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Engaging Social Resilience as Strategic Framework in Inter-Group Relations: Implications for National Security Drive in Nigeria

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Abstract: The core objective of this study is to examine the extent to which the effective engagement of social resilience strategies could assist in mitigating social, economic and cultural as well as environmental disasters in Nigerian society. Research evidence from works of experts has revealed that due to the complexities of the Nigerian state, and in view of several ethnic conflicts, electoral violence, terrorism and terror attacks; banditry, flooding and many other disasters, it has been relatively complex for citizens to cope after these occurrences happen. Several states in Nigeria for example have been overtaking by increasing killings maiming, farmers-herders clashes, post-election violence, arm banditry, terrorism and insurgency. Quite a number of other states, especially those around the Niger/Benue River tributaries such as Kogi State, Delta State, Anambra state, and many riverine states, including Bayelsa and many others, have continued to face the ravaging challenges of flooding. In 2022 alone, hundreds of thousands of people have been evicted from their homes and their means of livelihood running into millions of US dollars have been destroyed by flooding. In Nigeria currently, there is a devastating effect of hunger, disease and malnutrition due to after-effect of flooding. By every standard, Nigerian citizens in some of these affected areas are living in dire strait while several farm lands have been taken over by excessive flooding, which is why there is a lingering shortage of food supply, unavailability of sea food, and lack of infrastructural development such as housing, and increasing rate of homelessness among the teeming population. This study explores works of experts in the broader field of intergroup and conflict studies designed to x-ray some of the factors and strategic policy alternatives that can be employed to mitigate adverse effects of such incidences as they pattern to the complex social groups living in the Nigerian political system. The study relies heavily on secondary research materials as a data collection method. The paper sums up with findings and recommendations.

Keywords: Intergroup, Relations, Conflict, Strategic Plan, National Security

1. Introduction

One of the evolving and disturbing global phenomena the world over is the dramatic socio-political, economic, environmental as well as cultural changes that have continued to take place unabated. Aslam, Teo, Ashantha and Abdul have argued that in the last two decades, nation-states, whether developing or developed, have experienced excruciating and devastating disasters in form of conflicts, climate change, outright wars, humanitarian crises, intense and adverse environmental conditions such as earthquakes, insecurity, volcanic eruptions and several cases of inter-communal rivalries which, more often than not, results to deaths, displacements, breakdown of mutual trusts and suspicion, among others [1]. In the classic works of Cox and Hamlen alluded that the desire for resilience capabilities

among nations globally in a bid to cope with changing circumstances have increased [2]. This position has been corroborated by Aldunce, et al., and UNISDR [3, 4]. Unarguably; most countries of the world have continued to face different challenges, some of which include rapid urbanization, development planning problems, exposure to environmental hazards, among others. The multiplier effects of all these are the rising tides of risks that have emerged and the associated losses that goes with the risks.

Quite a number of experts and particularly those within the ambit of security studies have claimed that while the question of environmental disasters might be peculiar to the western world, Africa faces her own unique problems. According to Marco, Assad and Ana while conflicts and insecurity festers in Sub-Saharan Africa, a number of peace-building approaches have been taken by many governments and agencies as leeway and response action to either wriggle out, or to simply enhance development pathways to such emerging conflict situations [5].

For most scholarly writings, especially those that x-ray conflicts and insecurity in the Sahel claim that insecurity in Africa has been on the rise. Little and McPek have maintained that for over two decades, several disputes have emerged involving transhumant pastoralists or what is generally referred to as herdsmen and rural peasant farmers [6]. These conflicts have, no doubt, escalated and parties in conflict have at various times employed lethal weapons and extremism, all of which have propelled dangerous humanitarian crisis in its wake. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has estimated that over 2.7 million persons have been evicted from their homes, while another 13.4 million others are in dire need of humanitarian supplies [7]. Instances have been given in conflict-prone countries such as those of Mali, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Southern Cameroon, Nigeria, among others. Fang, Kothari, Cameroon and Mustapha have confirmed the pervasive nature of insecurity among sectional groups and tribesmen in Africa when they noted that security breaches occasioned by conflicts among contending forces have been felt in terms of the nature and intensity and geographic distribution [8]. Conversely, inter-group conflicts in Africa, based on the statistical estimates show that in the 1990s alone, sectional altercations gave rise to over 825,000 deaths (representing over two-thirds of global conflicts-related deaths.

These deaths were propelled by the celebrated ethnic pogrom and wholesale genocide against Tutsi minorities by the Hutus in Rwanda. The same case can be said of the Ethiopian-Eritrean war, the bourgeoning war in Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra-Leone and Liberia.

In all of these, what has been the central theme in intergroup relations discourses in Third World countries generally is the complex nature of the society. Besides this, and for very obvious reasons, intergroup conflicts, which in itself is a platform that breeds insecurity finds expression in group rivalries, competition, and better still, it can be propelled by some kind of incongruence between contending groups over one form of group objectives or the other (Quadri & Oladajo, [9]). Thokore agree that any group as asserted by Quadri and Oladejo could be used to mean ethnic sects, race, nation-state system, class divide, religious groups or organizations [10].

For most critics, the argument in the public domain remain that Africa, and indeed Nigeria, is composed of multi-ethnic and culturally diverse entities each of which is unique in its own way. Nigeria, for example is believed to have well over 320 sub-ethnic minority groups. This is aside from the dominant majority conglomerates such as Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba. What we have experienced over time is a nation that is effectively polarized and divided along parochial lines with hardly any remedy to mend fences. It goes to say therefore that all previously known conflicts in Nigeria since the emergence of the Nigerian state either during the pre-colonial or post-colonial historical epochs take their roots from unstable intergroup relations.

According to Idowu and Bujra, the basis for all political conflicts in Nigeria's past and present rests squarely on weak political structures and institutions defined largely by ethnic configurations and manipulation [11, 12]. Therefore, from the Nigerian civil war to all other internal rancor such as the Ife-Modakeke rifts, the Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts, the Jukun-Tiv Fracas; the Ogoja-Obudu-Tiv crisis, the Zango-Kataf mayhem and several crises around Southern Kaduna, Benue, Nasarawa, Zamfara, Plateau states and elsewhere, are all attributes of a failed heterogeneous system showing up through a fragile intergroup relations.

To most radical scholars, such as Idowu, Kazah-Toure and Bujra, averred that while we may want to erroneously believe that conflicts in Nigeria as elsewhere are products of colonization, a significant percentage of intergroup squabbles are inherent in the people themselves [13, 14]. Idowu went ahead to claim that in Nigeria's post-colonial system, individuals and groups that continue to demonstrate strong resolve for greed, irreconcilable struggle and competition for political power, each of which could breed dangerous rivalry and antagonism in the system. Besides this fact, Kazah-Toure and Bujra had earlier lamented that one of the most worrisome factors that have continued to fuel continuous intergroup rivalries is the nature of political aristocracy implanted by the colonial masters which places greater emphasis on a divide-and-rule tactics, and hence, create a huge gulf in previously existing mutual trust among the various social sects in society. Unarguably, the prevailing resurgence of insecurity and conflicts, and particularly, those within the political environments, appear to have created a fertile ground for security breaches. The result of this development is that while the government is overwhelmed by the spiraling economic conditions of the state and continue to explore alternative economic matrix on the way out of the quagmire, insecurity arising from intergroup disturbances have consistently diverted a chunk of government's financial expenditures and created more room for borrowing from international donors with reckless abandon.

2. Conceptual Issues

Intergroup Relations (Correct)

Historical experts such as Uwomano have argued that the concept of intergroup relations has been around for some times [15]. As a critical feature in Nigeria's pre-colonial history, the concept has continued to evoke a sense of homogeneity among its users over a period of time. Nonetheless, and due to the changing nature of intellectualism, the concept has enjoyed some level of historical transformation and historiographic revolution brought about by some of these changes.

In any case however, the social groups in Nigeria appear to have since time immemorial, preserved its relationships and good neighborliness which is believed to have existed long before colonialism. According to Afigbo traditional African societies (Nigeria inclusive), have over time, been guided by their rich cultural heritage, tradition and common sense of negritude [16]. As earlier pointed out, and due to the emerging conceptual innovations in intergroup relations, concepts have been reconstructed. What is obtainable and indeed, have gained currency among historians is the fact that ideal contents, patterns and forms the concept is taking and the way and manner intergroup relations have expressed itself between and amongst sectional groups is of immense concern.

In view of the aforementioned, Sheriff and Sheriff cited in Afigbo has claimed that intergroup relations makes sense when discussed within the context of friendship or hospitality that exists between groups in society [17]. What Sheriff and Sheriff have adduced here is that within the prism of friendship and hospitality, social groups can effectively engender the spirit of corporation, competition, dominance and subordination. The multiplier effect of this is that the social interaction among contending centripetal forces could snowball into unhealthy alliance, war, conflict due to differences in preferences and ideologies. This position put forward by Sheriff and Sheriff has been criticized as been too simplistic. The reason is because they have failed to look at the activities of groups. Instead, what the scholars have done is unfortunately restricted to defining behavior of groups in their relationship with one another.

However, Afigbo has opined that intergroup relations as a concept should be seen as multi-faceted concept in view of its operational dynamics. To this end, Afigbo alluded that the concept finds expression in the nature of political behaviors of a nation as well the economic, cultural and technological factors. It also demonstrates the extent and dimension of societal philosophies, legal system, language pattern, and religion and the overall societal cosmological orientations, etc.

Social Resilience Explained (correct)

The concept of resilience, from the point of view of physical scientists connotes the continuous emphasis on the general persistence and subsistence of the ecosystem. It essentially looks at the changes that continued to occur around the social-ecological systems and change in relation to human adaptations good enough to engender requisite social transformation in the face of global change. Markus and Patrick agree that this kind of change follows a very unique pattern or sequence, and encapsulates essential elements some of which include transformability, adaptability and persistability [18]. On the other hand, Obrist et al has pointed out that what constitutes social resilience concerns itself with diverse social entities whether they are organizations, individuals or communities and the extent to which these individuals or groups muster sufficient capacity and rapacity to tolerate, cope and absorb environmental externalities and threats to their immediate social horizon [19]. Threats in this case could be used to mean any form of risks, stress, and fear or to a significant degree, insecurity.

National Security (correct)

To Afolabi security can be problematic in terms of definition. What this means is that the concept and its usage is contingent on the ideological persuasion of the scholar concern [20]. Afolabi then argue that when we talk about security, we are simply referring to an environment where there is absolute peace, gladness, safety and protection of lives and properties. This is antithetical to insecurity which describes the direct opposite of what security stands for. Afolabi then averted that security can take the form of economic, food, environmental, personal, community, health and political security.

On the other hand, political experts and intelligentsias have noted that national security has a universal appeal. A number of independent nations of the world, in the event of global uncertainties have developed widespread affection on how well they can manage their territorial boundaries. To this end, national security could be used to mean the ambitious steps designed to preserve and protect the sovereignty of any given state from external aggression. This definition confirms what Brown had earlier postulated [21]. According to Brown, national security as the capacity to preserve and protect a nation's interest, territory or sovereignty. Corroborating this point as opined by Brown, Abolurin and Adedoyi have maintained that national security, though ambiguous in its orientation, defines a nation's quest to effectively maintain its socio-economic intercourse and relations with the outside world in the international global arena [22, 23].

Lippmann cited in Afolabi informed that national security rests on two schools of thought [24]. First, is the traditional security and contemporary security paradigm. Thus while the realist traditional paradigm subsists on aggression and in some cases, outright confrontation and war, the contemporary thinking, on the other hand, thrives in citizen diplomacy and all aspects of national democratic injunctions and dictates.

3. Nexus Between Social Resilience, Intergroup Relations and National Security

Parmak in his studies on national resilience in multinational societies has noted that resilience at any

dimension within social systems is a function of the capacity available to manage in successful terms existing or unexpected pressures confronting such social systems [25]. What this implies is that within social groups, there is the likelihood occurrence of conflict of interest, especially in a multilingual and socially diverse political community. The differences that exist in terms of either needs or competition for space could become formidable avenue for conflicts, which in turn, snowball into full-scale insecurity within a defined national entity.

Buttressing the position held by Parmak, Stefano, Francesca, Laura, Danielle and Antonio had earlier informed that individual members of society naturally belong to social groups [26]. The purpose of this is ostensibly to derive certain indispensable psychological or existential needs. To a greater or lesser extent, membership of a social group helps adherents to clearly define their personalities as well as the extent to which they are able to interact with the outside world. The ensuing social identity that follows and hence, creates room for group, based behaviors namely, social stereotyping, inter-group competition, unhealthy rivalries and ethnocentrism, could all develop into greater inter-group fracas, which may graduate into national security threat (Tajfel & Turner, and Hogg, Terry and McKimmie [27, 28].

4. Implications of Social Resilience in Intergroup Relations on Nigeria's National Security

Extant historical literature on the political development of Nigeria indicates that the nation is a colonial creation. Iwendi for instance argue that the unfortunate marriage between the Nigerian North and Southern regions of the country since 1914 sounded a death Knell on the nation's foundation for peace and tranquility [29]. Thus the infamous amalgamation, from most political analysts, which apparently gave birth to the incorporation of all other sub-national traditional enclaves undoubtedly set in motion what, was later to be expected in the ensuing emerging social clusters in the country. From Iwendi's analysis, Nigeria's social groups namely, autonomous city states, empires, kingdoms, etc, which hitherto existed as independent entities were at this stage submerged together ostensibly to placate the whims and caprices of the colonial masters. The background analysis as presented in the aforementioned gives a clearer picture of the composition of the Nigerian system with diverse and wide ranging ethnic and linguistic configurations. According to Otite averred that as a federating political unit, Nigeria is home to approximately over 250 ethnic nationalities [30].

These groups, no doubt, are a direct reflection of the complexities framed around the nation's ethno-linguistic and multi-cultural spread of the nation to this day. The diversity manifests essentially in the nature of relationship that have continued to fester in the country. Again, historical experts have claimed that Nigeria's diversity, as it were, has largely stood at the centre of not only socio-political and economic

discourses, but basically influenced and directed the compass of intergroup relations. In this wise, Muhammad, Ayinla and Adeoye has lamented that what is practicable in Nigeria, and in virtually all aspects of the nation's life circle is the spirit and letters of regionalism, religious sentiments, ethnic chauvinism and all what nots [31]. It logically follows that intergroup relations in Nigeria adequately flourish under the toga of mutual hate and intolerance, discrimination, indigene-settler syndrome, nepotism and fundamentally, political tension exemplified by myriads of conflicts around the Nigerian state as is being witnessed currently.

Iwendi had queried that the colonial amalgamation of Nigeria's north and Southern protectorates has ushered in a new form of intergroup relations, and with the way and manner the process of amalgamation was conceived, there exists a gap in the whole calculations with dire futuristic consequences. Consequently, and to the character and content of the "unfortunate union", which to critics, was pervasive and politically and economically motivated, has further aggravated and heightened the already existing ethnic cleavages and animosity in Nigeria to a significant level. Ayinla et al, agree that regional sentiments characterized by ethnicity in Nigeria merely serve to reinforce the subsisting and dominant ethnic groupings such as those of the Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba [32].

It is needless to say that engendering peace and tranquility in Nigeria requires that all ethnic nationalities come to terms with the fact that there is need for tolerance, good neighborliness, mutual understanding, equity and the likes. There is also the dire need to ensure that the provisions and letters of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are clearly interpreted, respected and applied. The constitution as mentioned tells us that all of us, irrespective of ethnicity or creed, are equal before the law. Deliberate misrepresentation of this document to suit personal political interest, much to the neglect of the core principles of democratic practice as enshrined in the constitution could breed resentment, intolerance and conflicts. On the other hand, equitable application and administration of the core values of the constitution on all citizens, will no doubt, entrench collective interests, which in turn, enhances socio-economic and political stability with far-reaching implications for Nigeria's national security and development politically, economically and otherwise.

5. Challenges Militating Against Building Resilience in Intergroup Relations for Enhanced National Security in Nigeria

To better appreciate the challenges that have continued to confront the Nigerian state in her bid to build a viable social resilience aimed at tackling insecurity, there is need to look at the dynamics of the nation's political economy as at point of departure. According to Herbert and Husaini the challenges are mixed [33]. Conversely, Herbert and Husaini insist that the nature of Nigeria's socio-economic, cultural, political and

environmental circumstances stand tall, and hence, are sufficiently opposed to meaningful national security. From a historical standpoint, it has been widely argued that the modern day Nigeria has a trajectory of very disturbing, turbulent, vicious and violent political history. Iwendi had earlier posited that aside from the inordinate drive of the colonial administration to foster divisive politics of "divide and rule" on African Natives (Nigeria inclusive), through the instrumentality of the indirect rule system, the activities of Nigerian power elites have been a major setback. For very obvious reasons, it can be said that the roles played by Nigerian 'egg-heads' and 'nationalists', some of whom include, but not limited to the likes of Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sir, Ahmadu Bello, etc, in their bid to outshine political rivals from other regions speak volume. According to Ayinla the stage for conflict was conceived and delivered by some of these political ideologies. For instance, while the political parties that existed at the time were national in appearance and nomenclature, the actual party activities were more or less those of ethnic bigots whose overall interest were regional and sentimental considerations.

In most literature, it has been argued that while Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe established and nurtured the National Council of Nigeria Citizen (NCNC) though national in outlook, was not necessary national in its character and content. Again, the Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group (AG) and Alhaji Tafawa Balewa's Northern People's Congress (NPC) were all fashioned and meant to serve sectional or regional interests. The elevation of ethnic sentiments which saw Chief Awolowo re-echoing the "Omo Egbe Oduduwa" slogan and the 'Arewa' cliché popularized by Sir Ahmadu Bello has since prepared fertile ground for the ensuing ethnic politics in Nigeria today. To be sure, the polarization of the Nigerian state gave rise to the over 30 months bloody civil war way back in the 1970s; the Niger-Delta imbroglio in South-South geo-political zone; the Boko Haram terrorism which erupted around 2009, and of course, a plethora of other security threats such as IPOB agitations, banditry, insurgency and the herders-farmers clashes, among others.

Herbert and Husaini have claimed that Nigeria is currently worse for off in terms of socio-economic drivers to conflicts. To these scholars, what lies at the centre of instability is the monolithic oil-dependent economy. The over-reliance on crude oil economy has, no doubt, created a corresponding dependent political economy which in turn, has further engendered national and international elites whose main purpose is rent seeking and primitive accumulation. The adverse effect of this state of affairs is that the political system has laid a veritable foundation with extremely high and exclusive political settlement oiled by corruption. Corruption and corrupt practices on the other hand, has literally delegitimized the political system so much so that what goes on in the polity is increasing inequality, injustice in the process of distribution of the nation's commonwealth, insecurity of massive scale and proportion as well as grounding inflation and poverty. The stark reality is that

while some of these anomalies persist, the momentum of grievances also escalates among the teeming and growing populace. The gap keeps widening, and it appears that the Nigerian masses, who are already enmeshed in disenchantment and anger, are now ever ready to unleash the venom on just everyone they can easily find around. The transmission of this kind of aggression filters into the larger Nigerian space if unchecked. It goes to explain the more reason why, in spite of every social resilience strategies being put in place by the government, they can hardly promote intergroup dialogue and peace. The reason is simple. There is no sufficient antidote yet with which to calm frayed nerves, the result of which could eventually cascade into large scale insecurity as is being witnessed in Nigeria at the moment.

While the aspect of corruption in the system can be said to breed many other challenges to resilience building in intergroup relations in Nigeria, the socio-cultural and political factors are also critical. In the first instanced, the heterogeneous Nigerian population, overlapping ethnic and religious, regional and communal ethnic identities effectively mark the nation's fault lines, each of which claims of violent conflicts are vested. For instance, the North-South political dichotomy reinforces itself in regional and ethnic/religious divisions, which though had existed as political fissures during the colonial period, but still plays out even during the period after independence to the present democratic experiment. On the other hand, the political environment is such that Nigeria's diversities have been constantly exploited by the opportunistic elites and politicians. The latter appears to have the arsenal good enough to manipulate and control the minds of ordinary Nigerians rising chauvinistic political expressions based on ethnicity, religion and other regional sentiment ostensibly to shore up support from the people this is itself has the capacity to mobilize one group against the other and can also instigate national security in the nation.

6. Strategies for Building Social Resilience in Intergroup Relations for Enhanced National Security in Nigeria

As earlier pointed out in this study, Nigeria is a colonial creation and the nature of diversity inherent in the country's multi-ethnic and linguistic fusion is essentially the basis for all other conflicts and insecurity in the country. The classic works of Iruonagbe and Tayo has revealed that the Nigerian pre-colonial system existed as tribal sect even before the incursion of the British colonialists [34]. These scholars have argued that due to the application of what they call "British diplomacy" coupled with the convocation of the erstwhile Berlin Conference of 1885, the stage was set to facilitate the depletion of the African culture and people into a more antagonizing groups with one group pitched against the other. Therefore, with partitioning and balkanization of the African existing native communities, and the exploitation of the common bond of the people, diverse ethnic groups and ethnic rivalries cropped up. Iruonagbe and Tayo then went ahead to

insist that the ensuing disarticulation, disorientation and increasing subjugation of the African Natives by the colonialists pave way for ethnic rivalries that Africa had to content with to date. Among other things, some of the contentions issues that have continued to attract heated debates as it patterns to intergroup squabbles in Nigeria include questions surrounding resource allocation, boundary adjustment, the scramble for resource control, minority question and/or agitations; constitutional amendments, sectional agitations, religious bigotry as well as leadership crisis, especially at the central level. The compulsion to continue to co-exist by groups who appear to have little or nothing in common has gravitated into social dislocation and disruption, violent conflicts, displacement, mutual suspicion and rising security threats of greater proportion.

Undoubtedly, insecurity and conflicts have the potentials to destroy the already feeble foundations of national unity, peace and tranquility. It can be also be detrimental to nation-building drive as well as negatively affect intergroup relations. The reason is because ethnic pressures and demands can be inimical to nation-building if wrong group aspirations are not properly checked. It also questions and challenge the legitimacy and sovereignty of a state. According to Iruonagbe and Tayo the conflict situation as has been recently witnessed is not only the one of elite/masses divide, but basically orchestrated by group struggle and counter struggles for state scarce resources. Thus of all the conflicts that have occurred in Nigeria since inception of democratic project in 1999 and even during the military era, have been sufficiently linked to ethnicity or other associated factors. References have been made to conflicts such as the Ijaw-Itsekiri, the Ife-Modakeke crisis in Osun state; the Tiv-Jukun conflicts in Benue state and Taraba states, the Alago-Tiv crisis in Nasarawa, among others.

What is however, important is the strategies of building equitable social resilience in order to tackle some of these fracas as they relate to intergroup relations and Nigeria's national security. While we argue that conflict itself is inevitable in modern society, what constitutes the conflict resolution strategies and mechanisms available to government, and indeed other stakeholders, is of critical importance. Over time, a considerable number of security experts have indicated increasing interests in the resolution of conflicts using social resilience strategies and techniques. For instance, mention has been made of experts such as Harowitz and Wang and Richardson. These scholars have maintained that while many social issues and conflicts may be effectively addressed, ethnic differences are hardly effectively resolved. What these scholars have said as panacea towards resolving deep-seated intergroup skirmishes include, but not limited to, reduction in the momentum of conflicts, generating flexible and a more accessible points of power, raising the saliency and quality of discussion on intra-ethnic conflicts, creating a more robust incentives for inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation as well as encouraging inter-group alignment which is premised on achieving collective interests rather than promoting ethnic differences. All of these have been considered as avenues that can tackle national security in Nigeria.

According to Imobighe demonstrates that building effective social resilience for the mitigation of insecurity should take the form of negotiation and interaction with parties in conflict. Nonetheless, the technique for adoption is contingent on the type of goals to be achieved in the course of negotiation. Conversely, two very important techniques for building social resilience have been suggested. They include coercive and non-coercive techniques. The former subscribes to the use of pressure to arrive at concession. On the other hand, the non-coercive methods drive towards mutual consents between aggrieved parties in conflict. Again, Imobighe has outlined some of these techniques to include the ability to gain adequate understanding of the concerns and fears of the opponent; the preparedness to accept compromise, avoidance of the tendency to take undue advantage of opponents in intergroup conflicts as well as the need to build golden bridges around opponents for their possible retreats. Besides, there can also be third party mediation strategies some of which include judicial techniques, adoption and utilization of power politics techniques as well as conciliatory tactics. Each of these techniques depends on the particularity of the environment within which inter-group relations exists and the nature of conflict arbitration, resolution, threats as well as the way and manner the problems are resolved.

7. Conclusion

This paper is an evaluation of the extent to which social resilience can be built among persons or groups in society. The paper particularly examined social resilience in inter-group relations using the multifarious and heterogeneous ethnic groups as a point of departure. The work contends that though, nation states of the world may face different challenges within their political space such as inclement weather conditions, climate change, and hurricanes and so on. These countries, unlike Nigeria may not have common socio-economic and political circumstances. We argue therefore that while changes in global weather conditions are largely responsible for the increasing occurrence of environmental disasters in developed nations, the reverse is the case in most Third world countries. The work as x-rayed insecurity in Nigeria's social system, and concludes that a vast array of distrust, conflicts, agitations and violence take their roots from the clutches of Nigeria's colonial past. Characteristically, the Nigerian Natives, whom, it is believed, have been polarized and balkanized by the twin evils of colonial exploitation and disintegration, have been said to have lived peacefully before the arrival of the colonialist. The changes that have continued to occur, and with devastating sectional effects gave rise to several other conflicts believed to have been bequeathed on Africans, namely, Nigerian ethnic groups by the colonial masters.

Be that as it may, what has been seen and witnessed over time are a thriving ethno-religious conflicts, agitation and

competition for space by sections of the polity pitted against the other and so on. This study found that so long as the Nigerian people, inclusive of the power elites and the governed, have held on to this divisive tendencies, it is as well pretty difficult to effectively address the remote and immediate predisposing factors to insecurity and inter-group conflicts. What can be done, in view of this paper, however, is to suggest that there should be adequate steps to address the calls for restructuring. The latter has been around for some time, and the debate for systemic reorganization and restructuring where all the hitherto existing regional enclaves are harnessed and re-positioned is timely and critical. Again, while this paper is not calling for national disintegration, the whole essence of this message is to say that, the unfortunate marriage of convenience, which was earlier initiated by the colonialists, should be revisited. What this means is that government should look deeply into the merits and demerits of inter-group agitations, do a SWAT analysis of the development and see how each of the groups can be given a soft landing. We know of countries, for example, the United Kingdom, who after several consultations and parliamentary debates, have successfully exited from Europe in the form of Brexit. We can replicate the same gesture in Nigeria, and amicably resolve some of the lingering socioeconomic, political and cu9ltural encumbrances bedeviling the nation.

Again, the study calls for decentralization and diffusion of political powers from the nation's central government to the adjoining units. This is so that other subsidiary units-states and local authorities can exercise a fair share of financial and resource-based independence and authorities. It has been discovered that a vast majority of insecurity in Nigeria today stems from insufficient access to national patrimony, commonwealth and opportunities. The over concentration of political powers in Abuja and elsewhere should be checked and, hence, readjusted to address this. Above all, there should be continuous inter-group dialogue and a demonstration of genuine political will to resolve burning national issues such as ethnicity. The tendency for power elites to continue to make inflammatory utterances in either the nation's media houses (TV, radio stations, etc) is not good for the health of the nation. People, and indeed, various ethnic groups in Nigeria tend to adhere to some of these negative utterances by their respective ethnic leaders. What happens therefore is that a number of inter-group rivalry and conflicts are direct offshoot of what some of these adherents see and hear their leaders speak or act.

It is the considered opinion of this paper that though, some of these suggestions enumerated here may not be sacrosanct and so, become last resort to addressing intergroup problems in Nigeria. However, we want to believe that the effective application of some of these strategies will no doubt, help to resolve the myriads of not only inter-group issues, but essentially, a plausible avenue with which government and other stakeholders can build a formidable and long-term inter-group relations as a sure way of ameliorating the bourgeoning national security challenges in the 21st century and beyond.

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