

Title: Policy and Politics in the Evolution of Jos Metropolis: Spaces of Indigene/Settler Identity and Conflict in Plateau State, Nigeria.

By

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Abstract

Persistent conflicts and increasing indigene/settler question in Jos metropolis are not recent. These conflicts date back to the pre-colonial period when the Hausa and Fulani continually attacked the autochthones of Jos Plateau. However, Jos city emerged in early twentieth century. The Hausa had settled in Naraguta but moved into Jos when the area was designated 'Hausa' in 1915 through colonial policy and politics. The indigene/settler and Christian/Muslim crisis in Jos was fuelled by certain policies and politics that altered social spaces and identities in the area beginning from the colonial period to the present. Jos metropolis therefore emerged out of colonial policy that partitioned the city into "Native Town" and "Township". The partitioning deepened the gulf existing between the Hausa migrants and the autochthones and reinforced the struggle for spaces between them. In post-colonial Nigeria, the Federal character principle further heightened the tension as State governments segregated against citizens as non indigenes. These patterns of relationship have further left Jos metropolis a violently contested space since 2001. The politicisation of religion and the replacement of the Middle Belt identity with Christian identity by the second set of colonial administrators in Nigeria after World War II renewed the contestations between the Hausa and the autochthones in Jos Plateau. Existing studies have traced the origins of the Jos crisis to the 1991 local government creation and the contestations over the ownership of Jos by different groups (Plotnicov, 1971, 1972; Bingel, 1978; Albert, 2003; Best, 2007). As important as these studies are, they gave little attention to the historical roots of the conflict and particularly the role of policy and politics in the unhappy evolution of Jos metropolis and its increasing contested indigene/settler spaces. This study strives to fill this gap. The methodology is qualitative and data was generated from National Archives and interviews as well as secondary sources.

Introduction

Scholars of the interaction between policy and politics tend to identify and focus on those who influence public policy and also examine the particular economic, social, and political forces that structure politics and public policy (Van Horn, Baumer and Gormley Jr. 1989). Others attempt to better understand policy making process and to supply policy decision makers with reliable policy-relevant knowledge about pressing economic and social problems (Dunn, 1981; Fischer, Miller and Sidney eds. 2007). These plethora of literature have made little effort in situating policy and politics in the making of inter-group conflicts.

Historical evidence of the evolution of Jos metropolis in Plateau State indicate that persistent conflicts and increasing indigene/settler question in Jos metropolis are not recent. These conflicts date back to the pre-colonial period when the Hausa and Fulani continually attacked the autochthones of Jos Plateau. However, Jos city emerged in early twentieth century. The Hausa had settled in Naraguta but moved into Jos when the area was designated 'Hausa' in 1915 through colonial politics. The indigene/settler and Christian/Muslim crisis in Jos was fuelled by certain policies and politics that altered social spaces and identities in the area beginning from the colonial period to the present. Jos metropolis therefore emerged out of colonial policy that partitioned the city into "Native Town" and "Township". The partitioning deepened the gulf and inequality existing between the Hausa and the autochthones and reinforced the struggle for spaces between them. This paper focuses on the role of politics, planning policy and regulations in the unhappy evolution of Jos metropolis.

Politics, Planning Policy and Regulations in the Unhappy Evolution of Jos Metropolis

Policy but particularly public policy and politics has been in the forefront of initiating and sustaining group inequalities and this has actively played a role in the making of conflicts in Jos metropolis. Although Mamdani (2002:10) has argued that inequality has existed throughout time; however, metropolitan fragmentations in colonial Nigeria suggest inequality is not a thing but a relation. Glenn Loury (2015) contended that group inequality has different economic and sociological logic from inequality among individuals. Thus, group inequality most times is sustained by what is called collective reputation and selective association. Collective reputation is an attempt to treat a population collectively by categorizing them as negative. For instance, the idea of associating Islam with terrorism or seeing every Muslim as a potential terrorist is a collective reputation. Another example of collective reputation is the categorization of Christians as infidels in Northern Nigeria. On the other hand, selective association is an attempt by a group to select the group they relate with. Groups in their relation attempt to select the group they inter-marry with, those to live with and where to live. Both collective reputation and selective association have a way of sustaining group inequality. According to Loury (2015) both issues (collective reputation and selective association) "entail self-reinforcing feedback loops and problems of collective action. "Inequality traps" arise. Yet, policy interventions exist that can reduce the disparities". However, there is increasing debate whether it is politics that determine if such policies are adopted. Indeed, politics functions as a rallying point between government, the people and policy. Hence policy and politics are salient in the making and the unmaking of conflicts.

The Lugardian policy of "indirect rule" can be seen from the lenses of collective reputation and selective association. This is because the policy attempted to minimize the contact between Nigerians and in Jos metropolis like elsewhere in Nigeria it was used to keep culturally dissimilar ethnic groups separate. James Coleman (1958:162) describes the indirect rule programme as one designed to:

Minimize the contact between educated Africans and the illiterate masses was implicit in Lugard's plan for a government educational system in the Northern Provinces, which included (1) cantonment schools for educated southerners, to confine them to urban communities and isolate them from the native administration system; (2) the training of northern mallamai to replace Western-educated clerks; and (3) the education of chiefs' sons, which had been the main motivation for opening Nassarawa School in Kano and Kings College in Lagos in 1909...The Lugardian policy of excluding educated elements from the native authority system and of preventing their contact with the masses was not peculiar to the north, although it was more through going and endured much longer there than elsewhere. It was characteristic of the official attitude throughout Nigeria until the early 1930s when signs of change began to appear.

The intent and result of the indirect rule policy and the subsequent division of Jos into Native Town and Township was not only to separate non-Africans from Africans but also to establish residential, administrative, and social segregation between different ethnic groups of Nigerian extraction. The colonial administration predicted there would be a gradual withdrawal of the more alien elements of the Native City population into the Township Sabon Gari [the Hausa term for "new town" but referring to Native Reservation]... [so that there might be] no disturbance or interference with the Native Administration (Jos Township Report for the First Quarter 1921, 208/1921). Although this view was later altered when the colonialists considered the possibility of amalgamation of the native reservation of the Township with the Native Town (Plateau Province, Office File 274/S.2, 1950-55 NAK), it was merely a consideration as it never happened. The point to underscore is that different groups of Nigerian extraction were systematically and perpetually kept separated. To be precise, the colonial policy did not allow for genuine integration between the Hausa and Fulani groups and groups of Plateau extraction like the Afizere, Anaguta and the Berom. This is because the later considered the former as historical oppressors and enemies.

Thus, the colonial policy and politics of that period created and sustained group inequality which Sen (2000) tagged 'unfreedom'. As already pointed out, inequality is not a thing but a relation. The relational view to inequality is a sociological approach which considers institutional and relational clusters in which people, power and organisations are positioned and connected (Loury, 2015). In this sense, a relational setting is a patterned matrix of institutional relationships among cultural, social, economic and political practices. By implication inequality is produced. The argument here is that colonial policy and politics in Jos metropolis produced and sustained the inequalities that exist between the Hausa and Fulani Muslims and Afizere, Anaguta and Berom Christians. Responding to this study, a renowned political scientist alluded to how the colonialists produced the inequality existing in Jos through their politics and policy; he argued:

The problem in Jos can be traced back to colonial politics. Although you cannot totally separate it from policy but it was more of colonial politics. The Hausa had moved from their earlier place of settlement when they first migrated to the northern Plateau area at Naraguta in 1902 to Jos in 1915. It will interest you to know that Colonialism attempted to make Jos a Hausa town. Indeed urban Jos was designated Hausa from 1915. This was done given the indirect rule system that was operational and the colonialist wanted to use the Emirs to control people they termed pagan tribes... However, the second set of colonial administrators after the Second World War deepened the identity crisis. It was within this period that people of the Middle Belt region further developed a common consciousness to stand against the Hausa and Fulani domination in northern Nigeria. The Middle Belt region and Jos particularly developed a Christian identity as against the Muslim identity of northern Nigeria. Thus, reforms in urban Jos after the Second World War saw Christian identity become synonymous with Middle Belt identity (Field interview, 2015).

This respondent's position aptly demonstrates what Mamdani (2002) called dilemmas of alien rule. While the indirect rule produced inequalities the Township Ordinance sustained it by reinforcing selective association and determining who lives where. The idea of moving the Government station from Naraguta to Jos was first mooted in 1913 and the designation of Jos as Hausa settlement compounded the already triggered issues on the Jos Plateau. Naraguta was first to be termed Hausa town; this was applied to their residential quarters up to 1913 because "majority of the people of the Naraguta village and the mining camp were Hausas", (Bingel, 1978:5). The colonial inconsistency in managing the issues emanating from the contending relationship between the Hausa and Plateau natives gave rise to the contestations over the founders of Jos city. From 1914, however, population increased in Jos tremendously due to the tin economy but the movement of the Government station from Naraguta to Jos was concluded in 1921. The trend have lingered with post-colonial Plateau State issuing local government indigene certificates and excluding several from the scheme of things.

*This study relied on qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. Primary data include Archival documents from National Archives Kaduna, Focus Group Discussions and interviews. The secondary sources include books, journal articles, Government white papers and Newspaper Editorials.