

## Clash of Identities and Ethno-Religious Conflict in Kaduna State Nigeria

Daniel Michael<sup>[a],\*</sup>; Ejura Ugbeda Egwemi<sup>[a]</sup>; Jibrin Boniface<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Kogi state university Anyigba, Anyigba, Nigeria.  
\*Corresponding author.

Received 27 July 2021; accepted 11 August 2021  
Published online 26 September 2021

<http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/12234>  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12234>

### Abstract

Over time Clash of Identities in Kaduna North-west Nigeria often manifest into ethno-religious conflict in the state. This paper examines however the nexus between politics, ethno-religious and sharp identity question that formed the basis of ethno-religious conflict in the area. These however, affect sustainable development in Kaduna state. Historically, this conflict has played itself out in the contest for space, resources and access to power between different communities in the state; it also accesses how state failure and elite competition for power and resources in a multi-ethnic nation causes ethno-religious conflict and sharp identity question in Kaduna state. The paper adopts Human Needs theory. This theory explicates the reason to meet basic needs of man and if these needs are not met, conflict is likely to occur. The paper also adopts qualitative methods of data collection; this is drawn from both primary and secondary sources of data. It utilizes instrument of in-depth interviews with the key actors, community leaders and religious leaders. It is the finding of the paper that politics of identity and ethno-religious conflict have been the fundamental issue that poses security challenges to Nigeria. These challenges have taken the form of bombing, injury; killing and kidnapping that threatened Nigeria national security. The study recommends that government; ethno-regional and religious groups should adopt preventive diplomacy and dialogue to attaining cohesion and symbiotic relationship.

**Key words:** Ethnic; Religion; Identity and Conflict

Michael, D., Egwemi, E. U., & Boniface, J. (2021). Clash of Identities and Ethno-Religious Conflict in Kaduna State Nigeria. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 17(3), 38-46. Available from:

### INTRODUCTION

The Clash of Identities in Kaduna Northwest Nigeria is the outcome of state failure and elite competition for power and resources. The phenomenon establishes the interplay between politics, ethno-religious and identity question in Kaduna northwest Nigeria. Historically, this has played itself out in the contest for space, resources and access to power between and within community. It is a framework for understanding the prevalent conflict, driven by the reality of state failure and elite competition for power and resources. Nigeria since independence has remained a multi-ethnic nation with over four hundred ethnic groups (Chidi, 2005; Salawu, 2010); belonging to several religious sects has been trying to cope with the problem of ethnicity and religious conflict on the other. In the last decade, ethno-religious conflict, which forms the basis of clash of identities, experienced in most major cities in Kaduna: North West Nigeria.

Over the years, ethno-religious conflict has been the fundamental issue that posed security challenges to Nigeria. The recent security challenges (ethno-religious conflict) in the country has taken form of torrent and turbulent spate of bombing, injury, killing and kidnapping that have threatened the national unity and security. Most of the ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have attracted attention of international community since the emergence of democratic government in 1999 till date. Kaduna state had witness Sharia crisis in Kaduna, miss world beauty pageant crises, 2011 post-election crises in Kaduna; among others (Kwaja, 2009). Conflicts of these natures have drawn active participant from across ethnic enclaves in Nigeria.

Formerly, poverty, class interest and manipulation in the struggle for control of state power and the resources

associated with, have led to conflict of yarning character and dimension in the northern Nigeria. Hussani (2010) avers that the Kaduna state has experienced several conflicts, usually of ethnic and religious dimension, more often violent in nature. This is not denying other forms of violent conflict in the state. But in most cases all other forms of ethnic conflict takes second fiddle position in the moment of violent conflict between the Hausa-Fulani and other ethnic minorities in Kaduna state. Suberu (1996) maintained that the people of southern Kaduna communities remained underdeveloped due to deliberate and persistent neglect by Hausa-Fulani emirate in the zone; which provoke southern Kaduna minority and northern Kaduna majority. More often southern Kaduna complains against marginalization, domination and exploitation carried out by Hausa-Fulani ethnic group in Kaduna State.

The manifestation of Clash of Identities and ethno-religious conflict in Kaduna state were product of differences in resources distribution, and land allocation, which often escalated into violent agitation and confrontation. This wave of conflict continues to grow in the last two decades. To be sure, the recent economic crisis is another factor that triggers conflict in the area; this varying in contrast and proportions. This period witnessed general resurgence in ethnic and religious conflicts in state. The study has taken note of the differences between the geographical boundaries within Nigeria federal structure called Kaduna state (Chabal, 2009). Increasing land pressure in Kaduna state reinforces complaints of Hausa-Fulani domination of native farmland.

Data for this paper were drawn from both primary and secondary source mainly from structured interviews with the stakeholder and library. The paper was also analyzed using content analysis. It is believed that these instruments and sources of data collection improve the understanding of identity question in Kaduna state at large. Against this background, the study set out to examine the causes of clash of identities and issues over land and territories in Kaduna state

---

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

---

The discourse of the paper relies on the theory of Human Needs. Human needs theory is an element of conflicts theories which propose that all humans have certain universal basic needs and when these needs are not met, conflict is likely to occur. Abraham Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs beginning with the need for food, water, and shelter followed by the need for safety and security, then love, self-esteem and, finally, personal fulfillment and self-actualization (Maslow and Burton, 1990). They also identifies a set of needs, which he considers to be universal in their occurrence but with no significant hierarchy. His list of needs includes distributive justice, safety and security, self-

esteem, personal fulfillment, identity, cultural security, and freedom. While Maslow and Burton emphasize on biological, psychological, and social needs of human, argues for sets of needs, which is categorizes as the need for love, integrity, celebration and mourning, and spiritual communion (Ibidi). Likewise, Kok, (2007) and his colleagues added their own unique idea of human needs; these include need for recreation and leisure and idleness. Hertnon (2005) proposes the Theory of Universal Human Needs based on just two needs: survival and betterment. Under survival needs he identifies physical and mental well-being, respect for others, and self-esteem and a safe and healthy environment, logical reproductive practices, appreciation of life and doing good things. There are still many other formulations of human needs.

Human needs theory is significant because it describe how conflicts can be managed and resolved through the satisfaction of human basic needs. Human needs represent the state of deprivation, which have to be satisfied (Burton, 1990). It is clear from this that concept of human needs is an evolving concept in the search for a more universal, integrated framework. Human needs theorists distinguished between human needs and interests, and he also argue that human conflicts emerge when people's efforts to meet their fundamental needs are frustrated (Ibidi). It is further argued that conflict and even violence are inevitable because human needs are non-negotiable, while human interests are open to negotiation and compromise. The line of demarcation between needs and interests, however, remain largely and subject to dispute. While human needs theory is accepted as a valid and useful model for understanding some of the fundamental aspects of human behavior, there are nevertheless significant questions that remain to be answered. What is a human need? This are basic essential need for sustain human life. To what extent hierarchy of needs, are more important than others? Man has many needs that are different in nature, this ranging from biological needs and psychological needs at the extreme. What distinguish between human needs and human interests? Individual are in a constant state of need, which never achieve state of satisfaction except for a very short time; man interest is therefore, is constantly unsatisfied and changing need . Does clash of identities, ethno-religion conflicts and unmet needs essentially different from those caused by differing sets of interests? These questions require a better understanding of the nature of human conflicts and their genesis. In this regard it should be noted that there is a general agreement among most scholars that issues of security, identity and recognition play fundamental role in creating brutal conflicts (Danesh, 2011). As it stand, conflict is a useful tool to demonstrate identity, enhance development and social change that fortifying human relationships.

The study adopts Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. He advocated for linear sequence of needs to

satisfied human basic need. For instance, Christian's youth agitated for religion identity and freedom of worship; this over time took violent dimension instead of cohesion, because *status quo* has failed to hire social inclusion of heterogeneous ethnic background of the state. This therefore led to numerous killings and suicide attacks for failing to recognize their freedom of worship by extremists in Kaduna state. The study emphasis on the identity needs of both religious bodies (Shiite and CAN) whose activities provide a secure place for both Christians & Muslims that promotes religious extremism will. This need is not negotiable and has to be met and satisfied.

### **The Basic Assumptions of Human Need Theory**

The theory rest on three major assumptions; these include: (i). Human beings have many needs that are different in nature, ranging from biological needs at the lower level to psychological needs at the upper extreme, (ii). Individuals are in a constant state of motivation, never achieving a state of satisfaction except for a very short time. Man is therefore, motivated by constantly unsatisfied and changing needs and (iii). These needs are arranged in a hierarchy, so that lowest level needs must be satisfied before higher level ones arise.

The paper revealed that for peace to prevail in the state (Kaduna), it must at least meet four basic needs of humanity. These include: need for security, identity, well-being and self-determination have to be satisfied. The paper therefore, examines how the following elements contribute to conflict and how peace will eventually emerged.

#### **Need for Security**

There has always existed an adverse relationship between the need for security & conflict. The need for security is basic for human continual existence. Experiences have shown that unsatisfied need stimulate certain behavior threatened human security irrespective of environment or situation. In fact, in every human society the needs for security are not always visible, but visible when it is threatened. This is because for fear, man always acts to restrict or prevent insecurity developing from heterogeneous nature of ethnic and religious background. This however, is calling for protection of diver interest to sustain safety and uninterrupted peace. So long as the human being does not feel safe or secure to practice her faith (religion), there will be no prevailing peace over him, his family and in the society at large. Thus, the feeling of security is of utmost importance and this need must be satisfied in order to maintain peace and harmony in the society.

#### **Need for Identity**

The quest for identity is very important and is required in every human life. The need to distinguish one from others, to indicate group and to have access to unique piece of resource or asset to be shared, all these are attributes resulting from the need for identity. The example

mentioned earlier about the ongoing conflict among ethno-religious denomination in Kaduna state is fallout of identity quest on the part of the Christian association and Shiite religious groups. The both alleged that youth were implored to deny their group's identity, through their teachings; as both theologies consent to denying freedom of worship of both faith and through extremist teaching and frequent attacks. This therefore, was to lead to the restructuring of Kaduna state along religious line; namely: Kaduna north as Muslim communities and Kaduna south as Christian's areas.

#### **Need for Well-being**

The need for well-being refers to possession of tangible and intangible resources which are required by man to attain self-growth and development. This by implication refers to those needs that ensure youth development and growth of worship across the State. If these are not met, it could result in disturbances and eventual conflict. By 'well being' the paper refers to those people who live above the poverty line as well to do. The need for well-being arises out of human basic needs, in order to live a happy and healthy life; these needs have to be met. For example, when this need is not met, youths that are extremely poor are used as instrument of violence by religious extremists

#### **Need for Self-Determination**

The need for self-development is similar to a self-actualization role portrayed in the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. The need for self-development stresses on the need to providing equal opportunities to all, while set out to improve the standards of living and freedom of worship. This level of need helps man to establish his potential. If it is not met, it can result to intra-personal, interpersonal, Intra-group or intergroup conflicts and disputes. For example, seeing Christians as infidel by Muslim extremist or Christians seeing Muslim as sects or terrorist is an example. Similarly, most minority group of southern Kaduna, feel marginalized on structural development (facilities), which eventually led to clash.

#### **Application of Human Needs Theory**

The position of human needs theory is similar to that of Frustration-Aggression and Relative Deprivation theory. Its main argument is that all humans have basic needs which they pursue and that the denial of this needs lead to frustration and eventual conflict. 'Basic human needs' in this sense comprise physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs. An attempt to denied others access to food, freedom of worship resulted to violence in an effort to protect these needs. Though scholars identify a wide range of human needs, they agreed that denial of them hampers actualization of the potentials of groups and individuals, subsequently leading to conflict. Nevertheless there are many steps in the formation of conflict, in other word, there are common factors which lead to conflict or responsible for its evolution. Conflicts in this nature are associated with aggressive behaviour, which eventually

resolved through the underlying problem solving tactics (Jeong, 2010). Unmet needs are one important source of conflict. Feeling of insecurity, identity, well-being and self-determination may consummate in misunderstandings between parties and eventually lead to conflict. The Human Needs theory provides parties with strategies to deal with conflicts and resolve them in a mutually understanding manner without the use of violence or shed of blood. Burton is renowned for his work with the theory of human needs. He observes salient needs to understanding the dynamics of destructive social conflicts. Those needs include security, identity, recognition and personal development.

---

## CRITICISM

---

Despite the usefulness of human needs theory; the first major criticism is that there is no concrete or stable way to map or identifying Human needs in a conflict situation. It is therefore difficult to judge which needs of the parties have been unmet or not satisfied secondly, the theory find it difficult to identify priority of the interests. For example, how can Britain or America place priority for well being over the need for security? These are: important issues which the researchers have not been able to provide answers and finally, it is impossible for parties in conflict to sit down together and tries to identify constant areas of needs to arranged the hierarchy needs

Despite the above criticism, the paper adopted Human Needs theory; this is because the theory provides an insight to unsatisfied and changing needs that instigating regrouping of identities that manifested into clash of identity and ethno-religion conflict. It also resolved that need for security, need for identity, need for well-being and need for self-determination as viable tools to attain win-win situation for all the parties involved in the conflict.

### Clarification of Concepts

This aspect set out to review relevant literatures on the subject matter; clash of identities, ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna state; the nexus and Causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna Northwest Nigeria.

---

## POLITICS AND CLASH OF IDENTITY

---

Political identification is the links between how persons define himself his organization, group or other reference point. In the context of ethno-religious configurations, Kaduna state is divided into two homogenous norths which are mainly Hausa Fulani speaking and the southern minority group. This is not denying the presence of other ethnic and religious categories, but they are few inter-ethnic relations (Hussani, 2010).

Jega (2003, p.14) expressed the reappearance of politics of identities in the following structure. The concept

of identity has long been used in social anthropology and psychology, especially by both structuralists and post-structuralists. This gained in the most recent literature. From socio-political perspective, identity has both an individualist and collective connotations. In any case, it may simply be defined as a sense of belonging to a group, whose influences affect political behaviour of others. His attribute comprise commitment to a cause, love and trust for a group, emotional tie to a group, as well as obligations and responsibilities relating to membership of a group with which a person identifies. According to Pye, (1962, p.124) infers that those who share interest and identity exercise social inclusion, which enhances the collaboration of all. Thus, ordinarily, identities serve as medium contact to organizing principles of social action within the civil society, and in state-civil society relations. They inform and guide political behaviour, and add dynamism to political conduct in the context of plural societies. In the context of state-civil society relations, it also serves as a check on the potential excesses of the state. Identity is not only about individuality and self-awareness, but also and especially about identification with, and commitment to, shared values and beliefs, in a social collectively into which a person belongs. At any given time, a person may have multiple identities, each of which may always have some bearing on his or her political conduct and social roles in society. Identity politics, in other words, is primarily politics aiming at claimed identities of their leading role (Calhoun, 1994). In general political efforts to access the state power and avenues for wealth accumulation; it involves the recruitment of identity perception in order to create a mass base of support for the ruling classes, and the elite generally, in their factional struggles in the wealth accumulation process. Also, identity politics connotes a relatively high degree of the subjective entering into politics. Identity politics as conceived here include range of loyalties, activities, and other phenomenon that connect humans across nations and national boundaries.

### Conflicts

Conflict represents disagreement between two or more people. It is the negative feeling expressed in forms of hatred, fight, violence among other. Conflict is an essential feature of the society that sometimes makes it progress (Giddines, 1973). This submission is in agreement with Marx's understanding on social conflict, where he avers that conflict is the combat between owners of capital and industrial worker. Marx conceptualized conflict through historical analysis and treats history; which narrate the inherent problems of mankind and society that led to conflict. This account according to Marx is the inherent contradictions in the mode of production in which one class dominates the ownership of the means of production, and compels other classes to work on terms and conditions dictated by it (Mbah, 2007, p.175).

Conflict is predictable in human societies, to that effect Otite, (1999) avers that it is an act that involves personal contact and communication leading to different forms of competition, struggle and contest. Conflict is a normal process of interaction particularly in complex societies in which resource are usually scarce. The attempt of two celebrated conflict theorists Marx Weber and Marx alike made two important submissions in relation to meaning of conflict. They contend that human societies are system of interrelated parts (institutions, beliefs, etc) these are in the process of constant changes through internal contradictions and conflicts (Bottomore, 1963). In an attempt to provide logical meaning to conflict, Coser defines conflicts as constant struggle over values, power and scarce resources in which the aims of parties involves are not only to gain the desire values, but also to eliminate their rivals (Coser, 1968).

### **Ethno-Religious Conflicts**

Ethno-religion conflict explained ethno-religious polarization that entails high level of religious fanatics an extreme sense of religious intolerance, resulting to politicization of religious identities in contemporary Nigeria. Ethno -religious tension described the situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic group and another, in a multicultural polity such as Nigeria, which is characterized with lack of cordiality, sensitive mutual suspicions and fears these are trend to violent confrontations (Jega, 2002, p.35). Communities that experience ethno-religious tension are perpetually insecure and unstable. Any minor misunderstanding involving members of two or more different ethnic groups have catalytic effect that pushes issues beyond the precipice. There are two major types of sources of this category of tension in Nigeria, namely that associated with the character of the relationship between the so-called settlers and native (host community); which is associated with view of how kinsmen are being treated in isolated locations, which attract reprisal attacks

Nigeria is certainly an apprehensive country, whose ethno-religious relationships causes' tension. A combination of interrelated crises has ridiculed the bonds of unity and the foundation of nationhood, as well as citizenship identity. Although the incredible resiliency demonstrated by Nigerians has somehow prevented the dismemberment of the country, the tension hangs in the air like thick clouds, for example, a mere argument between two traders of different ethnic backgrounds in a market in Kaduna has been known to ignite widespread of violent conflict. This affect the context of national development this is one of the major problems that have to be concretely resolved in order to guarantee sustainable development in Nigeria.

In resolving this problem, the study states the need to understand the underlying causes holistically, in all their ramifications. There are many causes of ethno-

religious tension and conflicts in Nigeria and quite a number of them are actually interrelated. Ordinarily, it is difficult, although not impossible, in a pluralistic society to promote a strong bond of citizenship while at the same time accommodating socio-cultural diversity (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000). What role the elite play is largely responsible for success or failure in this attempt. In the case of Kaduna state, complicating factors, such as the convergence of religious, value-orientations with ethnic differences have combined with the greedy disposition of the elite, as well as their deliberate and willful manipulations, to make things much more difficult to manage.

### **Clash of Identities and Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Kaduna State: The Nexus**

Hussani, (2010) avers that religion is an identity that set boundaries between those who are considered believers and those that are not. This deals with issues of sentiments, feelings and norms that may create a sense of social disorder or unjust social order. It means that identity brings distress and insecurity to those whom group seeks to exclude (Egwu, 1977). In recent times, ethnicity and religious identity display how ethnic identity and religious allegiance overlap. For example, Karsfelt, (1994) shows how the Christian religion became critical component in the explanation of ethnic identity among Bachama people and other minority ethnic identity in Adamawa State. Salamane (1991) and Egwu (2001) revealed how religion identity provided ways of shaping an ethnic identity in the resistance of outside forces of domination by Hausa-fulani in the pre-colonial Yauri province. The Islamic religion has provided a primary element in the definition of Hausa ethnicity. According to Hussani (2010), the criteria for Hausa identity includes languages and religion. In Kaduna state, he reveals that every Hausa person is considered a Muslim and every other ethnic minority group from southern Kaduna is perceived Christian. It is a result of this most conflict, if not all; take both ethnic and religious dimension in the state. It is in the above context the study adopt to utilize ethno religion as a variable for clash of identity.

Ethno-religious conflicts have severally drawn Kaduna State to the precipice of disaster. It has engendered huge human carnage, internal displacements and refugee crisis, loss of investments, strained inter-communal or inter-ethnic relations, threatened internal security and public order. There is the high level of inter-ethnic and inter-religious vendetta in the state, to the point that it seems that Kaduna State is now exhibiting the symptom of a collapsing state, whose members are perpetually at war with one another (Imobighe 2003). Thus, ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna State have become matter of great concern to not just the state and the nation but also to the international community. Indeed, the state has undergone series of profound civil disturbances and currently seeking

ways to manage her persistent and complex problems and ethno-religious conflict. Several efforts such as deployment of huge security operatives, peaceful dialogue amongst religious groups and setting up of probe panels have been made to manage the perennial conflict but with little or no positive improvement.

Predictably, the mixtures of ethnicity and faith have taken deadly heights. In certain instances, villages have been rendered desolate. Neighbours who had lived in harmony for decades have turned on one another with murderous fervour that has led to the loss of thousands of lives and destruction of valuable properties. Social and economic life is at its lowest in the city and indeed the state that used to hold a lot of attraction for tourists now finds it hard to sustain even the love of the indigenes. Fear has become a common denominator. Law enforcement agents now comb worship centers and mosques in the State. For a state whose citizens boast of belonging to either Christianity or Islam, two of the world's greatest faiths, that indeed is a sad commentary (Egwu, 2011).

In some cases, ethnicity has been the basis for violent intra-religious conflicts adding a new dimension to religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria (Bogoro, 2008). The tendency to identify some ethnic groups with particular religion easily gives credence to the use of religion for the manipulation of other differences. It is a fact according to Bogoro (2008), many modern secular nations fraternize with some religions, depending on the peculiarity of such countries especially the wishes of the majority of the citizens. Similarly, a number of theocratic states whose political system is generally guided by the dictates of a dominant religion still find it convenient to accommodate one or more prominent minority religions.

There are two types of religious conflicts in the Northern Nigeria. This includes the conflict between followers of two different religions and conflict between followers of the same religion, particularly between Muslims. The identifiable causes of inter religious conflict range from extremism to politicization of religion. A factor that contributed to this development is the politicizations of religion that took place at both national and local levels. On the other hand, the roots of ethnic and religious conflicts have been linked to colonialism and the cold war (Machava, 2008, p.2). Other scholars argue that ethnic and religious conflicts are rooted in bad governance, politicization of ethnic and religious identities, the competition and conflict for political power by the ethnic and religious communities respectively (Anarfi, 2004 and Conversi, 1999). According to Ibrahim (2000, p.69), ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria are linked to citizenship within the context of identity that is rooted in the politics of inclusion and exclusion. These are tied to claims and counter-claims over identity as a basis for determining who is excluded or included from decision making as well as access to opportunities

(Kwaja, 2008, p.83). In this sense, this possibility is not regretted because, the generation of ethnic identity and consciousness is an essential component in the definition of ethnic identity among people in Nigeria.

### **Causes of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Kaduna Northwest Nigeria**

Land is a critical issue in the inter-ethnic relation in Kaduna rural areas. This is claiming over space and land often buttressed by specific history of migration and settlement. This often generates serious disagreement, sometimes resulting in violent conflict. To this end, land related controversies, have often been manipulated in most area of southern Kaduna, serves as anchor for interethnic claims and counter claims to local supremacy and legitimacy (Chabal, 2009).

The uproar of the religious tension in Kaduna state is also fuelled by the growing fears over political domination and religious freedom. Muslim fundamentalists and activities express concern and fear over what they consider to be the dominance of Christian culture, westernization or secularization of Nigeria. The only politics they recognize is Islamic politics, guided by the Quran and Sunnah in an Islamic state.

As Falaki (1988, p.22) posited: It is incompatible with Islam, therefore, for a Muslim to pledge support to any political party of a non-Islamic platform or to yield to a non-Islamic government of alien origin and aims. The ruler is not a sovereign over the people. He is a representative employee chosen by the people and derives his authority from his obedience to the law of Allah. Another issue worth discussing is the statement credited to Nzeribe, which appeared in a Christian newspaper. Nzeribe was quoted as saying: Christianity and Islam will be the underlying factors in the 1990 elections time have come for the Christians to be political. Rome and Canterbury cannot afford to fold their hands again because Christians have realized in a hard way that Islamization of Nigeria is the target of the Muslim World (The Leader, 1987 and Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2003, p.75).

Christian fundamentalists and activists are concerned mainly with what they regard as the threat of Islamization of the county, imposition of Sharia on non-Muslims and the use of state resources to subsidize Muslim activities. Elaigwu (1977, p.7) in an address to the North Baptist convention in Kano called on Christian organizations in Nigeria to become more politically conscious, thus: They should start participating in political activities in order to infuse the Christian ideals of charity into politics...Christians must radicalize their churches for more socially beneficial purposes. The Christian must stand up boldly and speak out against social and political wrongs whenever they are found in the society (Elaigwu, 1977, p.7). In fact, Sabiya avers that the mandate of Sharia Court is to legalize the weakness of non-Muslims and the superiority of Muslim. He claims that the courts cannot

be used as instruments of evangelism (Sabiya, 1979, p.48), this is drawn from the fact that Sharia is Islam and Islam is Sharia. Sharia is a total way of life; it is evangelism.

The battle seemed to centre on perceptions of the imposition of identity on the other or at least maintaining one's ground. This hegemonic contest also involves an interpretation and reinterpretation of events and history in Nigeria. Even the "theological space" is in contest, as seen by the attempt of the Christian and Islamic activist groups to project themselves as the pure and the faithful, unlike the others who are seen as nominal (Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2003, pp.85-86).

The fear and tension is constant in every in political activity in Nigeria. Not the physical fear of discrimination, of domination, it is the fear of not getting one's fare share, one's dessert. In a situation such as the one described above, the youth, elite and even key political figures identified themselves with ethno-religious movements and issues. The level of corruption exacerbated by harsh economic conditions and the skewing of the spoils of office for only those in the corridors of power made many people retreat back to the mosques and churches as alternative modes of economic survival and political expression of opposition and protest. This, however, was not done in any systematic or organized way. Ethno-religious movements helped in providing some social welfare services to the followers and have also become a means of accumulation (Kare, 1994 and Ibrahim, 2003, p.90). Nigeria ethno-religious revivals have terms of repression. But ethno-religious movements can help keep the society peaceful, depending upon the agenda of the ethnic and religious leaders.

The ethno-religious and communal identities are negative message often manipulated to achieve selfish and parochial objectives. Identity consciousness in itself, and its varied forms, are not major problems in plural societies. However, they become a problem when they are mobilized negatively and used as platforms on which political action is organized, as well as when, as Ibrahim has observed, "they become, or are perceived as, objectives around which discriminatory practices and unjustified use of violence are organized" (Otite, 1990). For example, these leaders pursue self-serving objectives in the power game and in the process of accumulation, and tend conflate these with, and project them as, a part of an ethno-religious agenda. While doing this, they also make unguarded, if not irresponsible utterances, which deepen existing ethno-religious divides. The hypes they make are popularized by the mass media they control, which further engender fears and suspicions. Their lack of transparency and good governance reinforces both the reality and perceptions of discrimination and marginalizing of one group by another.

Another major factor according to Jega (2002, p.36), which has helped to nurture ethno-religious conflicts, is

poverty. The onset of economic crisis in Nigeria in the decade of the 1980's, which was accompanied by the introduction of structural adjustment programme (SAP) by the Babangida regime, gave rise to a profound crisis of legitimacy of the postcolonial state (Jega, 2000). SAP was acclaimed to have, not only structurally adjusted the Nigerian economy to the requirements of global capitalism, but also created mass poverty in Nigeria.

As noted elsewhere; the incidence and magnitude of poverty has increased dramatically in the country since the 1980's, this resulted that 67% of Nigerians are entrapped in acute poverty. Poverty has ravaged communities and families, it has torn the moral fabric of society, and it is now threatening the country with violent eruptions. Most of the recent violent ethno-religious and communal conflicts can also be explained by poverty, joblessness and intense competition over scarce resources and services both in the urban and rural contexts. The mass of unemployed youth in both the rural and urban areas of Nigeria need little motivation or mobilization to partake in riots and 'reprisal attacks', given the opportunity for looting that often accompanied these. Thus, poverty and joblessness, especially amongst the youth, are important casual and facilitating factors in violent conflicts. Such objective economic conditions nurture the subjective conditions of frustration and aggression, which create conducive atmosphere for violent conflicts to erupt (Ayoade and Jega, 2000).

Thus, mass poverty served to condition the minds and attitudes of Nigerians and made them susceptible to elite manipulation and mobilization of negative identities. As the state became unable to satisfy basic needs of the people, they in turn withdrew from the sphere of the state, into ethno-religious and communal cocoons, with heightened sensitivity to the roles of the 'others' in their marginalization and immiseration (Jega, 2000).

---

## DISCUSSION OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

---

There has been a phenomenal increase in tension resulting from politics of identity and ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna North West Nigeria since May 29, 1999. Estimates place the number of violent incidences throughout the state at five uninterrupted violent. The most destructive of these conflicts occurred in cities, such as Zaira, Kaduna town, Kachia, and Zangokatab. The loss of lives has been estimated in millions of Naira. The emotional scars are enormous, and are bound to take long to heal. The totality of the material and non-material costs are intense, and they inflict a serious saddle on the state resourceful as Nigeria.

A part from loss of lives and property and the emotional trauma that accompany these, the persistence of ethno-religious tension has resulted in declining national unity and identity, undermining of legitimacy of the

state and significant loss of assurance on the mechanism of government. Essential issues of citizenship continue to disagree with, notions of 'indigene-ship', which are the bases on ethnic and communal identities. Consequently, the dispute on National problem remained relevant in the history of Nigeria, of course with dire results (Jega, 2002, p.38). The killings in Kaduna state since 1999 and the government's indecisive response trembled people's confidence in Nigerian government. The evidence of the government's selective justice consistently cited instances that whip up sentiments and ethnic and religious hate. These are, indeed, are good factors that revival of Sharia; a vehicle for Muslim identity (Mohammed, 2005).

The protest against the failed miss world contest as a result of story published by a national daily, considered blasphemous of the Holy Prophet Mohammed. The three-day riots claimed over 200 lives in Kaduna metropolis, according to unofficial sources, and consumed countless property, including many places. Cars and other valuables became victim of armed violence, this gradually becoming the trademark of Kaduna state (Oshunkeye and Mumuni, 2002, p.25).

Clash of identity and Ethno-religious predicament are hot in Kaduna the State. Hardly a year passes without mind blowing brutality by perpetrators. The area remains the heart of the horrible act; among the feuding groups, the Hausa/Fulani settlers and their host, the indigenous group. Of course, the Igbo who were worst hit by the mayhem, carried out reprisal attacks on Northern in the south east. It was, therefore, not surprising that economic activities were stuck in Kaduna states. Many shops that survived the rage of the riots were shut with many traders from the Southeast fleeing to their states of origin for fear of being killed. One of the most unfortunate results of this tension was bringing religion and ethnicity as determining factors of where one may live. The question of who is an indigene or settler is an incorrect way of dealing with identity.

---

## CONCLUSIONS

Clash of identity and ethnic and religious sentiments are the foundation of mistrust, which affect the political relationships of Nigeria. Ethnicity and religion groups have lived together in different historical periods; the colonial conquest arguably set the basis for the direct political control of southern Kaduna ethnic minorities under the auspices of Hausa-Fulani native authority. This was design to promote a favourable relations and proper hold on the territories. The policy had significant implication on ethnic relations. It is in this context that the inter-ethnic relations between southern Kaduna ethnic minorities and Hausa-Fulani became attached to historical experience of colonial political control.

It may be apt to conclude that it is not fair as often believed that cultural and religious heterogeneity

affect civil peace; but it is the rebuff to accept this heterogeneity among diverse group that is responsible. This is not denying the presence of other ethnic and religious categories, but they are so few that their significance in inter-ethnic relations is often not pronounced. Therefore, there is a need for governments, ethno-regional and religious groups to adopt preventive diplomacy and dialogue to attaining cohesion and symbiotic relationship.

---

## REFERENCES

- Baumol, W. J. (2002). *The free-market innovation machine; Analysing the growth miracle of capitalism*. New Jersey: Princeton
- Bottonmore, T. B. (1968). Marxist sociology. In D. L. Skill (Ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. New York: Macmillan & The Free Press.
- Burton W. T. (1990). *Expanding the debate on Generic theory of conflict resolution: A response to a critic*. *Negotiation Journal*, 3.
- Calhoun, C. (Ed.) (1994). *Social theory and the politics of identity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Chabal, P. (2009). *Africa: the politics of suffering and smiling*. London and New York: ZED Books.
- Coser, L. A. (1968). Conflict –Social Aspects. In D. L. Skill (Eds.), *International encyclopaedia of the social sciences*. New York: Macmillan Co. and the Free Press.
- Danesh, H. B. (2011). Human needs theory, conflict, and peace: In search of an integrated model. In D. J. Christie (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of peace psychology*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Egwu, G. S. (2001). *Ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria*. AFRIGOV: Abuja.
- Elaigwu, J. L. (1997). *Christianity and nation-building: The challenge of faith in a modernizing context*. Lecture at the Northern Baptist Convention, Kano.
- Falaki, A. M. (1988). The Islamic approach. In I. Sulamiman & S. Abdulkarim (Eds.), *On the political future of Nigeria*. Zaria: Hukda
- Giddens, A. (1973). *Class structure of the Advance Societies*. London.
- Gowa, J. (1999) *Introduction to peace and conflict studies in West Africa*. Lagos: spectrum.
- Ibrahim, J. (2003). The transformation of ethno-regional identities in Nigeria. In A. Jega (Ed.), *Identity transformation and identity politics under structural adjustment in Nigeria*, Kano: The Centre For Research and Documentation.
- Ibrahim, M., & Ibrahim, J. (2003). Religious identity in the context of structural adjustment in Nigeria. In AttahiruJega (Ed.), *Identity transformation and identity politics under structural adjustment in Nigeria*. Kano: The Centre for Research and Documentation.
- Imobighe, A. T. (2003). *Civil society conflict management in Nigeria*. Ibadan: spectrum Book.



- Jega (2002). Tackling ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Social Scientist*, 5(2), 35-39.
- Jega, A. (2003). General introduction: Identity transformation and the politics of identity under crisis and the politics of identity under crisis and adjustment. In AttahiruJega (Ed.), *Identity transformation and identity politics under structural adjustment in Nigeria*, Kano: The Centre for Research and Documentation.
- Kastelt, N. (1994). *Religion and politics in Nigeria: Study of middle belt christianity*. London: Academic Press.
- Kok, H. (2007). Reducing violence: Applying the human needs theory to the conflict in Chechnya. *Review of International Law and Politics*, 3(11), 89-108.
- Kwaja, C. M. (2009). Ethnic and religious conflict in Wase L. G. A. Plateau State. *Causes and effects of conflict in the Southern Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria* (S. G. Best, Eds). Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies, University of Jos, Nigeria.
- Kymlicka, W., & Norman, W. (Eds.) (2000). *Citizenship in diverse societies*. Oxford University Press.
- Mansbach, R. W., & Rhodes, E. (Eds.) (2000). *Global politics in a changing world*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Marshal W., et al. (2001). *Future directions for USAID support to conflict mitigation in Nigeria*. Abuja: USAID.
- Marx, K., & Frederick, E. (1848). Manifesto of the Communist Party. In *The Portable Karl Marx* (E. Kamenka, Trans.). Viking Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1973). *The farther reaches of human nature Harmonds worth*. UK: Penguin Books New World Encyclopaedia. [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Conflict\\_theory](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Conflict_theory). (Accessed May, 2019).
- Mbah, C. C. (2006). *Political theory and methodology Onitsha*. Rex. Charles Patrick Publishers.
- Mohammed, K. (2005). Religion, federalism and the sharia project in Northern Nigeria. In E. Onwudiwe & R. T. Suberu (Eds.), *Nigerian federalism in crisis: Critical perspectives and political options*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Nnadozie, C. (2009). Why ethno-religious crisis persists in Nigeria –Sultan. *Daily Independent*, Friday January 23, A9.
- Oshunkeye, S., & Mumuni, M. (2002). The Miss World Tragedy (Cover Story). *TELL*, December 9, pp.24-31.
- Otite, N. (1999). On conflicts, their resolutions, transformation management. In N. Otite & Albert (Eds.), *Community conflicts in Nigeria: Management, resolution and transformation*. Ibadan: Spectrum.
- Otite, O. (1990). Ethnic pluralism and ethnicity in Nigeria. Ibadan: Shoneson.
- Pye, L. (1962). Politics, personality and nation-building: Burma's search for identify new haven. Com: Yale Uni. Press.
- Sabiya, W. R. (1979, Dec.). The Sharia Controversy: Sharia or Jihad. *Journal of Centre of evelopment Studies*, 1.
- Salamore, F. I. (1991). Religion and resistance in pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria. In J. K. Olupona & T. Falola (Eds.), *Religion and society in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Suberu, E. (1996). *Ethnic minority conflict and governanu in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum.