Ethno-Religious Identity Politics and Violent Conflicts in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Despite being independent for over 50 years, Nigeria popularly known as "the giant of Africa" is plagued with varying levels of internal conflicts whose roots could be traced as far back as the pre-colonial times where conquest between kingdoms were prevalent. Today, the Nigerian socio-political and economic sphere is shaped around ethno-religious identities with corresponding conflicts erupting from the quest to acquire and control the scarce socio-economic resources of the nation. After having coexisted for over 100 years since the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates under the British colonial administration, it would have been expected that the different ethnic and religious groups in the country could coexist in harmony but the situation is still not so, as ethnic and religious violence is still prevalent in the country, most especially in the northern regions. This study is undertaken to understand how ethno-religious identity politics has contributed to and promoted violent conflicts in Nigeria with particular interest in Kaduna State, northwest region of the country. The study adopts a methodological pluralism approach in understanding the problem. First, a historical review of the various ethno-religious violent conflicts that occurred in the State from 1980 to 2011 was done, and then data was generated by administering questionnaires to 2000 respondents resident in Kaduna metropolis in order to understand why violent conflicts have continued to define the state of coexistence in the State. Findings reveal that bad governance, politicians' attitudes, ethnic and religious leaders, among others,are responsible for the recurring violent conflicts in the State.
Keywords: Ethno-religious identity; identity politics; violent conflicts; violence

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I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, the West African nation nicknamed "the giant of Africa" based on its landmass, human population, natural resource endowment and its participation in conflict resolution in the continent is plagued with varying levels of internal conflicts whose roots could be traced far back as the pre-colonial times where conquest between kingdoms were prevalent. The arrival of the British imperialist under the prominent feature of colonialism amalgamated the different regions of the Northern and Southern protectorates it created into what is known as Nigeria in 1914. This amalgamation brought in contact several culturally distinct entities into one. The British as highlighted by many scholars took this path to ease an administrative burden on the account that the Northern Protectorate which mainly constitute the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group whose major religious practice was Islam and economic advantage being agriculture had a budget deficit which necessitated the need to merge the Northern with the Southern Protectorate which consisted of the Igbo and Yoruba as say that the establishment of the country Nigeria was not done with the keen interest of the major tribes whom at that time had financial surplus to ease administration of the colonies by the British. Looking closely at the amalgamation, one will not be wrong to indigenous peoples whose cultures and religions explicitly differs, rather it was an economic and administrative exit for the colonialist.

In addition to its status as Africa's and by extension the world's most populous black nation, Nigeria with over "180 million people" (National Population Commission, 2017) contains more than 300 ethnic groups who speak several languages and dialects. Its ethnic diversity cuts across religious and class divides which makes the country one of the most diverse sociocultural, political, economic, religious and multi-ethnic societies in the world. However, the quest for a national identity amongst the people of Nigeria since the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates in 1914 by the British colonial administration remains elusive as ethnic and religious conflicts continue to polarize the citizens of the country.

Ethno-religious violence and conflicts "generated on the basis of real or imagined difference in ethnic and religious identities" (Egwu, 2011) have unfortunately become an emblem of social, economic, political and cultural life in Nigeria. "The incessant ethnic and religious clashes all over the country have produced unprecedented amounts of deaths since the colonial era" (Olabanji, 2012). These crises became rampant as a

result of the existence of numerous ethnic and religious militias in the country. For instance, in the Southern part of the country, "it is estimated that more than 100 ethnic militias mostly concentrated in the oil rich Niger Delta region are in existence" (Floriquin and Berman, 2005; Hazen, 2007). Hence in what Adebanwi (2004) refers to as "the balance of terror" in the country, aggrieved ethnic and religious groups have observed the logic of "democratic violence in practice" since the return to democracy in the country in 1999.

Conflict in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society like Nigeria is inevitable and the need to understand its dynamics is paramount to ensuring sustainable peace. To achieve the desired peace, it is important to understand and trace the root causes of ethno-religious tensions or conflicts with corresponding violent consequences in Nigeria. To this end, this study set out to understand how ethno-religious identity politics has contributed to and promoted violent conflicts in Nigeria. In particular, the study aims to understand to what extent ethno-religious identity politics has led to violent conflicts in Kaduna State, northwest region of the country. To this end, the study examines the nature of ethno-religious identity politics in Nigeria and how ethno-religious identity politics has led to the numerous violent conflicts in Kaduna State.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Contention for Power Theory: Proponents of this theory sought to find answers to questions on "how and why do people who interact without doing outright damage to each other shift rapidly into collective violence, and then back into peaceful relations?" (Oberschall, 2010). This theory proposes that intergroup relation is the basis for conflict in that oppressed groups contend for power against the oppressors. This sort of power contention can be seen in democratic societies where the government does not seem to be towing the line of fairness. Such societies see the rise of oppositions in terms of political parties or civil rights movement whom show case the significance and power of the electorate in shaping governance. Nigeria has witnessed such contention for power right from the politics of the First Republic which pitched three (3) ethnicities (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) against one another for the promotion of their respective interests. This contention for power was met by violent reactions whose consequence bedevils the state of political affairs in the country.

In the same vein, ***Identity Politics Theory*** of conflict is of the notion that the root causes of ethnic conflict in multicultural societies stems from competing interests between identity-based groups. These interests are largely centred around group domination and control of resources which is often played through ethnocentrism or in-group preference. Identity politics theory appeals to negative stereotypes, fear of domination, divisive ethnic myths as pitch points for inter-group conflict or rivalry whose mismanagement often leads to violent conflicts. This theory stresses the cause of conflict as being that of "symbolic politics" (Huntington 1997; Kaufman 2001 cited in Oberschall 2010). Symbolic in the sense that conflict is about group representation or reputation. The in-group must be seen as the alpha group in social, economic and political aspects. Such highlight of conflict stemming out from the symbolic political plane in Nigeria has its manifestations predating the independence of the nation in 1960 as will be seen in the next section of this paper.

In dousing the tension that exists here, this theory suggests the need for cultural independence, power sharing agreements and promoting a shared or common identity also known as a national identity in the case of nation states. However, while power sharing agreements might seem feasible in the containment of ethno-religious conflicts and violence in Nigeria, politicians in their own respective enclaves or parties have exploited this avenue and dominated the political sphere with their respective kinsmen through ethnocentrism which in turn has led to violent conflicts. Power sharing agreements has been an avenue for positioning kinsmen at strategic points in socio-economic and political planes on the premise of "it's our turn" to rule. This is largely informed on the notion of the long standing mistrust between ethnicities and religious groups in Nigeria.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethno-religious Identity Politics and Conflicts in Nigeria
According to Jega (2002), ethno-religious conflict is:
"a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic group and another, or generally amongst ethnic groups in a multicultural polity such as Nigeria is characterized by a lack of cordiality, by heightened mutual suspicions and fears, by quarrelsomeness and by a tendency towards violent confrontations" (Jega 2002:35).

Conflict from an ethno-religious perspective erupts when varying groups feel threatened by the activities of other groups which could as a result of a minor disagreement between their respective members over non-trivial issues which in turn leads to the manifestation of tensions in the society. Ethno-religious clashes have been proven to be the most violent intergroup conflict in Nigeria largely because of their inclination towards a spill over from a particular immediate location to a farther range. Such violent conflicts have been experienced mainly around the middle belt States of Plateau and Benue and more so in States with a "dangerous convergence of religious and ethnic fears and animosities…. (in which) is often difficult to differentiate between religious and ethnic conflicts and the dividing line between the two is very thin" (IDEA, 2000 cited in

Achimugu, 2013). Prominent examples of such ethno-religious conflicts with a spill over effect since the return to democracy in the year 1999 have according to Ambe-Uva (2010) include "the Kafanchan - Kaduna crisis in 1999, ZangoKataf riot of 2001, Tafawa Balewa clashes in 2000, the Kaduna Sharia riot of 2000 and the Jos riot of 2001". More recently is the 2011 post-election violence which took a religious turn even though politically motivated.

The dominant discuss in Nigeria's social and political space is about what ethno-religious identity political and public office holders come from and not essentially about what intellectual contributions they have to offer in terms of promoting socio-economic and political development of the nation. Since the return to democracy in the year 1999, the issue of ethnicity and religion is what essentially shapes party politics and public office appointments.

Ethnic identity politics in Nigeria predates the country's independence. In the wake of independence, Nigeria witnessed the creation of political parties and corresponding elections. Party formation was regionally and ethnically oriented and the outcome of the 1951 elections which was the first election had electoral victories reflecting regional and ethnic party strongholds. The Northern People Congress (NPC) won overwhelmingly in the North, the Action Group (AG) won in the West and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) won in the East. These three political parties bluntly represented the three major ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo respectively) whose political rivalry led to the collapse of the First Republic in 1966 and consequently the destabilization of the country which still haunts the socio-economic and political growth and development of Nigeria.

In 1959, elections that ushered in the government that led Nigeria into independence were held. The result showed the continuation of regional dominance by the three major parties in their respective regions. It took a coalition between the NPC and NCNC to form a national government. Support base for the electoral candidates for power at the federal level where whipped up from ethnic and religious sentiments; the north for the northern candidate and the south for the southern candidate.

Religious identity politics crept into the Nigerian polity dating back to the 1960's when it attained its independence; although the narrative of events of that time was not isolated solely on religion but rather a combination of religion, ethnicity, and regionalism. This was so due to the demographic nature of the population where the North predominantly having the same religion (Islam) and similar culture (Hausa-Fulani), whereas the South has varying distinct cultures (Igbo, Yoruba, Ijaw, etc.). The interaction between these groups was not left without conflicts with violent consequences as history has shown.

The outright disregard for fair representation in Nigeria since the return to democracy has led to the manifestation of conflicts with violent consequences. Such cases could be seen from the 2011 post-electoral violence in Northern States following the defeat of the Northern Presidential Candidate, General MuhammaduBuhari (Rtd), whom besides being northern is also Muslim by former President Goodluck Jonathan a Southern Nigerian Christian. Evidently the reason for the violent clashes in most Northern cities including Kaduna State was a product of ethno-religious identity politics. While this might seem like being Northern or Muslim puts you out of harm's way in such periods, political party affiliation was also a marker of identity which if one did not belong to the party of the popular violent group, he/she risks being attacked.

The north-south divide that fuels centrifugal politics and struggle for power between various groups in Nigeria remains a bane to national progress. "Nigeria's crises of nationhood and its perennial quest of constructing a national identity amongst its citizens have effectively been hampered by strong divisions amongst the people that occupies it" (Olabanji 2012). Added to this is the dilemma of "citizenship characterized by the indigene-settler dichotomy used to describe the native versus settler difference in the Nigerian context" (Mamdani, 2001). This remains a major cause of sectarian clashes all over the country. This has unfortunately dented the image of the country and its national identity building efforts. Consequently, the national identity of Nigeria appears to be of a country divided between several ethnic and religious groups constantly in conflict.

Based on historical antecedents, the lack of trust between Nigerians continues to impede socio-economic and political growth and development of Africa's largest oil producing nation. This mistrust is said to have had its roots as deep as the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 by the British who have been perceived to have given little or no significance to the complex ethno-religious diversity of the entities they merged into one nation just to suit their economic interests.

Furthermore, the consequence of the actions of political actors in the First Republic (1960-1966) and the subsequent military rules could be said to be what haunts the sustainability of a national identity in Nigeria. It is important to mention here that the North-South power struggle, ethno-religious identity politics, inter and intra party power tussles have historically served as catalyst to violent conflicts in Nigeria. The age long power struggles and contestations have endured the configuration of political forces and the fractional and factional struggle for power and resources have remained. "The lack of internal political cohesion which began after independence continues and the struggle for power remain bitterly, lawlessly and violently contested as factions with no regards for the rules of the game engage in the use of private armies and thugs" (Collier 2010).

With Nigeria being ethno-religiously heterogeneous, conflict has been a reoccurring feature in the socio-political sphere of the nation with these conflicts seeking refuge along ethnic, regional and religious lines. Identity conflicts like those experienced in Nigeria involves contests between and amongst groups (ethnic, religious, cultural, gender and class) in the society over socio-economic and political resources especially when a group or groups perceives to be treated unfairly. Hence, ethno-religious identity politics are tactics usually utilized by the political class to pursue their goals as often seen during electoral campaigns in the country where you have the political class or the elites inclining towards the use of ethnicity and religion to garner support which has often led to clashes between opposing groups. This quest for the realization of goals by different identities is what triggers conflicts, some of which are resolved peacefully or sometimes through violence.It has been argued that ethnic and religious conflicts thrive in Nigeria because of the inability of the government to attain basic good governance which entails the provision of health care, portable water, education, road network and employment for its citizens as well as poverty eradication.

Kaduna State is one of the most affected States as far as ethno-religious identity politics and violent conflict is concerned in Nigeria. The State is renowned for being a flashpoint of violent conflicts arising from minor or major causes. To understand why this is so, a historical review of the numerous violent conflicts that have taken place in the State is necessary.

Historical Review of Violent Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Kaduna State

Documentary evidence suggests that Kaduna State has been ravaged by ethnic and religious conflicts prior to the independence of Nigeria in 1960. Most often than not, accounts have shown a significant level of synchronization or intertwining between ethnic conflicts and religious conflicts in Kaduna State based on the demography of the actors involved. Ethnic groups like the Kaje of ZangonKataf district have within the colonial period of 1942 "protested over perceived domination and discrimination by the Native Authority Administration" (Osaghae 1998). These perceived domination and discrimination has according to Suberu (2001) led to the persistence of "violent demonstrations in the Southern Kaduna province over certain oppressive features of the emirate system, particularly the headship of the Fulani ruling families over predominantly non-Fulani districts" in Zaria Emirate. Abdu and Umar (2002) further validated the assertion of ethnic marginalization where they highlighted that "in the 1970s the people of Southern Kaduna mobilized over frustrations with the Emirate officials who until the 1976 local government reform also dominated the system of native administration".

Not until the 1980s, violent conflicts in Kaduna State have been that between ethnicities. But due to social orientations, ethnic categorizations, and settlement patterns, these conflicts began to be mobilized based on religious sentiments and politics. Ethno-religious and political violence also got its footing in Kaduna State in the 1980s with the occurrence of violence in districts like KasuwarMagani (1980), ZangonKataf (1984), Kafanchan (1987), ZangonKataf (1992), the Sharia crises (2000) and the 2011 post-election violence. With these conflicts more apparent in the Southern parts of the State since the 1980s, the 21st century has led to the city of Kaduna being one of the flashpoints for the eruption of violent conflicts in Nigeria, both in terms of ethno-religious and political conflicts. Of particular interest to this study is the 2011 post-election violence which started as a purely political violence but later turned into ethno-religious violence with a lot of casualties in the State.

The 2011 Post-Election Violence in Kaduna State

Reports from the Human Rights Watch (HRW) indicated that a day after the Presidential elections of 19th April 2011, by which the main opposition candidate of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) in person of General MuhammaduBuhari (rtd), a Muslim from Northern Nigeria, was defeated by the candidate of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), Goodluck Jonathan, who was then the incumbent President and a Christian from the oil-rich Niger Delta in Southern Nigeria, supporters of General Muhammadu Buhari lunched series of protests which turned violent across 12 northern states which includes Kaduna State over what they perceived to have been a rigged election. This is despite the elections being described by certain international observers as "among the fairest in the country's history" (HRW, 2011) of general elections.

The elections were generally peaceful until the result of the Presidential elections was announced where the candidate of the PDP, Goodluck Jonathan, won the elections against the expectations of the supporters of the CPC candidate, General Muhammadu Buhari. The Kaduna State Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Presidential Election Disturbance (KSJCIPPED) highlighted that "as soon as the results of other States were being announced, the joy of the CPC supporters turned to bitterness….it downed on them that CPC was losing. As such they poured into all the nooks and crannies of Kaduna and Zaria and engaged in the destruction of properties spontaneously". They attacked chieftains and supporters of the People's Democratic Party and with Kaduna having an already polarized atmosphere along religious lines, mutual suspicion, intolerance and mistrust, the conflict took a religious dimension "as mosques and churches were destroyed, vandalized and or burnt down". These attacks led to counter attacks or reprisals particularly in the Southern

Kaduna where rumour mongering and the urge to avenge the killing and destructions that took place in the northern part of the State.

Deep-rooted animosity and suspicion as well as ethnic and religious intolerance and disregard for each other's customs and traditions by both Muslims and Christians was a major factor that led to the eruption of the violent conflict of April 2011 in Kaduna State as there was "divisive preaching by both Muslim and Christian preachers. The preaching of these religious preachers across the divide dabbled into politics and turned places of worship into centres of political campaign" prior to the elections. This has been the case since the 2000 Sharia crisis which brought about settlement segregation in the state capital. The segregation made it easy for any form of disagreement to degenerate into religious crisis, and this was why a reaction to perceived injustice in an election quickly degenerated into ethno-religious violence. Politicians in the state instead of designing issue-based campaign leaned towards the use of religious and ethnic sentiments as an umbrella under which they mobilized for electoral support and when a candidate from a particular religion fails to win an election, supporters of the candidate under the same religion resort to violence against believers of the winning candidate's religion irrespective of whether they voted against the candidate or not.

Unhealthy political party politics as depicted by the People's Democratic Party over its "non-adherence to the PDP zoning system as enshrined in its constitution forms part of the remote causes of the disturbances on the Northern States and Particularly in Kaduna State". It was expected that upon the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua who is a northerner, another candidate from the north should replace him to complete the second term of the eight (8) year term but instead, the PDP opted for the candidature of President Goodluck Jonathan, a Southerner and a Christian. This decision further broke the bond between northern and southern politicians in the PDP which further "overheated the polity and some parts of the North felt short-changed by the PDP" as such when electoral results came in that Goodluck Jonathan had won the elections violent broke out in the north.

Youth unemployment was another factor highlighted by the KSJCIPPED as a cause of the post-election violence. The report noted that "the large number of unemployed youth in Kaduna State poses a serious cause for concern. Unemployed youth in large numbers roam the streets in Kaduna and other towns and this has in no small measure contributed in the escalation of the disturbances". This large army of jobless youths are easily manipulated and recruited by ethnic and religious bigots into engaging in violence.

The Kaduna State Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Presidential Election Disturbance (KSJCIPPED) came up with the remote causes which were outlined as follows;

Remote Causes:
- People's Democratic Party (PDP) Zoning
- PDP/Northern Political Leadership Forum
- Divisive Preaching by Religious Leaders
- Large number of unemployed Youths in Kaduna State
- Indiscipline in the society and moral decadence
- General Anti-PDP feeling
- Desperate politicians and winner takes all syndrome
- Deep-rooted animosity and suspicion as well as religious intolerance and disregard for each other's customs and traditions by both Muslims and Christians.
- Indigene-Settler dichotomy

All these factors were responsible for the 2011 post-election violence in Kaduna metropolis and the State in general.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Study Area

With a population of about 6.1 million people according to 2006 population census, Kaduna State according to Abdu and Umar (2002) is "one of the largest cities in northern Nigeria". This is largely based on its status as the "colonial capital of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria" (Falola, 1999). The Kaduna State Government (KDSG) posit that the State has "over 60 ethnic groups namely, the Gbayo, Hausa, Fulani, Gwong, Atuku, Bajju, Atyab, Gure and Ninkyop among others. With Northern Nigeria being predominantly Muslim, estimates have it that "close to 40% of the population of Kaduna State may be made up of Christians (Maier, 2000).Suberu (1996) highlighted that "what is presently known as Kaduna State encompasses the area of the old Zaria (Zazzau) emirate-cum-province". Furthermore, Suberu, citing Smith (1993), put it that "there are two broad cultural segments" in existence within the Zazzau province. First of which is the "Hausa-Fulani group" which constitutes a majority (60%) and the "Pagan Population" which takes up the 40% population of the Zazzau Emirate.The State has twenty-three (23) Local Government Areas (LGAs) but the data for this study was collected in two (2) LGAs that make up urban Kaduna (Kaduna North and Kaduna South) whom are usually the

flashpoints of ethno-religious conflicts on the premise of significant population of both Muslims and Christians and varying tribes in the State. Kaduna North and Kaduna South LGAs have a population of 364,575 and 402,731 respectively according to the 2006 census. The two LGAs has high number of both Muslims and Christians, Hausa-Fulani and native ethnic groups as well as many Nigerians of different ethnic groups like Yoruba and Igbo, making them perfect locations for understanding ethno-religious identity politics and violence in the State.

Data Collection

Based on the complexity of the study and the researcher's quest in providing a cutting-edge analysis on the relationship between ethno-religious identity politics and violent conflicts, this study adopts a methodological pluralism approach. Also known as the triangulation approach, this methodological approach refers to the combination or harmonisation of several methods of data collection. "Triangulation connotes the mixing of data or methods such that a researcher uses different techniques to get access to different facets of the same social phenomenon."

For the purpose of adding meaningful value to the pull of existing knowledge on the subject matter, this study adopted the combination of three research methods which includes Historical Approach, Qualitative and Quantitative research methods in trying to realise the objectives of this research.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The sampling techniques used for this study are the purposive sampling technique and the simple random sampling. This is of the essence due to the diverse nature of the population under study in terms of ethno-religious affiliations. The purposive technique was used to select highly placed individuals in the study areas like Religious Heads and Traditional Rulers as those to be interviewed while the simple random sampling was used to distribute questionnaires amongst other residents of Kaduna North and South local government areas respectively.

A sample size of 1600 respondents was used. The sample size was arrived at using the Yamani and Cochran sample size statistical formula: $\quad n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Where: n= the sample size

N= population of study

1= constant

e= marginal error at 5%

Data Analysis

With data for the study collected through questionnaires and interviews, this study uses the descriptive statistical model to analyse the data. The quantitative data was entered into SPSS software and frequency tables generated for analysis while the qualitative data is presented verbatim after transcribing from the audio recorder.Of the 1600 respondents selected, only 1412 questionnaires were found to be worthy of analysis after checking for errors and quality control.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

As indicated on table 1 below, majority of respondents were males with 64% while the females constitute 35%. This however does not translate that men are more in number than women in Kaduna, instead it only indicates that more males were accessible than females in the study areas, and this is because the tradition of Muslims and the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group who constitute majority in many parts of the Kaduna metropolis is that their women are not accessible to outsiders except by the consent of their husbands or a male housekeeper. However, many other Muslim women are accessible without any permission by a male; as such the researcher was able to get access to many of them to respond to the questionnaire in addition to women from other religious faiths.

With regards to age of respondents, the data shows that they cut across all age groups with the majority (55%) being within the ages of 18-29, and one quarter of them in the age group 30-39 years, while 13.6% were within ages 40-49. This has shown that majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of the most active actors in violent conflicts in Nigeria; who have either participated in conflicts or have been victims of conflicts in the past and also who are at risk of been engaged in conflicts in the future. They are also in a position to share their experiences with regards to the most recent violent conflict in Kaduna State (the 2011 post-election violence).

Table 1: Socio-demographic distribution of respondents

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Missing	8	.6	.6	.6
Valid	Female	496	35.1	35.1	35.7
	Male	908	64.3	64.3	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	
Age					
	Missing	4	.3	.3	.3
	18 - 29	780	55.2	55.2	55.5
	30 - 39	360	25.5	25.5	81.0
Valid	40 - 49	192	13.6	13.6	94.6
	50 - 59	56	4.0	4.0	98.6
	60 - above	20	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	
Religion					
	Missing	12	.8	.8	.8
Valid	Christianity	528	37.4	37.4	38.2
	Islam	872	61.8	61.8	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	
Education					
	No Education	16	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Primary	12	.8	.8	1.9
Valid	Secondary	308	21.8	21.8	23.7
	Tertiary	1076	76.2	76.2	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The distribution of respondents by religious beliefs indicates that Muslims constitute approximately 62% and Christians constituted a little above 37%. This does not imply that this is the true reflection of the religious spread in the study areas as accurate data on the religious distribution of the areas was not available; instead it only reflects the response rate by the believers in the two dominant religions in Kaduna State. While the researcher ensured that both religions were given equal chance and are adequately represented in the sample, he however does not have control over how many of them returned the questionnaires within the stipulated time of the research. As such more Muslims responded and returned the questionnaires than Christians. It is important to state that both Muslims and Christians in Kaduna State claim numerical superiority over one another, however, there is no accurate data to back any of their claims as data on religion was not collected in the most recent 2006 Nigeria population census and the 1991 national census before it.

Kaduna State is known as the Centre of Learning in Nigeria, and the distribution of respondents have confirmed that with ¾ of them having attended up to tertiary education and about 22% with secondary education. With about 99% educational attainment rate, this means that the respondents were in good position to know about the history of the numerous crises that have occurred in the State and also be able to share their experiences.

Ethno-Religious Identity and Political Participation
This study found that an overwhelming 48% indicated that they became conscious of their ethno-religious identity when they were between ages 5 and 10 years (table 2). This indicates that the formation of identity starts from childhood.

Table 2: Age of Ethno-Religious Identity Consciousness

Years	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

	Missing	120	8.5	8.5	8.5
	05 - 10	676	47.9	47.9	56.4
	11 - 20	348	24.6	24.6	81.0
Valid	21 - 30	220	15.6	15.6	96.6
	31 - 40	44	3.1	3.1	99.7
	41 and Above	4	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Also, 53.5% of the population (table 3) indicated that they identify themselves from an ethno-religious perspective which in turn further validates the assertion that ethnic and religious identities have historically been significant in Nigeria.

Table 3: Ethno-Religious Identification

Identification		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Missing	68	4.8	4.8	4.8
Valid	No	588	41.6	41.6	46.5
	Yes	756	53.5	53.5	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

However, despite being conscious of their ethnic and religious backgrounds right from childhood and largely identifying themselves from their ethnic and religious groups, an overwhelming 74% of the respondents indicated that ethno-religious identity does not influence their political party affiliation and participation in political activities (voting pattern and choice of candidates). This is contrary to historical events which showed that voting patterns have been almost along religious or ethnic lines. A good example could be seen from the 2011 Presidential elections held in Kaduna where an overwhelming vote was thrown in favour of the PDP candidate (a Christian) by the predominantly Christians in Southern Kaduna electoral polling units while an almost exact scenario played out in favour of the CPC candidate (a Muslim) from the predominantly Muslim Kaduna North polling units.

How Identity Politics hasled to Violent Conflicts among, and between the People in Kaduna State
Findings from this study revealed that ethnicity and religioncan, and has led to violent conflicts between the people in Kaduna State. A clear reference point could be taken from the year 2000 Sharia conflicts that erupted in the State. One of the Christian Religious Leaders interviewed, who once served as an acting President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN, Kaduna State Chapter) revealed that:
"the basis for the eruption of the Sharia Conflict was because the then state government led by Governor Ahmed Makarfi moved to institute Sharia Law to replace the existing English Law that was in practice at that period. This move was met by resistance from the apex Christian body CAN in the state who met with the state government and aired their grievances" (Religious leader, Kaduna South LGA, 2017).
He went further to say that the CAN had informed Governor Ahmed Makarfi that:
"they would not accept Sharia Law as the State Law because Christians are greater in number than Muslims in Kaduna and the Governor asked if they had any statistical proof of that which they didn't. So the CAN body mobilized the Christians in the state to come out in great numbers for a peaceful protest against the move by Gov. Makarfi to institute Sharia Law in Kaduna State. While this march was seen as disapproval to the proposed law, the whole agenda of the march was to showcase the numerical strength of Christians to the State Governor. This unfortunately degenerated into violent conflicts when Christian and Muslim youths clashed on the streets" (Religious leader, Kaduna South LGA, 2017).
On his part, a traditional leader in Tudun Wada district of Kaduna South LGA, submitted that where he lived in Tudun Wada, political party affiliation was a cause of violent conflict during the 2011 elections even though the inhabitants were all Muslims and shared to a large extent same ethnicity. He stated that:
During the 2011 post-election violence in Tudun Wada, Muslims killed and maimed fellow Muslims and also destroyed their properties on the account that they supported the People's Democratic Party (PDP) whose presidential candidate was Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian in place of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) candidate Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim who was seen as the most righteous and loved northerner alive. Ethnicity took its turn as the Muslim Yoruba inhabitants were targeted by some Hausa

Muslims on the premise that they betrayed the "ummah" and voted the PDP. (Traditional Leader, Kaduna South LGA, 2017)

These have gone to show that indeed ethnic and religious identities have contributed to the violent conflicts experienced in Kaduna State.

Causes of Ethnic and Religious Identity Conflicts and how it has impacted on Coexistence within and between the diverse Residents of Kaduna State

Findings on the causes and factors leading to violent conflicts in Kaduna State showed that bad governance is a leading cause of violent conflicts in the State. About 70% of respondentssupport this as indicated on table 4 below. Also the actions of politicians in the cause of pursuing their political ambitions and political party differences have contributed to violent conflicts in Kaduna State.

Table 4: Causes of and Factors contributing to Violent Conflicts in Kaduna

Bad Governance		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Missing	60	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Agree	440	31.2	31.2	35.4
	Disagree	208	14.7	14.7	50.1
Valid	Neutral	88	6.2	6.2	56.4
	Strongly agree	548	38.8	38.8	95.2
	Strongly disagree	68	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	
Politicians' ambitions					
	Missing	20	1.4	1.4	1.4
	Agree	508	36.0	36.0	37.4
	Disagree	44	3.1	3.1	40.5
Valid	Neutral	36	2.5	2.5	43.1
	Strongly Agree	752	53.3	53.3	96.3
	Strongly disagree	52	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	
Political Party differences					
	Missing	24	1.7	1.7	1.7
	Agree	600	42.5	42.5	44.2
	Disagree	84	5.9	5.9	50.1
Valid	Neutral	116	8.2	8.2	58.4
	Strongly Agree	536	38.0	38.0	96.3
	Strongly disagree	52	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	
Political office privileges					
	Missing	28	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Agree	564	39.9	39.9	41.9
	Disagree	88	6.2	6.2	48.2
Valid	Neutral	136	9.6	9.6	57.8
	Strongly Agree	532	37.7	37.7	95.5
	Strongly disagree	64	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	
Traditional and Religious leaders					
	Missing	24	1.7	1.7	1.7
	Agree	440	31.2	31.2	32.9
	Disagree	228	16.1	16.1	49.0
Valid	Neutral	268	19.0	19.0	68.0
	Strongly agree	352	24.9	24.9	92.9
	Strongly disagree	100	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Privileges attached to political offices which makes politicians to device all means necessary to win elections at all cost and occupy positions is another factor that have contributed to violence in Kaduna. This is the position of 78% of the respondents (see table 4 above). Also, traditional and religious leaders who are supposed to be the promoters of peaceful coexistence have contributed to the violent conflicts in Kaduna State with their utterances and support for politicians and political parties during election campaigns. Even the White Paper report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the 2011 Post-presidential Election Disturbances in Kaduna State submitted that divisive preaching by religious leaders was among the main causes of the post-election violence in the State.

VI. CONCLUSION

It is the conclusion of this paper that a suitable solution to the negative impact of *Ethno-Religious Identity Politics* is good governance through sustainable socio-economic and political institutions where accountability for violation of national integration policies is guaranteed. Good governance at its full potential will without a doubt foster the desired development on the premise that ethno-religious inclusion is attained based on justice and fairness.

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