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Migration, Ethnicity and Sectional Politics in Takum Local Government of Taraba State

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Abstract

The politics of migration and identity has over the years created -stereotype allies, adversaries, historical accounts of migration and subsequently conflicts and violent struggles over the control of political, traditional and economic resources between the various ethnic nationalities in Takum local government of Taraba State. The paper examines this phenomenon using the inter-elite competition thesis of conflict theory. Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Findings in the study reveals that discovered that the politics of the local government is manipulated by a fragmented elite from all the ethnic nationalities particularly the Jukun who since the colonial era, through the Aku Uka, have access to power at the centre to disempower the other ethnic nationalities in the area. To resolve this problematic and create a harmonious relationship that will stimulate collective development, the paper recommends' amongst other strategies, the recognition and erection of a 1st class traditional stool in the area based on the core traditional ruling houses that had existed before colonial rule. It also recommends the recognition and erection of second class stool for the various ethnic nationalities in the area together with the sharing of political offices on rotational bases to the various ethnic groups in the local government and the provision of basic amenities by government to create employment for the people.

Introduction

Nigeria is a multi- cultural, religious and ethnic society with the various conglomerating units having their identity with associated traditional, cultural and belief systems. These various ethnic nationalities according to Makar (1994:34) have all migrated from one region within or outside Nigeria to settle at their current place of

abode. In the process of this migration and settlements, some ethnic groups were assimilated by others such as the Etulo and Nyifon who were assimilated by the populous Tiv. The Kutep, Chamba and Ichen ethnic identity has always been integrated into the Jukun traditional authority, the Igede for a long time were merged with and under a single first class chief with the Idoma amongst others. Within this politics of assimilation, there emerged two forms of integration or domination. One is the domination of the Hausa oligarchy that has been able to create hegemonic ties by *hausanizing* the northern part of Nigeria to the level that, the "minority" ethnic nationalities in the region have adopted the Hausa language as their *lingua franca*.

According to Kukah (2003:43), this politically created identity engendered the fissuring of northern minority ethnic group reaction and creation of counter ethnically-based platforms. Two, within the minority ethnic groups, the colonial masters created a "superior" ethnic group-the Jukun that was supposed to rule over the other "inferior" groups of Tiv, Kutep, Chamba, and Chen amongst others (Turaki, 1993, Akpar, 2012). It is worthy to emphasize that, the politics of migration and identity became intensified with colonial conquest.

The colonial imperialist in the bid to concretize the rule of the colony and reap the full benefit of their dominance off the indigenous ethnic nationalities constructed relationships between the various groups. We can argue that, the two legacies of the colonial contact are that, it fragmented African societies through an informal policy of divide and rule and destroyed the formation of classes by any stratum of indigenous society.

To achieve this effectively, the colonial powers manipulated the ethnic groups in the areas in a divisive power play by creating or inventing traditions that gave certain ethnic groups an edge over others. This is a condition that the colonialists manipulated to create tension and suspicion between the various ethnic groups as happened in Rwanda, Burundi and Angola. In Rwanda, it was between the Tutsi's and Hutu's and in the central region of Northern Nigerian particularly in Takum among the Tiv and Jukun and Kutep.

It is worthy to note that, colonialism distorted the cultural and ethnic boundaries of groups that had no viable structures and institutions that could be used in consolidating the interests and system created by colonial philosophy. Robbins (2002:302) argues that, the consequence of European division of Africa where ethnic groups had little opportunity or need to form political alliances has resulted in a continuous explosion of inhibited tension in form of ethnic conflicts. This situation has been exacerbated because,

colonialism created tribalism which conditioned every African to belong and hold strict allegiance to his or her ethnic group.

Arguing in the same direction, Geldof (2004:6) observed that colonialism imposed a new geographical context in Africa. That, this colonial imposed new geography made Africans to be more aware of ethnic divisions and passionate about their ethnic groups than the collective national identity. The chiefs that the colonialist depended on to rule in the case of British colonies became highly powerful, corrupt and oppressive as they used every means just like their colonial mentors to perpetuate themselves in power. As a result of this colonial legacy, most African countries became ethnically divided and their forceful fusion into nation-states entities without a negotiated parameter of resource distribution and power control has continued to create ethnic animosity which is often manipulated by the political elite to generate conflict.

Alkinson (1999:24) and Jinadu (2005:14) argue that, even though Africa nationalist fought for independence, they could not remain together due to the unhealed scars, recrimination, mutual fears and antagonism which undermined the emergence of a wholesome nationhood and a common citizenship.

In this condition, core democratic values and practices are sacrificed on the altar of ethnic chauvinistic considerations and religious identities. In Nigeria for instance, the federal character system and the zoning formula have conspired to entrench mediocrity at the expense of collective sharing to avoid the perceived marginalization of some ethnic groups. This system has benefited only the political elite because it has prevented checks and balances which were a major inherent character of traditional African societies. It is based on this background that the paper seeks to examine the history of migration and identity and how it affects the relationship between the major ethnic nationalities in Takum local government of Taraba state.

Theorizing the Problematic

This paper adopts conflict theory but particularly the inter-elite competition thesis of the theory to analyze. It argues that, ethnicity tends to produce conflicts when it is manipulated by the elite to further their interests. According to Osaghae (1991:21), the task and struggle of the elite is further facilitated by the scarce and limited resources, unequal distribution and allocation of these resources, and unequal access amongst the groups and access to these resources and opportunities for development.

Within this context, the elite become fragmented in the bid to acquire personal wealth in the quest to fight for the narrow interest of their group cajole other groups into prioritizing primordial sentiments to mobilize support to fight their perceived or actual enemies. In actual terms, the elite pursue only its interests and as such, the struggle is essentially designed to benefit those interests alone. As Osaghae argues, ethnicity does not acquire political relevance or violent expression, except people or groups are subjected to structural inequality and perceived political and economic gains seen as a reward for political mobilization along ethnic lines.

In this context, the elite create in the minds of their group an enemy image of the out group(s) and indoctrinate the in group the need to not only deprive the out group of resources but to also prevent them from exercising their constitutional rights in terms of participating in the decisions and the governance process of their society. In this situation, the elite present themselves as patriots and messengers of their ethnic group. They therefore create cultural and ethnic "cultist" and "militia" ideologies that consider themselves as superior and as such in control of the distribution of the resources of the society while at the same time consider other conglomerating groups as inferior hence the need to marginalize them.

It is within this argument that the paper adopts elite theory to analyze the identity and political agenda of groups in Takum local government. The various ethnic nationalities in Takum, which are; the Kutep, Jukun, Tiv, Chamba and other minority groups have experienced a continuous struggle between their elites in the selection of traditional and political offices, and have created a condition that has hampered the socio-economic, political and cultural development of the local government

Conceptualizing Migration and Identity Politics

The migratory system in Nigeria has given rise to large movements of many rural peasants in search of virgin lands for farming and grazing activities. It is worthy to state from the onset that, the provisions of the 1963 Republican Constitution anchors' the governance of Nigeria and provides in section 27 the freedom of every Nigerian to move freely throughout the territory regarded as Nigeria; and to reside in any part of the country of their choice. Section 27(3) states *inter alia* that, nothing shall invalidate any reasonable justified law that imposes restrictions on the acquisition or the use of land or other property in Nigeria.

The impetus giving by these provisions has over the years encouraged the migration of different groups of people from one place to another. It is also apt to note that, the history of all ethnic nationalities resident in Takum local government of Taraba now is the history of migration. This is because all the ethnic groups residing in the local government have all migrated from one region or the other to their present place of abode. We can therefore argue that, there are two types of populations in Takum. These are the so called indigenous populations who claim to have lived in the area before colonial demarcation of the area. This population because of the balkanization of the area by the colonial imperialist for administrative and-economic reasons was placed as rulers over other ethnic groups that had also lived in the area but were not favoured by the colonial authorities.

The second population is the migrant population which due to the need for land and the search for safety from their aggressive neighbours has migrated into new areas that fulfilled these two needs for them. Varvar (2008:25) argues that, migration has remained a major causality factor in the Nigeria State. He argues that, migrant populations maintain dual identity. These migrant populations usually have more attachment to their home areas. In some cases, when the leader of the community becomes the eldest person in a *Gerontocratic* system such as that of the, Jukun, Chamba, Kutep and Tiv, he is usually called "home", that is his original place of abode to take over the leadership of the family. It is therefore clear to see why maintenance of this dual identity has remained a flash point in inter-group relations between the various ethnic nationalities in Takum Local Government.

Identity is closely related to the problematic of migration. As people migrate in to new areas, they use their identity to create an image for themselves. Identity is a collection of criteria, and factors that define a subject and an internal feeling. This feeling of identity is made up of different feelings. Feelings of unity, coherence, belonging, values, autonomy and confidence -build around the will to live. Identity according to Ugbem (2012:23), identity is a combination of socio-cultural characteristics which individuals share, or is presumed to share with others on the basis of which one group may be distinguished from others. Identity has a combination of ethnic, religious, gender, class and other layers all of which refer to the same person either in self definition or as defined by others. Identity leads to the creation of in-groups and out-groups and these groups usually create stereotypes about the other and these further hold prejudices

based on these stereotypes and such prejudice leads to selective interactions and creates competition and reinforces the politics of exclusion and inclusion.

The character of the groups in Takum presents the typical nature of identity and the consequence of it in a plural society. We can therefore argue that the various groups that have migrated into Takum at different points have come to create identity for them and as such have created stereotype and consequently prejudice against each other hence the various conflicting points in their inter-group relations. It is pertinent to now examine the migratory story of the various groups especially the majority groups in Takum and to see how migration has affected the politics of identity in the area.

The Politics of Migrations into Takum Local Government

As earlier mentioned, it is a fact that all the ethnic groups residing in present day Takum migrated from different parts of the world to their present place. Others did not migrate into the area but became part of the local government by virtue of boundary creation in the process of delineating the boundaries of state/ administrative units. For instance, the Kuteb are of the Yukuben-Kuteb in Benue-Congo classification of ethnic groups who are mostly artisans distinguished in pottery making. The Kuteb according to oral narration by Yubun Azeda, interviewed at Takum on the 17th June, 2010 are also found in Cameroon. The migration and history of the Kuteb just like all other ethnic groups in the area is controversial as there are two variations of the origin and migration of the Kuteb into the area.

According to the version by Polycarp Istifanus, the progenitor of the people is Kuteb who had two sons, Ussa and Uppa. According to this version, Ussa who was the hardest working child got married to Iyaka and they begot Likam, Ayigban, Acha, Amcevu, Rubur, Ticwo, Askean and Lumbu. This version argues that, Uppa also got married later to Kufyenhiriman and gave birth to Arufun, Bika, Afwean and Aewuman. This is why these names are today the names of Kuteb districts in Takum Local Government area of Taraba State.

A second version of this argues that, the progenitor of the Kuteb is Likam, who got married to a woman of another stock and begot a son called Kuteb who later begot many children who today form the Kuteb nation. Whatever version we adopt, the fact is that, Likam and Kuteb appear in the two accounts and that the people are referred to as Kuteb shows that, Kuteb was the progenitor of the people.

The migratory movement of the Kuteb is traced to Egypt through to the Cameroon. It is argued that, Kuteb on arrival at the Cameroonian mountains met other migrating groups such as the Tiv, jukun Kpanzzo, Chamba, and Ichen among others. Due to ethnic wars and crisis over land, the Kuteb migrated eastwards in search of new land. According to Tyongwa Agyulu, a Kuteb traditional ruler interviewed on the 5th July, 2010, when Kuteb moved away from the Cameroonian mountains they settled first at a mountainous area where he decided to name the hills after his first son Ussa. He argues that, the Tiv who today settled alongside Kuteb were also migrating from *Swem* downwards and settled beside the Kuteb.

At Ussa hills, the population of Kuteb started increasing and the other children of Kuteb became jealous of the attachment of Ussa to their father. This jealousy soon resulted to conflicts hence the movement or dispersal of the different children of Kuteb to new lands. According to Musstapha (2000:134), Kuteb oral tradition has it that, by 1510 AD, Kuteb apportioned different portions of land to his descendants. Each clan has its hills and land boundary, which was marked by natural features like rivers and streams. According to his analysis of oral tradition, by 1600 AD, the capital of Kuteb was moved from Ussa to Mbarikani and the town of Taekum (now Takum) was developed south of the Mbarikani hills.

By the 19th Century, some portions of Kuteb clans seceded and settled in separate places forming independent clans and political units. By the 20th Century, the Kuteb kingdom was divided into Takum, and Ussa. The Kuteb people have the *Kukwen* as their political and spiritual leader who does not touch strangers or bath, if he does, the land will be ruined with poverty and famine. He is the head of the *Ndufu* (council of elders) drawn from all clans of the Kuteb ethnic group. He resides at the headquarters of the Kuteb people which is Likam at Mbarikani Hills.

Just like the Tiv, and the Ibo, the Kuteb political system is federal in nature. According to Ugbe (1973:4) although Likam is recognized as the senior and is consulted for societal decisions, the other clans also do have a degree of autonomy to take decisions in areas of maintaining peace and mobilising resources for the development of their people. The Kuteb also believe in God (*Rimam*) as the creator of heaven and earth and the provider of all things. To them *Kukwen* is the intermediary between the people, their ancestors and *Rimam*. It is *Kukwen* that receives from *Riman* and keep in custody the laws governing all Kuteb people.

The Jukun on the other hand are said to have migrated from the Arabian Peninsula and moved into Egypt around the 1350 AD. The controversies of this account cannot be resolved here. According to the Aku Uka of Wukari interviewed in 2010, when the Jihadist Islamic incursion started in Egypt around 570 AD, many of the non-Islamic ethnic nationalities left Egypt alongside the Kanuri and first settled at a place called Ngasargamu. He explained that, due to population explosion and contestations over resources with the people at Ngasargamu, the Jukunoid left Ngasargamu and migrated towards their present place of abode fighting anti-slave wars with Zaria, Borno and Kano. These it appears, are highly contentious accounts. Before arriving at their present place, the Jukunoid settled at Bepi, which was considered the head quarters of the Jukun before its movement to Wukari.

The Jukun, particularly the Jukun Wapan believes in the Aku Uka as their supreme leader and father. To this group of Jukun, the Aku Uka has power over life and death as well as over all the land in his domain. The Aku Uka has the power to decide the death of anybody under him. To portray this, the Jukun Wapa pays homage to the Aku Uka by touching their hands on the ground three times while greeting. This gesture signifies that, the Aku Uka has power over land, life, and death. According to the current Aku Uka mentioned earlier, the core Jukun usually carries three marks on their face particularly by the side of the mouth. The three marks shows that, the Jukun first respect goes to God, secondly, the Jukun believe and shows respect for the Aku Uka and thirdly, the Jukun believe and show respect for death.

It is worthy to note that, this supremacy of the Aku Uka is, not total to all Jukunoid. For instance, the Jukun Awuno (those in Abinsi) do not recognized the Aku Uka as their supreme leader. Their traditional rulers are also, not installed by the Aku Uka as it is the case of other Jukunoid such as Etulo. Instead, they are installed by the Tor Tiv. Informants of the Awuno stock argue that, the domineering attitude of the Aku Uka was responsible for pushing them out of Kwararafa and as such, they delinked completely from the Jukun Wapan who thinks the stool of the Aku Uka is their birthright.

On the part of the Tiv, The Tiv traditionally regards themselves as one indivisible family with a single or common progenitor. The term Tiv therefore carries multiple meanings; it is used to refer to an ethnic group (*Ityo I Tiv*), the language spoken by the people (*dzwa Tiv*) and the man (Tiv) who is regarded as the progenitor. A critical look at the works of Gbor (2006:vi) reveals that, Tiv origin can be traced under two sub-headings, this is the origin of Tiv on progenitor line

and the origin of Tiv based on alleged ancestral home or geographical migration. There are many historical or conceptual differentiations on the origin of the Tiv people; however, there is a consensus by scholars such as Makar (1994), Avav (2002), Gbor (2006), Agule (2007) and Agena (2011) on humanistic or linguistic origin of the Tiv people as belonging to the Bantu lineage in Africa. Therefore, in tracing Tiv origin, it is pertinent to understand their acclaimed parentage and original place of abode before their dispersal to different parts of the Benue Valley.

To Gordon (1999:23) the Tiv are a highly migratory people who have moved from the Congo and Nile River and the Chad Lake before arriving the Benue Valley. As Hembe (1983:44) observed, the tendency to migrate has remained one of the most persistent feature of the Tiv people. This desire to "keep moving" is determined by two constant goals of self determination and food security, (Bohannan, 1953, Hembe, 1983 and Jibo, 1993, Hagher, 2002). The Tiv are associated with the Bantu race. The Bantu *Nyanza* or the Bantu race is found in the present day Malawi and Democratic Republic of Congo. From this narration, the Tiv are considered as part of the Bantu race or what Iyo (2008:42) refers to as the Bantu continuum in the Congo region, and it is from there that they migrated to West Africa.

The Tiv therefore believe in the elasticity of land, which they can acquire and farm on at their own time. The Tiv also believe in the divine death of both the indigene of the land and the stranger to the land, and as such, everybody has the right to occupy any piece of land he can acquire. This belief is emphasised in a cherished Tiv song that goes thus;

Haan ma tar, ma tar kpa ka u warn tar la,
 Haan ma tar, ma tar kpa ka u warn tar la,
 Yio oo oo orya kpa kpe- orvanava kpa ka nan kpe
 This is translated thus;
 Every land, every land is my own
 Every land, every land is my own
 Yio oo oo, the property owner dies and the visitor (settler) also dies.

From the aforementioned, the Tiv political ideology became the struggle for the capture and use of farmland and they without hesitation fought whoever threatened their freedom and use of farmland. The scholars earlier mentioned insist that, during Tiv migratory escapade, the Tiv encountered the Fulani who were pastoralists and warmongers. The Tiv had a peaceful and cordial relationship with the Fulani as they exchanged food and animals. The

Tiv until today refer to *Sivem* as their ancestral home. The *Swem* is therefore venerated by the Tiv people and serves as a place where the Tiv take oath for truth, purity, and justice. It is also a place where all sorts of powers both positive and negative are derived from.

According to Denga (1995:9), Wuam (2006:27) and Agule (2007:2), evidence has it that, during their migratory journey, the Tiv crossed river Congo with the help of a snake called "*Ikyarem*" (a green non-poisonous snake) which bridged itself across the river for the Tiv to walk across away from their enemies. Reiterating this position, Yuhe (1978:30) claims that, the Tiv sat on the snake and the snake ferried them across from Congo to *Swem-Ka-Agbe*. Varvar (2008:73) moved on to say that, the enemies (*Mbaihomov*) were made to perish when the snake coiled back at the point the enemies were in the middle of the river in chase of Tiv, a gesture the Tiv reciprocate till date by not killing the *Ikyarem* snake.

The socio-political history of the Tiv during the pre-colonial era revealed two important characteristics. First, the society was characterized by a striking lack of centrality. Varvar (2003:8) notes that although the entire Tiv people lay claim to a single genealogical tree, there was no single political institution whose authority was felt throughout Tiv land. Rather, the area was divided into several lineages whose distribution exhibited correspondence between genealogical, social, and spatial distances, thus earning for the Tiv the description of a "segmental lineage system" (Horton, 1971:79). Invariably therefore, the Tiv lineages doubled as political units as well as kinship groups that lived in dispersed but territorially defined communities. This was why Fortes and Evans (1967:23) regarded the Tiv as an example of a stateless society, a perspective Horton accepted and described as "acephalous or stateless".

The migration of the Chamba people is also worthy of note in this paper. According to Makar (1994:31) the Chamba are said to have migrated from Tibati in the Cameroons and first settled at Adamawa. As warlike people that took pride in their military prowess, they engaged the Fulani at Adamawa and broke up into two streams one group settling at today's Donga and the other settling at today's Takum. According to Akpar (2012: 95), the Chamba had overrun the Kuteb but were soon curtailed to remain within this areas and their push further to occupy move land and to totally dislodge the Kuteb especially from Takum was their defeat by tactically superior Tiv military forces. The Chamba claim that they had ruled Takum before 1914 and after that they have been shut out of the kinship of Takum by the Kuteb, a stool they wish to reclaim. This claim is refuted by

oral tradition because evidence has shown that, the Chamba before colonial rule had only on traditional stool which was and still remain the *Gara* of Donga and as such could not have ruled the Kuteb at Takum especially as they were defeated by the Tiv who liberated the Kuteb from being captured by them (Chamba).

The Politics of Identity and its Implication on Intergroup Relations in Takum

The first point of controversy in the locality is the problem of the name Takum and the owner of such a name, in Taraba state, names are semiotic fault lines of the fight over resources; identity, possession and dispossession of economic resources especially land (Akpar 2012:95). Although Takum is the headquarters of the local government, there are counter claims of who are the original owners of the town and the real meaning of the word Takum. While the Kuteb claim and insist that the word "Takum" was a corruption of the word "Teekum" meaning; "we assemble". The claim of the Kuteb is backed by the fact that they were the earliest to settle in this area and they usually converged at Teekum for their religious, cultural, social and political activities festivals. This claim is rejected by the Jukun and Chamba on the ground that Takum is not a kuteb word but a Tiv word which means the sound of a gun and as such it cannot be a Kuteb word. According to Isa (2001:3), the combined team of Jukun and Chamba argues that, it was the German colonialist that corrected the Tiv word "tak kpu" to mean Takum. This argument is not accepted by the authors and oral tradition as there is no Tiv word like "tak kpu" and there is also no historical incidence that led to the exchange of bullets between the colonial Germans and the Tiv to have made the Germans familiar to a Tiv word of "tak kpu" in form of the sound of a gun. It is therefore conceivable that this argument is part of a process of rewriting and reconstructing history to suit elite groups that wish to contest the control of the area.

According to Isa (2011:6) the throne of the chiefdom has been occupied by only Kutebs since 1914, which has created a feeling of deprivation and otherwise because the Chamba feel short changed by this. The Chamba elites have argued that the deposition of the reigning Chamba Chief (Yamusa) in 1914 by the colonial state (British) was an excuse for some deeper political conflict between the British colonial office and Chamba people who had resisted British occupation of Takum and had invited the Germans to Takum. The Chambas argued that Yamusa was deposed by the British for daring to invite the Germans, as they maintained, "there were worst slave dealers than

Yamusa in other parts of Northern Nigeria who were left intact by the British (Best, 1988:95).

Another controversy in the settlement pattern in Takum is the argument of the Chamba that they defeated the Kuteb and took over the place called Takum. Historical records and oral traditions of Tiv, Kuteb and Jukun all showed that it was the Tiv that defeated the Chamba in the war to prevent them from pushing into the land that was already occupied by the Tiv and the Kuteb. This controversy and the thought that the Chamba having raided them for slave and wanting to dislodge them in their abode has created deep seated resentment between the Kuteb and the Chamba. This resentment is also in the Chamba who have felt that the kuteb have with the connivance of the british authority deprived them of occupying the traditional stool of Takum, the Chamba therefore have always allied with the Jukun elites who always wish to capitalize on the position of their elites in government positions to dislodge the Kuteb from controlling politics in the area and the traditional stool of *Kpuru kpante* to consolidate their hold on the status quo.

Although the crisis in Takum had colonial roots as a result of the colonial authority placing the Jukun over and above Kuteb as a result of their (Jukun) centralized nature of the Jukun and the assimilation of Chamba and other minority identities by Jukun identity and subsequent alliance of these groups against the Kuteb and the Tiv in the area. It is worthy to note that, the politics of who controls the cosmopolitan town of Takum and its traditional stool became more tensed with the creation of Ussa local government. When Ussa was created in 1996, the time the *kuru kpante* also died, the Jukun and their alliance began a tactical way of forcing the Kuteb to leave Takum for Ussa. Historically, Jukun superiority was mischievously created by the British colonialist began to wane by 1950. Mustapha (2000:114) observes that, the Kuteb had started asserting their identity and refused assimilation by the Jukun and their created supremacy.

The Kuteb realized that the Jukun had assimilated the Chamba and other minority groups and were determined to use this collective force against them. To prevent this plan to dominate and exclude them from politics of the area, the Kuteb sought an alliance with the Tiv and under the UMBC (a Tiv dominated party). They won the regional assembly seat in the 1959 elections for Tanko Yusuf against Sangari, a Jukun man. The Jukun were angered by this defeat and to prevent a repeat of the Tiv/Kuteb alliance, the Jukun relying on their elites stated a process of fragmenting the Kuteb by reducing the numbers of Kuteb kingmakers and replacing them with Chamba

kingmakers. The Jukun also tagged the Tiv as non indigenes that should be prevented from participating in the politics of the area. To make matters worse for the Kuteb, the Jukun clan head was made the chairman of the kingmakers. As earlier mentioned, this politics of identity became a topical or vital issue in the conflicts between the various ethnic groups in Takum.

It is worthy to state here that, the role of the Jukun/Chamba in the identity politics of Takum against the Kuteb became aggressive in the approach of partisan politics and all strategies were to be adopted to force them out. For instance, the 15th March, 1997 general elections, the Kuteb won the chairmanship in both Takum and Ussa, a development that was vehemently opposed to by the Chamba/Jukun elites. They insisted that, they (Jukun/Chamba) needed a Takum local government that will be totally controlled by them and not just a boundary adjustment. With the influence of Jukun/Chamba elites at the federal level, the boundaries were adjusted in favour of the Jukun/Chamba and the efforts to push the Kuteb and the Tiv out of Takum intensified. Again, in the 2007 and 2011 general elections, more Kuteb were pushed out from contesting for political office. For instance, S.Y Giwa a Kuteb from Takum was denied nomination for the house of representative and was publically asked to go to Ussa local government to contest.

It is worthy to mention here that, enjoying the patronage of Jukun/Chamba elites such as Gen. T. Y. Danjuma, Alhj. Chanchanji, Ibrahim Kefas amongst others and the Aku Uka of Wukari enjoys the benefits of the absence of the Chief of Takum. This is why the alliance has since 1996 prevented the coronation of a new *kuru kpante*. The controversy and discrimination is so tense that some Kuteb refused moving to Ussa but a development area called Yantu has been created for them. The call for a proper Yantu local government by the Kuteb has also been opposed by the Jukun alliance for reasons that the small Jukun and Chamba towns of Bete and Yukuben will be in Yatun Local government and as such might be marginalized by the majority Kuteb.

The Tiv also had their share of the identity discriminatory politics in Takum. Primary data reveal that, the non Tiv groups that control political power in the local government have intentionally refused to create more council wards in the Tiv dominated areas. The Kufai Amadu Council Ward which was created in March 1997 out of Chanchanji ward was cancelled after elections were held and the Tiv won. What this reveals is that, the non-Tiv groups fear that, the creation of more Tiv wards will give the Tiv more access to political authority, and with their (Tiv) population, it will be a matter of time

to achieve the 2/3 of winning the local government chairmanship and the House of Assembly seat. It is therefore clear that political marginalization in both elected and appointed offices have remained a major dimension of identity politics in the area.

Based on the calculations raised above, another emerging dimension of identity politics in Takum is that, recently, the Kuteb have realized that the Tiv are not their major enemy. The reason is that, the bone of contention between the Tiv and Kuteb has been land. However traditionally, the Tiv are not interested in the rulership of the Takum Traditional Council but only wish to be given district heads in areas they dominate. Politically, the Kuteb have also realized that with the *ya na angina principle* (eat and give a brother) of the Tiv, rotational power holding will ensue between the Tiv and the Kuteb while the Jukun alliance has a political culture that does not approve of this method of communal power sharing. The kuteb have also realized that with the population of the Tiv, their political desire to control the political power of the local government is more assured as the Tiv Council Ward of Chanchanji alone has more voting power than all the Jukun and proto- Jukun Wards. The figures below show the voters register and the voting votes in the recent past elections in Takum local government. Voters Registration Figure in Takum LGA as at the Local Government Election in 2008 was thus:

Name of Council Ward	Total Registered Voters
1. Chanchangi	17,108
2. Dutse	17,005
3. Rogo	10,070
4. Fele	8,810
5. Tikari	7,684
6. Manya	7,379
7. Bete	6,695
8. Gahwentun	6,566
9. Kashimbila	6,025
10. Yukuben	5,756
11. Shinbon	5,749
Total	98,847

Source: INEC Registration Voters Figure as at July 2012 Local Government Election

Below are also the Voters figures at the July 2012 local government elections in Takum local government.

Name of Council Ward	Total Cumulative of all the parties
Chanchangi	20,078
Dutse	12,700
Rogo	8,965
Fele	5,381
Tikari	6,150
Manya	4,650
Bete	4,106
Gahwentun	4,770
Kashimbila	5,460
Yukuben	3,000
Shinbon	2,869
Total	78,129

Source: TRSIEC Result Sheet as at the 2012 Local Government elections in Takum LG

The above figures shows that, Chanchangi, a council ward where the Tiv are dominant and where they produce an elected councilor is three times bigger than all the Jukun/Chamba Council Wards put together. On this account, the Kuteb seems to become more interested in a Tiv/Kuteb alliance as these figures if added to the Kuteb wards of Dutse, Rogo and Fele will naturally overwhelm the Jukun/Chamba alliance in any political contest. The Jukun/Chamba alliance is also not taking this calculation for granted. To fragment the Kuteb/Tiv alliance, they have resorted to political intimidation of the Tiv in Kashimbila and Chanchangi by instigating crisis during election periods and by relying on Fulani nomads to destabilize Tiv population by invading Tiv farms which usually results to conflict between the two. And once conflicts ensue between the Tiv and the Fulani nomads, the Jukun alliance quickly take over the conflict with the desire to push the Tiv out of the area.

It is also worthy to note here that, economic issues are also part of the problematic in Takum local government that is influenced by identity politics and elites manipulation. It is therefore important to appreciate that, in the whole of Takum local government; it is only Chanchangi (Peva) market that generates the greatest revenue. This marketed is located in the Tiv settlement of Chanchangi ward called Peva in honour of Tor Peva, a Tiv man who founded the settlement before colonial rule. However, with the control of government mercenaries and connections the jukun/chamba alliance has wrestled the management of the market from the hands of the Tiv traditional authorities that established the market and handed over to politicians

of Jukun stock (Akpar 2012:98)

The viable nature of the market system has continued to be a contentious issue in the identity politics of the area. Apart from taking over the management of these markets, the Jukun/Chamba elites have used their political powers to change the name of the markets from Peva to Chanchanji. It is worthy to note that, apart from the political calculations that are involved in this struggle over the markets, the lucrative worth of farm produce especially yam has also exacerbated the conflict over land which was hitherto not a problem between the Jukun and the Tiv.

Firstly, it required more land for large cultivation to guarantee large harvest, a condition that creates the greed for land and increased the settler/indigenes crisis. Secondly, it has created what the informants call "struggle for market". The yam markets in Taraba have not only increase in the number of yam trucks that depart the market on a daily bases but the revenue accruing to the market committees who control the market have become a source of conflict.

According to Haruna Rabiru and Tyover loryem both market leaders at the Peva yam market, during harvest period, about 40-50 trucks fully loaded with yams depart Chanchanji (Peva) market weekly and each of them pay about N3000-N5000 depending on the size of the truck to the market committee. It can be argued that, Jukun and even the Kuteb saw the need to conscript these hitherto Tiv established and dominate markets in order to reduce Tiv economic strength that was giving them (Tiv) advantage over political decisions in the area (Apkar:2012:103).

Conclusion

From the aforementioned it clear that the politics of migration and identity has affected inter-group relations in Takum local government, a condition that has also caused conflicts and thus affecting the nature of peace and development in the local government. We can therefore conclude that, for peace and development to be enshrined in Takum for accelerated development, the recognition and erection of traditional stool in the area based on core traditional ruling houses that had existed before colonial rule must be carried out. To resolve the identity crisis, all the other ethnic groups in the area must be recognised and their traditional chiefdoms created to give them a sense of belonging.

To avert the fear of political domination and marginalisation, a zone system should be established as to guarantee the sharing of political offices on rotational bases to the various ethnic groups in the

local government. Finally, government should provide basic amenities that will create employment for the people and create an enabling environment for private business to grow.

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Interviews

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