/INDIGENES ISSUES IN NIGERIAN FEDERALISM**

While it is true that settlers-indigenes question is a reality in Nigerian federal system, the political elite manipulate it for selfish political ambition. Most especially, they employ ethnicity to achieve their aim. This is what Nnoli (2003) alluded to when he argues that the problem is not the cultural differences among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. In addition, it is neither their geographical differences, nor their social and economic differences. The difference among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria ethnic question arises from the degree to which this emergent identity has been manipulated. This is why a Nigerian should be redefined. The first thing that needs to be done is to amend Section 147 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) which encourages indigene ship. This should be expunged from the Constitution. It is an irony for a Constitution to discourage discrimination against an individual, but still encourage elements that strengthen discrimination. This is a lacuna too many in strengthening federalism in Nigeria.

As a matter of urgency, it should be purposely included in the next amendment to the Constitution that all Nigerians are eligible to enjoy every rights and privileges in every part of the country, no matter where they trace their ancestral origin to. However, this would solve two major problems in Nigeria; ethnicity and settlers-indigenes dichotomy. Settlers-indigenes question could be solved when meritocracy becomes the only criteria for the appointment of political posts and employment in the country. Quota system and Federal Character,

though they have their merits based on the wisdom of their proponents, are part of the elements in Nigerian federation that pull Nigerians apart. Instead of using these, every Nigerian should be given equal opportunity to serve and enjoy the rights of being a Nigerian. Lagos State is a good example on this. The former Governor of Osun State, RaufAregbesola, was a Commissioner in Lagos State. On the contrary, settlers-indigenes brouhaha would have denied the former Minister of Aviation, Stella Oduah, the opportunity of being a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This was despite her qualifications and experience. Emphasis should be on ‘what you can offer’ not ‘where you come from’ or ‘who you know.’ Furthermore, there is a need to enlighten Nigerians about elite manipulation. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) has a lot to do in this regard. The Agency should begin to educate Nigerians on things that unite them and sensitize them about the essence of unity in the country. Nigerians should be informed about political elites’ manipulation of ethnic differences for self-centered political ambition.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Movement of people, both now and in history, is the basis on which people come in contact with others. As a result of the contact, interactions follow. As the interactions continue, there is bound to be conflict. The issue is not the conflict but its management. Consequently, the ineffective management of conflict arising from interactions of the Nigerian people across all the states of the federation has heightened settlers-indigenes question. The experience in Taraba State between the Jukun and the Tiv proves the fact that difference in ancestral origin and history are not the main problem in the State, but the manipulations of these issues by the Nigerian political elite. They use the issue of settler-indigene to divide the people for their political benefits. Settler-indigene question in Nigeria is the manifestation of the manipulative skills of the elites in the country. Consequent upon the above, the Nigerian federalism would be better when Section 147 is appropriately amended. The Section needs to deemphasize the state of origin as the main criterion for national assignment as a minister. This emphasizes “statehood” rather than the nationhood of Nigeria. Merit is the only way through which this can be done away with. No matter the state of origin, ministerial appointment and any other national assignment should be given based on qualifications, achievements, and past records of the would-be minister. This is why the NOA is very strategic in nation building in Nigeria. The agency needs to justify its existence as the platform on which national re-orientation is done. It needs to embark on national campaigns on strength imbedded in diversity. This shows that ethnic difference is never the problem but its usage for political reasons. In this, Nigeria’s unity and national integration depends. It is noteworthy, therefore, that it is not the movement of people across ethnic or national boundaries that is the problem, but the management of conflict that might arise as a result of this movement. This is because the movement would definitely affect the socio-political equation of the environment where people settle. The relations between the Jukun and the Tiv reinforce this argument. It is for this reason that the authors submit that this needs some strategies which could help resolve the conflict (settler indigene dichotomy). The proposed strategies would not only enhance true federalism in the

country, it will also help resolve the conflict that might arise as a result of the movement of people and interactions among them.

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