



ABSTRACT

The events of the 19th century have continued to shape social, political and economic realities in Yorubaland up till today. There were evidences of inter-group relationships among different tribes across Yorubaland during the pre-colonial era. Ibadan, which emerged as a powerful Yoruba town in the 19th century was involved in interactions with many other Yoruba groups, and one of such relationship was with Ido, a neighbouring community then. Drawing on oral and documentary historical sources, this article examined the political and

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF IDO-IBADAN RELATIONS IN THE 19TH CENTURY

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Introduction

Background to the Study

Inter-group relation has been in existence as far back as when human societies began to increase in number. According to Odunlami (2004), inter-group relation refers to cooperation between different communities to promote social, economic and political survival of the communities involved. There are evidences of inter-group relations among many Yoruba groups in the nineteenth century, and this has continued to shape social, political and economic realities in Yorubaland up till today. Ibadan, which is today the largest city in the sub-Sahara Africa was one of the towns involved in inter-group relations during the period of our study. Olubomehin (2004) writes that there were sufficient evidences of socio-cultural and economic interactions among different Yoruba groups in the pre-colonial period. According to him, the Ekiti and Ijesa located in the eastern Yorubaland interacted with the Ijebu, Ibadan and other Yoruba groups located in the western zone; while traders from Egba, Ijebu and Ibadan also attended markets in eastern Yorubaland. As a result of inter-group relations, there were cases of inter-tribal marriages among different Yoruba groups, a situation which accounted for blood relationships among different Yoruba tribes during the period of our study.

It is noteworthy that the consequences of its relations with other groups in the nineteenth century reflect in the cosmopolitan and republican nature of Ibadanland up till today. Establishing that fact that Ibadan has been involving in inter-group relations with other Yoruba groups from inception, Oluseye (1985) maintains that the town, which was founded as a war camp later became a permanent



social dimensions of the Ido-Ibadan relationship in the 19th century, and established that the relationship brought about the integration of the two groups that hitherto existed as separate communities.

Keywords: inter-group relation, Ido-Ibadan relation, pre-colonial era, nineteenth century, socio-political dimensions

settlement of soldiers from Il-Ife, Ijebu and Old Oyo. Similarly, Bamidele argues that the coming into being of the Ibadan's republican form of government dated back to the time when soldiers, fugitives and others sought refuge in the town. Also, Oguntomisin (2004) writes about the roles played by Ibadan in ensuring peace throughout the Yorubaland during the period of our study. According to him, the first peace meeting in Yorubaland was initiated and hosted by Ibadan Chiefs in 1855, and during the conference, the Balogun of Ibadan, Ibikunle, put forward a proposal for the promotion and maintenance of peace throughout the Yorubaland.

The recognition of Ibadan as powerful Yoruba town during the nineteenth was as a result of its relationships with other Yoruba groups in terms of war and peace during the period. Citing Lekan Alabi (2007), Abegunrin (2008) explains how Ibadan thwarted the invasion of Yorubaland by Fulani army. He further explains that "Ibadan army under Balogun Oderinro was sent by Oluyole. They met and defeated the Fulani invaders around Osogbo in 1840". All these are pointers to the fact that Ibadan has been involved in inter-group relations with other Yoruba groups starting from its establishment in the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, one of the groups that Ibadan related with during the period of our study is Ido. This paper therefore, examined the socio-political dimensions of the Ido-Ibadan Relations in the nineteenth century.

Origin of Ido

Although, the people of Ido have distinct origin and identity, they are today considered as Ibadan indigenes, as a result of their interaction with Ibadan people during the period of our study. Ido is one of the communities in Ibadan suburbs and headquarters of Ido Local Government Area of Oyo state, one of the six council areas in the Ibadan less city. The town is located within the territory of the present day Ibadanland. Ido, which has been in existence for over two hundred years, was established by a great warrior called Agura (Orobiyi, 2008). There are two conflicting oral traditions about where Agura came from. While one oral tradition claims that Agura was among the soldiers that followed Oranmiyan from Ile-Ife to found the Old Oyo Empire, and that it was after the founding of Oyo that he went to establish Ido; the other one claims that Agura was called upon by Ibadan people to assist them during the Yoruba civil wars, and that it was after the wars that Agura and his people decided to settle in Ido instead of returning to their former base. It is, however, important to note that the latter is more logical because the date of the founding of the Old Oyo Empire was more than three hundred years before the founding of Ibadan.

Although, the exact date of the founding of Ido town could not be ascertained, it appears that the town began to emerge in the late eighteenth century. It has been argued that Ido existed before



the emergence of the third and present Ibadan in 1820. According to an oral traditions, Ido had been existing for many years before Ibadan, which started as a war camp, grew to become a major town in Yorubaland. It was also said that some parts of the present day Ibadan had once been under the control of Agura. According to oral tradition, Agura was a great warrior who had vast parcels of land and villages under his control, and it was from Ido that he was administering all the territories under him called *Igbo Egba* (Egba Forest).

Another oral tradition claims that Agura once lived somewhere else around present day Ibadan, where he used to keep his weapons under the rocks. Then, Agura and his people were said to have no permanent settlement. They lived from one tent to another. However, as their population increased, they felt the needs to look for a permanent base, and subsequently consulted the oracle (Ifa) for guidance and instruction on their choice of permanent settlement. The oracle instructed them to come and settle in Ido through an oracle verse (Odu Ifa) known as Olubori Awo Ode Ido (Orobiyi, 2008). Agura consequently came with majority of his people to settle in Ido, while some of his people later proceeded to settle in the present day Abeokuta (these are the people called Egba Gbagura up till today).

Agura was said to be the first person to enter into the Igbo Egba (Egba Forest), even before the coming of the Egbe people to Abeokuta. It was Agura who first dominated the area. During the period, Agura was said to be so powerful and influential to the extent that his words were commands. No action would be taken in all the territories under Agura without his consent. From Ido, he controlled as far as Iware, Awe, Fiditi, Ojoo among.

Like many other Yoruba towns, Ido has ruling families. All the Baales (traditional rulers) that have ruled over the town were from the Agura dynasty. It is written in the constitution guiding traditional council of Ido that only male descendants of Agura can be crowned as Onido of Ido. It is on record that the five different Onodos who reigned after the demise of Agura were from the Agura ruling house of Ido, and that Agura reflected in their names. They are: Akinwumi Dada Pero, Ige Eniyewu Agura Yesufu Oladapo Agura Orobiyi 1, Alimi Akinola Olatoye Agura and Benjamin Ademola Isola Orobiyi 11. The Agura family is popular in the community as members of the family own large parcels of land across the town. Also, direct descendants up till today still see themselves as the original sons and daughters of Ido town. They are considered as the real owner of Idoland, while others see themselves as sons and daughters of Ibadan people, who came to settle in the community during the period of our study.

Ido-Ibadan Relation in the Beginning

The history of the origin of Ibadan shows that the town was founded by soldiers from other different Yoruba towns. This consequently made it inevitable for the Ibadan people to relate with members of other Yoruba groups. Among different groups that Ibadan related with during the period of our study is Ido. The Ido-Ibadan relation, according to Chief Benjamin Isola Orobiyi, a former Onido of Ido, can be traced back the early nineteenth century when Ibadan people invited Agura to assist them during the Yoruba civil wars. This military alliance marked the beginning of the relationship, as Agura and his people honoured the invitation and fought on the side of Ibadan army during the war against Owu kingdom in 1821. During this period, Ibadan was gradually taking



upon itself, the responsibility of securing the entire Yorubaland, and the town had no other choice than to increase her military capacity.

The relationship that eventually brought Ido under the control of Ibadan and turned the town which hitherto existed separately into a part and parcel of Ibadanland started in the mid 1820s. After the Yoruba civil wars, many Ibadan people came to settle in Ido because of the availability of vast parcels of farmland in the area. Ibadan people needed farmlands in order to participate in the agricultural economy introduced to Yorubaland by Europeans after wars. This consequently resulted into series of conflicts between the peoples of Ibadan and Ido, as many Ibadan people struggled to acquire parcels of land in Ido for agricultural purposes. One of such clashes occurred in the present day *Ijokodo* area of Ibadan. The area which was hitherto a territory of Ido derived its name from a violent clash that occurred in the area over ownership of farmland during the period of our study. The name was derived from “*Ija Oko Ido*” which means in English language: battle over farmland in Ido (Arowolo, 2008). While some Ibadan warriors forcefully took over some territories in Ido through raids and invasions, many other Ibadan people came to negotiate for farmlands in the community. Those who acquired farmlands in Ido either through the use of force or mutual consent started to bring in their relatives and people to their newly acquired lands as from 1820s. This marked a watershed in the Ido-Ibadan relation, as the process of socio-cultural and political integration both peoples began to see themselves as one.

During this period, many Ibadan villages began to spring-up within the territory of Ido. These villages were considered as part and parcel of Ibadanland because they consisted mainly of who had come from their original home. Therefore, Ibadan began to expand to include the territory of Ido. This fusion of the two peoples started during this period. All Ibadan villages like *Kusenla*, *Omowusi*, *Alafara*, *Ologun-Eru*, *Elenu-Sonso* and so on sprang-up within the territory of Ido (Arowolo, 2008).

Socio-Cultural Dimension of the Relationship

Although, the interaction between Ibadan and Ido people during the nineteenth century took different dimensions, the most noticeable one can be seen in the socio-cultural aspects. As a result of the presence of many Ibadan people within the territory of Ido during the period, there began to be the fusion of the cultures of the two groups, especially in the areas of language, cultural festivals and the kind of foods taken by people of the two groups. Before the contact with Ibadan people, Ido people were predominantly Osun worshippers, but as a result of the interaction, almost all traditional festivals being celebrated in Ibadan are also celebrated in Ido (Asabi, 2008). The socio-cultural dimension is also noticeable in the area of inter-group marriages that occurred among peoples of the two groups during the period. As Ibadan people began to move to Ido territory with their family members, inter-tribal marriages started to occur, as many Ibadan men married Ido women and vice-versa. The inter-group marriages between Ibadan and Ido continued even up till today. For instance, Madam Asabi, Yeye Osun of Ido, who is also a daughter of the fourth Onido of Ido, Alimi Akinola Olatoye Agura, got married to an Ibadan man. Series of inter-group marriages that occurred during the period brought about the total fusion of the two groups, as it is very difficult to separate Ido from Ibadan today. Ido is today dominated by people whose origin or parents' origin can be traced to Ibadan. Even, the compound of the first Onido of Ido that



emerged as the death of Agura, Akinwumi Dada Pero Agura, is up till today located in *Oja'Ba* in the heart of Ibadanland (Asabi, 2008).

The socio-cultural dimension of the relationship completely changed the way of life of Ido people, who would have shared so many things in common with their brothers and sisters in the *Egba Gbagura*. In the words of Alao-Adetokun, a community leader in Ido, “the transformation of Ido people into Ibadan indigenes started with the influx of Ibadan people to Ido in the nineteenth century and the consequent emergence of many Ibadan villages around the territories of Ido”. This made the relationship between the two groups inevitable during the period.

Economic Dimension of the Relationship

Another important dimension of the Ido-Ibadan relationship in the nineteenth century can be found in the area of economic interaction. As noted earlier, the agricultural economy introduced to Yorubaland by Europeans after the abolition of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade necessitated the need for more agricultural land by Ibadan people, and they subsequently came to Ido for land acquisition because of the availability of vast parcels of farmland in the area. Many Yoruba people engaged in the production of cash crops such as cocoa, oil palm and cotton during the period. One of the Ibadan people who came to acquire farmland in Ido during the period was Omowusi. Omowusi was given a vast parcel of land to cultivate, and up till today, his descendants are still living in a village called Omowusi near Ido town (Arowolo, 2008).

The flourishing agricultural activities in Ido led to emergence of some market places within the territory, and many traders from Ibadan were coming to trade in these markets. The availability of market places in Ido also made Ibadan farmers, who hitherto usually went back to Ibadan to sell their farm produces, to remain in Ido. To establish the fact that agricultural activities were flourishing in Ibadan during the period of our study, Lekan Alabi (2007) cited by Abegunrin (2008) writes that there were about seventy-four blacksmith industries within the territory of Ibadan by the middle of the nineteenth century.

Also, the Ajele system that was later introduced into Yorubaland further integrated Ido and Ibadan. The District Officer (DO) who controlled all the territories around Ibadan lived in the city. Through this system, taxes and tributes were collected from all the territories under the control of Ibadanland, including Ijaye and Ido (Arowolo, 2008).

Political Dimension of the Relationship

The origin of Ido-Ibadan relationship can be traced to political and military cooperation that existed between the two groups in the early nineteenth century. This started during the Owu war when Agura and his people were invited to assist in the war against the Owu people. Agura and his people were said to be great warriors during the period. In an oral interview, Arowolo (2008) maintained that before the advent of the Yoruba civil wars, Ido was a very powerful and organized community, which was made up of great warriors. This invitation extended to Agura marked the beginning of the political relationship between the two peoples. However, after the Yoruba civil wars and the subsequent emergence of Ibadan as a super power, some Ibadan warriors, like Foko, Ogunmola and so on, acquired parcels of land within the territories of Ido in their quest to expand the frontiers of Ibadanland. It is however, important to stress that inability of Ido people to spread



across the whole of their territory made the encroachment somehow easy for Ibadan people. Odunlami (2004) opines that the Owu war did not only led to the emergence of the new town of Ibadan, but also changed the power politics in the Yorubaland during the period as the new town founded by victorious warriors started to embark on deliberate expansion. He writes that “during the period, events took a dramatic turn as the people of Ibadan cleverly carried out their plan of emerging as the most powerful town throughout the Yorubaland”.

Following the emergence of many Ibadan villages on the territory of Ido, the population of Ibadan people living in the area later grew significantly than that of Ido indigenes. An oral tradition maintains that that Ido gradually fell under the control of Ibadan because of the political and military power in the hands of Ibadan people. Giving an account of this, Arowolo (2008) said Ido was developing at its own pace as an independent and separate community until after the war, when Ibadan started to exercise supremacy over it. He added that by the middle of the nineteenth century, Ibadan had increased her military capacity and became the arrowhead of the Yoruba nation.

Conclusion

This paper examined the socio-political dimensions of the Ido-Ibadan relationship in the nineteenth century. It was established that although the two groups started as separate communities, the socio-political relationships that occurred between the two peoples during the period of our study brought about the integration of the two groups.

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