# Youth, Security and Community Development in Nigerian Conflict and Post-Conflict Eras

# Youth, Security and Community Development in Nigerian Conflict and Post-Conflict Eras

By

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To:

All youths struggling against all odds to make meaning out of life
and keep their heads in the midst of growing decadence.

The memory of Pa David Adefioye Adesoji, a vibrant and fearless
community leader who, despite all odds, left a lasting legacy.
He will continually be remembered.

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# SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

# INTRODUCTION

Youths, categorised, and variously labelled and stereotyped, remain a vibrant and significant section of the population of every society. Described as a period of life between childhood and adulthood, the social conception and age categorisation of 'youth' differ across societies and even organisations, but peculiar to them is a mindset of youthfulness, which adults tend not to have. This mindset manifests in characteristics such as the display of uncommon or unusual energy, impulsive and abrasive actions, aggression, enthusiasm, adventurousness and impetuousness, among others. The emergence of these characteristics, especially salient for addressing issues of authority, agency, and consciousness, has been noted.[1] Similarly, their links at organisational level, directly and indirectly, with religious or ethno-nationalist movements, point at their vibrancy, but also show the use to which they could put themselves.[2] Essentially, the struggles and challenges of youths shape how they, as a social group, respond to, or more broadly relate to, the society and the state in terms of engagement or disengagement, incorporation or alienation, rapprochement or resistance, integration or deviance.[3]

The ability of youths to contribute to, and secure, the socio-political and economic development of their communities, dates back a long way.[4] However, they have been constrained by the peculiar (unfriendly and unsupportive) material conditions in which they are immersed, occasioned by bad governance, poor management of the economy, prolonged militarism, state repression, and violence. All of these, and other factors, have combined to create in the youths a culture that is tolerant of violence.[5]

Insecurity is a major global problem, but at varying levels of occurrence, regularity, and complexity. Its prevalence in Nigeria, like other African societies, is enormous. It manifests in diverse forms, such as theft, burglary, armed robbery, kidnapping, vandalism, ethnic and religious violence, and general restiveness, and the attendant loss, destruction and death that characterize insecurity have hindered development at different levels, including within local communities. Given their vigour and vulnerability, youths have become widely involved in various acts which generate insecurity in Nigeria. Unemployment, peer influence, exposure to hard

drugs, and previous participation in violent protests can pre-dispose, catalyse, or harden youths' involvement in acts capable of generating insecurity. Also, acts of insecurity limit or hinder community development in diverse ways, and truncate or frustrate youth development.

The Ile-Ife and Modakeke conflicts which lasted from 1996 to 2000 provide an example of how youths involved in violent inter-communal clashes can turn out to be agents of insecurity, while still (ironically) providing a semblance of security. Exemplifying this irony was the major role played by youths as combatants in the conflict, and as vigilante group members repelling robbery attacks, and generally providing security in post-conflict period. In the Osun State of Nigeria, Ile-Ife and Modakeke are two contiguous Yoruba communities with hardly discernible boundaries, which have co-habited for about two centuries. Both communities, aided by the military alliances formed during the Yoruba wars of the 19th century, were involved in wars,[6] but the renewal of the conflicts in the closing decades of the 20th century, and particularly the massive youth involvement in those conflicts, deserves critical study.

This book assesses the impact of the renewed communal clashes on the youth, and the security and development of their communities in a post-conflict era. The approach involves determining and appraising their level of involvement in the clashes, its impact on them, and an examination of the involvement of the youths in the security and socio-political and economic development of their communities in the post-conflict era. This is particularly important to document because of the recurrent nature of criminal activities in the two communities. It is also important for a better understanding of the security issues in the two communities in the post-conflict era, such as the activities of vigilante groups, the growing culture of impunity, the threat of the use of charms, even in personal conflicts, the increasing level of drug addiction and the unusually daring nature of the youths, among others.

The book specifically explores the relevance of youths in the context of their contributions and challenges to the security and development of Ile-Ife and Modakeke communities. It also traces, and places in proper historical context, the origin, features and manifestation of intercommunal conflicts in Ile-Ife and Modakeke. Furthermore, the study examines and assesses the forms and levels of youth involvement in intercommunity conflict in Ile-Ife and Modakeke and the implications of youth involvement in intercommunal conflicts on the security and socio-economic development of Ile-Ife and Modakeke.

The renewed phase of the Ife-Modakeke crisis began in 1981 and re-occurred in 1983 when party politics and the quest for power by the political class combined to provoke it. These developments aided the growing quest for self-determination by the Modakeke community, and the unresolved problems of chieftaincy and ownership, usage and control of land. This study begins in 1996 when the Osun State government announced the siting of the Ife East Local Government headquarters. The announcement provoked a round of conflicts. The last in the series of conflicts ended in 2000, but the ripple effects continue today. Thus, the study covers the conflicts that occurred between 1996 and 2000. However, developments before 1996 aid a better understanding of the study, thus they are either referred to or covered extensively, depending on their relevance.

The research mainly made use of primary data gathered through oral interviews at various times and from many informants. Different categories of people interviewed included: known youth leaders who played active roles in the conflicts in the two communities; leadership of youth organisations who mobilised their members for effective participation; leadership of organisations who, apart from being involved in the conflict, provided security for the communities after the conflicts; leadership of transport unions and artisan groups whose members, in addition to being involved in the conflicts, provided opportunities for some sort of employment for the involved youths after the crisis; leadership and men of the Nigeria Police Force who managed the conflict and criminal activities involving youths thereafter; community leaders, politicians and government officials who were involved in the rehabilitation of the youths after the conflicts; and local residents who have had escalating security problems to contend with. Data gathered from the various groups were analysed and situated in the context of available literature on youth involvement in community development and security-related issues.

The book contributes to the understanding of the security assets and liabilities that intercommunal conflicts in Ile-Ife and Modakeke gained through the youths. It provides a critical link in scholarship on youth as a phenomenon in different cultures and contexts. It highlights common traits of youths, relating to their abilities and capabilities, vulnerability and susceptibility, as well as their transformation and/or degeneration. It also explains how the youths could be different, given the kind of challenges and opportunities in their environment. It shows that the youths are important stakeholders in community development. A clearer understanding of militarized youths, who are in search of identity, and given limited opportunities, can provide a sound basis for policy formulation and

documentation intended to provide a logical solution to security-related problems, not only in the study area alone, but in the whole of Nigeria, and even elsewhere.

## The Ife-Modakeke Conflict: Exploring the Relevance of Rational Choice Theory

The rational choice theory, also known as choice theory or rational action theory, is a theory that refers to a set of guidelines that help understand economic and social behaviour. The theory originated in the 18th century, and can be traced back to political economist and philosopher, Adam Smith.[7] The theory postulates that an individual will perform a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether an option is right for him or her.[8] In other words, an individual uses rational calculations to make rational choices and achieve outcomes that are aligned with his or her own personal objectives.[9] It also suggests that an individual's self-driven rational actions will help better the overall economy. Rational choice theory looks at three concepts: rational actors, self-interest, and the invisible hand.

Rational choice theory is premised on the basis that the decisions made by individual actors will collectively produce aggregate social behaviour. The theory also assumes that individuals have preferences within the available alternatives. These preferences are assumed to be complete and transitive. Completeness refers to the individual being able to say which of the options they prefer. Alternatively, transitivity is where the individual weakly prefers one option over the other. The rational agent will then perform their own cost-benefit analysis using a variety of criteria to perform their self-determined best choice of action.

Although rational choice theory does not claim to describe the choice process, it helps predict the outcome and pattern of choice. It is consequently assumed that the individual is self-interested. Here, the individual comes to a decision that maximises personal advantage by balancing costs and benefits.[10] Rational choice theory has proposed that there are two outcomes of two choices regarding human action. First, the feasible region will be chosen within all the possible and related actions. Second, after the preferred option has been chosen, the feasible region that has been selected will be picked based on restriction of financial, legal, social, physical or emotional restrictions that the agent is facing. After that, a choice will be made based according to order of preference.[11]

Rational choice theory begins, firstly, from the viewpoint of the individual, as opposed to viewing several individuals, social situations, or groups, interacting together.[12] In the words of Abell "it is only individuals who ultimately take actions and social actions [...] individual actions and social actions are optimally chosen [...] individuals' actions and social actions are entirely concerned with their own welfare".[13] These basic assumptions portray the individual as an actor with an initial concern only about him or herself, as well as his or her welfare.

There are a few assumptions made by rational choice theorists. Abell notes three assumptions made by rational choice theorists. These assumptions further assume that it is individuals who ultimately take actions. Individuals, as actors in the society and everywhere, behave and act always as rational, self-calculating, self-interested and self-maximising beings, and these individual social actions are the ultimate source of larger social outcomes.[14] From this first overarching assumption derives the four other major assumptions, namely optimality, structures, self-regarding interest, and rationality. First, individuals choose their actions optimally, given their individual preferences as well as the opportunities or constraints with which the individuals are faced. Abell defines optimality as taking place when no other course of social action would be preferred by the individual over the course of action the individual has chosen. This does not mean that the course of action that the actor adopts is the best in terms of some objective, and outside judgment. Rational choice theory, therefore, assumes, according to Abell, that individuals "do the best they can, given their circumstances as they see them". Second, Abell argues that structures and norms that dictate a single course of action are merely special cases of rational choice theory. In other words, the range of choices in other circumstances differs from choices which exist in a strong structural circumstance, where there may be only one choice. Although these structures may be damaging to the rational choice model, individuals will often find a way to exercise action optimally, hence the rational choice model may not necessarily show harmony, consensus, or equality in courses of action.[15] Third, the self-interest assumption states that the actions of the individual are concerned entirely with his or her own welfare. Abell notes that, in as much as this is a key assumption in the rational choice approach, it is not as essential to the approach as the assumption on optimality. He also notes that various types of group sentiments could exist, such as cooperation, unselfishness, and charity, which may initially seem to be contrary to individual optimality. The fourth assumption is rationality which appears as the most predominant assumption of rational choice theory. All individuals, according to this assumption, act in ways that would benefit them more; every individual is

most likely to undertake courses of actions that they perceive to be the best possible option, and which would immensely be to their own advantage.[16]

Given its relevance in the political science subfield, as well as some other fields, rational choice theory has been commended as the prototype for a more deductive approach to political analysis. Specifically, it has been used to help predict human decision making and model for the future hence its usefulness in creating effective public policy, and enabling the government to develop solutions quickly and efficiently. Besides, it critically helps to understand the choices an individual or society makes. Even though some decisions are not entirely rational, the theory still helps to understand the motivations behind them. These benefits notwithstanding, rational choice theory has often been criticised as being too individualistic, minimalistic, and heavily focused on rational decisions in social actions.[17] Although sociologists tend to justify any human action as rational, because individuals are solely motivated by the pursuit of self-interest, the theory does not consider the possibility of pure altruism of a social exchange between individuals.

In applying rational choice theory to the Ife-Modakeke crisis, and especially the youth involvement in it, the following are obvious: On the one hand, there is the individual perception of youth, of either marginalisation, injustice, or oppression, together with the need to throw off such yokes, or even seek revenge, and on the other hand, there is the perception of the need to stop incessant harassment, displacement from family land, and threat of extermination. These are the major triggers for the conflict and its resurgence. Other consequential developments like loss of farmland, loss of prospects of employment, constricting spaces of opportunities, large scale destruction of lives and properties, combine to sharpen individual choices which are then subsumed or presented as being in the collective interest of the communities involved. The hyperactive youth involvement, which took several forms - from being combatants to providing varying forms of support - threw up leaders, several of whom died during the crisis, and the emergence of some others as heroes who were rewarded, which points to choices which they made and their eventual outcomes. In other words, their actions emanating from their choices, influenced by the structures or norms in their communities, over which they had little or no control, ultimately determined where they ended. Implicitly, this does not mean that they have made rational decisions or taken rational actions which could also have been influenced by emotion or unguarded sense of patriotism among other factors. Even when altruism, that is the need to defend, protect or liberate the communities as the case may be, was touted in the context of what

obtained in the two communities, and apparently to garner support, some side developments of the crises, such as desire for booties, recognition and the rewards that came after, as well as some of the youth's involvement in criminality, all point to the individualism involved. This also explains the use to which individual youths turned their experiences after the crisis as security consultants, guards, beer joint owners, political thugs, and mercenaries, among others. Significantly however, the ideational support for identity, justice, development, or recognition, for their communities, or the idea of preserving the *status quo* of land control or domination, and control over chieftaincy matters, have served to rally support for them. Pertinent also are the security assets that the youths collectively represent in the face of threat, such as warding off robbery attacks. These are developments that do not erase their individual choices, goals, how they go about accomplishing them and the eventual outcome of their choices.

## The Ife-Modakeke Conflict: State of Literature

This section surveys some works that have been written on the Ife region and the recurrent conflict that has plagued the area for some time.

Akintoye, Akinjogbin, Olaniyan, Oyediran, Ojo, and Akanji, lay the foundations for a proper understanding of the origin and the trajectory of the prolonged and recurrent conflict in the region. The emphasis of the authors was on the role of Ibadan in the sacking of Ife in the 19th century, their exile, and the growth of the influence of Oyo refugees ably supported by Ibadan in the region. Whereas Ibadan played a major role in the resettlement of Ife, the same development marked the whittling away of Ife influence and the gradual coming into reckoning of the Oyo refugees, first from being part of Ile-Ife and later as a separate settlement.[18] But Oyediran and Ojo escalate the discourse by probing those developments that built on the 19th century developments, and the quest for a separate identity by Modakeke following its establishment outside the wall of Ile-Ife. The incremental developments that dominated the first half of the 20th century, and the response of Ife community to them, were pointers to issues that dominated or characterised Ife-Modakeke relations since then. Specifically, Akinrinade and Akinjogbin discuss the role of Ooni Adesoji Aderemi in the management of Ife-Modakeke conflict during his reign, spanning a period of 50 years from 1930 to 1980. Their focus on the role played by Sir Aderemi and the perception of his activities forms the basis of the documentation and reflections made by other authors on the issues that dominated the affairs of the region beginning from the 1950s.[19]

The quest for separate identity and increased autonomy on the part of Modakeke, and the desire to exercise control over land and c matters on the part of Ife dominated the discourse and engaged the attention of such scholars as Adeyemi-Ale, Oladoyin and Babajimi, whose accounts are largely similar, varying only in details.[20] Beyond the common reflection on the issues at stake in the conflict, Oladoyin underscores the efforts of the state in the conflict and the extent of its success, an aspect that also engages the attention of Albert. Asiyanbola also notes the implications of the recurring conflict on the urban status of Ile-Ife and its implications, given the massive destruction that characterized the conflict.[21]

Whereas Albert elaborates on the subject of discourse of other authors, combining the historical aspect of the conflict with a nuanced discussion of the pertinent issues,[22] the likes of Oyeniyi and Lamidi emphasize peacemaking and peacebuilding.[23] In resolving the conflict however, Oyeniyi emphasizes the need for mass-oriented strategies given the propensity of the political leaders to benefit from conflict especially in terms of arms sale among other benefits. Along this line, Albert also explores and appraises third-party intervention in ensuring enduring peace in the region.[24]

In exploring the concept of strategy change better, but situated in a broader and different context, Oyeniyi interprets the persistence of the Ife-Modakeke conflict in terms of the gains accruable from violence to participants. He uses the greed-grievance debate to explain that the prospects of looting and stealing, rather than the stated objectives of grievance by actors, underwrites the Ife-Modakeke conflict and explains its recurrence. Very pertinent in his explanation is the situation of the history of the emergence of Modakeke, the problem at Ibadan, and the relationship of the Oyo refugees with their Ife landlords, all culminating in their insubordination and rebellion in the context of the debate.[25]

Given its centrality to the conflict, and its increasing prominence, either in its escalation or the efforts at resolving it, the concentration of Akanji on the subject of identity and group rights could be understood.[26] Meanwhile, in the context of the emphasis on group rights, Adesoji, Hassan and Arogundade contend that in the broader context of the composition of Ife region and its categorisation in administrative units at different times, Ife appears as a minority group in the region. This is premised on the population of Oyo elements in the Ife region, and Osun state generally. The political encircling of Ife at different times provides a basis for the analysis.[27]

As is to be expected of a conflict that has lasted almost two hundred years, the issues that generated it, and those that the conflict generated – many of which have not be resolved – have polarized the two communities. It has also promoted narrations seen mostly from the perspective of the communities and the leading *dramatis personae* in the conflict. This explains, and properly situates, the contributions of Agbe and Toriola, whose accounts were apparently influenced by their sense of patriotism and commitment to their respective communities. Essentially, they chronicle the history of the conflict from the narrow lens of their participation and understanding of the issues involved.[28]

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# CHAPTER ONE

# YOUTH, ETHNICITY, ETHNICISM, AND INTRA-ETHNIC CONFLICTS: NEXUS AND CONTEXTS

## Introduction

While it has attracted significant scholarly interest, the place and role of youth in society continues to be controversial. How do we determine who a youth is? Who qualifies, is excluded, and on what basis? What roles do exhuberance and experience play in determining social responsibility and privilege? This chapter advances a general survey of the literature on youths, their relevance and challenges, with close reference to Nigeria. This is situated in the context of concepts such as ethnicity, ethnicism, and intra-ethnic conflicts, with specific emphasis on the challenges of socio-cultural identity and distribution of economic resources. The purpose is to underscore the centrality of youths to the process of identity projection and defence. The involvement of youths in intra- and inter-ethnic conflicts and conflict-related situations across cultures and contexts is an additional basis. Such a survey as this provides the scholarly grounding/background for this book. It helps clarify the concepts as they are used in this study, and it reveals the gaps in the literature which this study tries to fill.

## Defining Youth: A Question of Identity and Relevance

Youth is the biological stage between childhood and adulthood. Arriving at an all-encompassing definition of youth is difficult for a number of reasons. First, the boundaries delineating youth from childhood, and from adulthood, are neither clear-cut nor stable. Second, while in some African societies, the processes of transition from childhood to youth and youth to adulthood are always marked by traditional rites and initiation, other societies do not have such markers of transition. This makes it difficult to clearly map an African convention of youth. Third, there are no regular or stable statistics defining

the age of youth. Lastly, the level of social and economic stability of the society can affect the definition and classification of youth.[1]

Such uncertainty reflects in the perspectives of scholars on the classification of youth, ranging broadly from 14-35 in age and across social and economic indexes. Heaven and Tubridy, Nolte, Abbink, Ikelegbe and Olujide define and classify youth in terms of age, societal value or functions. Heaven and Tubridy view youths as those persons who are neither children nor yet adults.[2] Nolte defines youths as those who do not yet possess material means and recognition to establish themselves as providers for others.[3] According to Abbink, African youths are aged between 14 and 35. He argues that people below 14 are no more than children who depend on older ones, while those above 35 are expected to be socially independent and responsible.[4] Ikelegbe describes youths as those who fall into category of early adulthood and participate in emerging activities but are limited by societal values and some level of dependence and agency.[5] Olujide refers to youths as the most active, volatile, and yet the most vulnerable section of the society. He maintains that youths are not only the resource base of development, but also constitute the major segment of population that bears the responsibility of development in any country. However, he statistically classifies Nigerian youths as all young people aged between 18 and 35 years.[6] Generally, the term does not exclude females, although male youths are dominant in politics, social activities, street, aggressive and insurgent groups, conflicts and violence. For the purpose of this study, the term 'youth' refers to people who are no longer children and not yet fully adult.

For Heaven and Tubridy, being a youth is determined not by age alone, but by a certain level of agency or social power, relationship and relevance to the labour market, and youth-specific cultural pursuits or cultural consumption. The generational consciousness of youth has formed the basis of demand in a new market where the culture industry is the agent of supply. The culture industry refers to industry and markets that produce, distribute and consume cultural commodities, such as fashion, entertainment and information. The interaction between youths and the culture industry produces sub-cultural identities that are both continuous and distinct from the larger or dominant cultural tradition from which they emerge. Such sub-cultures are depicted as sometimes dangerous, rebellious, and anti-establishment.[7] Heaven and Tubridy argue that the majority of Western youths do not indulge themselves in the sub-culture proper, despite their exposure to the culture industry, rather, they are involved in non-subcultural identities that are less confrontational and modified. The extent to which this assertion is correct could be relative, given that youth action even in the

West is highly unpredictable, depending on the prevailing situations and the presence or otherwise of triggering or moderating factors.[8] Generally also, the conventional definition of youth (age-based) does not apply correctly in the Ife-Modakeke case, given its class dimensions and the way poverty, zeal, ambition, or desire could make an old man appear like, or act like, a youth.

## Ethnicity, Ethnicism and Intra-Ethnic Conflicts: Conceptual Clarifications

Attempt is made here to discuss the concept of intra-ethnicity and situate it within the broad frameworks of ethnicity and ethnicism. This is necessary given the roles youths have played in the Ife-Modakeke conflicts. Historians, political scientists, sociologists and philosophers have focused on the nature and patterns of relations among ethnic groups, while less attention is paid to intra-ethnic relations. The reason for the paucity of studies on intra-ethnic relations is the rarity of intra-ethnic conflicts in the past except perhaps with the possible exception of the Yoruba wars of the 19th century and the struggles among the Hausa states between 15th and 19th century, or insufficient knowledge of the divergent features which exist, or that may be present, within perceived homogenous ethnic groups. The differences, which are manifested culturally and linguistically, are seldom pronounced except in the time of strained relationship and conflicts. Another challenge is posed by the problem of defining groups within a group.

An ethnic group is defined as "an informal interest group whose members are distinct from the members of other ethnic groups within the society because they share a number of things such as kinship, religious and linguistic ties".[9] It is further defined as "a distinct group of people who define themselves as belonging to a named or labelled social group with whose interest they identify, and which manifests certain aspects of a unique culture, while constituting a part of a wider society".[10] 'Ethnicity' is seen as a social phenomenon that involves interactions among members of different ethnic groups, while ethnic groups are "social formations distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries".[11] This contrasts with 'ethnicism' which implies the feeling of loyalty to one's ethnic group.[12] Likened to ethnicism, 'ethnocentrism' is differentiated from ethnicity. While ethnicity is defined as beliefs, group identity, parochial orientation and group pride, ethnocentrism includes these attributes but goes beyond them. Thus, while ethnicity is behavioural in form and conflictual in

content, ethnocentrism is attitudinal in form and parochial in content and represents the subjective dimension of ethnic behaviour.[13] Ethnicity is also conceived as the contextual discrimination by members of one group against others on the basis of differentiated systems of socio-cultural symbols.[14] This implies that the central objective characteristics associated with common ancestry, such as language, territory, cultural processes and the like, are perceived by both insiders and outsiders as important indicators of identity, so that they can become the basis for mobilizing social solidarity, and this, in certain situations, results in political activity.[15] Consequently, ethnicity does not consist in mere ethnic or cultural heterogeneity or the mere identification of ethnic or cultural group entities, rather it comprises the interactions and the inter-relationships as people from various identifiable socio-cultural groups struggle and manoeuvre themselves over the control of access to the nation's resources. It also involves a perception of group differences as well as a manipulation and exploitation of that perception.[16]

Characterising ethnicity as social-cultural identity are such features as language, communal world view, religion and common cultural traits, among others.[17] Whereas, ethnic groups and conflicts could be ascriptive on one hand, and firmly bounded by sense of commonality, passion, ethnocentricism and tensile on the other hand,[18] "ethnic groups are not necessarily homogenous entities even linguistically and culturally".[19] Thus, ethnic consciousness and conflict result from ethnic competition between "ethnically differentiated segments of the working class or ethnically differentiated traders and customers".[20]

In discussing ethnicity, the term 'pluralism' is used as a generic concept to describe a distinctive structure of group relations whose social basis could be controlled by class division, religious differences, and differences in culture, race or ethnic background. Pluralism, which rests on race and ethnicity, is characterized by the greater likelihood of primordial sentiments, while the plural structure of a society arises from the interaction of the plural sections.[21]

It has been argued that that there is a sufficient agreement among numerous scholars of ethnic relations that ethnicity refers to the intensity of ethnic identity or the feeling of allegiance to one's ethnic group.[22] Citing Crawford Young's definition, Sanda maintains that ethnicity concerns "the active sense of identification with some ethnic unit, whether or not this group has any institutional structure of its own or whether it has any real existence in the pre-colonial epoch".[23]

Gbadegesin sees ethnicity as referring to the morally neutral act of belonging to an ethnic group. While contending that the concept is not in any way harmful, he argues that in an environment in which other ethnic groups co-exist, there is a tendency towards the development of ethnicism, which is the politicization of ethnicity. According to him, ethnicity is a biological fact, while ethnicism, which is an attitudinal expression of this biological fact in the realm of politics, is a political variable.[24] Citing Hartwell, Gbadegesin defines politicization as "that new pervasive tendency for making all questions political questions, all issues political issues, all values political values and all decisions political decisions".[25] Gbadegesin examines various dimensions of politicization. In one variant, the principal feature is the subordination of all aspects of life to politics and their determination by the political sector.[26] Citing Mill, Gbadegesin sees politicization as taking the manifest form of increasing the power of the state, of increasing political power as against all other forms of power in society, of increasing the power of the politicians and the bureaucrats as against the power of individuals, private institutions and voluntary associations.[27]

The second variant of politicization is the tendency to manipulate other social institutions and/or individuals for political ends, and to treat all issues from the point of view of the political advantage to be derived therefrom. This variant is especially recognizable in a social context in which competitive politics of a partisan nature is embraced. In such a context, as argued by Gbadegesin, politicization effectively means the 'partisanization' of social policies and institutions for individual or group advantage.[28] In other words, political expediency, rather than objective and rational criteria, is the sole factor guiding the activities of the political actors. In this sense, the objective reality of ethnic origins is subjectivized and manipulated for political ends. As Gbadegesin observed, it is this second variant that was manifested in Nigeria's Second Republic. What perhaps should be added, is that this phenomenon started in the First Republic.[29]

Salami and Salawu corroborate Gbadegesin's distinction between ethnicity and ethnicism. According to Salami, ethnicity merely suggests that a nation such as Nigeria is made of several ethnic nationalities. It expresses the fact that Nigeria is made of linguistic, cultural or ethnic groups, such as Birom, Tiv, Igbo, Edo, Yoruba, Ijaw, Jukun and Hausa among others, whereas the politicization of ethnicity is what is referred to as ethnicism. This occurs when citizens begin to manipulate their facts of belonging to different ethnic groups, for their political and economic ends, in which case, they begin to lose a sense of national identity. Salami further sees the ethnic problem as

it exists in Nigeria as a product of how ethnicity is used. The ethnic elite now manipulate and politicize ethnicity in their various struggles to partake in the sharing of the national cake.[30] Salawu sees ethnicism as denoting ethnic loyalty. The concept of loyalty, according to him, carries with it the willingness to support and act on behalf of the ethnic group. Ethnicism therefore usually involves a degree of obligation and is often accompanied by a rejective attitude towards those regarded as outsiders, that is, members of other ethnic groups.[31] In distinguishing between ethnicity and ethnicism, Salawu opines that it was the phenomenon of ethnicity that was found among Nigerians before the coming of the Europeans, while the phenomenon of ethnicism is a product of competition for both economic and political resources.[32]

According to Mordi, the difference between ethnicity and ethnicism is that while the former is limited only to social interaction between ethnic groups, the latter refers to the practice that emerges out of such interaction, through which ethnic group members protect their interest via the theoretical framework of communality. The group interest that is protected, as Mordi indicates, stems from solidarity arising from meaning and definition given to the situation by the actors involved. Communality, according to him, encompasses all human activities within the realm of sharing which result in oneness. Thus, embodies the covenant, agape, or 'love feast' which binds human relationships through ancestry, kinship, linguistics, myth and ritual ideologies.[33]

Dukor sees ethnicism as ethnic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism according to him is the loyalty to one's ethnic group in a multi-ethnic state through social and political behaviour. This social and political behaviour is more often than not carried out to the detriment of the nation-state. In the Nigerian context, Dukor argues that the era of Nigerian nationalism in the colonial days has gone, and in its place is the phenomenon of ethnic nationalism, which is having a sense of belonging only to one's ethnic group.[34] However, viewed within the context of contemporary relations, ethnic nationalism may not be completely equated with ethnicism. As Levinson argues, ethnic nationalism is more of an ideology that supports political movement toward the formation and existence of a nation-state comprising either the members of a single ethnic group, or a group whose culture dominates the other ethnic groups.[35]

This chapter demonstrates that youth and ethnicity have attracted the attention of many scholars, who have debated the nuances of meanings, with a view to resolving the place of youths in shifting meanings of ethnicity.

What appears necessary to me is to forge these perspectives into a narrative that connects to the study's themes. The gap displayed in a critical reflection on the literature is what provides justification for the present work.

# The Case of Ife-Modakeke

Central to the discourse on ethnicity, ethnicism, ethnocentrism, and ethnic nationalism, is the use of symbols, ideologies and representations to project group identity and to defend the inclusive group interest against those considered outsiders. Underscoring the desire for inclusion is the need to safeguard political and economic benefits and privileges either for individual or group advantage. Pertinent, however, is that there could be struggle within ethnic groups for the promotion of benefits and privileges among ethnic groups, particularly if such groups are differentiated by their seeming homogeneity to outside groups. This is the case with the Ife and Modakeke communities.

The conflict between the people of Ile-Ife and Modakeke represented a rare and peculiar case of intra-ethnic conflict in a multi-ethnic society such as Nigeria. Whereas the people of Ife and Modakeke are historically scions of the same ancestral stocks of the Yoruba, both communities are not wholly homogeneous. Although both communities speak mutually intelligible Yoruba language, their dialects are slightly different. The people of Ile-Ife speak the Ife dialect of the Yoruba language while the Modakeke speak the Oyo dialect. Culturally, these people also differentiate themselves through tribal marks, though this is not a rigid factor given population mixing and the spread of different tribal marks all over Yorubaland.[36] Generally, Yoruba people have always distinguished and classified themselves based on sub-cultural identity, such as Ekiti, Oyo, Ife, Ijesa, Egba, Ijebu and the Igbomina, among others.[37] Essentially, dialects and tribal marks are the easiest tools for recognizing and distinguishing one Yoruba sub-group from another. Distrusts based on stereotypes have always existed between and among the different sub-groups.[38] In the 19th century, there were several internecine wars between and among the Yoruba sub-groups.[39]

Intra-ethnic conflicts could arise from the pursuit of divergent interests, ends, and ambitions by individuals and groups within communities. This is not to ignore the fact that ethnic conflict could result from "specific historical situations molded by particular and unique circumstances", but such historical conditions were usually fabricated to favour the interests of rulers, politicians, wealthy individuals and opportunists.[40] Besides, intra-ethnic conflicts are alternative potent instruments in the hands of opportunists

and the bourgeois class, to cover the existing class inequality in society and divert the attention of the masses from class differences.[41] Viewed from one perspective, the Ife-Modakeke crises represent an example of a situation where attempts to protect and perpetuate the interest of the ruling class, nobles and potentates were manipulated to reflect the popular interests or accord. From another perspective, it represents a conflict between an attempt to perpetuate the *status quo*, as seen in the desire by Ife landlords to maintain their control over the Modakeke, and the determination by the Oyo elements not only to checkmate control but more importantly to seek separate identity.

Land holds a central position in the socio-cultural and economic life of the Yoruba people. Land is held sacred. Land is believed to be the source of life and livelihood. Economically, land was the material basis of the two communities, as it was with other Nigerian communities. Among the Yoruba, land was communally owned by the people.[42] Like many other African societies, arable land was abundant for farming and other productive activities. The accommodation of visitors and war refugees by the people of Ile-Ife, and the settlement of the Modakeke people within Ife territory are testimony to the non-competitive nature of land in Yorubaland. The landlord-tenant relationship between the hosts and the refugees was based on mutual understanding and agreement. For instance, arable land was allocated to the refugees, visitors, or settlers, based on agreement by the latter to pay tributes in return. Tributes in the form of cash, services, food items, and gallons or tins of palm oil, were paid annually. A defaulter could forfeit access to the farmland. However, this was not peculiar to the Oyo elements in Ile-Ife, as it was also a common practice for Ife families given land by other families, particularly for cocoa and other cash crop cultivation, to pay annual rent to the landowning families.[43] This is still being practised in one form or another.[44] The sudden scramble and competition for land in Ile-Ife and Modakeke was not unconnected with the influx of the Oyo refugees into Ife beginning in the 19th century, and the subsequent rapid urbanisation in the two communities. Aiding the process of urbanisation was the siting of the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in Ile-Ife and its movement from Ibadan to Ile-Ife in 1967.[45] The University covers about 13,850 hectares of land,[46] and accompanying the growth of the University was increased pressure on land, among other competing demands or factors in the growth of the two communities.

The next chapter explores the subject of community development and security in literature, with a view to highlighting the level of youth

involvement and exploring how they have contributed to the security or insecurity of their immediate communities and the nation at large.

# Notes

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