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**CONFLICT AND IDENTITY IN NIGERIA:  
AN EMERGING CULTURE OF CONFLICT  
IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2015

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## **DEDICATION**

**This research is dedicated to the lives that have been lost in the killing fields around the world and especially in sub Saharan Africa.**



## **ABSTRACT**

Conflicts remain a major issue in many parts of the world, with many African countries still embroiled in one form of conflict or the other. The nature of conflicts have changed from the civil wars that preceded independence in these countries and are now smaller conflicts that are termed identity conflicts. Understanding the reasons behind these conflicts have become a major area of research with the discourse focusing on the instrumentalist and economic reasons behind them. The focus has been that instrumentalist factors are the main motivators in conflicts largely ignoring the effect of identities and how they affect the dynamics of conflicts.

This research attempts to bridge this understanding by examining the nexus between identity and conflict. It adopts a socio-psychological approach to comprehend how groups see their roles in these conflicts. To do this, it examines the factors behind identity formation and how identities are used as mobilising tools during times of intense inter group competition. It then goes beyond understanding the reasons behind conflicts by focusing on why some conflicts become intractable. It argues that we should understand group narratives and the role these play in conflict dynamics through how groups selectively focus on narratives that emphasize their strengths and threats. During periods of intense competition, these are used in the process of mutual delegitimisation to create stereotypes that increase the suspicions between groups, making conflict resolution difficult.

Finally it argues that for conflict resolution efforts to be successful, we must go beyond just implementing policies that are aimed at reducing political, social and economic inequalities and include those that change negative group narratives that currently exist in plural countries. This should enable groups better understand each other so as to create a space for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the reduction of inter-group competitions.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACN	Action Congress of Nigeria
AD	Alliance for Democracy
AG	Action Group
ANPP	All Nigeria Peoples Party
APC	All Progressive Congress
APP	All Peoples Party
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CDC	Constitution Drafting Committee
COCIN	Church of Christ in Nigeria
CPC	Congress for Progressive Change
CRISE	Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECWA	Evangelical Church Winning All
FCS	Federation of Christian Students
GNPP	Great Nigeria Peoples Party
His	Horizontal Inequalities
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
JIBWIS	Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a wa Ikamatis Sunnah
JNI	Jama'atu Nasir Islam
LGA	Local Government Authority
MSS	Muslim Students Society
NA	Native Authority
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and The Cameroons



NEPU	Northern Elements Progressive Union
NPC	Northern Peoples Congress
NPN	National Party of Nigeria
NPP	Nigeria Peoples Party
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
OPC	O’odua Peoples Congress
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PRTV	Plateau Radio and Television
PRP	Peoples Redemption Party
SDT	Social Dominance Theory
SIEC	State Independent Electoral Commission
SOKAPU	The Southern Kaduna Peoples Union
SU	Scripture Union
UPN	Unity Party of Nigeria
WIC	Women Interfaith Council



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Conflicts have remained one of the world's major problems, claiming the lives of millions and disrupting the social harmony of many communities. Collier and Sambanis (2005) estimated that since the turn of the 20th century approximately 191 million people lost their lives due to acts of collective violence. Conflicts are a common feature in many developing countries, many of them in sub Saharan Africa, where they are occurring with greater frequency. Since the wave of independence on the African continent in the late 1950s and early 1960s, countries on the continent have seen their share of conflicts, with the early conflicts waged between different groups fighting to take control of the new emerging states.

However over the last two decades there has been a change in the nature of African conflicts, with fewer of the civil wars and insurgencies that were characteristic of the post independence conflicts, to smaller conflicts that are described as identity conflicts. These conflicts have had damaging effects on the continent with huge loss of lives and large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and have slowed down any meaningful attempts at development. There is a growing scholarship researching conflicts that seek a better understanding of the causes of such conflicts so that more effective conflict resolution policies can be formulated.

Although recent studies have provided some understanding of the causes of conflicts, many have persisted, proving very difficult to resolve, reaching the point where they are described as intractable. These are conflicts that are characterised as being 'protracted, irreconcilable, violent, of zero sum nature, total, and central; parties involved in such conflicts have an



interest in their continuation' (Bar-Tal and Salomon, 2006:3). These conflicts usually last a long period of time, sometimes over decades and are also violent with the violence having an emotional impact on members of the parties involved in the conflict.

These kinds of conflicts involve 'psychological investments to cope with the situation' and are seen as existential, finding a central place in the lives of the group members involved in the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007:1432-1433). Bar-Tal (2003:78) also states that the length of the conflicts implies that they have been difficult to resolve leading to 'increasing amounts of prejudice, mistrust, hatred and animosity'. The length of the conflict also results in the development of collective memories that 'focus mainly on the other side's responsibility for the outbreak and continuation of the conflict and its misdeeds, violence and atrocities' with these collective memories 'institutionalized and transmitted through the political, social, and cultural channels and institutions' (Bar-Tal, 2003:78-79).

This research argues that these kind of conflicts are usually underpinned by mobilisations based on identities that provide them with an emotional aspect, making the positions of the conflicting groups rigid. This is because they 'see themselves as beleaguered and threatened by powerful others, and they must fight hard to protect themselves' (Kriesberg, 1993:419). By focusing on the role of identities in conflicts, the study argues that, while different reasons are put forward for conflicts, solutions cannot be viewed from purely instrumental or interest based perspectives. Rather in order to get a better understanding of those that continue to defy conflict resolution efforts, we must understand the basis of mobilisation that relate to some emotive component especially those that are linked to group identities such as ethnicity and religion. An important distinction must be made here regarding those conflicts regarded as religious in nature. Many of these are not conflicts with the goal of religious conversion rather they are conflicts centred on mobilisation based on religion. This



is especially important when examining conflicts in African societies where these types of identities still form the basic foundation for intergroup relations.

## **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Nigeria is one of the largest countries in West Africa with an estimated landmass of approximately 910,768 square kilometres and an estimated population of over 170 million made up of 250 ethnic groups. The main ethnic groups are the Yoruba in the southwest, the Igbo in the South East and the Hausa-Fulani in the North but there are several other smaller ethnic groups around the country. There are two main religions in the country, Islam and Christianity with a number of traditional religions. Muslims are mostly found in the north and the southwest while the southeast is predominantly Christian.

This ethnic and religious diversity makes Nigeria a very tricky terrain when it comes to ethnic and religious interactions and has led to serious contestations between these groups that sometimes lead to bloody conflicts. While conflicts in the oil producing region of the Niger Delta have been the most visible of the conflicts in the country, there have been other conflicts that are communal or ethno-religious in nature where mobilisation between the competing groups are based on identities such as religion and ethnicity. The importance of identities has led to a continued fight for hegemony between the two main religions Islam and Christianity in the country and between the major ethnic groups, the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo on the one hand and the smaller ethnic groups. In the middle belt area of the country, which was a part of the old northern region, ethnic divisions remain an issue with conflicts between the ethnic groups as they struggle for hegemony.

Nigeria has had a long history of conflict, with initial conflicts being sectional struggles between the regions trying to assert their hegemony and the more recent ethno-religious



conflicts. Conflicts in Nigeria began in the three decades prior to independence 'when political and economic resources expanded rapidly' (Diamond, 1988:59) resulting in increased competition between the elites for control of these resources. Competition in Nigeria has largely been based on regional, ethnic and religious identities. One early example of this was during the period leading to the 1951 elections. The elections showed the early signs of the emergence of ethnic politics with wins for the Yoruba led Action Group (AG), the Igbo led National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), and the Hausa/Fulani led Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the western, eastern and northern regions respectively with each major ethnic group winning votes in the area that it had a numerical ethnic majority. This solidified identities between the regions and intensified competition during the years leading to independence (Diamond, 1988).

In the immediate years after independence, ethnic politics continued, with this culminating in the 1967-1970 civil war. The war provided an insight into the relationship between the ethnic groups in the country and has been a factor in their current relationships. The war was a result of the after effects of the coups of January and July 1966. The first coup in January 1966 resulted in the deaths of mainly Northern politicians at the hands of mainly Igbo officers, which then prompted a retaliatory coup in July where the main casualties were the Igbo Head of state, General Ironsi with the Igbo population living in the northern region also targets. The conflict while not the first ethnic clash in the country, degenerated to a situation where the eastern region felt that in order to protect the Igbo who bore the brunt of the attacks, it was necessary to secede, which it did when it declared the republic of Biafra in 1967. This resulted in a civil war that lasted from 1967 to January 1970 and helped define intergroup relations that had already been strained with the competition for political office during post independence years. At the end of the war, General Gowon who was then



Head of government stated that neither side should see themselves either as winners or losers, rather that all Nigerians should adopt the sense of 'no victor, no vanquished.'<sup>1</sup>

However, the war increased suspicions that already existed between the country's main ethnic groups; the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. These groups continue to contest for dominance, even though the war weakened the position of the Igbos who have since been treated with suspicion and remained on the fringes of the country's political establishment although this is now changing. While the struggle for dominance has been between these three, there have been conflicts between these groups and the minority groups within their regions.

Most of the conflicts are currently occurring with greater regularity in the northern region that has long been beset by ethno-religious conflicts between the smaller ethnic groups and the Hausa Fulani majority. While the demand for more economic and political benefits by the smaller groups can be argued is a reason for these increasing conflicts, other factors such as the expansion of the sharia legal system in some of the northern states with the resultant increase in religious consciousness in the region, can also be seen as a reason for the increase in the frequency of clashes between Christian and Muslim groups. However there have also been intra religious clashes especially amongst the Muslim *Shi'a*, the *Tijaniyya* and the *Qadriyya* sects. Religion is said to have 'become so important in recent history that no analysis of modern Nigerian politics in the last quarter of the twentieth century can fail to consider it fully' (Falola, 1998:2). These conflicts have created a sense of insecurity in the region and needs to be addressed before it deteriorates further.

All of the conflict areas especially those in the northern states are ethnically diverse. Religion also plays a role in inter group relations in northern Nigeria where Islam is the dominant religion and the main identity, so that there is a confrontation between Muslims and

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<sup>1</sup> Gowon pursued a policy for the Igbos that pushed for their quick reintegration back into Nigerian society. For a more detailed analysis of how this was attempted see: Anthony D.A. (2002). *Poison and Medicine: Ethnicity, Power and Violence in A Nigerian City, 1966 to 1986*. Heinmann, James Curry and David Philip.



Christians who are each trying to assert their position in the region (Falola, 1988). In order to understand the conflicts in Nigeria we must examine them from historical, social, political, economic and religious perspectives, by examining the country's political instability, diversity, the level of poverty, effect of modernisation, the role of Nigeria in the world and the level of militancy (Falola, 1998: 13).

Over the past three decades there have been several conflicts in the north. One of these was the 1980 Maitatsine conflict in Kano, when a radical group headed by Muhammadu Marwa established an enclave in the town that preached a radical form of Islam. The group attempted to violently take over the central mosque, something akin to a coup against the traditional Islamic establishment that the group saw as illegitimate. This led to violent clashes between the movement and the Nigerian authorities, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people including the movement's leader. However this was not the end of the group because even with Marwa's death its members moved to other cities where they continued preaching the group's ideology. This resulted in other clashes between the splinter groups and law enforcement agencies in other cities such as Maiduguri and Kaduna in 1982; Yola in 1984 and Gombe in 1985 (Kasfelt, 1984).

In 1982 Kano was also the scene of more religious violence, while there was also rioting in Kaduna in the same year, in Yola, Jimeta and Gombe in 1984 and further riots in Lagos, Ilorin and Sokoto in the second half of the decade (Falola, 1998). When the Christian Association of Nigeria, (CAN) invited German evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke, to hold a crusade in Kano in 1991, it increased religious tensions and led to violence between Muslims and Christians.<sup>2</sup> The Kafanchan conflict in 1987 and the Zangon-Kataf crisis of 1992 were also noted for the high levels of violence and the ripple effects they had in other cities in the north notably Kaduna, Zaria, Daura and Kano and the reprisal killings that followed in the eastern parts of

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<sup>2</sup> Muslims complained that government was partial in allowing Bonnke to preach in Kano when it had just banned a Muslim Preacher, Ahmed Deedat from coming to the country to preach



the country (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, there have been about 500 violent conflicts in the country of which 100 can be classified as ethno-religious conflicts (Scacco, 2007). These include the Kaduna 2000 and Jos 2001 crisis while other communal conflicts that are estimated to have claimed over 10,000 lives by 2005 have also ravaged the middle belt states of Benue, Taraba, and Nasarawa (Adebanwi, 2005; Adejumobi, 2005).

Pre-colonial differences between the more progressive south and the conservative north have also had an effect on regional relations. The North's culture alongside Islam's role in the lives of the population has been seen as a barrier in its development and pace of modernisation. It is argued that this reluctance to develop and modernise was aided by 'the more or less deliberate refusal of British Colonial officials in the north to actively promote the agencies of modernisation tended to reinforce what is commonly presented as the essentially autocratic and hierarchical nature of Northern-particularly Emirate-society' (Kwanashie, 2002: vii). This slow pace of modernisation in the North clashed with the South's desire for a faster rate of modernisation based on western ideas and values. Also, we will see in later chapters that as religion began to take up more of the responsibility in the lives of the population with the shrinking of the state after the introduction of the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s, it began to take a bigger role in how social, economic and political policies in the country were shaped.

The country's place on the international stage has also affected relations between religious groups, with Muslims leaning towards the Islamic states of the east, while the southern Igbo and Yoruba lean more towards the west and their more liberal value systems and politics.<sup>3</sup> During the years after independence, there was a deliberate attempt by Ahmadu Bello the northern Premier to reach out to Muslim countries that saw him as a religious leader and

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<sup>3</sup> The Yoruba have large Muslim population but take a more liberal attitude to religion.



gave support to the northern government. Northern Christians saw this as an attempt by the Premier to impose the Islamic way of life in the region and this affected Muslim Christian relations with each group viewing each other with suspicion. This has continued even after the events of 1966 and by the 1970s and 1980s this worsened due to the rise in religious revivalism and the country's membership of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1986.

The conflicts in northern Nigeria have centred on the states of Kaduna, Plateau, Bauchi, Gombe, Benue, Taraba and Nasarawa. The towns within this area that have been most affected are around the Jos and southern Kaduna area. Within these areas are a large number of ethnic groups that have since 1987 in the case of Kaduna and 2001 in Jos, been in a more or less permanent state of violent conflict. Although these conflicts are mobilised based on ethnic and religious lines and can thus be termed as identity conflicts, there have been efforts to downplay the role identities have played by ascribing the conflicts to the efforts of political opportunists to gain political capital by veiling them along those lines. The argument has been that these identities only become relevant when elites invoke them to mobilise groups so as to further their own agendas and as such these identities are used as instrumental tools.

However while this argument might have some validity, it is noted that it does not explain 'the mass appeal of religion [and] the rise of fundamentalism' (Falola, 1998:2). Ignoring the role identities play in these conflicts has made it more difficult to find a long lasting resolutions. So it is important to examine the role of identities in the lives of millions of Nigerians so that we can understand why individuals are easily mobilised to kill and maim and what effect these have on the intensity of the conflict and the efforts at resolving them.



## **1.2 RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The foundation for this research is based on the notion that identities are important to many communities in Nigeria and form the basis for everyday interaction between individuals and groups. While these provide the moral foundation for everyday interaction between groups, they are also a powerful mobilising tool during periods of conflict and should not be discounted when we try to understand conflicts. The study examines how identities such as religion and ethnicity emerged, how they have been maintained by group narratives and how during conflicts, they help strengthen group identities by selectively choosing those myths that help solidify the group's cohesiveness. This selectivity of narratives by one group brings it in conflict with other groups who have a different view of the issues and worsens intergroup relations, making it more difficult to resolve such conflicts. The research focuses on providing answers to the following questions;

- What are the main identities in the country and how did they evolve and are maintained?
- What factors have helped heighten group identities in northern Nigeria?
- How do social groups use past narratives to help them navigate present intergroup relations?
- Why do groups mobilise using identities and what effect does this have on the nature of conflicts and the conflict resolution process?

## **1.3 DATA SOURCES**

Nigeria's long history of conflicts has produced several judicial commissions of inquiries at both the Federal and state levels with the objective of determining the immediate and remote causes of the conflicts and proposing lasting solutions. Such commissions provide a rich source of data in identifying the causes of these conflicts through the narratives that



each group holds important. The study examines group submissions to get an insight into how they perceive their relationship with other groups involved in the conflicts and what they thought were the immediate and remote causes of the conflicts. The main sources of data for this research will thus involve the examination of group narratives through presentations made at various commissions of inquiry inaugurated at the state and the federal Government levels to investigate the conflicts.<sup>4</sup>

The various reports are listed in the reference section and include government reports and various presentations by ethnic and religious groups that cover conflicts in Kaduna and Plateau states. Archival data will also be used to provide a historical understanding of the region and these will include colonial reports and gazetteers from the old northern region. Other documents include studies carried out examining the conflicts in the states of the northern region and include interviews of actors in the conflicts, published and unpublished documents, newspapers and news magazines that covered the conflicts. While some of the commission of inquiry reports have been used in previous conflict studies these have been conflict specific.<sup>5</sup> The interviews have cut across ethnic and religious groups, some political elites, community leaders and civil society activists. This research examines the different narratives between the conflicts to identify if there are threads that link them together and if the narratives in different reports are radicalised to justify the conflicts.

#### **1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

The research focuses on the old northern region that has a number of ethnic groups that have been competing for hegemony before independence. As observed, many of these conflicts have occurred in Kaduna and Plateau states, with towns such as Kaduna,

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<sup>4</sup> Many of the recommendations of the various commissions of inquiry had not been implemented and this has been argued is due to the fine line that the Federal and state governments tread to maintain peace, but it can be argued that over the years this has exacerbated the problem.

<sup>5</sup> See Kukah, M. H. (1989) Religion and Politics in Nigeria Since 1960; Ibrahim, J. (1989). The Politics of Religion In Nigeria; The Parameters Of The 1987 Crisis In Kaduna State); Yusuf, B. (2007): Managing Muslim–Christian Conflicts in Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of Kaduna State, Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations



Kafanchan, and Zangon-Kataf in Kaduna state and Jos, Yelwa and Shendam in Plateau state being worse affected. The towns of Jos and Kaduna are unique in the sense that they were never part of the Sokoto caliphate unlike the other major cities in the region like Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Bida, and Ilorin. Jos and Kaduna were established during the colonial period and did not share administrative structures like the older emirate towns. These towns were more cosmopolitan with Kaduna serving as the administrative centre of the northern region, attracting migrants from within and outside the region, while Jos grew out of the tin mining activities in the area and also witnessed an influx of migrant workers (mainly Hausa-Fulani) into the area as mine workers.

This research covers conflicts from 1987 onwards, a period that has witnessed the most intense conflicts in the Kaduna and Jos areas beginning with the 1987 Kafanchan conflict in Kaduna that spread into other states in the region. This was followed by the 1992 Zangon-Kataf conflict, the 1999 Kafanchan conflict, the 2000 Sharia conflict, the 2002 Miss World crisis and the 2011 post election violence. During this period the contestation between the Hausa Fulani and the Berom and the other ethnic groups in Jos reached breaking point, resulting in the conflicts of 1994, 2001 in Jos and the 2002/2004 conflicts around the Shendam/Wase local government areas.<sup>6</sup>

The choice of the conflicts in the Kaduna and Jos areas is due to their historical developments that created tensions between the mainly Muslim Hausa Fulani and non-Muslim ethnic minorities of the northern region. The areas are also similar because of the large number of ethnic groups that reside in the areas who see themselves along ethnic and religious lines. However we cannot generalise for all conflicts because they do have some differences, which include the composition of the groups involved, with different ethnic

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<sup>6</sup> These were the major incidents, however the town and settlements around the town have continued to witness bombings, raids and intermittent clashes between Muslims and Christians.



groups engaged in the two conflicts but importantly the Hausa Fulani are a common group in both conflicts.

Also, while Kaduna has a Muslim majority, Jos is predominantly Christian, with the crisis in Kaduna resulting in retaliatory attacks within other towns in the state, while the Jos crisis tends to be largely contained within the town and where there have been cases of retaliatory attacks these have happened outside the state in neighbouring states like Kano and Bauchi. The study examines how identities have emerged and been maintained by studying how group narratives are constructed, reconstructed and maintained incorporating past events to enhance group cohesiveness. This is particularly relevant because it was important to see if group narratives widen divisions between groups pulling them further apart and making it more difficult for peaceful coexistence while also making intergroup relations more prone to violent conflict.

Even though there are numerous written sources and oral narratives to support the study, one of the limitations relates to the veracity of the interviews undertaken. Due to the level of suspicions between the various groups, some of those interviewed were not as forthcoming as one would have hoped and I was viewed either as an ally or an enemy depending on the ethnic or religious composition of the respondents. Due to this, a greater reliance is placed on written narratives especially judicial commission of inquiry reports and the various submissions to these commissions by the various ethnic and religious groups involved in the conflicts. This should not in any way diminish the strength of the analysis because as Cobb (2013:24) notes these are the institutional spaces where 'narratives are evaluated, judged and adopted as scenarios moving toward a future that is, itself, under development.'



## 1.5 METHODOLOGY

This study uses a multi-case study approach as expounded by Yin (2005), to examine the conflicts. The case study approach is adopted even though there has been some criticism by post positivists as to its relevance for comparing events due to its non-scientific approach. But Flyvbjerg (2006:233) argues that in research that involves human understanding 'predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is, therefore, more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals'. Case studies help support interpretive approaches to understanding social phenomenon and are more useful than using a positivist approach. This interpretive approach enables a different method of examining conflicts by focusing on understanding how social groups are mobilised during conflicts. It allows for conflicts to be seen through the eyes of the groups engaged in the conflict, understanding how they see their roles in the conflicts through their perspective of the conflicts; how each group's perspective differs and if these differences affect how the dynamics of the conflicts.

Bevir (2006) is an advocate of the interpretive over the positivist approach in the study of the social sciences, noting that 'interpretive approaches rest on philosophical analysis of the human sciences as being concerned to unpack meanings as beliefs' and that 'this analysis inspires a distinctive narrative form of explanation in which beliefs are situated in wider webs of beliefs that themselves are situated against traditions and dilemmas' (2006:281). These stories or narratives have been a tool used in folklore, however this approach is now finding its way into use in the study of the social sciences. This is because although narratives are life stories, they are useful in explaining daily experiences especially 'disruptions in daily life' (Murray, 2008:113) with narratives of actions 'interpretations of interpretations' implying that they 'seek to recover the beliefs or meanings that make



actions and practices possible' (Bevir, 2006:283). In situations of group conflicts, narratives are seen as being at the heart of conflicts, where over time they are 'presented, contested, elaborated and on occasion, transformed' (Cobb, 2013:24). These are what make them useful to understanding group conflicts as they provide the different group perspectives and can be useful during attempts at conflict resolution.

Narratives are described as 'an organized interpretation of a sequence of events' (Murray, 2008:113) which are 'concerned with the human means of making sense of an ever-changing world' and that 'it is through narrative that we can bring a sense of order to the seeming disorder in our world' (Murray, 2008:111). While this definition focuses on individual's narratives and how use them to construct the world they live in, they can also help in understanding group actions and how social groups use them to make sense of their world. This allows us to study the effect of disruptions like conflicts, not just in the individual's life but that of the group. Using this approach should help in a better examination of the social groups' perception of the conflicts, putting them into context and trying to understand how intergroup relations are formed, where conflict arises and if these can provide a new approach to finding local solutions to resolving conflicts. The use of narratives by groups to justify their actions has found its way into some of the recent research that has focused on the conflict resolution aspect of conflicts in trying to understand why some of them are hard to resolve.

Analysing the psychology of the actors involved in conflicts has been suggested as a way for understanding the reasons why some conflicts are hard to resolve (Kelman and Fisher, 2003). This approach argues that aside from the struggle for material needs, there is also the struggle for group recognition, self-esteem and a sense of justice (Burton, 1990 cited in Kelman and Fisher, 2003). Bar-Tal (1999, 2005, 2007, 2011) and Ross (2001a, 2001b,



2007,2009) have taken this approach so as to get a different perspective of conflict dynamics.

The approach seeks to understand the reasons why some conflicts have been difficult to resolve and also why groups involved in conflicts are so emotionally and psychologically invested in the conflicts that they are unable to reach a peaceful resolution. It bases its analysis on intergroup relations that use identities such as ethnicity and religion as the ideological foundation for group actions, with ideology being defined as 'a socially shared belief system about how society should conduct itself' (Krochik and Jost, 2011:146). These ideologies remain the main drivers for intergroup relations in many African states and because of the nature of the African State, where there is still a strong reliance on identity and religion, it makes this approach a useful explanatory tool for understanding inter group relations. This enables us examine conflicts from the perspective of cultural nations within a territorial state as they contest for political, economic, and territorial control, based on ethnic or religious identities that are emotive and some might argue irrational.

Bar-Tal's research has largely focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, examining the reasons why conflict resolution methods have not been successful, while Ross has also examined that conflict and the Northern Ireland conflict. These types of conflicts are seen as leading to 'threat, stress, danger, demands, pressure, insecurity, uncertainty and unpredictability' (Bar-Tal, 2011:335), and because they affect individual and group behaviour, they lead to negative reactions such as 'fear, anger, sense of hardship and suffering, frustration, grief, pain, sense of victimhood, humiliation, resentment, will to revenge, hatred, hostility [and] closure'.



This approach can be adapted to examine similar inter-communal or ethno-religious conflicts such as those in northern Nigeria where mobilisation is along ethnic and religious lines. His approach has three parts, with the first involving how groups use collective memories to justify the essence of the conflicts and the actions that they take. Each group's collective memories have the purpose of showing the main group in a positive light as a victim of the other group (Bar-Tal, 2011). The historical memories of the conflict demean the out-group showing them as the aggressors and the in-group as the victim in the conflict justifying the group's acts of revenge against the out-group (Paez and Liu, 2011).

The second aspect of the structure relates to the construction of what Bar-Tal refers to as the 'ethos of the conflict' that is developed as the period of conflicts become longer and more permanent. This is defined as 'the configuration of shared central societal beliefs that provide a certain dominant orientation to a society at present and for the future,' (Bar-Tal, 2011:11). The ethos provides the characteristics of the conflicts in terms of 'its goals, its conditions, requirements, images of the own group and the rival' (Bar-Tal, 2011:11), which helps to legitimise the conflict in the eyes of a group.

The ethos of conflict has eight themes which are identified as; the justness of the conflict, issues of group security, positive collective self image, issues around victimization by the out-group, issues of patriotism that revolve around loyalty to the group and sacrifice; issues of group unity and finally issues around peace (Bar-Tal, 2011:12). Unlike the collective memories of the conflict that deal with the historical narratives surrounding the conflict, the ethos of conflict relate to the present and the future of the conflict. So these two provide three threads around the conflict; the past; the present and the future aspects of the conflict, where it has been, where it is and where it is heading.



The final aspect of this approach is 'Collective Emotional Orientation' which emerge when groups develop orientations that revolve around fear, hatred, humiliation, anger, shame, guilt or pride (Bar-Tal, 2011:12). These are found within the first two aspects and the three serve the function of providing a clear picture of the conflict to the group, help to justify the actions against the out group, in this case destruction and violence, to its members and the outside world. It also helps the groups prepare for threats to its existence, motivates it for solidarity and mobilisation during conflicts and finally it serves to maintain the sense of superiority and differentiation of one group in relation to another (Bar-Tal, 2011:13). This aspect of the structure ensures that there continues to be selective dissemination of information to favour the actions of the in-group.

Bar-Tal (2001), Jarymowicz and Bar-Tal (2006), Halperin and Bar-Tal (2008) and Bar-Simantov (2010) noted that when examining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they found that the most common emotion was fear that was generated either from present or past experiences such as threat and dangers. This fear overcomes hope, making the peaceful resolution of the conflict more difficult. This fear then leads to increased fear of potential threats and causes overestimation of danger and threat (Bar-Tal, 2001 and Jarymowicz and Bar-Tal, 2006). The emotion of fear is spread through group narratives and other sources of information dissemination such as places of worship, the media and cultural practices.

In situations like those in Jos and Kaduna, the groups create their own source of information to their members and these take the form of written and oral narratives. What is important to note is that in these cases, information is selectively chosen so as to ensure that the focus is on group memories that create narratives that help it support the group and justify its position in the conflict. Cobb (2013) notes that narratives are used to promote positive legitimising images of the in-group while at the same time portraying the 'other' in



delegitimising and negative terms by positioning them in their narrative as the 'other' who is seen as an enemy or a threat. These contentious and radicalised narratives are restrictive and in some cases closed, so that group members' actions work within the confines of the narratives and even where there are dissenting voices, these are silenced by the dominant majority (Cobb, 2013). Manojlovic (2010:2) also notes that if we want to understand issues around human security and identity conflicts we must explore 'contentious narratives, through which threats, perceptions and meanings that reinforce or undermine human security circulate' and one way to do this is through understanding how narrative inquiry is used as 'a tool for understanding and dealing with the complexities that challenge human security and provide avenues for transformation and change in today's conflicts.'

These kinds of narratives emerge through collective memories that provide 'a prism through which society members construe their reality, collect new information, interpret their experiences and then make decisions about their course of action' (Bar-Tal, 2011:13). This leads to the formation of 'tunnel vision' by each group making the conflicts hard to resolve due to the group's perception of the conflict where they see it as a stable form of existence with each selective information processed in a manner that would further validate and reinforce it. All of this leads to the evolvment of what Bar-Tal (2011) refers to as a 'culture of conflict' whereby the conflict becomes a part of the political, societal, cultural and educational structure of the society.

Once a culture of conflict is developed, it becomes difficult for successful conflict resolution because the socio-psychological aspect of conflicts inject emotive attributes to the conflict making group positions uncompromising because fear overcomes hope in these societies with the fear of potential threat having a greater effect than the possibility of peace (Bar-Tal, 2001; 2011). Finally the fear of the possibility of potential terror also ensures that in-group



cohesiveness increases resulting in groups maintaining a rigid stance. This approach also helps us understand why conflict resolution becomes harder because group members find it difficult to come to terms with the lives that were sacrificed during the conflict and any peaceful resolution would be seen as the group giving up its goals, while some might feel that if peace was possible now, the sacrifices could have been avoided. The final issue relates to the role of the leaders of these groups, who after having adopted a rigid position at the start of the conflict find it difficult to change their position late in the day because of the fear of losing legitimacy among group members.

Collective memories become radicalised to provide the justification for each group's position in the conflict, with each group taking from the past to justify present and future actions. In their study of the construction of collective memories in intergroup conflicts, Paez and Liu (2011:107), observed that collective memories refer to events that affect a group of people who are part of a national community or political group. These memories must have had a significant effect on this collective that resulted in a change in their 'institutions, beliefs and values' (2011:107). The events that create these memories are said to elicit emotions that range from 'surprise, interest and pride' which are positive emotions or negative emotions such as 'sadness, anger, fear and anxiety' and are formed through the mass media that are followed as they develop and are transmitted through personal communications (Paez and Liu, 2011:108). Collective memories help reinforce these identities by magnifying the difference of the identities of the in-group vis-a-vis the out-group.

An example of how such collective memories were invoked to rationalise violence can be seen where past battles between the Turks and the Christians in Kosovo were used by Serbian leaders to justify their action against the Muslims by claiming that current Muslims in the area were descendants of the Ottoman empire who were their historical enemies.



What was important is the manner in which the Serbs used it where they selected just those portions of history that helped justify their actions while ignoring those bits that would weaken their position. These were also used as motivational factors by highlighting the fear of past events to justify the actions of the in-group against the 'out' group (Paez and Liu: 2011). Collective memories between groups in such instances usually emphasise different and contradictory aspects of the conflict making it difficult for each group to reach a compromise (Bar-Tal and Salomon, 2006). This is because the groups use memories that are associated with 'contempt, hatred and anger' (Paez and Liu: 2011:109), against the out-group and this is what Bar-Tal (2011) refers to as the 'Collective Emotional Orientation'. The collective memories also revisit past traumas, which are losses that the group remembers as significant but also referring to past glories, which are used to enhance the image of the group.

Although the research uses this framework to understand how groups frame their positions during periods of conflicts, it must be acknowledged that there are limitations to its use. One such limitation relates to the fact that conflicts differ with each one having different characteristics making it difficult to proffer a 'one size fits all' approach to understanding them. It begs the question whether the study of one conflict can be used to understand other conflicts? However even though this might be a stumbling block, we can still 'identify a broad spectrum of rules of human behaviour in conflict situation' (Bar-Tal, 2011:336).

Ross (2001b) also advocates the use of group narratives to get a better understanding of this approach to understanding conflict. He begins by noting that culture and cultural differences do not cause conflict but are the lenses through which the conflicts are understood, with the immediate causes normally tangible issues like competition for political and economic benefits. However the position of the competing groups in the conflicts are made more rigid



when groups evoke emotive meanings that are deep rooted, to organise collective action. Because of the emotional investment that parties make in the conflicts, the conflicts become a central part of their identity, so that giving it up is like giving up a part of oneself. This kind of conflicts result in what he refers to as a 'double Minority' view of the conflict where each side feels vulnerable (Ross, 2001a).

Ross recognises that it is necessary to understand amongst other things, the history of conflicts and the issues separating the parties, but that these are not the only issues that need to be examined, rather he argues that we should be asking 'how do individuals and groups explain a conflict to themselves and to outsiders?' (Ross, 2001b:165). If we understand how group perceptions of conflicts are, then it should help us proffer new options for resolving the conflicts. He further states that 'listening to and analysing the narratives shared by activists and their communities can reveal a great deal about the deep fears and threats to identity that drive ethnic conflict' (2001b: 165).

For a better understanding of these types of conflicts, Ross begins by noting that psychocultural narratives are formed based on emotion filled images and meanings that provide the group with a 'version of the past, including the origin and development of the group, they invoke past threats and conflicts and enemies and they laud group survival' (Ross, 2007:33). An example of this is how the Serbs, Quebecers and French have all used some aspects of the past in their narratives to justify their current actions. Other uses of past events in current narratives are evident in Northern Ireland where the Protestants recall the orange's victory in the battle of the Boyne in 1690. This singular event and its commemoration still continues to be a point of contestation between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, while in the Israeli- Palestinian conflict, the Jewish state still



uses the destruction of the second temple in 70AD reinforced by the holocaust as reference points in the narrative of the Jewish people and state (Ross, 2007).

The second feature is narratives as collective memory, where these memories are passed on to group members through the selective use of past events in current narratives, but Ross (2007) notes that these memories are sometimes at odds with history because they change over time emphasising different events or persons. Connerton (1989) states that the past matters because it shapes our present needs, but Ross (2007) argues that how we see the past grows out of our present needs. It can be argued that both positions do have their merits and what is important is that we appreciate the fact that the past plays a role in current group actions and must then be understood from the perspective of each group. Narratives can therefore be useful in understanding conflicts by examining the collective memories of social groups and how these shared memories are communicated (Ross, 2007). It is thus important to understand why certain part of the group's past is given more significance than others. We do this by examining the process that determines what is given most importance and this could be a myth or past event, with this selective choice of a group's history used to legitimise its current actions (Ross, 2007).

These narratives are said to be 'valuable for showing how participants think about and characterise a conflict' and that 'it is important to consider the differences in the stories each community uses to explain what is apparently the same conflict without necessarily contradicting each other directly' (Ross, 2001b: 166). Narratives thus "separate histories," with each side magnifying events that are of significance to their communities or groups (Ross, 2001b). Examining the narratives that emerge from them in terms of how they perceive themselves as a people in relation to other groups, what in their imagined past is shared, what dangers they face and how in times of conflict these imagined fears and threats to the group's identity are magnified to create a stronger bond within the group,



usually provides a better understanding of what drives intergroup relations. The use of historical narratives is done through what are known as ascending or descending anachronisms, where ascending anachronisms push events back to give it legitimacy and descending anachronisms bring them forward so that the community can claim them as their own and give legitimacy to the contested present (Ross, 2007).

The third feature relates to the selective manner narratives are employed by groups; with these usually focusing on the group's past but not necessarily on its history. The narratives that they remember focus on emotion-laden events in the group's history that usually focus on the in-group's perspective ignoring or hardly featuring the out-group's narrative (Ross, 2007). The manner in which groups frame their narratives define their fears and the threats to their identity and by highlighting these threats of an attack on the group's identity, it elicits feelings of vulnerability, denigration and humiliation that link past losses to present dangers (Ross, 2007:37).

Narratives also ensure in-group conformity, ensuring that the majority of the group members conform to the dominant narrative. Ross (2007) argues that by getting group members to accept the dominant narrative, it helps the leaders of the group to easily mobilise along those lines while also reducing the anxiety that might be felt by group members. He does note that dominant narratives are not always rigid with new narratives sometimes emerging to challenge those narratives. However where a few members only hold the new narratives, this might result in those members that subscribe to the alternative narrative being branded as disloyal to the cause. In a situation where multiple narratives exist with some group members advocating a softer approach to resolving the conflict, it could create a struggle between the competing narratives within the in-group affecting group cohesiveness.



The effects of changing narratives help increase or decrease the severity of the conflicts at different times in the life of the conflict. This sometimes provides a softening or hardening of positions within the groups. An example of this is how the increased migration of Jews to Israeli increased the emotional importance for the holy sites to Muslims (Ross, 2007:41), which on the other hand increased its significance to the Jews making Jerusalem an important factor in the conflict. Groups also tend to enact narratives through public displays of group symbols. One such example is the use of the song 'we shall overcome' by African Americans to illustrate the struggle against racism. This evokes emotions that relate to the long struggle they had to overcome to achieve equality, a fight that has not been fully accomplished. Finally narratives help portray a group's moral superiority over the out group, justifying the conflict in terms of a struggle for the preservation of the group's values (Ross, 2007).

These features of narratives form the basis for understanding identity conflicts as they work as reflectors, exacerbaters or inhibitors of group actions. As reflectors they enable us understand how the parties in the conflict understand the conflict especially what is important to each group (Ross, 2007:42). In situations where the narratives accentuate the differences between the parties, they will serve to exacerbate the conflict while if they focus on the commonalities between the different groups then they can act as inhibitors to conflict situations. The way narratives affect conflicts was evident during the Spanish conflict with the Franco era narratives focusing on the differences between the parties making the conflict rigid and hard to resolve. After the death of Franco, the narratives changed with a shift in position regarding the possibility of multiple identities between the Basques, Catalans and Spanish. This eased the previous rigid positions opening room for the conflict resolution process to move forward (Ross, 2007).



Manojlovic (2010:3) also notes that narratives enable the 'formation and interpretation of human conditions and actions through constant renegotiation of meaning and making sense of these conditions.' When narratives are used in this way, it results in competing narratives emerging that position rival groups at opposite ends of the struggle. These groups attempt to ensure that their narrative is the dominant one and they reject the legitimacy and claims of the other group that results in a process of delegitimisation.

The use of narratives throws up a number of issues, which include the argument that narratives are not scientific enough to give us a good understanding of the world we live in. Opponents of the approach argue that 'telling a story about the past necessarily involves a kind of interpretative violence' (Norman, 1991:120) because the narrative structure is seen as imposed by the historian, thereby weakening its legitimacy. Proponents of this argument are called '*impositionalists*' (Norman, 1991) who argue that this process results in the real meaning of the past being lost. However Norman (1991) argues that with every research the researcher must inevitably pick what part of the data collected he will include in his research and this does not necessarily reduce the validity of the research.

The rejection of narratives due to what is seen as an imposition of structure assumes that the past had no form and only becomes structured in the present by the person researching it. Norman (1991:121) challenges this by asking 'do we, in constructing a narrative history, impose a narrative order of the past, or do we simply read off an order that is already there?' He argues that it might be simplistic to say that the structure is imposed on the narrative, rather we should be conscious that the 'the past is not initially or primarily given to us in the form of separate, isolated incidents that are given a false narrative by an historian' (Norman, 1991:124), because every story has a plot created by the narrator when he or she narrates the story. This is what Murray (2008:113) refers to when he states that



‘we are born into a storied world, and we live our lives through the creation and exchange of narratives’.

Understanding the perspective of the narrator provides us with an understanding of what aspects of the past are given importance. What we must then examine is why certain group narratives only focus on certain aspects of the past event. So as we examine the different group narratives it should help determine the points of divergence. This point of divergence forms a significant aspect of how each group perceives the event, helping it understand it, especially in contentious issues. It can be argued that the wider the divergence in the narratives of the past, the harder it becomes to bridge the gap between the groups in the conflict.

The legitimacy of the narratives is also a contested issue, with Norman noting that those that defend the legitimacy of narratives as a suitable tool for social science study deny that narratives ‘even claim to be true’ (1991:128). This is a weak position because if a narrative does not claim to be representative of some past truth then it has no place in the pursuit of knowledge. It must be seen to be true or based on an individual or group’s perception of the truth. While this narrative is contestable, it still forms the basis of the individual or the group’s link with their past. This an important point because if the narrator sees narratives as true, it forms the foundation of how he or the group relates with the present. This study will argue that the further away from what can be established as true, the more likely that there will be conflict between the narrators, in this case the conflicting groups.

In African countries during the process of nation building, identity cleavages became more magnified as different groups struggled for hegemony. Many groups continue to rely on these cleavages as the basis for intergroup relations ensuring that contestations between



them are mobilised along identity. Because identities remain important in-group relations, this framework becomes a useful tool for the examination of the conflicts in Kaduna and Jos.

## **1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

The study is divided into eight chapters, with the first chapter laying out the reason behind the study, its scope and limitations, the sources of data and the methodology used. Chapter two focuses on the concepts of conflict and identity focusing on ethnic and religious identities, examining the different understandings of the concepts and how they relate to the Nigerian situation. Chapter three is a historical examination of the Nigerian state during the colonial era that examines the effect internal slavery, migration and the missionaries had on the social and political evolution of northern Nigeria and how these processes helped define identities such as ethnicity and religion. The chapter also traces the development of the towns of Kaduna, Jos Zangon-Kataf and Kafanchan and how these factors affected their development.

Chapter four focuses on the emergence of regional, ethnic and religious tendencies during the pre independence years and the period since then. Chapter five provides the history of the conflicts in Jos and its environs while chapter six gives a description of the conflicts in Kaduna and parts of southern Kaduna such as Kafanchan and Zangon-Kataf. The narratives that emerged from these submissions are examined in chapter seven to see if they provide an understanding of the different perspectives of the conflicts as seen from the position of the groups, how these have either accentuated or reduced the intensity of the conflicts and if they provide a better understanding of the conflict. Chapter eight examines how narratives emerge from within the groups and are used in the process of mutual delegitimisation. Finally, chapter nine provides a summary of the study and examines the



policy options that include, political, social, economic and traditional structural changes that can be adopted to resolve these conflicts.

## **1.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has focused on the purpose of the research, its scope and limitations and methodology. It has suggested that identities, such as ethnicity and religion, play a significant role in the conflicts that have become a regular feature of sub Saharan Africa. It argues that to come up with effective conflict resolution strategies it is important that we incorporate the role of these identities in understanding conflicts and not just focusing on the more common interest based and instrumentalist approaches. It also suggests that examining group narratives help provide an insight into how social groups see themselves in the world they live and how this affects how they interact with other groups. This will thus provide a better understanding of how groups use identities as a platform for mobilisation during times of conflicts and because of the rigidity of these identities how this makes conflict resolution more difficult.



## **CHAPTER 2: CONFLICT AND IDENTITY THEORETICAL ISSUES**

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a general overview of the understanding of conflicts and the different approaches that have sought to understand their causes. It is concerned with the effect identities such as religion and ethnicity have on conflicts in plural countries like Nigeria, by examining the role they play in intergroup relations and as a basis for group mobilisation during times of conflicts. The argument is based on the premise that while other factors might be responsible for violent conflicts, when mobilisation is based on identities where individuals or groups have an emotional investment or strong sense of belonging, it makes the parties involved more rigid in their positions. This makes the task of conflict resolution more difficult leading to conflicts becoming intractable resulting in a total breakdown of everyday life, such as seen in Gaza and the West Bank area in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict and the more recent conflicts in Nigeria in the middle belt area and in the north eastern part of the country.

The chapter begins by examining different approaches to understanding conflict such as Collier and Tilly's greed and grievance model and other instrumentalist approaches. It also examines the effect of Horizontal inequalities (Stewart, 2000, 2013), Ostby (2007, 2008), Langer and Stewart (2013) and Langer and Smedts (2013) and the argument that religion is used as an instrumental tool and manipulated by elites for their own ends (Usman, 1987).

### **2.1 IDENTITY CONFLICTS: A BACKGROUND**

The identity conflicts under examination here are those that are between groups that share certain traits that bind group members together. There is clear evidence of these types of identity conflicts bordering on ethnic or religious differences around the world. Countries



such as Northern Ireland, Kashmir border of India-Pakistan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Nigeria are currently plagued by such conflicts and it is argued that this is because 'in divided countries, ethnic conflict is at the centre of politics' (Horowitz, 1985:12). Ethnic affiliations are seen as the foundation for these conflicts in plural countries because 'ethnic affiliations are powerful, permeative, passionate and pervasive' (Horowitz, 1985:12).

While attempts to understand why there are ethnic conflicts that are hard to settle have focused on issues of interest based zero sum competitions, they have fallen short in explaining how competition can lead to conflict in one area and not in another (Ross, 2007). This is evident in Northern Ireland where even though there is little inequality and competition for intangibles, the struggle for dominance between Catholics and Protestants has sometimes resulted in violent conflicts, while in South Africa where even with racial inequalities remaining high even after apartheid there is little inter group violent conflict. The focus then becomes understanding where these interests come from and what role cultural differences play in the way they are pursued (Ross, 2007).

## **2.2 UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT**

The definition of conflict is varied but the definition used for the purpose of this research is that it is 'a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources, a struggle in which the aims of opponents are to neutralise, injure or eliminate rivals' (Coser, 1956:8). Tilly (2003) while identifying different variants of conflicts recognises the most common characteristics of collective violence as those that 'immediately inflicts physical damage on persons and/or objects ("damage" includes forcible seizure of persons or object over restraint or resistance); involves at least two perpetrators of damage; and results at least in part from coordination among persons who perform these damaging acts' (2003:3). This study is concerned with group or identity conflicts which are defined as 'the instrumental



use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group-whether this group is transitory or has a more permanent identity-against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve *political, economic or social objectives*<sup>7</sup>’ (Collier and Sambanis, 2005: 215). This definition lays the political, economic and social goals as the defining reasons behind violent conflicts but acknowledges the fact that some of these struggles are mobilised along group identities indicating that this is not a universal struggle but one that focuses on a goal tied to the group.

Many conflicts in Nigeria fit this definition and they relate to competition where groups mobilise along ethnic or religious lines to attain political, social or economic goals. A number of studies (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000; Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000; Reno, 2006) have examined conflicts from different perspectives namely interest based, rational choice and instrumentalist, arguing that the competition for power and resources are the main reasons for violent conflict. Another approach examines conflicts using a neo Malthusian approach which sees conflicts as a result of the pressure that increasing population levels put on natural resources, thereby leading to contestations between groups as they struggle for these scarce natural resources. An alternative argument is that, it is the abundance rather than the scarcity of resources that leads to violent conflicts as groups try to dominate control of such resources at the expense of other groups.

Studies of conflicts by Tilly (1969) and Oberschall, (1978) focused on a rational choice perspective, both developing theories that are based on some form of deprivation. Tilly developed the theories of deprivation, social control, power and aspiration as approaches to understating violent conflict. The theory of deprivation relates to hardships that individual themselves or members of their communities have faced, while social control theories relate

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<sup>7</sup> emphasis mine



to the detachment of individuals from the state and the failure of the state to control aggression as the cause of conflict. Tilly's examination of the struggle for power as the cause of conflicts relates to competition by different collectives for political and economic power but he notes that conflict cannot be looked at from just one of these perspectives but that they are ultimately a combination of two or more of these theories.

Two alternative theories are the breakdown-deprivation and the solidarity-mobilisation models developed by Oberschall (1978). The latter examines conflicts from the position of the process of conflict group formation through mobilisation. It assesses how individuals' resources are collected for the good of the collective arguing that the strength of the collective depends on the ability to collect these resources needed for funding the conflicts. This approach however has its limitations because it does not take into consideration countries with high poverty levels where groups cannot mobilise funds but are still engaged in one form of violent conflict or the other. The former looks at how a collapse in traditional social formations can lead to 'strains, frustrations, insecurity and grievances' that act as a pressure cooker that can explode and lead to collective violence and civil disorders (Oberschall, 1978:278). Some of the conflicts in Nigeria do share the characteristics that Tilly and Oberschall identify as causes of conflicts especially where the state is unable to meet its obligations to its citizens resulting in their detachment from the state. However they do not explain why groups mobilise along identity lines and the effect this has on the nature of the conflicts.

The Greed and Grievance model developed by Collier and Hoeffler (2000) argues that conflicts result from either grievances that are a result of 'inequality, political oppression, and ethnic and religious divisions' or due to the 'greed' for personal gain by the actors in the conflicts (2000:2). The model concludes that even though grievances are seen a major



reason for conflicts, there was little evidence to support this argument that inequality or political oppression increased the risk of violent conflict. On the other hand, they argue that the evidence supported the idea that 'greed' was the major driving force behind many conflicts. However they do note that grievances cannot be completely ignored when examining conflicts and thus use both approaches but with greater emphasis on the economic factors as the main drivers for conflicts. It is important to note that this approach focuses on civil wars where there are at least two parties with an 'identifiable rebel group' (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002), it however did not examine smaller ethno-religious and post election violence that are currently plaguing some African countries.

Elbadawi and Sambanis's (2000) study of African civil wars also concluded that conflicts appear to be based more on 'deep political and economic failures' (2000:245) rather than the ethnic and religious diversity of the region, with countries with a high dependence on natural resources having a higher risk of conflict. The study also supported Collier and Hoeffler's (2000) position that the continent's high ethnic diversity acts more as a deterrent rather than a motive for conflict, with Reno (2006) also acknowledging that greed played a greater role in conflicts in states that can be defined as 'failed states', where state institutions are either at the point of collapse or have collapsed. He states that the collapse of the state results in predatory behaviour from politicians and the emergence of militias that want to take advantage of the situation. He explains that the emergence of conflict in this instance is due to what he calls the 'Looting logic' model, where greed through the pursuit of control of available resources to finance rebellions was the main driver for violent conflict as was evident in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia.

A 2007 study by Bodea and Elbadawi challenged some of these earlier findings arguing that ethnic diversity should be seen as a major factor for violent conflicts, noting that ethnic,



religious and linguistic fractionalisation increased the chances of civil wars. Gurr (1993) also argued that ethnic diversity does have an impact on the possibility of violent conflicts contending that multi ethnic countries were shown to have a higher risk of violent conflict. This position is supported by Harff and Gurr (2004) who stated that since 1960, ethno-political conflicts have increased due to the 'tension between states that want to consolidate and expand their power and ethnic groups that want to defend and promote their collective identity and interest' (2004:17). This should be seen as the likely result of the restructuring of the new emerging states as ethnic groups within the state struggle for supremacy and control.

However most of these studies have focused on large conflicts paying little attention to smaller ethno-religious and communal conflicts that are now a common feature in African countries. African conflicts are seen as being more related to a struggle for group dominance or the need to address power relations where even though economic, sociological, psychological and religious factors matter, understanding power relations might provide the link that binds all these factors together (Chabal, 2005). Power in the African context operates within the realms of the formal and informal sector in a neo patrimonial system where those in the formal sector rather than being impartial dispensers of rights, are the link between patrons and clients (Chabal, 2005).

The system described by Chabal, allowed rulers of Africa's newly independent nations to dispense favours based on client networks. This was not a problem in the immediate post-independence years when the economies were growing, however as African economies contracted due to the economic crisis of the 1980s, there were fewer opportunities and favours to grant, resulting in increased competition between various social groups that sometimes led to violent conflicts (Chabal, 2005). Chabal however notes that it might not be



simple enough to look at conflict in Africa from a purely political standpoint noting that conflicts like the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda and the RUF in Sierra Leone cannot be easily explained through the lens of politics but are still linked to the process of modernisation on the African continent.

Conflicts can also be examined from a sociological perspective where the emergence of identity of ethnicity becomes a focal point in everyday life of the people and how this can lead to conflict (Vlassenroot, 2006). In line with Chabal's argument, Vlassenroot (2006) also states that ethnicity should not necessarily be seen as the cause of conflict but rather as a tool used to modify power relations. In areas of conflicts, the examination of social settings can explain how the emergence of militias provide unemployed youth with 'an alternative to exclusion and a way to benefit from modernisation' (Vlassenroot, 2006:51) so that this disorder in the society provides militia leaders with access to both political and economic resources. Finally he states that this perspective allows us understand that those that employ such means see violent conflict as an opportunity rather than a problem.

While these approaches do provide some understanding of causes of certain conflicts, the conflicts of northern Nigeria under examination cannot be easily explained by many of the factors that have been identified by Collier and Hoeffler (2000), Reno (2006) and Bodea and Elbadawi (2007) because these are framed along issues of marginalisation with mobilisation usually along ethnic and religious lines as groups attempt to address existing power dynamics between groups. Group competitions framed around incompatible identities should not be seen as the cause of the conflicts but rather they are just the mechanisms for groups to demand for a correction of issues of discrimination and injustice against the group. If this is the case, it then becomes necessary for us to try and understand the processes of identity mobilisation and what effects they have on intergroup relations.



Studies by Roy (1994) Bar-Tal (2000) and Ross (2001a, 2001b) all examined intergroup relations through their narratives during conflicts. In her study of conflicts in India, Roy (1994) found that even though all conflicts are based on some form of competition, it was important to understand how these are formulated. She states that this can be understood by examining how group identities help shape individual perceptions of the world, so that we can comprehend the relationship between the individual, other groups and the state. She goes on to note that 'group actions are formulated from the experience of identity, that is, the complex construction of an individual's location in the community and her ties with others' (Roy, 1994:3) and that 'what sticks in people's memories, what they choose to say and when they choose to remain silent, how they distort what they know to be their experience' (Roy, 1994:9) with these selected memories forming the basis of 'both identity and ideology-making' processes with the 'shared histories constructed through storytelling that serve to define memberships within groups and relations among them, and that bound the formulation of protest' (Roy, 1994:8).

Ross (2001a; 2001b: 2007; 2009) also argues that even though the competition for tangibles remain important in understanding conflicts, it is essential to appreciate how identities are used as platforms for achieving group goals and this can be done by using a psycho-cultural approach to examine how competing identities lead to conflicts. This is the case in the Northern Ireland and Palestinian and Israeli conflicts, which cannot be simply explained by competition for tangibles but are more rooted in incompatible group goals as shown by the narratives that emerge from competing actors.

Harff and Gurr (2004) developed the 'mobilisation model' as an explanatory tool for understanding conflicts and the model identified seven factors that may either accentuate



or reduce conflicts. The first of these relate to the level of discrimination namely; political and economic, where economic discrimination refers to when policies restrict a group's access to economic activities and limits its access to education, housing, employment and health care. Political discrimination on the other hand refers to factors that limit political participation resulting in low involvement by the groups being discriminated against in the public sector including the armed forces and the security agencies. This form of discrimination also relates to how much influence the ethnic identity wields, which is dependent on the strength of the group in terms of group numbers and its shared cultural and religious traits. This is then related to the level of group cohesiveness that is determined by factors such as the leadership of the group, the degree of acceptance of the ideals within the group and the number of factions and level of conflict within the group (2004:109).

The political environment, such as the political and civil rights of the citizens also affects group relations. Four of these kinds of environments are identified and these are institutionalized democracies; autocracies; socialist states and populist states (Harff and Gurr, 2004) with each having characteristics that can either accentuate or reduce the possibility of conflicts. The argument is that the depth of democratic entrenchment in a country determines the possibility of violent conflict with the most entrenched systems reducing the risk of conflict and the less democratic nations being more prone to violent conflict. The kind of democracy that exists must also be one that allows for multi party elections where parties are not formed along ethnic lines. It must also be competitive by allowing all groups to have an opportunity in the political process.

The problem with using democracy as an explanatory tool is that it is still in the process of consolidation in African countries making its application difficult. In Nigeria, since 1999 when the country returned to multi party democracy, there has been an increase in the frequency



and number of conflicts that can be termed ethno-religious conflicts. While, Nigeria's democracy has the features of a liberal democracy, with its multi party system where many of the parties are broad based cutting across religious and ethnic divides, the system is skewed in such a way that political participation still has strong patron client features that exist within ethnic and religious cleavages.

The severity of the use of violence by government against different groups through mass killings, arrests and torture and executions is also another factor that can lead to conflicts in plural societies. Harff and Gurr (2004: 111) argue that the use of force is normally related to the type of government 'with autocracies and socialist governments more prone to using force to subdue minority groups' The situation in Borno and Yobe states in the north eastern part of Nigeria, where there are accusations of indiscriminate arrests, torture and mass killings by the military and other security agencies, suggests that state violence can also occur under a seemingly democratic country resulting in the formation of a cycle where state violence is rife and helps in the continued perpetuation of violence. The last two factors relate to the amount of external support the groups get. Where groups have a great deal of support in terms of arms, mercenaries and safe havens or have international support we see an extension of the period of the conflict. Even though this approach is useful when examining group conflicts, some of the variables do not necessarily apply to all conflict situations. However it does provide a basis for understanding how the structure of the state can increase identity consciousness that leads to the mobilisation of groups on ethnic and religious lines during conflicts.

Another socio-psychological perspective to understanding conflicts is Van Den Berghe's (1978) work on intergroup relations, where he noted that conflicts went through phases with initial conflicts for scarce resources, gradually becoming competition that was based on



what he called coercion and hierarchy, where most conflicts are now being fought. He argued that because most human societies were predisposed to the development of hierarchies, there was a risk of conflict as groups fought for supremacy. He identified two types of social group sets, which he called Types I and II. Type I group sets were based on racial, caste and ethnicity while type II were those groups based on interests and include, trade unions, political parties, sports clubs and other such groups.

Type I groups were those synonymous with human societies (Van Den Berghe, 1978:404) where the groups were based on some form of commonality such as common descent, language and culture with members of such groups seeing themselves as a single group. He also noted that these kinds of groups felt strong kinships and were the basis for 'powerful sentiments we call nationalism, tribalism, racism and ethnocentrism' (1978:404) and these were seen to be prone to easy mobilisation and 'the blind fury of the ferocity of the conflicts that these sentiments can lead, the imperviousness of such sentiments to rational arguments' which can explain their 'continued vitality and their primordality' (1978:404).

The Social Dominance Theory (SDT) is closely related to Van De Berghe's approach. SDT examines societies that have group-based hierarchies and is concerned with understanding social attitudes and intergroup relations as they relate to the domination of one group over another. Like Van den Berghe's work, SDT also acknowledges the existence of group-based hierarchies, which it argues develop because 'all human societies tend to be structured as systems of group based social hierarchies' (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999:31). This type of structure differs from an individual hierarchical dominant system where an individual's characteristics allows him or her to possess some dominant position in relations to others. The implication of this is that in every society there exist on the one side, one or more dominant groups and on the other one or more subordinate groups, with hierarchies



referring to 'that social power, prestige, and privilege that an individual possesses by virtue of his or her ascribed membership in a socially constructed group such as race, religion, clan, tribe, lineage, linguistic/ethnic group or social class' (Sidanius and Pratto (1999: 32).

In order to understand social hierarchies we must begin understand the multiple levels in which 'group based social hierarchy is formed and maintained' (Pratto, et. al., 2006:272) by looking at societies as systems and examining the different processes that create and maintain these hierarchies. The processes could include 'cultural ideologies and policies, institutional practices, relations of individuals to others inside and outside their groups, the psychological disposition of individuals and the interaction between the evolved psychologies of men and women' (Pratto et. al., 2006:272). The approach notes that in most societies, dominance is manifested when the dominant groups have more access to positive social value than the subordinate groups. These positive social values include political authority and power, good and plentiful food, splendid homes, the best available health care, wealth and social status. They then leave the subordinate group to deal with negative social values that include 'low power and social status, high risk and low status occupations, relatively poor health care, poor food, modest or miserable homes and severe negative sanctions' (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999:32).

These group-based hierarchies are maintained through the use of legitimising myths that are based on 'attitudes, values, beliefs, stereotypes and ideologies' (Sidanius and Pratto: 1999). These myths are considered strong factors that define groups and help in maintaining these hierarchies or at least the perception of dominance that are created through the narratives that emerge from competing social groups. This approach is linked to identities such as ethnicity whereby one ethnic group considers itself superior to another, creating a schism with the groups fighting for dominance. In societies that are structured hierarchically, as is



the case in Nigeria, groups attempt to adjust the power relations that exist within these hierarchies. In northern Nigeria, the use of the indirect system of administration that was seen to favour the Hausa Fulani Muslim group because of its reliance on the emirate system as a basis for administration, created a hierarchy with the Hausa-Fulani at its apex, remains contested between that group and the smaller mainly Christian ethnic groups especially in the middle belt area of the region.

The Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) at the University of Oxford developed a similar approach to the SDT where conflict is examined from the perspective of group inequalities. The findings have been highlighted by Stewart (2000, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013), Stewart, Brown and Mancini (2005), Brown and Langer (2010), Ostby (2008) and Langer and Stewart (2013), with the studies focusing on how the likelihood of conflicts are affected by the incidences of what are termed Horizontal Inequalities (HIs). HIs are inequalities that cut across social, economic, political and cultural dimensions between groups, with social HIs referring to inequalities in access to health education and housing while economic HIs refer to access to the ownership of assets and employment opportunities. Political HIs relate to inequalities in the distribution of political office. The final aspect of HIs is cultural inequalities whereby certain cultural groups are accorded less recognition than others (Stewart, 2009:8).

Stewart (2005) notes that these inequalities are both a means and an end with the dimensions of HIs linked with one another, so that inequalities in one area can result in inequality in other areas. She also noted that political inequalities affect political elites more than the masses while social and economic inequalities tend to affect the masses more than the elite. The CRISE studies identified some major findings regarding the relationship between HIs and conflicts, notably that there was a greater chance of conflict in areas where



social and economic HIs were high (Stewart, 2010). Some of the other findings included a greater likelihood of conflicts where economic, social and political HIs were consistent, although it also found that where a group only faced deprivation in one dimension then the likelihood of conflict was reduced. Power sharing governments were shown to reduce the likelihood of conflict; political and economic exclusion through citizenship laws were shown to increase the chances of conflicts; unequal cultural recognition; perception of HIs within groups and the nature of the state as suggested by Harff and Gurr (2004) where repressive or aggressive regimes were shown to have an effect on the likelihood of conflicts.

While Stewart (2009) notes that conflicts are determined by access to socio-economic factors and motives, she acknowledges that mobilisation is based on identities such as ethnicity and religion. She had earlier made an important observation that the memory of violence 'contributes to group identification, animosities and mobilisation, increasing the risk of future conflict' (Stewart, 2000:249) and even though she argued that her basis for understanding group violence is still based on HIs, she opens the door for further research on the role memories play in exacerbating conflicts (Stewart, 2009). The role of memories is also highlighted by Ukiwo (2008) who noted that memory of inter group relations, where the discourses and narratives focus on negative images of the 'other', tend to have a long term effect on inter ethnic cooperation, thereby increasing the possibility of future conflict.

Ostby (2008) notes that even though Stewart's studies of the relationship between HIs and conflicts have provided a foundation for understanding group conflicts, initial studies have focused on countries where HIs have actually resulted in violent conflicts ignoring those that have high HIs but little or no conflicts. Langer (2008) also acknowledged that HIs alone were not sufficient to cause violent conflict as shown by her studies of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. However Ostby (2008) recognises the contribution of HIs to understanding conflicts, as



groups use collective grievances, that make group members feel disenfranchised as a basis for mobilisation. However she also notes that the reverse might be the case when rich regions feel that government policies are unfair leading to calls for secession or partition. This has been the case in Nigeria where there have been calls by the oil rich Niger-delta region that has called for secession due to a long history of neglect in the region (Hopfensperger, 2006).

Another approach is Usman's (1987:20) argument that elites politicise religion to suit their needs and obscure the reality, which he stated was the domination of the economy by a certain class of intermediaries. This position is supported by Olayiwola (2012:11-12) who also argues that 'Religion has also come in handy as an instrument of citizen control even when it is clear that the leaders-lack authentic life and spiritual integrity' and that 'Nigerian political leaders have been employing religion for quite some time.' Sampson (2012:104) also makes the same observation, noting that while religion can be used as a tool for social harmony, 'it is often instrumentalised for political and other established interests to the detriment of peace and social harmony.'

The idea that elites politicise religion, with Usman's approach focusing on the Marxist idea of class struggle for the control of the means of production and economic control, presupposes a top down approach to the politicisation of religion. However it can be argued that we need to examine if there could also be a bottom up process where elites politicise religion due to pressures from their groups. In this case ordinary citizens use elites to politicise religion so as to project their sense of reality and how they see the world.

These approaches have contributed to the conflict literature and while they each have their merits, on their own they are not sufficient to understanding all conflicts. In Nigeria, where



there is no nationally dominant group, this kind of diversity (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000; Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000) should make it less prone to violent conflicts, but this is not the case with the country's on-going spate of identity conflicts exposing the risk of conflicts in sharply divided societies. It leads us to ask why identity conflicts continue to be a common feature in plural countries groups? To comprehend this, it is important to understand what identity means and examine the more salient identities that have been used as the basis for mobilisation during conflicts.

### **2.3 WHO ARE WE? UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY**

Identity refers to those attributes that differentiate individuals, collective or groups from one another and can be loosely defined as 'social categories, attributes, or components of the self concept that are shared with others and therefore define individuals as being similar to others' (Monroe et al, 2000:421). It can also be defined as 'a provisional stabilisation of a sense of self or group that is formed in actual historical time and space, in evolving economies, politics, and cultures, as a continuous search for some solidity in a constantly shifting world' (Suny: 2001:866). Ashmore, et.al. (2004) also define collective identity as referring to a group where members share or believe that they share certain characteristics such as language, religion or ethnicity and consider themselves part of an in-group while everyone else that does not share these traits is seen as the 'other.' These traits are seen as inherent within individuals that make up a group and the stronger the feeling of sameness, the more rigid the boundaries between in and out groups (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:10).

However, identity is a much-contested concept with primordialists arguing that identities such as religion and ethnicity are entrenched and will be hard to alter while constructivists argue that identity is continuously changing due to social interactions between individuals and so should not be seen as inherited or fixed (Kaufmann,2012). Ross (2007:23)



acknowledges the divide between those that see identities as constructed and those that see it as fixed, but states that both views are 'caricatures in their denial of the other position', noting that while identities might be constructed they are not as easily altered in the short term as assumed. However even though the concept of identity is contested, it can be a useful tool by providing us with an understanding of how groups use it as foundation for making sense of an ever-changing world. When groups mobilise based on identities, they compete for the attainment of group specific goals rather than universal goals that benefits all of society (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000).

Because Identities refer to the establishment of boundaries such as language, norms, culture, religion and other shared history carried down from the past through narratives that separate one group from another, it means that groups must recognize their differences, which is why identity is considered a relational concept where it is not just an individual perception but one that is held by others in the way they relate to the identity holder (Tilly, 1995). It thus has both cultural and historical components where the cultural aspect refers to the shared understandings between group members while the historical aspect refers to the memories that are attached to these identities and helps group members define their understanding of the world (Tilly, 1995:5). The relational aspect of identities is also recognized by Taylor (1994:7) who sees identity as 'dialogically, in response to our relations, including our actual dialogues, with others', with groups not existing in a vacuum. Intergroup relationships are thus based on a struggle for power, where power is described as the ability to distribute both material and immaterial goods such as information, status and reputation (Simon and Klandermans, 2001).

There is also a multi dimensional aspect of identity where issues such as power dynamics, access to resources, position in society's hierarchy and a belief in collective action all



determine a group's perception of itself. These factors are formulated to 'justify and maintain' (Ashmore et.al., 2004:94) a dominant group's position in society which results in a struggle between the dominant and the subordinate groups. In order to use collective identities in social science research we must understand their constituent parts which Ashmore, et.al. (2004) categorise into seven. These are self-categorisation, evaluation, importance, attachment and sense of interdependence, social embeddedness, behavioural involvement and content & meaning. (2004:83). Self categorisation refers to the alignment of individuals to a particular group and is connected to the basic human need for individuals to place themselves into categories that they perceive themselves as being most similar. In developed western countries the forms of self-categorisation might refer to professional bodies that provide the most sense of self-esteem, such as medical Doctor or academic, but depending on the situation might be racial or ethnic. In African countries, because social interactions are still largely conducted through categories such as religious or ethnic affiliation, these become the most salient.

The second category is the value the individual ascribes to the identity and the level of importance that members place on their membership of the group, that is affected by how others perceive the identity, with the two not always similar or positive (Ashmore, et.al., 2004). This valuation has two components, the explicit part which is the subjective appraisal of the importance of the collective identity to their well being and the implicit which is the ranking of the identity from high to low by the individual (Ashmore, et.al., 2004:87). The importance of multiple identities in an individual's life determines which is more salient in a particular situation, however there are some situations where even if one identity is more salient it might not be the most important to the individual. This is the situational aspect of identity where the individual's multiplicity of identities allows one identity to be salient in a



particular situation while it might not necessarily be the one that an individual values as the most important.

The fourth category refers to the emotional attachment and sense of belonging that the individual feels as part of the group, with this emotive aspect being the 'degree to which the fate of the group is perceived as overlapping with one's personal fate' (Ashmore, et.al., 2004:90). This provides the emotional aspect of collective identities and the stronger the emotional bonds the more likely that the position of the group members might be more rigid during periods of contestations. This is also more likely if the attachment is based on a shared heritage that has determined the group's past and is seen as influencing its future. So collective identities that are ideologically bound together provide a higher sense of belonging as seen in the Israeli Palestinian conflicts where the two groups have a shared sense of destiny. This is also evident in the Nigerian situation where individual and group narratives that are examined in later chapters indicate a high emotional attachment to these groups so that they see their fates tied to the destiny of their groups, making it easy to mobilise along these lines. The level of social embeddedness also helps us understand how identities affect individual actions. This relates to how much of a role identity plays in the lives of the individual and this is 'considered high when it would be costly and painful to abandon a particular collective identity because a majority of one's social contacts and relationships reinforce this identity' (Ashmore et.al. 2004:.92).

There is then the behavioural involvement of group members in the group's activities that can be found in studies of ethnic identity where there are customs and rites that form an integral part of the group's identity (Phinney, 1992). This type of involvement is found in religious identities such as Islam, Christianity and Judaism that are based on certain rituals (Ashmore et.al., 2004). For Muslims rites such as the five daily prayers, fasting and giving alms form an important part of their identity, while church attendance and baptism form



the basis of the Christian identity. Jews also have certain rites such as prayers and strict observance of the Sabbath and the other Jewish rites that help define their identity. In Nigeria, especially in the northern part of the country, Islam and Christianity are both important and this tends to bring them into conflict when inter-group relations magnify their differences. The long history of religious identities help define inter group relations, something that will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

The final component of collective identity is content and meaning. This comprises of three parts; self attributed characteristics; ideology and developmental narratives. Self-attributed characteristics refer to how the individual perceives the traits and characteristics of a group as part and parcel of his identity, with the individual defining himself within the characteristics of the group identity (Ashmore et.al., 2004). These usually relate to physical characteristics and therefore do form an important aspect of identities such as religion and ethnicity that focus more on ideology or some share sense of heritage. The ideology aspect of the content is more relevant when examining identities such as religion and ethnicity. It refers to the sense of heritage that becomes the founding basis of the identity and can be found in many African ethnic groups. Religious ideology relates to the role religion has helped in providing the moral foundation for the group and like ethnicity, has an emotive aspect that creates strong group bonds.

The narrative aspect of identity refers to the individual's narrative of his place in the group, however narratives have also developed that seek to examine group identity. This type of narrative is said to have two parts, one that is the member's story as a group member while the second refers to the group's narrative. In examining the role of narratives in group identity in Nigeria, the focus will be on group stories, their 'ideas, emotions, and mental pictures of the past of the group's origins' (Ashmore et.al., 2004:96) and the group's origins



and their current status. These narratives usually contain not just people and events in the group's history but are also tied into some mythical aspect of the group's origins (Ashmore et.al., 2004).

Having examined the different ways in which identities are understood, it must be noted that identities should not be seen as 'things in the world' (Brubaker, et.al., 2004:47) but rather that the cognitive component of identities such as race, ethnicity and nation only serve to provide group members with a way of understanding the world, categorising other groups based on differences or sameness and a way of 'coding and making sense of their actions' (Brubaker et.al., 2004:47). In essence identities serve as the lens through which groups perceive the world, a position supported by Richards (2008) who sees identities as mental phenomena that do not cause anything on their own but are affected by physical phenomena, what he calls epiphenomenon. He argues that the manner in which 'institutions are forged, function and react when stressed is to explain the emergence of feelings and actions based on ethnicity' (2008:2).

These group identities tie people to 'culture and cultural expressions that mark groups as distinct from each other' [and are] 'articulated around collective memories and mundane everyday practices' (Ross, 2007:2). These can be very polarising when their expression is seen as threatening by a second group and when attempts at limiting such practices are seen as a threat by the group performing them. Identities also provide members with 'a sense of a common fate including expectations of common treatment, joint fears of survival/extinction and beliefs about group worth, dignity and recognition' (Ross, 2007:22). It is thus important that we understand that 'identity is both individual and social linking the individual to larger social groupings and is experienced at the deepest emotional levels'



which is what makes it difficult to predict and allows for members of the group to be willing to give their lives when they feel threatened (Ross, 2011:1015).

This section has shown that identities are an important aspect of group relations in some societies and should be considered as a significant aspect in understanding group relations. Later chapters will discuss the importance of identities in the Nigerian context by examining group narratives that provide a lens into how these groups frame their roles and in the conflicts being examined.

## **2.4 THE IMPACT OF ETHNICITY ON INTER GROUP RELATIONS**

Since identities have been shown as a basis for group mobilisation, this section examines two salient identities in Nigeria; ethnicity and religion. Ethnicity is seen as a form of identity that relates to a group of people that share similar traits with Barth (1969) defining ethnic groups as those that are; biologically self-perpetuating; share fundamental cultural values; makes up a field of communication and interaction and most importantly has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others as a continuing category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.

Ethnic groups are defined as 'a group self-consciously united around particular cultural traditions' (De Vos, 2006:18). The markers that determine group composition include, racial uniqueness, territory, aesthetic cultural patterns and language (Horowitz, 1985; Smith, 1991; Harff and Gurr, 2004). But just as these group members share certain traits, the differences with other groups also help define their identity (Van den Berghe, 1975) and it is important to note that as a form of identity, ethnic groups cannot exist in isolation and only exist in relation to their differences with other ethnic groups.



Ethnicity is also perceived as a basis of organisation and categorisation by groups of people, where there are two points of entry into the group; the first being through birth and the second through choice (Horowitz, 1985). Members of ethnic groups are said to be born into such groups and even though it has been suggested that groups can have fluid boundaries regarding membership, most have very rigid borders and entry is still largely linked to descent and birth, making ethnicity similar to kinship (Horowitz, 1985). In its use as an explanatory tool, constructivists argue that ethnicity is socially constructed, only becoming conflictual when politicised, a position contested by Ifidon (1998:2) who argues that, the position 'that ethnic differences are not inherently conflictual but lead to strife only when they are politicised ignores the fact of the conflict generating competition for the resources of the state that is a feature of coexistence within the same state. Ethnicity is inherently political, hence conflictual'. However even though ethnic differences might be conflictual due to the natural state of competition, the violent conflict that emerges is not easily explained.

Constructivists argument that identities do change over time undermines the claims that these identities can be used to explain ethnic violence that are seen as based on animosities that are maintained over time or are due to 'antipathies and antagonism that are enduring properties of ethnic groups' (Fearon and Laitin, 2000:849). This supports the argument that identities only become conflictual when politicised by elites as suggested by Usman (1987) but raises the question of how social identities are constructed. Fearon and Laitin (2000) offer three approaches to understanding this; which are through social and economic processes, discourse; and by individuals.

The first approach argues that national identities are not innate as claimed by primordialists, rather they were socially constructed during the historical period of a country's evolution,



only become important during the 'modern period as a result of economic and the attendant social changes' (Fearon and Laitin, 2000, 851). Secondly they argue that identities are constructed through discourses, such as during colonialism when western discourse of nationalism/ethnicity formed the basis for violent conflicts. However it is noted that although colonialism occurred in Africa and Asia, violent conflict is not confined to these regions and this approach cannot explain conflicts in other parts of the world that were never colonised. Finally, they saw individuals as agents of identity construction with particular focus on the idea that elites construct these identities for their own personal goals (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

However Fearon and Laitin (2000) and Scacco (2007) wonder how elites convince ordinary people to partake in violence if they do not necessarily stand to benefit from it, indicating that there are other ways in which individuals construct these identities through everyday interactions. This observation is important when we acknowledge that during conflicts the actors are everyday people that have little to benefit politically and even where there are some benefits such as in cases of looting, these are usually immediate and not long term, indicating that there must be other factors that encourage their involvement in the conflicts.

Martin (1995), Eyoh (1998) and Jenkins (2012) provide alternative approaches of understanding how groups use identities to further their political goals. Martin's position is that by focusing on group narratives we can understand inter group relations. He notes that identity as an analytical tool becomes relevant when an individual sees himself in relation to the other, which he calls an 'interpretation' that can be rearranged and reinterpreted to take care of changes in the individual's life so that they make sense (1995). Identity thus becomes the stabilizing factor and when we examine narratives we can understand how they are used to justify individual and group actions. These identities are based on past



histories where the manner of remembrance relates to a 'history, liberating amnesia and imagination' that determines 'what is remembered, and how and what is to be forgotten' (Martin, 1995:7) with these memories related to past traumatic events sometimes in glory or in loss.

Secondly, Identity is useful if used within the context of space, where space here relates to social space where the 'necessities of life are available' where 'power is exercised in a certain form by certain people' (Martin, 1995:12). In the African context, power could reside in the traditional or in modern institutions, so violence can erupt in any of these spaces or a combination of these spaces, between groups that see themselves as the owners of the space and the 'other' who they see as trying to control the space. Finally Martin sees identity as relating to culture, where there is an emotional connection between the identity and the individual that makes the link stronger. What Martin identifies which is important as we attempt to understand the use of identity as an analytical tool is that 'identity narratives channel political emotions so that they can fuel efforts to modify a balance of power' by bringing 'forth a new interpretation of the world in order to modify it' (1995:12-13). This argument is strong when we understand how narratives, both real and imagined, are constantly reinterpreted to justify group positions during periods of contestation.

Eyoh (1998) also acknowledged the significance of identities when he examined intergroup relations in Cameroon. While recognising that most analysis of African ethnic violence is seen as instrumentalist with elites manipulating masses for their own personal gains, he argued that this approach ignores the agency of the masses and understates their role in maintaining identities. He acknowledges that Martin's approach allows us to 'understand individual and collective identities as phenomena that we construct and transform through narratives of the 'self' and 'other' (Eyoh; 1998: 252) and so by relating identities to the past,



groups select what is important to justify their positions. This relates to Ross' (2007) position that groups use collective memories through their narratives to justify their actions and roles in violent conflicts by demonising the 'other'. Bar-Tal's (2000) also notes that these collective memories form the basis for the creation of a group's ethos of the conflict to provide them with an understanding of the conflicts.

Jenkins (2012) approach also identified the importance of identities in inter group relations and developed the immigrant-Guest metaphor as an explanation for inter-group relations in Kenya as evidenced during the 2007 elections. She argued that Kenyans had been able 'to construct and maintain oppositional identities through a narrative of ethnic others as migrants' (2012:577). She found that identity was part and parcel of Kenyan society and that ethnicity and land (territory) were linked, while noting that colonialism was responsible for the rigidity of the ethnic borders by the creation of administrative structures that linked certain groups to certain areas. She goes on to note that even though some territorial restructuring has occurred, 'the consciousness of ethnic territoriality' remains in 'everyday social practices, institutions and discourses' (Jenkins, 2012:579-580).

While examining the 1990 conflict in Tafawa Balewa, a town in Bauchi state, Nigeria with a significant Christian population that borders Jos, Falola (2003) identified a similar relationship between two different groups in the town. However while Jenkins' examination of the Kenyan violence was based on ethnic differences, the Tafawa Balewa conflict was based on religious differences and significantly the people of the town were not migrant guests but indigenous ethnic groups. The differences manifested during local elections that resulted in a win for the Social democratic Party (SDP), whereas the more conservative opposition party, the National Republican Party (NRC) had won all other local governments



in the state. He argued that the victory for the SDP was seen as a rejection of the Muslim majority of the area resulting in an attack against the minority Christian population.

Ethnic identities have been shown to be important in the dynamics of group relations and become more salient during periods of contestation. Nigeria's ethnic and religious plurality has been noted and with over 200 ethnic groups in the country, it can be argued that there remains a high risk of conflict as these groups compete for hegemony. Even though before the colonial era there were interactions between the groups, especially in the area of trade as evidenced by the trade routes that existed from the north down to the coastal areas of Lokoja and into Lagos, the differences between the groups were magnified after the advent of the British and the imposition of the indirect rule system of administration.

Mamdani (1997) argues that the introduction of the indirect rule system of administration impacted negatively on the social and political harmony of the colonial African state, because it highlighted the differences between the peoples of the country by putting them into ethnic compartments that were now forced to compete for political and economic power during the latter days of colonialism. Does this mean that ethnicity always has a negative connotation? Ikelegbe (2005) disagrees, stating that identities such as ethnicity provide a platform for representation for ordinary citizens and usually has good cultural, social and psychological attributes.

While this is true, if we understand ethnicity to mean the way in which groups see the world and how they react to changes in it, then with the changing nature of most developing countries where the competition for scarce resources and the struggle for economic and political power is intense, then even though ethnicity provides a moral basis for group interaction, it can act as a rallying point during times of competition for economic and



political power.<sup>8</sup> Usman (1987:45) argues that ethnic groups in Nigeria did not exist in the sense that they had their own social political and economic systems, noting that there was no evidence to support a sense of common ancestry. Rather what we had were linguistic groups that did not necessarily belong to one of the so called ethnic groupings, so that these divisions that currently form the basis for competition cannot be used to understand how groups mobilise during conflicts.

In Nigeria, ethnicity has permeated every social political and economic fabric of the country and while it is not always conflictual, the changing dynamics of the country and the arrangement of political and economic institutions have resulted in its increased salience. This has resulted in situations where groups see themselves in constant competition with each other for fear of being marginalised by the larger more dominant groups like the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the west and the Igbo in the east. These perceptions of domination and discrimination are passed through ethnic and religious channels into all facets of the society, which end up affecting policies that should be 'routine administration', end up being political charged (Horowitz, 1985).

## **2.5 RELIGION AND IDENTITY FORMATION**

Religion plays a role in identity formation in African countries, however there is a lack of understanding of its importance because attempts at the examination of the role of religion and state has taken a very euro centric approach, focusing on the evolution of religion in the west where it has lost some of its salience and been successfully separated from the state. Dingley (2011) argues that these studies ignore eastern religions like Islam that encompass political, economic and social organisations under its banner. So it can be suggested that because religion provides the way people understand the world, it can become conflictual

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<sup>8</sup> Lonsdale, J. Coined The Terms 'Moral Ethnicity' And 'Political Tribalism' to differentiate the normative and competitive aspects of ethnicity. See "Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism", in Kaarsholm, P. and Hultin, J. (eds.), *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism*. Roskilde University.



when the view it provides differs between religious groups. The inability of the west to understand this link is what makes it hard for those examining the causes of conflicts to understand why religion plays such an important role in the mobilisation of conflicting groups (Dingley, 2011).

Religion's role in identity formation begins when young people look for ideological contexts such as religion to 'make sense of the world and their place in it' and also to 'generate a sense of meaning and order' (King, 2003:198) in their lives, helping to form the cornerstone of their identity. Religion has 'compelling qualities to people all over the world' (Roy, 1994:96) and even though it varies between peoples and cultures, it helps in the formation of reality and course of action for individuals and societies especially on the African continent (Den Heever, 2001). As a basis for mobilisation during periods of competition, Stewart (2009:18) notes that 'religious leaders typically have a long history of religious devotion while ethnic leaders invent a belief in ethnic issues to assist them in power seeking' such that for religious leaders, religion comes first before power seeking while political rewards are seen as secondary for religious leaders than for ethnic leaders. This can explain why religion in northern Nigeria is easier to use as a platform for mobilisation due to its long history, entrenchment in the social fabric of the region and strong emotional bond between members.

Islam and Christianity are the main religions in Nigeria and in recent years the space where they operate has become a highly contested one, as they both try to dominate the social, political and economic spheres. Importantly as the role of the state has shrunk, religion has tried to fill the void with each religion attempting to restructure the state in its own vision of the world. Even though the country is said to be secular, this very secularity has been a source of conflict between the religions, with the Muslims seeing this secularity as based on



Christian values and thus demanding that sharia be given more consideration in the Nigerian legal system, while Christians maintain that for peaceful coexistence, Islam must not be given a pride of place in the society, especially in northern Nigeria.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has examined the theoretical and conceptual notions of conflict and identities such as religion and ethnicity. The focus has been on the nexus between identity and conflicts in Nigeria and how a sense of identity belonging has affected the nature of conflicts. It found that while identities are said to be constructed and ever changing, they remain an important feature of intergroup relations in Africa, helping groups formulate their views of the world, how they interact with other groups and how they justify these interactions be it peaceful or conflictual as the case maybe.

It was also acknowledged that the space where religion exists is highly contested between the two main religions in Nigeria, Islam and Christianity. This is apparent in the northern region where Islam has always had a dominant place in the region's history, with Christianity trying to gain a foothold in the economic, social and political affairs of the region. This struggle took a different dimension with the introduction of the sharia legal system, which brought religion to the centre of the region's politics and has seen these contestations take a violent turn in the years since 1999.

Even though various methodologies to understanding conflicts such as the instrumentalist approaches developed by Collier and Hoeffler (2000), Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) and Reno (2006) and the Horizontal Inequalities approach developed by Stewart (2000, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013), Stewart, Brown and Mancini (2005), Brown and Langer (2010), Ostby (2008) and Langer and Stewart (2013), have been discussed here, it is clear that these have



some shortcomings. One is the focus on civil wars with little emphasis on ethno-religious and communal conflicts. Secondly the instrumentalists take a top down approach assuming that the conflicts are elite generated ignoring the role of the average man. On the other hand, even though the HIs approach has attempted to address some of the issues disregarded by Collier and others, it does not provide sufficient explanation for why some states that have Horizontal Inequalities have not been plagued by conflicts.

Due to these shortcomings and the need to understand why some conflicts persist and have become a recurring theme in these conflict areas, this thesis adopts a social-psychological approach that examines the psychological aspect of intergroup relations. The adoption of this approach is because it has been acknowledged that 'socio-psychological barriers play a major role in the continuation of intractable conflicts. They are responsible for the socio-psychological closure that resists and prevents the entertainment of alternative information that could potentially facilitate the acceptance of ideas advancing peacemaking processes' (Halperin and Bar-Tal, 2010:637).

This position is supported by Seymour (2003:1) who notes that for us to get a 'comprehensive analysis of conflict, social-psychological dimensions must also be understood and addressed.' Kelman (2009:175 cited in Demirdöğen, 2011:217) also proposes that this approach can help us understand why 'once a conflict has started, normative and perceptual processes are set into motion that promote its escalation and perpetuation and create or intensify barriers to conflict resolution.' The approach also identifies the role of history and notes that for successful conflict resolution we must build awareness, accord legitimacy and recognise the fears of the groups involved in the conflict and the consequences of such conflicts (Seymour, 2003:1).



Kreuzer (2002:i) also argues that the approach provides a different perspective to understanding conflicts because it 'stresses the identity dimension of ethno-cultural conflict' which 'has to be treated as a basic need, which, if sought for by the members of a self-defined identity group, must be fulfilled to some degree, because otherwise it will be pursued irrespective of costs'. He also notes that even though instrumental approaches are relevant in conflict analysis as they 'cause, contribute to and aggravate a conflict' (Kreuzer, 2002:i) we must understand the identity aspect of conflict-resolution if we are to have any chance of success.

This approach allows us understand the psychological effect conflicts have on groups and their members which in turn affects their perceptions of the conflicts and the way they approach the conflict resolution process. As groups use collective memories and narratives of the past to create their understanding of conflicts, the narratives that evolve are usually radicalised and contentious (Cobb, 2013; Manojlovic, 2010) and used in a process of delegitimisation to justify groups' acts of violence through the demonisation and dehumanisation of the 'other.' The memories used to create these narratives focus on those that highlight an 'us against them' position which restricts their choice of interaction to one of revenge or violence (Cobb, 2013; Manojlovic, 2010). This leads to the development of negative emotions such as hatred, fear and anger that create distrust and increase suspicions between groups, further entrenching the divides that already exist. Even where there are positive emotions such as pride, they usually only serve the function of enhancing the groups' actions even if such actions are immoral. As the conflicts persist they help create a 'Culture of conflict' (Bar-Tal, 2012) that makes conflicts more difficult to resolve.

The next chapter examines how pre-colonial and colonial social, economic and political processes such as the internal slave trade; migration and the change in economic landscape



in northern Nigeria provided the starting points for the development and entrenchment of identities such as ethnicity and religion in the Nigerian state and as groups competed for hegemony they used these as a basis for mobilisation.



## **CHAPTER 3: NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION SINCE THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD**

### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

As Stewart (2000) noted, group inequalities can find their foundation in colonial policies that favoured one group against another. Once these inequalities are formed it becomes easier for groups that feel deprived to mobilise against the favoured group. This chapter examines the social, economic and political process that facilitated the construction and entrenchment of identities during the pre-colonial and colonial era. Because this research argues that identity mobilisation is the building block for the conflicts that are currently afflicting the country, it becomes important to understand how they have become entrenched in the lives of millions of Nigerians.

The chapter examines how these processes evolved in the new semi-urban and urban areas in the northern protectorate with particular emphasis on the towns of Jos, Kaduna, Kafanchan and Zangon-Kataf where the conflicts under review occur. Three factors are examined here; the first is the effect the internal slave trade in the region during the expansion of the Sokoto caliphate in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had on identity formation and group relations; pre-colonial and colonial economic processes that encouraged internal migration levels and how the increase in foreign groups into areas within the region created a new set of strangers whose relationship with the indigenous groups were altered after the arrival of the colonialists. The final factor examined is the advent of Christian missionaries in the region and how their provision of education and evangelism created a new crop of Christian elite within the middle belt area that began to challenge the hegemony of Islam in the region. The effect of these three factors on the relationship between the colonial administration, the minorities and the Hausa Fulani Muslims and non-Muslims in the region are examined to understand how identities and the narratives that emerged from these



have become important in inter group relations and how they affect ongoing conflicts within the areas.

### **3.1 SLAVERY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

The study of the slave trade in Africa has largely focused on the trans Atlantic trade that involved the mass movement of Africans to Europe and the Americas. Hogedorn and Lovejoy (1993) suggest that the volume of internal slave trade on the African continent was also on a large scale and played an important part in the social, political and economic transformation of the region. In the area that became known as northern Nigeria, there were two periods of the slave trade, with the first occurring in the early period of the formation of the Hausa states and the second beginning after the jihad of the Sokoto caliphate in 1804, with this second phase lasting well into the first three decades of British colonialisation.

The focus of the internal slave trade has been on the economic aspects of the trade, especially the role slaves played in providing labour for the cultivation of farmland in the production of agricultural produce. However, the trade also played a pivotal role in the social and political processes that have affected the current relationship between the various ethnic groups that reside within many of sub Saharan Africa's countries. This aspect of the trade is worth examining particularly as many of the ethnic groups that were on opposite sides of this activity were forced together into the same territorial nations. If this had not occurred the effect of the trade would not have as much significance.



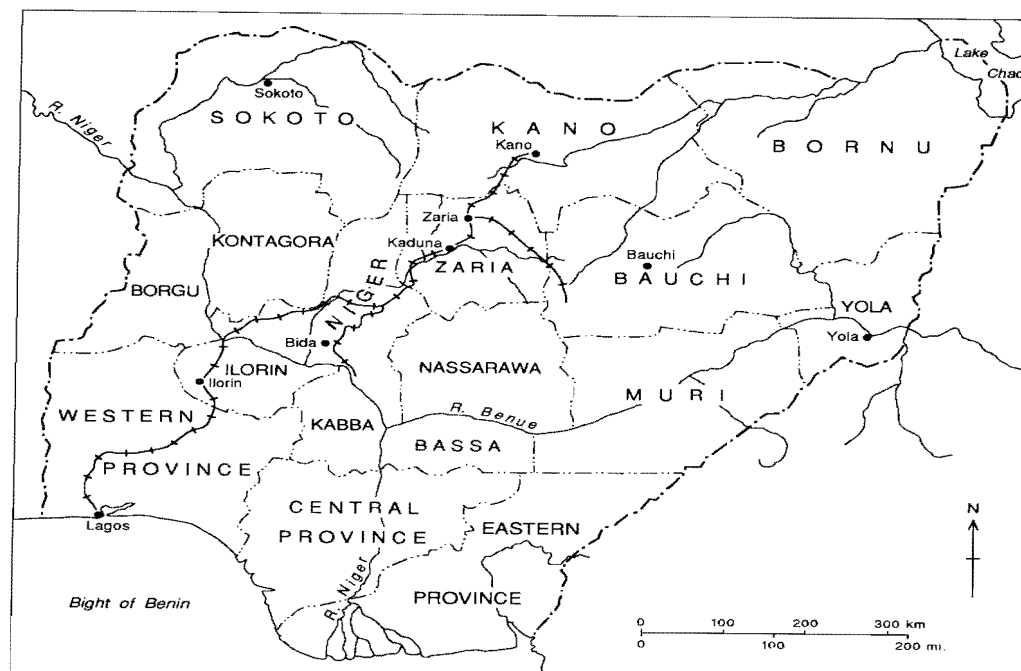
**MAP 3.1**



The Sokoto Caliphate. French, British and German Spheres. Lovejoy, P.E and Hogendorn, J.S. (1993)

*Slow Death for Slavery: The Course Of Abolition In Northern Nigeria, 1897-1936.* p.3

**MAP 3.2**



Provinces of Northern Region 1916. Lovejoy, P.E and Hogendorn, J.S. (1993) *Slow Death for Slavery:*

*The Course Of Abolition In Northern Nigeria, 1897-1936.* p.4



Map 3.1 shows the area of control of the Sokoto caliphate before the creation of the northern protectorate and how this fit into the Nigerian state after its creation, while map 3.2 shows the northern provinces in the early years of colonial rule. This section examines the period of the expansion of the Sokoto caliphate just before the advent of the colonialists and after the arrival of the British and their attempts at its abolition. This period was one that saw the caliphate pushing to increase its territorial control through the subjugation of the non-Muslim ethnic groups of the area. The sudden unification of these opposing groups into a new territorial nation state was bound to be fraught with dangers given the suspicions that already existed between the groups based on their previous relationship.

The caliphate was a result of Usman dan Fodio's jihad of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century which created an Islamic state that was 'a confederation of emirates that stretched from today's Burkina Faso in the west to deep into Cameroon in the east; from the edge of the Sahel in the north to the start of the forests in the south' (Last, 2013). The emergence of the caliphate created a political and religious force within the region and helped entrench Islam in the region (Bunza, 2004; Muhammad, 2004). The structure of the caliphate was such that there was no central control and emirates, while swearing allegiance to Sokoto, carried out expansions of their territories unilaterally with emirates such as Kontagora, Bida, Bauchi and Zaria carrying out raids into both Muslim and non Muslim areas. The areas that were the focus of the raids included parts of the middle belt region around southern Kaduna and the Jos plateau. Incursions into the Muslim areas were rationalised on the need to return Hausa states to the original ideals of Islam, while forays into non-Muslim areas were carried out to bring these areas under the control of the Muslim emirates as a way of furthering the cause of Islam. However while the initial motivations behind these expansions were ideological, economic interests crept in (Mason, 1969; Turaki, 2010).



Economically, as the caliphate expanded there was an increased need for labour due to the emergence of a new crop of land holding political leaders who needed agricultural labour for the cultivation of their plantations. The increasing economic activities in the new territories also required skilled workers such as artisans and soldiers to defend the territories (Turaki, 2010). One way to acquire such labour was through slave raids into nearby non-Muslim areas with an estimated slave population of between 1 and 2.5 million slaves within the emirate during the years between 1897-1903 (Lovejoy and Hogendorn, 1993). This figure is based on rough estimates of labour requirements for the arable land under the caliphate. While Hogendorn (1977) and Salau (2010) both acknowledge the existence of slave labour on the plantations of the emirates of Zaria and Kano for the cultivation of cash crops such as groundnut and cotton, they both admit that estimating their numbers have proven difficult due to the lack of verifiable data.

The expansion of the caliphate into the non-Muslim middle belt area resulted in emirates such as Zaria raiding towns in southern Kaduna area such as Kajuru, Zangon-Kataf and Kachia, while the emirate of Bauchi focused its raids on the Jos plateau, which is claimed to have resulted in the depopulation of the areas (Turaki, 2010). The annual colonial report of 1902 also stated that 'wherever a Fulani army had been it left depopulated desert.'<sup>9</sup> However, Mason (1969) argues that there might be other explanations for why these areas are sparsely populated, noting that there are towns within these areas that actually saw an increase in population. He also notes that this assertion of slave raids resulting in depopulation of these areas is not supported by any evidence that provide population levels of the areas before the raids which would help in determining the effect of such raids. Another contradiction in the position put forward by Turaki (2010) is that if he claims that the ethnic groups of the middle belt were successful in repelling the Muslim attacks are true,

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<sup>9</sup> Colonial Reports-Annual, No. 409. Northern Nigeria. Report for 1902



then it would seem that the people of the areas did not form the bulk of the slaves that were captured by these marauding emirates as is being suggested.

Even with the colonial administration in place, there was a slow pace in eradicating this practice. This could be attributed to Lord Lugard's unwillingness to dismantle the system that provided the labour needed for the production of cash crops such as cotton and groundnuts that were needed for exports. Even though little was done to overtly promote the trade, certain British policies such as the Land Proclamation No.8 of 1910 affected the ability of slaves to gain their freedom. The act was introduced to prevent the creation of European landowners by classifying all land as native land with the current user deemed as the lawful owner (Lovejoy and Hogendorn, 1993), but it also had the effect of restricting the ability of freed slaves to cultivate land unless granted permission. It also had an effect of denying migrants that were not indigenous to the community rights to land.

This exclusion of access to land, which was the region's major factor of production at the time, magnified issues of ownership and indigeneity. It can be argued that this forms the basis for the indigene settler dichotomy that still exists in the region. The issue of indigeneity has two facets; one is the issue of territorial claim to being the original inhabitants of the land (Fowler, 2011) while the second is linked to 'cultural specificity as a basis for specific rights' (Quasset, Kenrick and Gibb, 2011:138). It results in a quagmire about how to determine who can lay claim to land and the rights that are attached to it, while also raising the question of how to determine if indigeneity is based on who got there first or just by identity differences. If there is some ancestral evidence that defines the ownership of the land, the question is how far does this stretch especially when certain ethnic groups could not effectively monitor large expanses of land that they now claim as theirs. Or do issues of indigeneity only refer to identity differences that manifest in language and religion that



make one group different from another? It can be argued that culture was one of the things that differentiated the groups and because the migrant groups were smaller in size, the larger groups could label the other as the settler.

Fowler (2011) attempts to resolve this by examining the issue from the basis of whether indigeneity should be determined by prior occupancy or first occupancy. Prior occupancy refers to where those claiming rights over the land were the initial occupants before colonisation. The problem he identifies here is that if the land is returned to the original occupants then those that were not part of the original occupants will lose their claims. On the other hand the first occupant approach uses historical claims as the basis for ownership and requires tracing the history of the area and transfers of land that can be verified. The problem here relates to how to determine ownership of virgin land that cannot be easily verified as belonging to one group or another.

In Nigeria, the issue of territorial claim using the basis of first occupancy is used along side cultural specificity, with the first aspect the basis for the second. It is the social and administrative changes that colonisation brought, which absorbed the local system into the western capital system that increased the importance of indigeneity and ownership. Claims of original inhabitants to the land are linked to access to certain rights and while this was not so pronounced when the land laws were enacted, as the nation state evolved and access to political, social and economic benefits were linked to place of origin, the issue of indigeneity has had greater importance.

This was one of the early social process that affected the relationship between the Hausa-Fulani and the other ethnic groups within the northern region by solidifying ethnic and religious identities. This would lead to the development of radicalised narratives that



challenged the dominance of the dominant Muslim groups. These narratives, which are examined in later chapters, form the starting point from which ethnic groups in the middle belt area understand their relations with the Hausa Fulani.

### **3.2 MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PRE COLONIAL NORTHERN NIGERIA**

The second factor that helped develop identities in the region was the issue of internal migration within colonial Nigeria. Prior to the arrival of the British, the economic structure of the region was contingent on the existing Hausa states and economically, the states were not linked to the western capitalist exchange system. However, colonialism brought changes that allowed the integration of these states into the western capitalist system and would change the dynamics of the region (Shelton, 1986). The Hausa states were the primary state structure in the region. Within this state, *birnis* or large urban areas where the Emirs and the administrative machinery of the states were situated were the main administrative and political structures. These were made up of *Kauyuka* or smaller towns that were the outer rural areas that focused mainly on agricultural production (Oyedele, 1987; Smith, 1987). Economically, the *Birnis* attracted the surplus production from the *kauyukas* and were the centres of trade for the Hausa states during the period. They were cosmopolitan in nature with the population consisting of people that had migrated inwards and were not related to each other through kinship ties (Shenton, 1986; Smith, 1987).

The economic aspect of these *Birnis* resulted in rapid economic and social developments. In a study of the development of Kano, Smith (1987) noted that the town's strategic position around the most fertile land in the area helped attract migrant populations to take advantage of the economic benefits to be derived from the town. But even though economic factors played a part in the development of these *Birnis*, it was suggested that



religion had a role to play in their development especially in Kano where even before the advent of Islam into the region, tradition beliefs attracted migrants to the area, with the hills around Kano said to be home to *Iskoki* or *Jinns*, which provided a cultural attraction (Smith, 1987).

The development of Zaria was similar to that of Kano, with the incorporation of small settlements such as Dumbi and Farakwai into the major town of Zaria. This process continued with the subjugation of other *garuruwa* (towns) and finally the economic and political incorporation of smaller vassal and satellite states into the *Birni* of Zaria (Suleiman, 1987). The satellite states had some measure of political autonomy while the vassal states were under the direct control of Zaria. The development of these *birnis* attracted a number of migrants into the area and this will form the basis of the next section that examines the effect this had on inter group relations and the formation and entrenchment of identities.

As the *birnis* expanded, there was an increase in the level of migration into the areas from as far as North Africa. With these migrants came the religion of Islam during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. This was a period of the rapid growth of Islam with the period witnessing an increase in the struggle for control of territory between the *birnis* resulting in higher taxations and slave labour (Shenton, 1986). This is said to have been a factor in the rise of the jihadists whose teachings called for a relaxation of taxes and a return to Islamic legal principles in the relationship between rulers and their subjects (Shenton, 1986). The Jihad helped bring these states under one command, but the structure of these *birnis* remained largely unchanged. The only changes that would occur would relate to the expansions of their territories that provided an increase in slave labour, but there was also an increase in the level of migration into these areas as labourers in the agricultural sector.



As already noted, the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought the region under the northern protectorate, during which time there was an increased need for labour in the expanding urban areas and for the increase in economic activities. These labour needs were for both skilled and unskilled workers that included voluntary and forced migration from within and outside the protectorate. Even though slave labour still existed in the emirates in the northern protectorate especially on the plantations that produced cash crops such as groundnuts and cotton, there was still a demand for labour outside of the existing agricultural labour. While there had been migration within what became the Nigerian state before the advent of the British, under the new territory, there was a movement of migrants to the new developing administrative and economic centres 'as Europeans revitalised the older West African towns and built new commercial, mining, plantation and urban centres' (Skinner, 1963:309).

The increased migration levels was a response to the emerging opportunities provided by the colonial economy as seen in the Tin mines of the Jos plateau and its need for artisan and clerical labour (Freund, 1981). Migration movements took a number of forms that included movement along trading routes that led to the establishment of Zangos or transit posts along the routes. This was the main form of migration movements before the advent of the colonialists. Another form occurred during the colonial era when administrative officers moved to these areas (Abdu, 2010).

The towns of Jos and Kaduna would exemplify the need for labour for development and economic projects within the protectorate. While in Jos, labour was required for the tin mining activities; labour requirements in Kaduna were for its development into the new political capital of the protectorate. The completion of the Port Harcourt to Kano rail link helped in the movement of the Igbo migrants, who were restricted by the lack of available



land in their areas, into Kaduna and the neighbouring towns like Kafanchan in southern Kaduna. Because of this, there was a noticeable increase in the number of migrants with the majority of these from the southern province and other neighbouring African countries. There was however little migration from nearby towns like Kano, Zaria or Katsina due to the unwillingness of the people of the surrounding areas to leave their farmlands to the city that was still developing (Oyedele, 1987). During the period from 1927, Kaduna was populated by mainly Hausa Fulani Muslims who though not indigenous to the area were the largest group, but by 1931 the number of migrants in Kaduna from the Southeast made up of mainly Igbos migrants increased from less than 20 men in 1927 to 1,272 (Oyedele, 1987:276).

Whereas the relationship between the different groups during the post colonial era was one that was defined by the indigenous groups, the arrival of the colonialists resulted in a change in the dynamics of the relationship which was now defined by the colonial administration. This was because 'the new strangers entered these foreign areas under the aegis of the Europeans' so 'that unlike the earlier strangers, they had only secondary relationships with the local African political authorities (who were now also controlled by the Europeans) and were now free to deal with them as they saw fit' (Skinner, 1963: 309). This would form a later basis for contestation, as these new strangers did not see themselves as under the control of indigenous groups as new colonial laws now protected them and would heighten identity tensions between the settlers and the indigenes (Skinner, 1963).

### **3.3 INTER GROUP RELATIONS DURING THE COLONIAL ERA**

During the colonial era, as migrations created a new set of migrant labourers that were alien to the areas, this required the introduction of new political, social and administrative structures that would ensure the effective administration of these areas. This would pose an administrative problem for the British who wanted to maintain cultural and religious



separation between the different ethnic groups on the one hand and between the Muslims and non-Muslims on the other.

To address this issue, the British created separate administrative structures within the towns to cater for the different ethnic groups. One way in which this was done was through the enactment of the Township and Public Health Ordinances in 1917 that resulted in the establishment of six second class townships that were divided into three; the European reservation, the commercial area and the Native town (Bingel, 1978). Non-native ethnic groups in these towns were segregated into new areas like *Sabon Gari* and *Tudun Wada* in Kaduna. In Jos, the division was into two administrative units made up of the native town, which was administered by the Jos Divisional Native Authority located in Naraguta and the township that housed the Europeans in the Government Reservation Areas (GRAs). This segregation along ethnic and religious helped magnify identities between groups.

The British adoption of the indirect rule as the system of administration through the native authorities also affected inter group relations especially within non-Muslim areas. This is because the Native Authorities that resulted from the emirates 'developed into units of local government based on emirs and chiefs' (Yahaya, 1980:3) and were staffed from within the emirate councils resulting in a large Muslim staff. In settlements that were predominantly Muslim populated, there was little risk of contestation between the residents and the NA's, but in areas where the majority indigenous population were non-Muslims, the risk of conflict was high. Because these Native Authorities used force when obtaining the required labour for the colonial administration, they were viewed as collaborators with the British especially in the non-Muslim areas that were a source of much of the labour. This created a sense of resentment against the Hausa-Fulani ruling class that made up the Native Authorities. This was especially true in the southern part of Kaduna, with the resentments



further deepened due to the private use of these labourers by the district heads (Kazah-Toure, 2003).

This support for the emirates through the Native Authorities created a hierarchical structure with the Hausa-Fulani at the top. This structure was resented by the minority indigenous groups in the region and still resonates as a point of contention between these groups and the Hausa-Fulani who they accuse of continuing to propagate the system through their control of the social, economic and political machinery in states such as Kaduna.

### **3.4. CHRISTIANITY IN NIGERIA**

Christianity played a role in the formation of Christian identities within the northern region through the work of missionaries in the middle belt area. This section begins by tracing the advent of Christianity into Nigeria and the efforts by the missionaries to extend their work into the northern emirates and the resistance they faced from the colonial administration that constrained their work to the middle belt area so as to preserve Islamic purity in the emirates of the region.

Christianity's history in Nigeria took a very different route to that of Islam, with missionaries emerging alongside the advent of Europeans into Africa in the mid fifteenth century (Falola, 1998). The early missionary work was concentrated in the Niger Delta protectorate areas of Benin and Warri but this had little success due to the inability of the missionaries to cope with local conditions. This resulted in a more or less total collapse of missionary work by the mid eighteenth century and it was not until the nineteenth century that there was a return of missionaries (Falola, 1998). The first batch composed of returning slaves who had been converted while in captivity and arrived in Badagry on the southern coast in 1842. The people of Badagry were not very receptive to the missionaries forcing them to look for



friendlier environs which they found in Egbaland in 1846 (Gbadamosi and Ajayi, 2004), where they adopted a strategy of incorporating local converts to help in their work. This was to give a local content to the missionary work by enabling prospective converts to identify with the missionaries. More importantly for the purpose of this study is the fact that the revived missionary work placed Christianity in direct competition with Islam that was already more firmly rooted in the area.

Missionaries challenged some of the fundamental basis of Islam (Gbadamosi and Ajayi, 2004), however the attack on Islam rather than attract more converts, led to a hardening of the Muslim faithful amongst the Yoruba Muslims and further north in towns such as Bida and Lokoja (Ayandele, 1966). The early missionary work focused on competing with Islam as the main religion in Nigeria especially by attempting to increase its proselytising work in the north. And even though there was some difficulty in the move to establish missions in the north, the CMS and other missionaries did not relent in their efforts to move into the interior. The colonial policy of restricting missionary work within the core north frustrated their conversion efforts within the area and helped in the construction of narratives by the minority ethnic groups supporting the perception of undue support for the Hausa-Fulani. These narratives are reechoed in minority narratives of marginalisation and domination by the majority Hausa-Fulani that will help us understand where the current tensions between the groups are founded.

#### **3.4.1 Missionaries in the Northern Protectorate**

Islam's long history in northern Nigeria spanned three centuries before the advent of Christianity and enabled the creation of a strong Muslim identity and the entrenchment of Islamic ideals that permeated the political, social and economic life of the population. The Christian missionaries on the other hand only began to make inroads into the region



alongside the British colonialists and even then the activities of the Christian missionaries were restricted to the pagan areas of the middle belt by the British policy of non-interference in the region's Islamic way of life. This would result in a clear demarcation between what can be referred to as the core north made up of mostly Hausa-Fulani areas and other conquered areas that made up the old Sokoto Caliphate on the one hand and areas of pagan tribes in the middle belt that were soon converted to Christianity.

After the conquest of the Caliphate and the establishment of the Northern Protectorate, Lord Lugard stated in Sokoto at the installation of the new Sultan in 1903 that 'all men are free to worship God as they please. Mosques and prayer places will be treated with respect by us' (Crowder, 1966:226) and he was keen to distance himself and the colonial administration from the work of the missionaries, while also unwilling to be forced to engage the emirates if per chance any harm came to any of the missionaries (Ayandele, 1966). During the period after amalgamation there continued to be a restriction on the activities of the missionaries in the northern region to the pagan areas prompting allegations of bias against Christian missionaries.

The restriction generated ill feelings between the missionaries and the colonial administration with a sense that the Muslims were being unduly favoured allowing them to maintain their hierarchical superiority over non-Muslims in the region. However, the lack of manpower of the missionaries and the antagonism towards them in the Muslim areas meant their task would nevertheless have been more difficult. It seems that this restriction had a positive effect on missionary work in the middle belt area by allowing them to focus in areas of least resistance (Crampton, 1978). So even though the colonial administration restricted the work of the missions in the emirates, the missionaries had themselves began to appreciate the futility of converting the Muslims who Miller stated had 'hide bound minds'



(Ayandele, 1966). So the missionaries focused their work among the ethnic groups in the middle belt area of the

### **3.4.2 Missionaries in the Middle Belt**

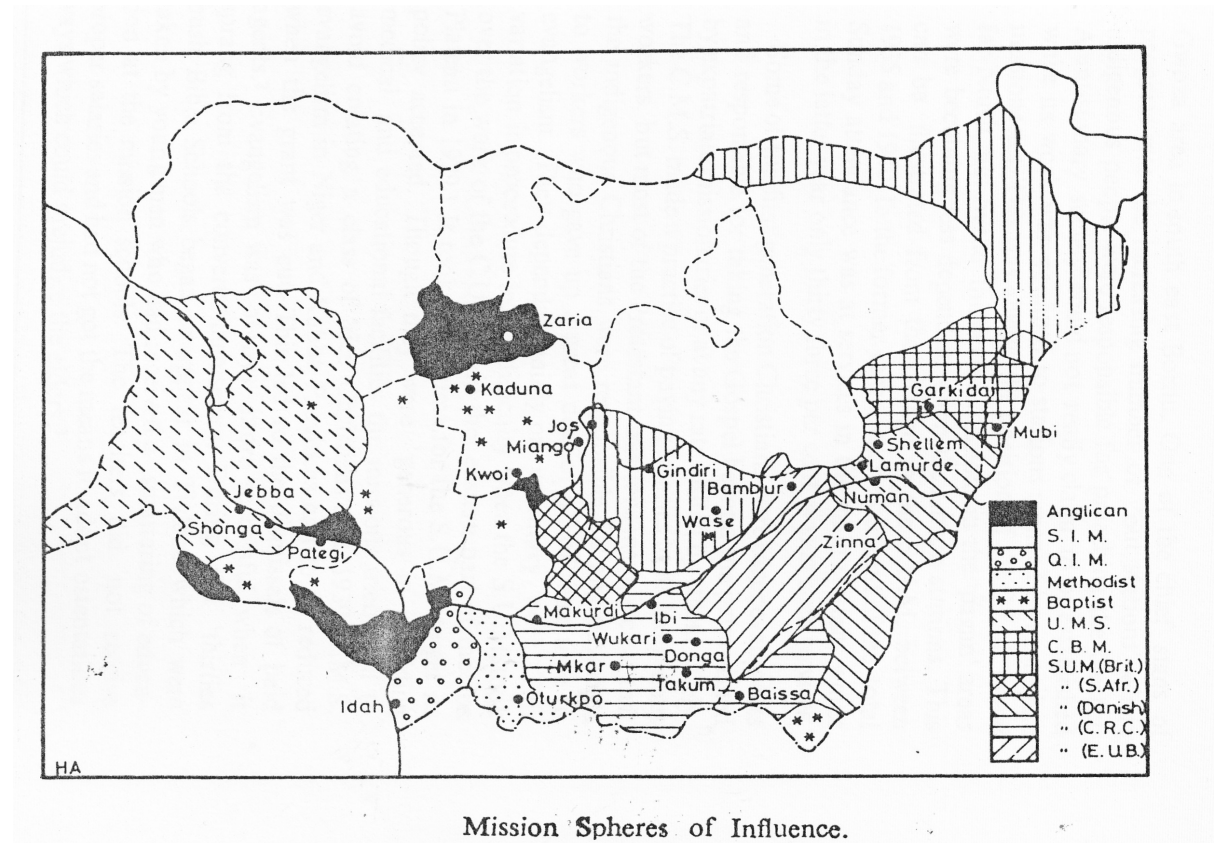
While missionary work began in the plateau area after the advent of the British, the decision in 1922 by Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor General of Nigeria to divide northern Nigeria into three areas was to have a profound effect on the ability of the missionaries to extend their work into the Muslim areas of the protectorate. Three separate administrative areas zones were created in the north; this comprised of the Muslim emirates, which were areas that had predominantly Muslim populations and were ruled by an Emir. There were also the independent pagan areas that were populated by pagans and finally there was the area where even though the population was predominantly pagan were ruled by Muslims. In these areas the basis for giving Muslim leaders control over the pagan groups was their word that these areas had been under their purview before the advent of the British.

The new administrative units created a number of problems for the missionaries (Crampton, 1978). Firstly, the missionaries were unable to get access into Muslim areas that had some pagan groups like the *Maguzawa* who though residing within the sphere of influence of the emirates had managed to resist the caliphate and remain traditional believers. The missionaries wanted access to these groups but the colonial administration was unwilling to grant them access so as not to be seen as reneging on its pledge of non-interference. Secondly, in pagan populated areas with Muslim leaders, the missions faced the same problems but were also unhappy that the Muslims were given support in areas that were pagan populated. This was the case in Bukuru a non-Muslim area, in the Jos plateau that was placed under the administrative control of the Bauchi province with an Islamic administrative system (Boer, 1988). This was also the situation in parts of southern Kaduna



that were placed under the Zaria emirate. These decisions affected the ability of the missions to have unfettered access to some pagan areas that were under Muslim control.

### MAP 3.3



Missionaries Sphere of Influence. Crampton, E.P.T. (1978) *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*. p.152

However the missionaries did have some success in these areas through their provision of education and health services on the one hand and also by the fact that indigenous ethnic groups saw Christianity as an ideological force that could challenge the dominance of Islam, making it an acceptable ally which encouraged conversion. The proselytising work of the missionaries also had an unexpected effect on the spread of the use of the Hausa language amongst the indigenous ethnic groups. Hausa was made the *lingua franca* of the region during the administration of Girouard who took over from Lugard in 1906 as Governor of the northern protectorate. Its use as the basis for promotion in the service increased its usage



within the region (Ayandele, 1966). With Hausa as the lingua franca of the region, the missionaries saw the translation of the Bible to Hausa as a way of gaining more converts amongst the people within the region. The result of this was that non-Hausa speaking ethnic groups adopted Hausa as a second language and coupled with its use as the language of trade, its usage spread widely helping to solidify the Hausa identity in the north.

The provision of education by the missionaries led to the emergence of educated minorities because the colonial administration had ensured that the education of Muslims and Christians were provided through different routes. Girouard believed that allowing missionaries to provide education in the Muslim areas would 'spoil the Northerners as they had done the southerners' (Ayandele, 1966:146). This resulted in Muslim children being educated through the schools established by the native authorities, while pagan children were educated in missionaries schools. In the initial stages the native authorities established schools within the pagan areas but these were usually within areas that had some Muslim population with Muslim teachers. This approach was seen as a tool for the conversion of the pagan people of the areas, but due to a lack of qualified teachers the project had limited impact (Crampton, 1978).

However there was some implicit support for the missionaries in their conversion efforts in certain pagan areas such as Toro where a school was established in 1928. In the school, pagan students that converted to Islam were expelled while conversion to Christianity was not a basis for expulsion (Crampton, 1978). The establishment of the school in Toro and another in Wusasa in Zaria in 1929, helped provide education to the pagan population of the middle belt areas. Even though there was a fear that missionary incursions into the Muslim areas might result in anti colonial sentiments within the population, Ayandele (1996) argues that there was little evidence to support this. Nonetheless it was obvious that the British



placed more emphasis on the economic benefits it gained through trade in the region and was not willing to allow social change that the missionaries represented to derail this. Minority ethnic groups saw this as a tacit approval by the colonial administration for their continued marginalisation by the Hausa-Fulani, a situation that only broadened the divides between the groups.

### **3.5 JOS IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD**

The effect of these colonial policies on inter group relations between the mainly Muslim Hausa-Fulani and the non-Muslim minorities in the middle belt area of the region was evident in the Plateau area where the historical development of the Jos area would provide some background about the relationship between the groups. While the Northern region was one that was seen by the British as predominantly Muslim composed of the Hausa Fulani, they did acknowledge the existence of large tracts of pagan tribes mainly in the middle belt area that included the plateau highlands and the southern Zaria areas. The fact that these non-Muslim ethnic groups existed within the region made it difficult for a full implementation of the indirect rule system of administration that was based on the Emirate system with its native authorities, treasuries and prisons (Ames, 1932).

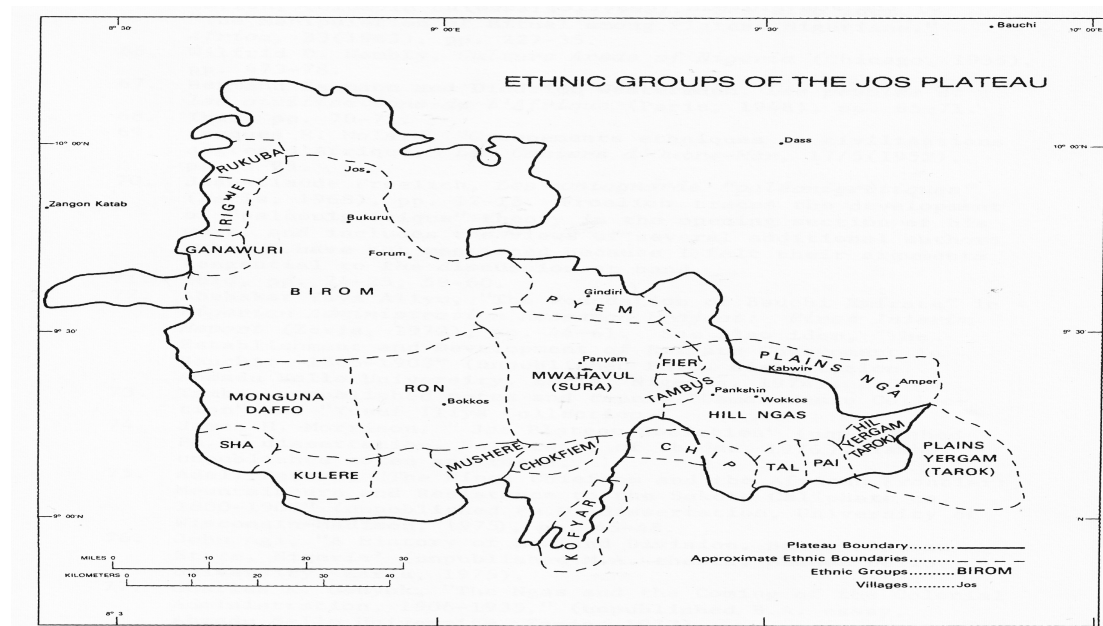
Between 1915 and 1926 when Jos was a part of the Bauchi Division and the Bauchi emirate, there were calls for the creation of a new division out of the Bauchi. It was argued that there was no reason for it to be under an emirate or for the creation of a Hausa ruler in the town (Hassan, 2004). This led to the creation of 'purely artificial native administrations' that had their own administrative structures including their treasuries, prisons and police force (Ames, 1932:46). These newly created native administrations existed along the lines of the colonial classification of tribes in the area based on their history and the need to preserve their traditions and customs. Further agitations led to the creation of Plateau province of the



Bauchi province when the northern region was restructured in 1926, with the new Plateau province consisting of five divisions, Jos, Pankshin, Jemaa, southern and Shendam.<sup>10</sup>

The province was bordered by the Zaria province from the northwest, the Benue province in the south, Adamawa province in the East and Bauchi province in the Northeast.<sup>11</sup> The largest of the divisions was Jos division, which covered an area of 1,431 square miles and included the Berom, Ganawuri, Rukuba, Pakara and Anaguta tribes around the northern and central areas of the highlands (Ames, 1932). Jos division was divided into fifteen districts made up of indigenous tribes and with the exception of the Jere district, the other divisions had large population of migrants from outside the area, which created administrative problems for the British because of their policy of ensuring the sanctity of the cultures of the various groups which could be affected by the intermingling of the different groups (Ames, 1932).

#### MAP 3.4



Ethnic Groups of the Jos Plateau. Tambo, D. C. (1978) *The "Hill Refuges" of the Jos Plateau: A Historiographical Examination*. p.223

<sup>10</sup> Gazetteers Of Northern Provinces Of Nigeria. Volume IV. The Highland Chieftaincies.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*



The Berom were the largest of the ethnic groups in this division and were spread over eight of the fifteen districts, which is over 50% of the districts in the division. The other main ethnic groups in the division were the Rop, Ron, Faram, Ganawuri and the Jarawa. The other tribes in the other districts comprised of the Irigwe, the Anaguta and the Pakara who all shared similar tribal political structures that were defined along patrimonial lines. Each tribe was headed by a chief, a title that is hereditary with families, with the Chief referred to as the *Gwom*, who was both the 'spiritual and executive head of his town or village' (Ames, 1932:69)

While the larger ethnic groups had their own courts, some of the smaller ones were not considered suitably developed to have their own separate courts and so were incorporated into one court that had jurisdiction over the whole tribal area (Ames, 1932), this was as opposed to the existence of seven *Alkalai* courts that were established for the Muslims in the area.<sup>12</sup> The significance of this was that it gave Islam a presence in an otherwise largely pagan area that was evident during the period 1914-1952, when the most important administrative positions in the area were those of the *Alkali* and the *Sarki*, both positions occupied by Hausa Muslims. This helped to enhance the place of the Hausa in the Jos plateau and form the current basis for their claim of Jos as a Hausa town (Plotnicov: 1972:007). The British however had been aware of the possible issues that this would have on the relationship with the indigenous tribes and had stated that the Hausa settlements were alien to the area and that they would guard the rights of the pagans especially in land matters.<sup>13</sup>

From 1927, migration levels into Jos increased due to the completion of the rail network and resulted in the division of the town into two administrative units administered by the Jos

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<sup>12</sup> These courts were headed by an Alkali who was versed in Islamic law and justice was administered based on the Quran and the Hadith.

<sup>13</sup> See. Plotnicov, I. (1972) Who Owns Jos? Ethnic Ideology in Nigerian Urban Politics p. 8



Divisional Native Authority located in Naraguta and the township that housed the Europeans in the Government Reservation Areas (GRAs). This had come into effect in 1917 with the enactment of the Township and Public Health Ordinances. The administrative division of Jos is shown in map 3.5. Even with this division, the GRAs were still home to some Nigerians in what was known as the clerks' quarters but indigenous tribes were not to be found in large numbers in these areas preferring to remain in the hills (Imo, 2001:101). Apart from the 1945 riots between the Hausa and the Igbo there are other no records of any violent inter ethnic crisis between the groups in Jos (Plotnicov, 1971).

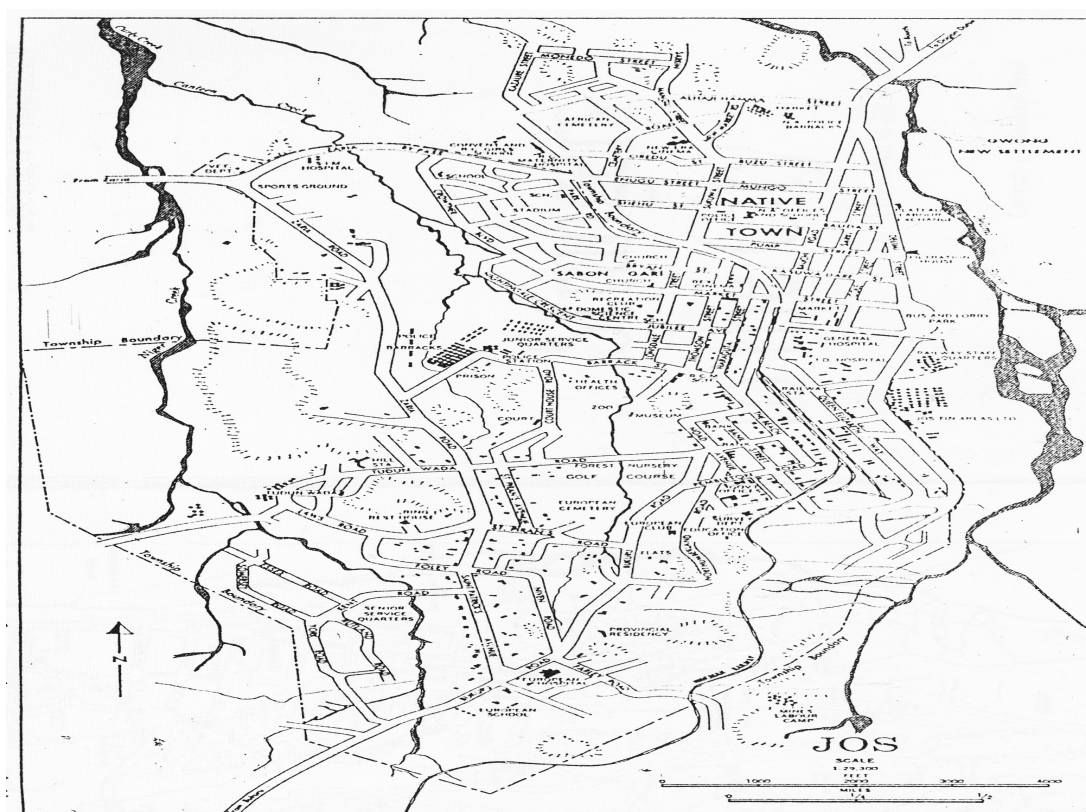
However as the town grew, the predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani in the area began to emphasise their dominance in the social, economic and political affairs of the area bringing them into direct confrontation with the local communities. This was manifested in the manner in which they tried to imprint their cultural identity within the town. An example of this was the request for funding from the regional government for the construction of a central mosque, a Muslim symbol, in the native town. However not wanting to seem partial to the Muslim population, the British denied this initial request. However the most important transformation in the town was the creation of traditional structures that gave a semblance of Jos as a Hausa town. The most significant of this was the creation of the position of *Sarkin Jos* who ruled through 10 successive *Sarkin Hausawa*<sup>14</sup> between 1914 and 1952 creating a tradition that the Hausa would use as a basis for later claims to the ownership of Jos (Plotnicov, 1967).

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<sup>14</sup> Chief of the Hausas



MAP 3.5



Jos. Plotnicov, L. (1967) *Strangers to the City*. p.iv

The British colonial administration was conscious of the effect that the creation of this traditional structure would bring the indigenous tribes in direct conflict with the Hausa migrants. However it was not until the death of the *Sarkin Jos* in 1947 that it was provided with the opportunity of integrating the Jos Hausa Native town into the Berom tribal authority.<sup>15</sup> By this period the Berom had begun to appreciate the relevance and significance of the traditional institution in the administration of the area and it welcomed the emergence of a *Rwang Pam* in Jos as the traditional ruler of the Berom.

The first *Rwang Pam* was a product of the missionary education system, part of the emerging Christian elites within the region and his appointment increased the visibility of

<sup>15</sup> Birom Tribe, Jos division SNP 1/38/307 cited in Hassan, R.I (2006) Inter group relations and partisan politics in Jos Metropolis 1902-2004. Unpublished Thesis (BA), ABU, Zaria.



the Berom in the town enabling them to lay claim as the traditional owners of Jos. With the *Rwang Pam* in place, the Hausa chief's place in the affairs of Jos was relegated to the background. In order to placate the Hausa population, the position of *Magajin Garin Jos* was created.<sup>16</sup> The *Magajin Gari* held the position of vice president of the Jos town council after its creation in 1951.<sup>17</sup> It must be noted that this traditional title was also linked to the emirate system and was similar to the position of Mayor as found in many western cities with the main difference here that the *Magajin Garin* was usually appointed by the Emir. The existence of these two positions within Jos town would create some confusion regarding who had more rights in the administration of Jos town, the *Magajin Gari* or the *Rwang Pam* leading to a struggle between the Hausa and the Berom.

The replacement of the *Sarkin Jos* with a *Magajin Gari* who was now under the Berom Native authority met with resistance from the Hausa community who called for the administration of the native town to be removed from the Berom Native Authority (Plotnicov, 1967). The effect of this was for the British to change the name of the native authority to Jos Native Authority in 1954 so as to ease the tensions. Significantly though, the role of the Berom in Jos continued to increase within the native authority, which was headed by the Chief of the Berom until 1958 when an elected Hausa person replaced him.

The new town council was composed of elected representatives of the numerous ethnic groups and the reorganisation in the manner the wards were represented, with four members from the older wards and three from the newer ward, allowed the Hausa-Fulani to be well represented. The reorganisation of the council resulted in representation along ethnic lines as a reflection of the ethnic composition of most of the wards. Even though an attempt was made to de-emphasise these ethnic divisions, representations continued to be

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<sup>16</sup> Town Administrator under the Emirate system

<sup>17</sup> Plotnicov, 1967



made along those lines due to the need by groups to be represented by those they felt could best protect their interests.

These ethnic divides were further magnified by the increasing role of the traditional institutions in the administration of the districts and divisions, with the advent of politics intensifying these ethnic cleavages between the indigenous tribes and the migrant ethnic groups. The Hausa Fulani also had the advantage of being the majority ethnic group within the region as opposed to the Igbo and the Yoruba who were southerners and could not claim as much rights in the region. Even though nationalistic fervour and the party politics that came with it allowed the Igbos and the Yoruba to participate in national politics, political activity was still largely regionally based and participation was along regional and ethnic lines. The changes that occurred after independence in 1960 will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter when the period of party politics leading to independence is examined.

### **3.6 THE DEVELOPMENT OF KADUNA**

Kaduna's choice in 1906 as the capital of the newly conquered northern protectorate by Lord Lugard increased its significance and with this decision the development of the town began in earnest with the final movement of the administration of the protectorate from Zungeru to Kaduna finalised in 1917. The period between 1906 and 1917 saw a steady influx of migrants into Kaduna, making it very much like Jos, but while migration into Jos was to take advantage of the opportunities in the mines, Kaduna's development was due to its position as the administrative centre of the northern province. Kaduna was not part of any of the emirates of the Sokoto caliphate even though the Muslim emirates of Kano, Katsina and Zaria were within close proximity. The town was situated at the crossroads between the Muslim north and the Christian and pagan south of the Zaria province but while the



northern and southern parts were administered under the Native authority, Kaduna as the capital of the northern province was never under the purview of the Zaria Native authority, rather the town was divided into north and south sections based on cultural differences for administrative purposes.

Map 3.6 shows the area under the Zazzau (Zaria emirate) and the various ethnic groups within the emirate. Kaduna was populated by the Gbagyi, an ethnic group that had settlements around the town including Bugel, Rido, Afago, Barnawa and Kurmin Kaduna all along the fertile lands around the bank of the river Kaduna. The main settlements within Kaduna included Kurmi Mashi, Rigasa and Kupei with several other settlements around Kaduna that included Palihi, dan Rono Tokache Bugai, Gwazum and Kan Rafi (Oyedele, 1987; Abdu, 2010). Unlike the emirates, the Gbagyi settlements were small political communities much like those to be found within the other ethnic groups around southern Kaduna including the Atyab (Katab), Baju (Kaje) and the Aninka (Ninzam) (Oyedele, 1987). The land laws enacted by the British had already created the indigene settler dichotomy and as the new migrants arrived and began cultivation of the land it became a point of contestation regarding issues of ownership.

The northern division comprised of the Hausa Fulani Muslims who were in urban and semi urban areas like Ikara, Soba, Giwa, Makarfi, Kubau, Sabin Gari, Igabi and Zaria city, while the non-Muslim dominated southern division was made up of Chikum, Kajuru, Kachia, Zango Katab and Kagarko (Oyedele, 1987:250). The completion of the railway line through Kaduna to Kano marked the arrival of migrants made up of mainly unskilled workers that were involved in the construction of the railway. Other migrants included, labourers and civil servants from Zungeru (Oyedele, 1987: Abdu, 2010).



**HAUSA** Ethnic Names

--- Modern State, Province Boundaries

..... Approximate Linguistic Boundaries

0 10 20 30 40 50  
MILES

### MAP 3.7

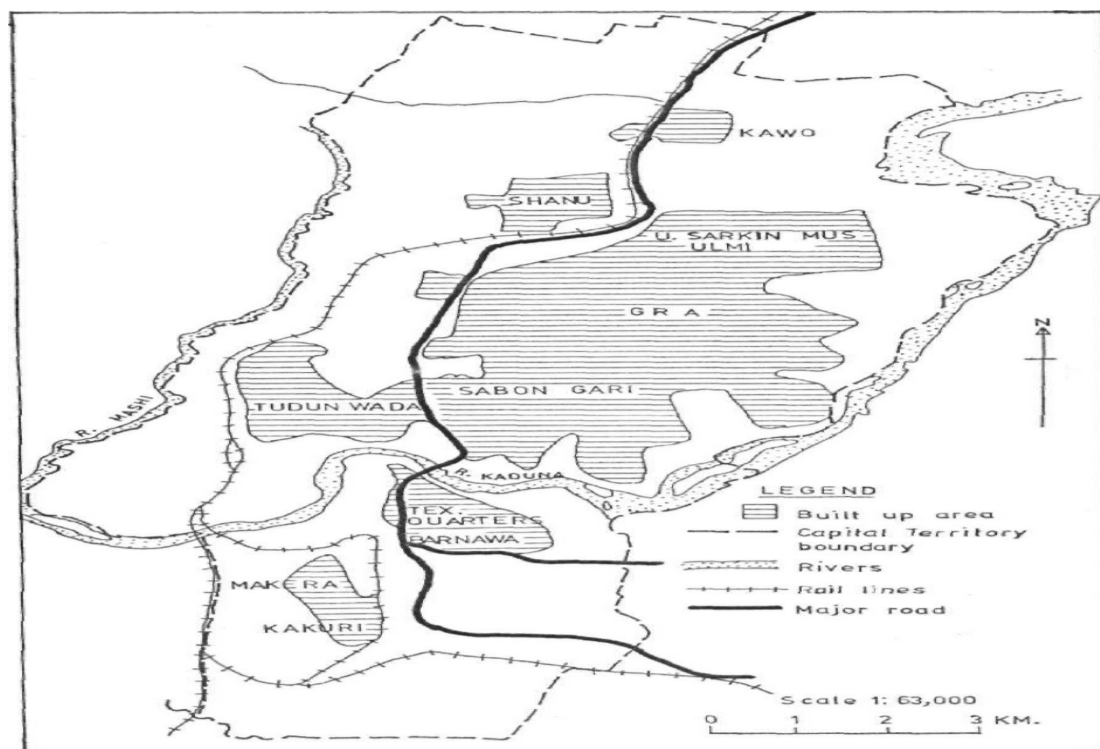


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Based on the 1917 ordinance, Kaduna had three separate residential areas, the European residential area and *Sabon gari* and *Tudun wada* settlements. The introduction of the policy of segregation was based on ethnic, racial, religious and cultural lines adopted by the British (Oyedele, 1987:209) and this policy has been seen as a deliberate attempt of divide and rule that Mamdani (1997) argues formed the basis for the ethnic divisions that still resonate in African countries and remains one of the defining reasons cited for the region's conflicts. The new migrants from the southern region were placed in the *sabon gari* settlements, while those from within the region were settled in *Tudun wada*. Map 3.8 below shows the different settlements in Kaduna during the period of its early development.

**MAP 3.8**



Settlement Pattern Kaduna Capital Territory. Oyedele, E. O. (1987) *Colonial Urbanisation In Northern Nigeria: Kaduna*. p.694



However it could be argued that even though settlements such as *sabon gari* emerged in Kaduna, they were not developed for the sole purpose of ethnic, religious and cultural segregation that sought to maintain some cultural or religious purity like was found in the emirate cities like Kano, Zaria and Katsina. Rather these divisions could be seen more as racial divisions because Kaduna was in all sense and purposes a barren land that had no 'indigenous' ethnic groups that could lay claim to it, with the Gbagyi having being pushed out of the area.

Oyedele (1987) was also of the opinion that early works (Abashiya, 1972 and Fika, 1973) that suggested that the policy of segregation was based on the need to separate the southern migrants from the northerners was flawed because there was evidence to support the fact that there was some level of mobility within Nigeria with Yoruba migrants settling in Kano and Zaria even before the advent of the British. However, Usman (2006) does not support this position arguing that even though there were cases of mobility between the ethnic groups, the British ensured that where different groups were to be found living together, they were forcefully separated to ensure the cultural purity, with Muslims living in the *sabon gari* settlements moved to the *Tudun wada* settlements as was the case in towns like Kano, Zaria and Ibadan.

These two Nigerian residential areas were separated administratively for the purpose of ensuring that people of different cultures were not subject to the same legal system. So, *Sabon gari* was placed under the jurisdiction of a civil and criminal legal system that was based on the British system while *Tudun wada* was placed under an Alkali who administered justice based on the Islamic legal system. This separation of the judicial system was important in ensuring that non-Muslims were not subjected to the sharia legal system. The settlements were considered the residence of the population of the town outside the



jurisdiction of the native authorities and these included 'native foreigners and 'alien natives' made up of southern Nigerians and other people of colour from outside Nigeria.

### **3.6.1 Southern Zaria During the Colonial Period**

Southern Zaria (now Southern Kaduna) is one of the areas where there were contestations between the local communities and the ruling Hausa-Fulani (Kazah-Toure, 1999). This area was administered by the Zaria Native authority, headed by the Emir of Zaria who was also responsible for the appointment of district heads for the urban and semi-urban areas there. The emirate was one of the closest of the Sokoto Caliphate vassal states to the area, however it had little influence on the people of the area due to their long resistance against attempts by the emirate to conquer them. The division of the region into the Muslim, independent pagan areas and Muslim controlled pagan areas helped the emirate to gain control of the area. However, this control by the Native Authority was fraught with problems because the ethnic groups of southern Kaduna saw it as an agent of the British. Coupled with the history of the emirates and the indigenous ethnic groups this resulted in resistance against the colonial administration being directed at the Native authorities and the Hausa Fulani (Ashafa, 2005). This policy would create tensions within the area as the indigenous ethnic groups resisted being administered by a system that was alien to their way of life.

One of the first areas of contestation that led to peasant revolts against the Hausa-Fulani, in 1910, 1922 and 1934 related to the collection of taxes and forced labour that were carried out by the district heads that had been appointed by the Zaria emirate (Kazah-Toure, 1999). The second area of contestation was the use of the Alkali courts and the Islamic judicial system to administer the area with the non Muslims complaining of what Kazah-Toure (1999) noted was 'widespread discrimination involving non-Muslims and Muslims' in the area. These agitations by non Muslim ethnic groups of southern Kaduna would continue into



the present time and their collective memories would form the foundation for the current competition enabling the minority groups to create radicalised narratives that they will use to justify their actions against the Hausa-Fulani of the area.

### **3.6.2 The Development of Kafanchan Town and Intergroup Relations**

One of the other semi urban areas within the southern Kaduna area that has been affected by conflicts is Kafanchan, which has a sizeable Hausa Fulani Muslim population. The town is approximately 100km south of Kaduna and its development is linked to the arrival of the railway in the late 1920s (Hannerz; 1982). This attracted a large number of migrant groups mainly from outside the town with the initial composition of the town made up mainly of the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani with a negligible population of the indigenous ethnic population. It was not until the Igbo left at the beginning of the civil war in 1967 that the local tribes made up of 'the Kagoro, the Katab, the Jaba, the Kaninkon, the Moroa and a number of others-gained a real foothold in the town' (Hannerz, 1982:29). The reluctance of the local tribes in the area to take part in the social and traditional activities in the town meant that the migrant ethnic groups were more involved in the economic and social aspects of the town during its early development.

While the ethnic groups in this area were animists, the advent of the British and the Christian missionaries led to increased Christian conversions. This provided them with access to education, helping to create a new identity based on the Christian faith so that while in the initial stages of the development of these areas the struggle was between the Muslim Hausa Fulani and the animist tribes or *arnas* (pagans) as the Hausa-Fulani called them, this became a struggle between Christians or *Kristochi* and Muslims<sup>18</sup> (Suleiman, 2011).

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<sup>18</sup> Arna s is seen as a derogatory term meaning pagan and is still used by Muslims when they refer to the people of these areas. A term sometimes used alongside *arna* to denote Christians



As Kazah-Toure (1991, 1999, 2003) and Dudley (1968) note, the advent of Christian missionaries increased education levels amongst the non-Muslim local communities and this would help them during their struggle against the Native Authorities. These NAs were the buffer between the British authorities and the local people so that during periods of protests they became the target of the indigenous groups and the focal point for their resentment (Kazah-Toure, 2003). The protests around the middle belt area began from the onset of the British attempts at stamping its authority. There were attacks against the British in 1903, 1908 and 1909 by the Gwari of Gussoro and the Dakarkari (Sa'ad, 2004). The people of Zangon Katab protested against forced labour and taxation in 1910, with more protests in 1922 and 1934 all against the British and their proxies, the Hausa Fulani (Kazah-Toure 1999).

The protests were related to other issues apart from taxation and the operations of the Muslim courts, such as demands for the creation of traditional stools for the ethnic groups that separated them from the Zaria emirate system (Kazah-Toure 1999). These protests were quelled by the colonial administration through the Native Authority Police Force (NAPF). The British in creating the NAPF adopted the pre-colonial police of the caliphate known as the *dogarai* and this alienated the minority groups from the ruling Hausa Fulani and increased the 'hostility towards the Hausa-Fulani' (Rotimi, 2010).

The use of Hausa as the lingua franca for recruitment into the force restricted the number of non-Hausa speaking local ethnic groups employed in the force ensuring that it comprised mostly of Hausa-Fulani. This was evident in the plateau province where even with a number of indigenous ethnic groups the force comprised entirely of the Hausa. This created tensions between the Hausa and the local communities in these areas because the NAPF was used to quell riots thereby creating a grievance between the indigenous ethnic groups, the Hausa and the colonial administration (Rotimi, 2010).



Traditionally, Kafanchan was home to the only Muslim emirate in the area, the Jama'a emirate that was formed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century around 1804, becoming a part of the Zaria emirate during the period of the Sokoto caliphate.<sup>19</sup> The indigenous ethnic groups of the area did not have their own traditional institutions and were forced to pay taxes to the Zaria emirate further increasing their resentments against the colonial administration, the Hausa Fulani controlled Native authorities and the emirates (Kazah-Toure, 1999). The unwillingness of the authorities to create traditional institutions within the indigenous areas would become a point of contestation and a recurring theme in the grievances that the ethnic groups would hold against the Hausa Fulani. This struggle was seen as a need for self determination that would enable them rule themselves and remove them from the Zaria emirate (Abdu, 2010).

### **3.6.3 Watering Holes: A Look at Zangon-Kataf Town**

Zangon-Kataf is also another town in southern Kaduna that has seen contestations between the local communities and the Hausa-Fulani in the area. Zangon-Kataf is approximately 100km south west of Kaduna town and the word *zango* refers to settlement for traders along the trading routes in the old northern region. These *zangos* are found in numerous towns in the north and were usually occupied by Muslim traders that plied the routes. The Zangon-Kataf settlement was established within the Kataf territory in the early part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Mustapha, 2003:12) but even though the groups interacted commercially for economic purposes there was little social interaction.

The settlement was initially autonomous and had no links to any of the more established political states but as the Sokoto caliphate expanded its territories it became a part of Kauru which itself was part of the Zaria emirate, one of the larger and closest vassal states of the

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna March 21, 2012.



caliphate. During the period of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Katab became a source of slaves for the 'supply of domestic needs for the caliphate and for export on both the trans-Saharan and trans-Atlantic slave route' (Mustapha, 2003:12). Also for Kauru to pay its tributes to the Zaria emirate it carried out regular slave raids in towns around the area. This meant that the Katab community saw the settlement as an agent of both the British colonial administration and the Zaria emirate leading to attacks on it in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that were quelled by British forces (Mustapha, 2003).

This form of traditional administration with district heads appointed from Zaria emirate remained in place until 1976 when the Emir of Zaria appointed a Kataf Christian, Mr Bala Dauke Gora, as the Kuyyambanan Zaria and district head of Zango so as to address the demands of the ethnic groups of the area. However even with this restructuring, because the district head was still answerable to the Zaria emirate it was not seen as going far enough in addressing the wishes of the people and so did not end the agitations for the creation of an autonomous Chieftdom (Yusuf, 2010).

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has taken a historical look at the social changes that occurred with the non-Muslim areas of the northern region by examining factors that affected inter group relations. It found that slavery, migration and the work of the missionaries would provide the basis for inter group relations that would become a focal point for contestations between the mainly non-Muslim ethnic groups and the predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani. Migration during the period of the expansion of the Sokoto caliphate that saw slave raids, slavery during the early period of the colonial era that were determined by the British administrations economic goals, the operations of the native authorities that were staffed by members of the emirates all affected the relationship between the groups.



Other factors that emerged in the later days of the colonial administration and after independence will be examined in the next chapter and these include an analysis of the changing political process that saw the emergence of political parties in northern Nigeria during which ethnic regional and religious cleavages became more pronounced leading to calls for self-determination by the minority groups in the regions of the country. The effect of the restructuring of the Nigerian state after 1966 with the creation of more states and local governments, the crisis of 1966 that resulted in the 1967-1970 civil war are also examined. Finally the constitutional changes of 1975 that saw the introduction of the quota system and the Federal Character principle that raised the issues of the indigene settler dichotomy across the country will also be examined.



## **CHAPTER 4: PRE INDEPENDENCE NIGERIA; EMERGENCE OF NEW NARRATIVES AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD ONES**

### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on the economic, social and political factors that shaped intergroup relations before and during the early period of colonial rule. This chapter proceeds from there through the country's march towards independence, the years after independence to the current democratic dispensation. It examines how the changing social and political processes entrenched identities such as ethnicity, religion and regionalism that had become more salient during the pre colonial and colonial era. These factors include the growth of nationalist tendencies before independence; the calls for the political restructuring of the country; military rule and the emergence of religion in the public sphere. As these identities became more entrenched during periods of competition, it resulted in the emergence of ethnic, religious and regional narratives that became more radicalised as competition became more intense.

### **4.1 NIGERIAN DIVERSITY**

As stated, Nigeria is an ethnically diverse country with the main ethnic groups in terms of population; the Hausa Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the south-west and the Igbos in the south-east. There are then many smaller ethnic groups including the Kanuri, Nupe, Ijaws, Tiv, Igbiras, Itsekiris and Igalas. The population is largely rural but rapid urbanisation has seen the proportion of the urban population increase over the last three decades. In 1952 it was estimated that only 11% of the country's population lived in urban areas but due to an estimated rate of urbanisation of 5.5% this number had increased to 46% by 2007. The urban population is currently estimated at 50% of the country's population (Oluwasola, 2007; CIA Factbook, 2012).



Lagos and Kano are the country's two largest urban areas with populations of 9.2 and 3.8 million respectively (National Population Commission and ICF Macro, 2009). Other urban areas like Kaduna, Ibadan, Abuja, Ilorin, Onitsha, Benin City, Minna, Maiduguri, Calabar, Port Harcourt and Jos experienced rapid growths in population as the country became more urbanised. These urban areas had in the past served as melting pots for the country's diverse ethnic and religious groups allowing for good intergroup relations and harmonious coexistence. However increased migration levels resulted in the emergence of sizeable number of migrants that altered the ethnic and religious demographics of these towns and impacted on inter group relations that sometimes led to violent conflicts as we shall see in the following chapters.

#### **4.1.1 Nationalism and the Nigerian State**

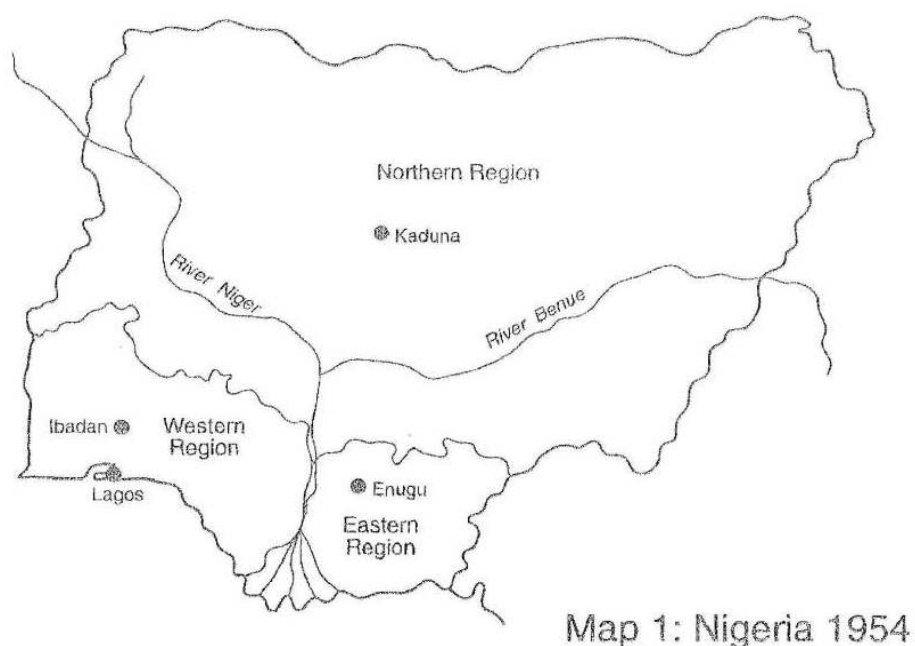
Calls for self rule began in the early 1940s even though there had been earlier agitations from nationalists in the southern region that began in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the colony of Lagos where activists emerged to contest British colonial rule. This would spread to other parts of the country after the 1914 amalgamation even though there was no sense of a national identity or nationalist movement. At this point the country could be defined as an 'imagined community' based on a territorial entity where most members were only bound together through residing within defined borders (Anderson, 1983). It was only after the Second World War that nationalistic fervour picked up, but this was restricted to the southern region with the northern region left out of the initial drive for self-determination.

Map 4.1 overleaf shows the three regions of the country in 1954 and this was the administrative structure at independence in 1960. Most nationalist activities in the northern



region during the period before 1946 were carried out through agents of southern organisations comprising of migrant southerners who lived and worked in the region. The lack of participation of the northern indigenous population during the early stages of the nationalist movements retarded political development in the region and would later affect the relationship between the northern political elite and its southern counterparts. After 1914, there was a process of the development of a national identity amongst newly educated Nigerians who were now in the forefront of the push for independence from the British (Crowder, 1966).

**Map 4.1**



The Nigerian State in 1954

[http://www.waado.org/nigerian\\_scholars/archive/pubs/wilber1\\_map1.html](http://www.waado.org/nigerian_scholars/archive/pubs/wilber1_map1.html)

Before the Second World War, nationalists in Lagos such as Herbert Macaulay had begun challenging the colonial administration by organising a series of mass protests (Crowder, 1966). Macaulay established the Nigerian National Democratic party and pushed his struggle



through his newspaper, the *Lagos Daily News*. While his initial efforts were focused on colonial policies in Lagos, he began to take a more nationalist view after the Second World War. This allowed the people of Lagos to appreciate being part of a larger territory known as Nigeria with the period regarded as the early rise of national consciousness (Coleman, 1958).

The Richards constitution of 1947 was the first of the three constitutions that were introduced before the country's independence in 1960. Its introduction was seen as the beginning of the process of participation in governance by the indigenous population and was meant to, amongst other things 'promote the unity of Nigeria, to provide adequately within that unity for the diverse elements which made up the country and to secure greater participation by Africans in the discussion of their own affairs' (Crowder, 1966:273).

However its introduction was widely criticised by large sections of the country's political class who questioned the lack of consultation with Nigerians during the process. Southern political elites also challenged the number of unelected members in the legislative councils that included Chiefs and Emirs from the NAs as this ensured that the colonial administration still controlled the decision making process (Coleman, 1958). Northern region elites that comprised of a large number of members of the emirates did not share in this criticism of the constitution since it allowed for the continued role of the Emirs and Chiefs in the administration of the country. Even though the constitution was meant to unite the country, because it came over three decades after the country's amalgamation when the regions had already created strong regional identities, it made the creation of a national identity difficult.

The constitution was meant to be in place for nine years from its introduction in 1947 with a review in six years, but the arrival of a new Governor, Sir John Macpherson in 1948, saw an early move for its review. Importantly, because the issue of non-consultation had been a



major criticism of the Richards constitution, the Mcpherson constitution went through two years of consultations within the regions. The restriction of social interaction between the Muslim north and the Christian south on the one hand and between the more politically minded southern migrants in the region had been put in place by the colonial administration so as maintain a 'pristine Islamic purity' (Coleman, 1958:322). This had alienated the northern region from the whole nationalist process until 1947, making its political development slower than that of the southern regions especially since the elites in the region were 'opposed to social and political reform' (Coleman, 1958:335). This resulted in its politics taking a very narrow view that focused on a regional outlook aimed at maintaining or restricting any major disruptions to its political and social structures.

Due to its low level of development in comparison to the other regions, there was a recognition in the northern region that it had to fight to ensure that the other two regions did not dominate it, with Tafawa Balewa noting that the region 'must move fast and faster than any region in the country.'<sup>20</sup> This led to the emergence of politically minded northerners including Aminu Kano, Saad Zungur, Yahaya Gusua and Barau Dikko who formed political associations and began trying to increase political consciousness within the region as the rest of the country moved towards self-determination. The Northern Peoples Congress was one of the early political associations formed but due to what Aminu Kano saw as the association's deference to the Emirs and the native Authorities, he broke away and formed the more progressive Northern Elements Progressives Union (NEPU) (Coleman, 1958).

The period also saw the rise of nationalist groups such as the United Middle Belt Congress and the Middle Belt Peoples Party from within the middle belt area of the region. Other

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<sup>20</sup> Cited in Coleman (1957:363)



groups included the Wurrum Tribal Union, the Idoma Hope Rising Union, the Tiv Progressive Union, the Igbirra Tribal Union, and the Berom Progressive Union (Cantori, 1962). After the Northern House of assembly passed a motion to restrict the activities of the missionaries to the middle belt area, the unions forged themselves under an umbrella body known as the Northern Nigeria non-Muslim League, which was founded by Pastor David Lot in 1950 (Cantori, 1962). This body was aided by the missionaries and comprised solely of ethnic groups from the middle belt area (Dudley, 1968) with the sole aim of the creation of a middle belt state from the northern region (Cantori, 1962).

These associations represented the yearnings of the numerous ethnic groups in the area and their goal included their calls for greater autonomy within the region (Coleman, 1958). The emergence of the middle belt groups had the effect of fragmenting nationalist groups along ethnic and regional lines with each group trying to assert its dominance so that they would have an advantage when the country attained independence especially in areas of representation, revenue allocation and regional powers (Coleman, 1958).

The emergence of regionally focused political parties such as the Yoruba dominated Action Group (AG) in the western region and the Hausa Fulani dominated Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the northern region, pushed issues of national unity aside with a greater focus now on regional issues resulting in what Coleman called 'the regionalisation of nationalism' (Coleman, 1958:319). The politics between the regions in the late 1940s and early 1950s was now a struggle that 'was characterised by the mobilisation of ethno-regional identities' (Jibrin, 1999:13). The rise of regional identities increased regional competition as each region struggled for dominance at the national level that manifested during the development of the nation's constitution.



The 1952 elections were based on this constitution and the results revealed that the country was divided along regional and ethnic cleavages with the Action Group (AG), the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) winning the majority of seats in the western, eastern and northern regions respectively. The strong regional outlook of two of the three main parties, the AG and the NPC, meant that policy focuses were always going to differ. This difference in nationalistic focus came to a head in 1953 when the AG pushed for self government as early as 1956, a motion that was opposed by the northern members of the council who insisted that the north was unprepared for self governance and led to a walk out by members from the western region.

This difference in the dates put forward for self government between northern and southern members led to political tension between the regions that affected the nascent sense of national unity in the emerging nation with the northern region threatening secession (Bello, 1962:135). Even though the region called for secession, it moved for a looser federation that would allow it dictate its own policy and pace of social, economic and political development. Specifically the region adopted an eight-point demand for a restructuring of the administration of the country that pushed for greater powers to the regions and less power at the centre. One serious point in the motion was that 'there shall be no central legislative body and no central executive or policy making body for the whole of the country' (Bello, 1962:144). While there were some dissensions to the 8-point motion it was easily passed at the northern house of Assembly and would accelerate the process that would lead to independence in 1960.

#### **4.1.2 Intra Regional Struggles; Minority Fears and The Willink Commission**

While the three main ethnic and regional groupings were trying to control the federal government while still maintaining their regional autonomy, ethnic minorities in the regions



were demanding for greater representation in the regions with some going as far as calling for more regions to be created from the three existing regions (Willink Commission, 1958). These groups were particularly vocal in the northern region where a number of political associations and groups had emerged in the middle belt area that were pushing for increased representation. There were also calls in the western region for the creation of Benin and Delta provinces made up of a mainly Edo speaking population and minorities of the eastern region also made similar demands. The regional governments opposed these demands but in order to address these issues the colonial administration in 1958 established the Willink Commission to examine how these fears could be allayed. The commission was the first attempt at the articulation of the fear of domination of the minority groups by the larger ethnic groups. The commission's mandate was;

- To ascertain the facts about the fears of minorities in any part of Nigeria and purpose means of allaying those fears whether well or ill founded;
- To advise what safeguards should be included for this purpose in the constitution of Nigeria;
- If, but only if, no other solution seems to the commission to meet the case, then as a last resort to make detailed recommendations for the creation of one or more new states and in that case:-
  - To specify the precise area to be included in such state or states;
  - To recommend the governmental and administrative structure most appropriate for it,
  - To Assess whether any state recommended would be viable from an economic and administrative point of view and what the effect of its creation would be on the region or regions from which it would be created and on the federation;
- To report its findings and recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Willink Commission Report (1958).



While the fears of the minorities were similar in the regions, all bordering on the issues of political, economic, cultural and religious domination by the majority ethnic groups as noted in the 1958 Willink Commission report, the northern region was more complicated than the other regions due to the fact that its land mass was three times the size of the southern region and it had a population of 16 million that was more than half the population of the country. The region had 11 million Muslims, 4 million animists and half a million Christians (Willink, 1958:54) and was home to numerous ethnic groups. These included the Hausa-Fulani the Kanuri and the Nupe who were predominantly Muslim groups and with the influence of Islam in the region so strong that it had 'provided an overarching trans-ethnic identity' (Diamond, 1988:25), this created a fear of Islamic domination amongst the non-Muslim population of the region.

The diversity of the north with numerous other ethnic groups such as the Tiv, the Berom, Jukun, Angas, Afizere, Kataf and Igala in the middle belt area resulted in competition with Hausa-Fulani who had maintained a hierarchical structure that restricted the involvement of the smaller groups in the affairs of the region, creating a perception of inequalities between the major group and the smaller ethnic groups. All of these provided the demand for the creation of separate states for the non-Muslim minority groups. The Willink Commission report concluded that even though there was some exaggeration of the fears, some were genuine and minority groups across the three regions had a serious apprehension for the future. However it also noted that the fears put forward by the various minority groups indicated that identities such as ethnicity and religion were already providing a basis for mobilisation for the struggle for political and economic benefits.<sup>22</sup> As the nation state evolved these issues will be recalled as groups continued their struggle for self-determination and greater control of their affairs.

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<sup>22</sup> Willink Report, (1958) p. 87



## **4.2 THE POST INDEPENDENCE YEARS AND POLITICAL CRISIS**

After the transfer of power to Nigerians at independence in 1960, there was an increase in the struggle between the regions especially since political power was the vehicle for class formation (Diamond, 1988) because it was seen as the main force that creates 'economic opportunity and determines the pattern of social stratification' (Sklar, 1965:204). So the control of political power was of great importance to the elites both at the federal and regional governments (Sklar, 1965; Diamond, 1988). With independence in 1960 and with no clear electoral majority, the NPC formed a coalition government with the NCNC, while the AG became the main opposition party. The NPC's Tafawa Balewa was independent Nigeria's first Prime Minister while Nnamdi Azikiwe was its first Governor General, later President after it became a republic in 1963.

The departure of an arbiter in the British began an increase in tensions between the various regions and ethnic groups in the country. There was greater cohesiveness within the groups in the early years after independence as they struggled for hegemony and while this was not unexpected in a nascent democracy and the process of nation building, the intensity of the struggle threatened the country's unity. There were several issues that exacerbated the tensions in the country and these included the crisis in the western region in 1962, the census crisis, the creation of the mid western state, the coups of 1966 and the Biafran war.

### **4.2.1 Its all about Numbers. The 1963 Census Crisis**

The national census conducted in 1963 was a point of contention between ethnic groups and the regions because population figures were a criteria used for determining the allocation of political offices and revenues. The census enumeration held in 1952-1953 had been contested by the western and eastern regions because it had given the northern region more than 50% of the country's population. The 1963 census was thus seen as a chance for a



realignment of the political map of the country by correcting the disputed 1952 census that had been viewed suspiciously as an attempt to ensure that the northern region maintained its majority representation in the country's political administration. The 1952 census was also contested due to the duration of the exercise that raised suspicions of over and under enumeration in certain areas (Suberu, 2001:146).

The 1963 census figures showed a population increase of almost 70% in the 10 years from the previous census with the western and eastern regions showing increases of about 70% each while the North's population increased by 30% (see table 4.1) (Diamond, 1988; Suberu, 2001; Shagari, 2001). The figures were contested in the north because it would reduce the region's previous majority and decrease its representation at the national level. With its control of the federal government, the north rejected the figures ordering a new census exercise to be conducted in 1963 (Suberu, 2001; Shagari, 2001).

**TABLE 4.1**

	<i>1952-53 Census (in millions)</i>	<i>1963 Census (in millions)</i>	<i>Percentage increase</i>
North	16.8	22.5	33.6
East	7.2	12.4	72.2
West	4.6	7.8	69.5
Mid-West	1.5	2.2	46.6
Lagos	0.3	0.7	133.3
Totals	30.4	45.6	50

1953 and 1963 Census Figures. (Diamond, 1988).



The census was not just an inter-regional tussle, it was also an intra-regional and inter ethnic struggle as different ethnic and communal groups within the regions also attempted to inflate their figures. This was because, even at that level ethnic groups understood that larger population figures would ensure a larger share of the country's economic and political benefits in terms of revenues and political representation. This manipulation of census figures for political and economic advantage was evident in later censuses as states, local governments, ethnic and religious groups all tried to gain numerical advantages so as to ensure political and economic benefits and remains a major point of contestation between groups within the country (Suberu, 2001).

#### **4.2.2 Restructuring the Nigerian State: The case of the Mid Western State and the 1964 Elections**

Even though the Willink commission had left the responsibilities of state creation to the independent Nigerian state, it did not seem likely that the regional governments would tackle this issue. However in 1961, members of the NCNC tabled a motion on the floor of the house for the creation of the mid-Western state, a motion that was supported by NPC members. The AG realised that opposing the motion would be seen as being against the yearnings of the minorities, however it also understood what it meant to its political control at the regional and federal levels because it would have to relinquish a portion of its territory and its numerical representation in both the western and the federal houses. It challenged this motion but lost at the Supreme Court and the mid western region came into existence in 1963 further weakening the party (Suberu, 2001) and reducing the influence of the AG at the national level.

The creation of the new region led up to the 1964 elections that would be the first conducted by Nigerians after independence. The elections were seen as important by the



political elites from all the regions as a way to retain or take power especially at the centre. The regional parties of the eastern and western regions realised that the best approach to seize power from the NPC was to enter into alliances with smaller parties of the northern region. The AG and the NCNC entered into alliances with the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and Aminu Kano's Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) to form the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). The crisis in the western region had led to the formation of the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) by Akintola, which had aligned itself with the NPC to form the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) (Suberu, 2001). The elections were thus contested between these alliances, a situation that ideally should have been positive for a nascent democracy, however the (ab)use of state power in the regions and at the federal level to ensure victory only exacerbated the already fragile democracy. Okoli and Irtyer (2014:24) noted that the level of competition was very stiff with all the parties intent on controlling the centre and this resulted in increased violence with a 'series of attacks, counter attacks and assassinations of perceived political opponents.'

The political tension that the elections generated led to a compromise being brokered with new elections held in the eastern region and parts of the western region where opposition party candidates had not been allowed to contest. The result of the eastern region saw the NCNC win with a huge majority, while Akintola's NNDP won the elections in the western region amidst cries of massive election rigging by the NPC led central government (Suberu, 2001). The elections increased tensions and regional identities in the regions and increased suspicions between them and this would continue to be a problem even after the creation of states as different ethnic groups competed for dominance.



### **4.3 THE RISE OF THE 'TRANSFORMERS': COUPS AND CIVIL WAR**

While the events that led to the civil war are well documented, it is worth examining how it affected regional and ethnic relations. Nigeria survived the election crisis of 1964 but on January 15, 1966 a group of military officers staged the first coup in the country. This coup resulted in the killings of notable political leaders including the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Premiers of the northern and western regions, Sir Ahmadu Bello and Samuel Akintola and the finance Minister Okotie-Eboh, while a number of senior northern military officers also lost their lives. The coup resulted in increased ethnic tensions and divisions because there was a strong suspicion within the northern region that the coup was a planned attempt by the Igbo to take control of the political administration of the country (Anthony, 2002).

These feelings helped increase restlessness within the northern ranks of the army (Anthony, 2002), which culminated in the counter coup of July 1966 where northern officers killed Ironsi, and a few other senior officers of the armed forces. Colonel Yakubu Gowon who had been Ironsi's Chief of Army Staff became the new head of state. However Ojukwu who was the Governor of the Eastern region did not accept Gowon as supreme commander and coupled with the attacks on the Igbo population living in the north after the counter coup of 1966, he began to represent the voice of the Igbo population. With his legitimacy threatened, Gowon abolished decree 34 and created 12 new states that gave minorities their own states especially the oil producing states, in order to bolster his support. Ojukwu asked the Igbo in the north to return to the safety of the region, while all efforts to reassure them of their place in the Nigerian nation failed. By May 30, 1967, Ojukwu declared the breakaway republic of Biafra nation from Nigeria, an action that led to the civil war of 1967 to 1970.



The civil war created strong ethnic tensions and increased ethnic cohesiveness and as Okonta and Meagher (2009:2) noted 'the conflict reshaped the political and economic character of Nigeria, intensifying the salience of ethnicity in the political process' something that is still evident in contemporary Nigeria. The Igbo narratives were one of an oppressed group that were being targeted for genocide by the national government comprising the Hausa-Fulani of the north and the Yoruba of the south west. The end of the civil war brought conciliatory overtones from the Federal government and the government of General Gowon tried creating new narratives that focused on unity of the different groups in the country. The first effort by the government was to declare '*no victor no vanquished*' so that neither side would see itself as the winner or loser while pushing for the quick reintegration of the Igbo population back into the affairs of the country. However Effiong (2012:262)) notes that this sudden 'eagerness to "unite" with an apparently despised people' had more to do with economic considerations than the creation of a national identity.

#### **4.4 THE CONSTITUTION DRAFTING COMMITTEE AND STATE CREATION IN 1975**

The end of the civil war was supposed to see a return to civilian rule and Gowon set a timetable to hand over by 1976. However in 1974 he announced that the date was unrealistic and would have to be extended. This announcement was one of the reasons for the overthrow of his government in 1975 with Murtala Mohammed installed as the new head of state. One of the first acts of the new administration was the establishment of a Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC) to draft a new constitution. The whole exercise faced challenges in the process due to competing demands between various sections of the country that were framed along political and religious lines.

One of the key issues was the role of religion in the affairs of the country with the Muslim north demanding for a place for the sharia legal system in the constitution, a demand



opposed by non-Muslim members of the CDC. Muslim members of the CDC argued that current laws were based on the Christian faith and there was a need to recognise that sharia was an integral part of Muslim life. However this was seen as an attempt to 'Islamise' the country. However Muslims argued that since the country was predominantly Muslim, it should be ruled by sharia law (Suberu, 1998). Usman (1987) notes that the period saw the increased salience of religion as a mobilising tool with notable Muslim elites such as the Managing editor of the New Nigerian, a northern owned newspaper and Mallam Umaru Dikko a northern Muslim delegate to the conference both alleging of a plot to wipe out Muslims. Usman (1987) argued that the creation of these alarming images of a conspiracy against Islam by the ruling elite was a deliberate generation of fear amongst Muslims so as to further their own goals.

This contentious issue threatened the work of the CDC, however in an effort to resolve the issue, a sub committee was tasked with finding a compromise and proffer a solution. This was finally resolved in April 1978 when the sub-committee recommended that cases that were appealed from the judgment of a state sharia court would be handled by three members of the Federal Court of Appeal that were deemed learned in Islamic law. While some Muslim members walked out of deliberations, this amendment was passed and ended the impasse over the issue (Falola, 1998). This issue of sharia highlighted the problem of religion in the Nigerian polity and would rear its head in later constitution drafting exercises where it accentuated religious identities on both sides of the divide. This increased religious cohesiveness would make it easier for mobilisation along religious lines as we shall see in the next section.



#### 4.5 INCREASING RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE NIGERIAN STATE

The politicisation of religion whereby political, economic and social policies are seen through the lens of religion, is an important aspect of inter group relations. While this has been discussed in the previous chapter, it is important to examine the relationship between the prominent Islamic sects in the region on the one hand and between Islam and Christianity and how this has increased the salience of religion in the public sphere.

Initially, there were two dominant Islamic sects in the region; these were the *Tijaniyya* and *Qadiriyya* groups. These were *Sufi* based Islamic groups that had been present in northern Nigeria since the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Usman Dan Fodio belonged to the *Qadiriyya* sect and his jihad helped it develop a strong presence in Sokoto and other parts of northern Nigeria. The *Tijaniyya* also had a strong presence in Sokoto, but in the late 1930s, the arrival of a charismatic Senegalese scholar, Sheikh Ibrahim Niass who had ties to the then Emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero, enabled it to gain a large following in Kano (Falola, 1998). The reign of Emir Sanusi, a member of the sect, provided it with a political platform that helped it become the dominant sect in Kano and most of northern Nigeria.

This dominance continued until 1978 when the *Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a wa Ikamatis Sunnah* (JIBWIS) or simply referred to as *Izala* was formed in Jos by Sheikh Sama'ila Idris. While Idris was the founder, the group had Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, a respected Islamic scholar as its spiritual head. Gumi was noted for his conservative Islamic beliefs that criticised the practices of the *Qadiriyya* and *Tijaniyya* sects that he saw as being permeated by innovations that were foreign to Islam. The emergence of this sect was to counter the innovative Islamic practices of the *Tijaniyya* and *Qadiriyya* sects. The *Izala* called for a return to the traditional interpretations of the Quran and the Hadith of the Prophet and the removal of innovations (Sanusi, 2007; Modibbo, 2012).



The *Izala*, while distancing itself from the *Tijaniyya* and *Qadiriyya* practices did not follow the strict *Wahabist/Salafist* interpretation of Islam (Paden, 2008) and was able to increase its followership especially amongst the educated youth in the region. However the sect was not without its own problems with the group splitting into two, known as the *Izala* Kaduna and *Izala* Jos due to the perceived authoritarian rule of its founder (Loimeier, 2010). Other notable groups emerged from the *Izala* movement but most did not have the spread that the movement had and were largely restricted to areas where their founders resided. The emergence of the *Izala* movement led to the formation of what can be considered as its youth wing, the Muslim Student's Society (MSS) in many educational institutions in the north.

One of the more vocal members of the Ahmadu Bello University MSS branch was Ibrahim El-Zakzaky who called organised events where he demanded for the implementation of sharia law (Hill, 2010). His clashes with the authorities led to his expulsion from the institution and resulted in the formation of the more radical and Iranian revolution inspired Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) as a breakaway of the MSS. While this group was initially broadly based including Sunni followers, its adoption of the Shia ideology resulted in a depletion of his ranks but allowed it to access funding from the Islamic Republic of Iran (Hill, 2010). The group continues to appeal to youths and is very radical in its focus, which has led to confrontations with authorities with the most recent in July 2014 where three of El Zakzaky's sons were killed by the army in Zaria.<sup>23</sup>

The struggle between the Muslim sects in northern Nigeria during this period affected its unity, which provided Christian groups the opportunity to make incursions into the north

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<sup>23</sup> I was in Kaduna when this happened and discussions with eye witnesses in Zaria revealed that the group challenged the Military during a training exercise leading to a clash that resulted in the deaths.



through the growing revivalism of the period. The rise of Pentecostal revivalism began as early as the 1960s in the southern universities with the establishment of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) in the University of Ibadan with the Ibadan Varsity Christian Union and the Evangelical Christian Union at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) (Fayokun, 2009). This began what Ojo (2007:178) calls a vigorous 'Christian awakening in Nigeria' spurred by the large number of educated youth that joined the movement.

Scripture Unions (SU) appeared in educational institutions in the south and gradually spread to the north through the establishment of the unity schools and the introduction of the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC) in 1974. The initial focus of the NYSC was to provide unemployed youth with a source of livelihood, however this changed to one of promoting national integration by sending graduates to different parts of the country for them to learn new cultures. With Christians from other parts of the country sent to the north for their yearlong service period, the scheme provided an avenue for the spread of Christianity and its penetration into Muslim areas. Also many of these corps members were sent to teach in unity schools, providing another avenue for Christian groups to gain a foothold into shaping the minds of young Christians in the north by establishing scripture unions in many of these schools just as Muslim Student Unions were also being established in these institutions.

Another important occurrence was the formation of the Christian Association of Nigeria made up of predominantly Catholic members in 1976. Subsequently other umbrella bodies such as the Christian Council of Nigeria that caters for Protestants; the Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) of mainly African churches, such as the Aladura (seventh day Adventist church), the Celestial Church of Christ, the United African Methodist Church,



the northern based TEKAN/ECWA churches and finally the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria that represents the Pentecostal Churches all emerged (Falola, 1998).

The Pentecostal churches are seen as being more confrontational in their relationship with Islam as opposed to the older Anglican and Catholic churches.<sup>24</sup> Pentecostals have had the fastest growth in the past three decades and while there are no verifiable figures regarding memberships numbers, it is estimated that approximately 30% of Nigeria's Christians belong to Pentecostal churches.<sup>25</sup> The spread of these churches began in the 1950s (Ukpong, 2006) because they provided an alternative to the orthodox churches that were seen as being unable to address some of the African issues such as 'witchcraft, demon possession, haunting by evil spirits, the cult of ancestors; the use of protective charms, talisman; sorcery and the traditional dancing form of worship at the shrines' (Mbefo, 2001:107) aspects of traditional religion that were still important to African Christians and the need for them to find solutions to their problems (Ayuk, 2002).

Ojo (2007) notes that while the early attempts at evangelical work in the north failed, they began to gain more ground through the work of corps members, because as more corps members gained permanent employment in the north after the end of their yearlong service period, they were able to increase their evangelical work, resulting in a rise in the number of Pentecostal churches. While most of the early churches had southern preachers and initially focused on southern Christians in the region and nominal northern Christians, they gradually began to increase attempts at Muslim conversions.

In Zaria Dr. Ishaya Audu a former Vice Chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and a Minister in the second republic established a fellowship church in Zaria that focused on

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<sup>24</sup> Interview. Archbishop Idowu Fearon, Kaduna. March 12, 2012

<sup>25</sup> Pew Research. Religion & Public Life Project. October 5, 2006. <http://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/historical-overview-of-pentecostalism-in-nigeria/>



northern Christians. This was one of the early 'northern' Pentecostal churches and since then there has been an explosion of such churches in the north, helping to legitimise this type of evangelical work in the region. In higher institutions such as the Ahmadu Bello University, elections into student bodies were now being contested along religious lines (Usman, 1987), while there were also clashes on religious ground between students in higher institutions such as the Kafanchan College of Education conflict in 1987 and the 1988 clash at the Kaduna Polytechnic over the erection of a chapel on the campus. Even southern institutions were not immune to this type of contestation, with Muslim and Christian students clashing at the University of Ibadan over the erection of an effigy of Christ (Best, 1996). These contestations continued into the 1990s and after 1999 they reflected the manner of religious contestation in the country illustrated by the increasing radicalisation of narratives between the groups.

The introduction and expansion of sharia in some of the northern states after 1999 resulted in the establishment of councils of *ulama* to ensure the proper application of the sharia system. *Ulama* is the plural of the Arabic word *al-amin*, which means, learned one, possessor of knowledge or scholar (Wakili, 2009:2). The *ulama* had played an important role in the promulgation of Islam in the northern region after the jihad of Dan Fodio but this function was truncated with the advent of the colonial administration that relegated religion to the private sphere. However the *ulama* remained relevant especially during the northern Premier's conversion campaign that was supported by government resources.<sup>26</sup> The *ulama* continued to call for an increased role of Islam in the public sphere including for the introduction of sharia. With sharia's introduction, the *ulama* became a vehicle for Islamic proselytisation in the region.

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<sup>26</sup> International Crisis Group. Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict. Africa Report N°168 – 20 December 2010. pp.7



The rise of Pentecostal churches and the *Izala* group coupled with the social process that increased the politicisation of religion in the 1980s affected Muslim-Christian relations especially with Pentecostal Christians seeing themselves as liberators of northern Christians who they saw as unwilling to confront Muslims on all issues.<sup>27</sup> The struggle for hegemony between the groups has resulted in increased demonisation of the other that helps fuel religious fundamentalism (Otayek and Soares, 2007; Ojo, 2007; Sanusi, 2007).

#### **4.6 ECONOMIC DECLINE AND THE SALIENCE OF RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES**

Economic changes within the Nigeria state during the late 1980s with the introduction of structural adjustment programmes also affected identity formation and inter group relations. The introduction of SAP in 1986 was said to have ‘had fundamental consequences for Nigerian society, politics, and economy’ (Mustapha, 2002:188). The Nigerian state is said to have two distinct features; its patrimonial nature that does not separate the public and the private spheres and its rentier nature where there is a huge reliance on external rents (Ibrahim, 2000) from its oil resources that are redistributed through patron client networks. The state thus plays an important role in social mobility making its control very important. In the period when the Nigerian state was able to extract as much rent as possible with the huge oil revenues, there was little competition between the various groups, however with changing fortunes in the economy after the introduction of the Structural Adjustment programmes from the late 1980s onwards, competition between groups for the control of the state became more intense.

The discovery of oil just before independence had provided a new source of revenue for the newly independent country with an increase in export revenues from N166 million in 1970, to N12,353 million in 1980 (Jega, 2000). From 1962, petroleum accounted for about 10% of

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<sup>27</sup> Interview. Archbishop Idowu Fearon, Kaduna. March 12, 2012



export earnings, with this increasing to over 80% in 1973 (Ibrahim, 2000:49). As the distribution of revenues became more centralised, control of the state became an important issue so that 'access to the state, thus, became a major avenue for accumulation, especially through contracts, patronage and corruption, or abuse of public office' (Jega, 2000:28). State power became important with politics becoming a do or die affair where those that captured the state were able to use state power to accentuate identity as an instrumental tool to suppress other groups (Jega, 2000).

The changing fortune of the Nigerian economy during SAP affected identity formation in two ways; at the micro and the macro levels (Osaghae, 1995). At the micro level, the shrinking of the state and loss of employment opportunities and incomes, resulted in people falling back to their ethnic and kinship groups to provide safety nets. Osaghae (1995) and Abdu (2010) note that this period of economic downturn resulted in a shift to alternative survival strategies resulting in an increase in membership and identification with groups such as the Christian Association of Nigeria, *Izala* and other township and ethnic associations.

At the macro level, the patrimonial nature of the state and its distributive aspect made control of the state highly contested. In multi ethnic countries like Nigeria, the competition for control of the state occurs under conditions of multi-polarity, where one central group in alliance with smaller groups takes control of the state (Bangura,1994), with group competition in Nigeria said to be multi dimensional taking three forms. These are the north-south divide; the regional divide; and finally the interethnic divides (Jibrin, 2000). The greater inequalities between these divides heightens inter group competition with group narratives becoming more radicalised as they are framed along issues of religious and ethnic domination and marginalisation.



#### **4.7 THE BABANGIDA REGIME AND THE SALIENCE OF ETHNICITY AND RELIGION**

Nigeria's political history cannot be complete without an examination of the long period of military rule and the effect this had on social and political processes of identity formation and inter group relations within the country. After the military rule of 1966 to 1979, the country returned to democratic rule only for the government of National Party of Nigeria led by Shehu Shagari to be overthrown on New Year's Eve in 1983. This began another phase in military rule that lasted till 1999. This second coming was to have a more profound effect on Nigeria's polity than the first because as Falola (1998:209) noted:

‘far from revitalizing the shattered government apparatus left behind by the second republic, these regimes presided over the entrenchment of official and everyday corruption in Nigeria, and sought to maintain power through oppression, coercion and the manipulation of the democratic transition process’

Some of the policies and events during the Babangida regime of 1985-1993 would have a significant impact on the relationship between the different ethnic and religious groups in the country. One policy was his highly controversial decision in 1986 to admit the country into the OIC even though the country had a large Christian population. This was met by outrage by Christians, who saw this as an attempt to Islamise the country, a process they believed was part of the agenda of the ruling northern Muslim Hausa Fulani ethnic group. This led to an increase in religious awareness and revivalism, with religious identity brought to the fore as a major factor in the public sphere, with both Christian and Muslim groups poised on opposite sides of the debate with the country's membership of the OIC continuing to resonate within the social and political sphere and remaining part of the narratives of non-Muslim groups.



Secondly, the 1990 coup led by a Christian officer from the middle belt area, Major Gideon Orkar against the government of General Babangida highlighted the divisions between ethnic groups in the country. One of their aims was to correct what they perceived as the domination of the north over the rest of the country. As a solution, the coup leaders called for the excision of parts of the north because of what they said were;

‘numerous and uncontrollable instances of callous and insensitive dominatory [sic] repressive intrigues by those who think it is their birth right to dominate till eternity the political and economic privileges of this great country to the exclusion of the people of the Middle Belt and the south.’<sup>28</sup>

They went on to state that;

‘They have almost succeeded in subjugating the Middle Belt and making them voiceless and now extending same to the south. It is our unflinching belief that this quest for domination, oppression and marginalisation is against the wish of God and therefore, must be resisted with the vehemence.’<sup>29</sup>

The coup plotters comprised of a coalition of army officers from the middle belt region in the north and the oil producing areas of the south, thereby giving it a colouration of an anti-north coup that was meant to address the southern perception of marginalisation by a northern political class. The attempt at excising predominantly Muslim northern states that included Sokoto, Borno, Katsina, Kano and Bauchi states was supported by sections of the country and was indicative of the negative views the non-Muslim ethnic minority groups in the middle belt and the southern part of the country held of the core north. Even though the

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<sup>28</sup> Dawodu.com. April 1990 Coup d’etat Speech. Available online from <http://www.dawodu.com/orkar.htm>. [Retrieved 25/09/2012]

<sup>29</sup> This illustrates the perception of Hausa-Fulani Muslim dominance that is held by large sections of Christians in the south and middle belt areas of the country.



coup failed, it highlighted some of the underlying issues in inter group relations in the country and further delegitimised the Hausa-Fulani Muslims.

Babangida's annulment of the 1993 Presidential elections would also increase ethnic divisions. While the annulment led to growing protests around the country that momentarily united the country, any signs of prolonged unity were swiftly dispelled when the protests began to have ethnic and regional colourations. The southwest political elite and the southern press portrayed the annulment as another attempt by Hausa-Fulani ruling elites to deny a southern Yoruba the presidency 'since that was not in the interest of the northern Hausa-Fulani' (Mahmud,1993:90). This perception pushed the northern political elite to take a softer stance against the annulment with protests becoming largely confined to the south western areas of the country, increasing ethnic tensions between the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba.

It was during this period that the O'odua Peoples Congress (OPC) emerged as a reaction to the annulment of the elections. OPC was formed in 1994 determined to protect the interests of the Yoruba people from what they perceived as marginalisation by other groups in the country with the group demanding for Yoruba autonomy (HRW, 2003). The group was the first of many militia groups formed in the country based on ethnicity that also included the Arewa People's Congress (APC) and the Igbo Peoples Congress (IPC) and their formation highlighted the growing ethnic divisions that would affect inter group relations and any sense of a national identity. These divisions still exist and the effect they have on the dynamics of conflicts will be assessed when group narratives are examined.



## 4.8 CONCLUSION

The development of the Nigerian state during the period leading up to independence was shaped by political and social factors that resulted in the creation and maintenance of regional, ethnic and religious identities. Issues such as the country's admission into the OIC, the rise of religious groups such as the *Izala* and Pentecostal Christian groups increased religious consciousness and put religion in the forefront of the country's political scene with CAN, JNI and other religious groups framing narratives along political and social issues as they struggled for hegemony. Other factors include the structure of the Nigerian state, the role of the military, the introduction of structural adjustment programmes all had an effect on the increased salience of identities affecting inter group relations.

The examination of these processes of identity formation and entrenchment in the Nigerian state since the colonial period is important because it allows us understand how groups perceive their relationships with other groups and enables us understand the basis for intergroup competition. Chapters 3 and 4 have shown that these factors remain relevant in the Nigerian socio-political environment and still affect relations between the various ethnic and religious groups. Importantly, understanding these processes is the basis for the use of a social-psychological approach to understanding intractable conflicts because it reveals to us 'the thoughts feelings and behaviours that are underlying the evolvment and maintenance of the conflict as well as later its eventual resolution and reconciliation' (Bar-Tal, 2011:4). This provides us with the basis for analysing the conflicts in northern Nigeria, which will be undertaken in the next two chapters when the conflicts in Kaduna and Plateau states are examined.



## **CHAPTER 5: PLATEAU STATE-BACKGROUND TO CONFLICTS**

### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter traced the creation and maintenance of identities in Nigeria since independence and identified the various social, political and economic factors that affected inter group relations in Nigeria. It acknowledged that the processes of the administrative restructuring, the introduction of the Federal Character doctrine, the quota system and the effect of the long period of military on inter group relations during the period after independence all impacted on identity formation and entrenchment. This chapter gives a general background of the conflicts in Plateau state since 1994 (Map 5.1 shows the conflict areas between Kaduna and Plateau states).

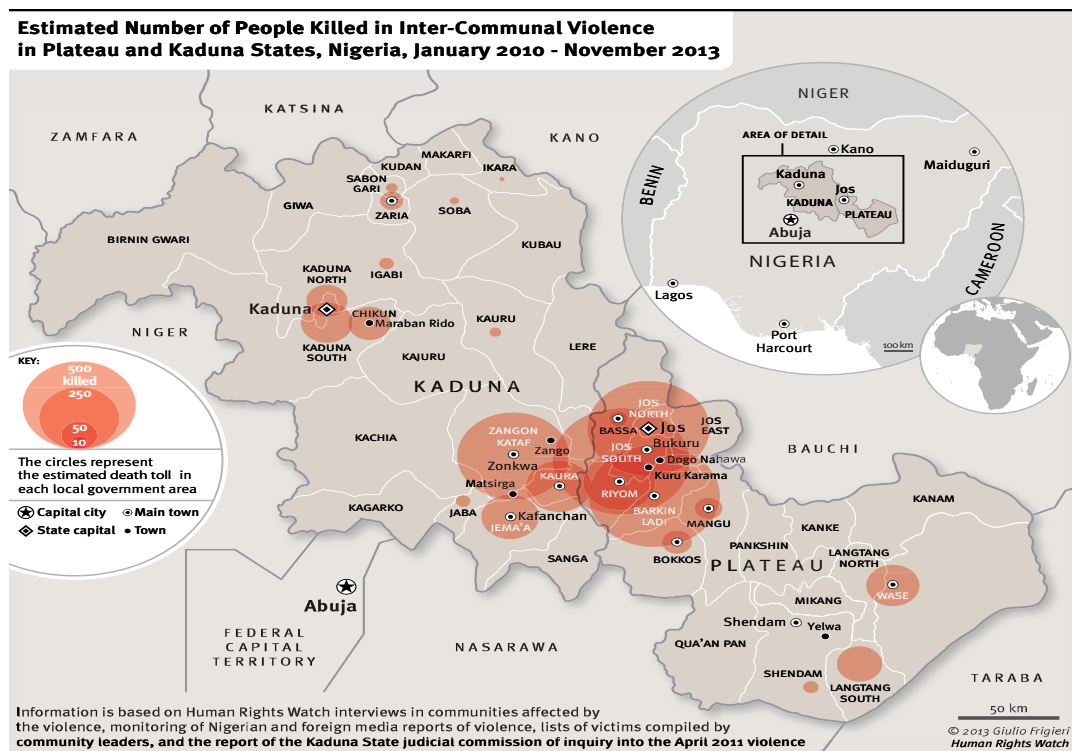
This chapter is largely descriptive, focusing on the events that led up to the conflict, the conflicts themselves and some of the group narratives that emerged prior, during and after the conflicts and leaves the analysis of how the narratives have affected the dynamics of the conflicts and its effect on intergroup relations for later chapters. Most of the basic facts regarding the conflicts are collated from newspaper publications, interviews and reports prepared by various organisations that examined the conflict and official Nigerian documents such as submissions to the judicial commissions of inquiry and the reports of these commissions. The conflicts are situated in the competition within the traditional, local, state and federal levels with each of these piggy backing on each other.

The selection of the Jos conflicts as one of the case studies is based on the fact that the conflicts have been between the local ethnic groups who see themselves as indigenes and the Hausa-Fulani population who are seen as settlers. Secondly, as has already been discussed, this area was the boundary between the mainly Christian middle belt area and



the mainly Muslim north so that historically, the struggle for hegemony in the area has been between Muslim and non-Muslim ethnic groups and this is currently reflected in the manner groups mobilise during conflicts. Also, the severity of the conflicts, which led to the establishment of a Special Task Force after the 2001 conflicts, indicates that even the Federal Government acknowledged the high probability of a recurrence of conflicts in the area. It also highlighted the risk that this might spill over to the volatile neighbouring states of Bauchi and Kano that had a history of conflicts and this could escalate the conflicts making it a regional issue that might be harder to contain. These factors make it relevant to examine the dynamics of these conflicts.

## MAP 5.1



Estimated Number of Deaths in Plateau and Kaduna States. Human Rights Watch. (2013). *“Leave Everything to God” Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria*.



## 5.1 PLATEAU STATE: POLITICAL AND TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES

Plateau state is one of the 19 states created from the old northern region and while its historical development has already been discussed in chapter 3, since independence it has undergone some changes. The first change, after the creation of the 12 states in 1966 was in 1976 when Plateau state was created out of the old Benue-Plateau. It was then restructured in 1996 with the creation of Nasarawa as shown in Map 5.2 with the thick border representing the boundary between the new states. This last change affected the political dynamics of the new Plateau state because it was now a Christian dominated state with a smaller Muslim population. The state has 17 local government areas that are divided into 8 federal constituencies and three senatorial zones (See map 5.2 and table 5.1)

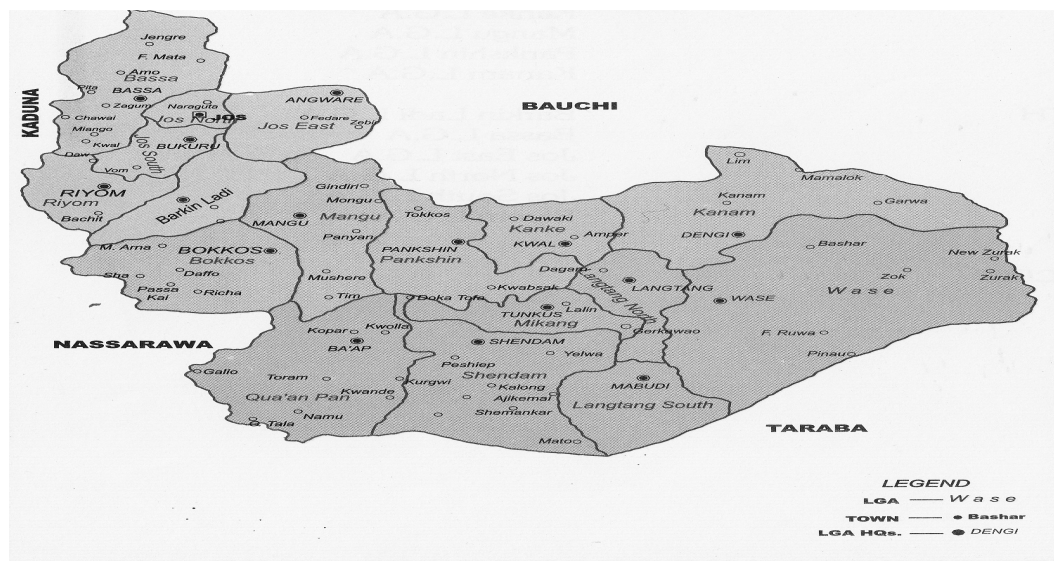
MAP 5.2



Plateau and Nasarawa States. Source: <http://www.ajtmh.org/content/80/5/691/F5.expansion>



**MAP 5.3**



Major Towns in Plateau State. Adebisi, R. O. (2007) *Nigeria: Federal Constituencies*. p.163

**TABLE 5.1**

Plateau State LGAs, Federal Constituencies and Senatorial Districts

Local Governments	Federal Constituencies	Senatorial Districts
Barikin Ladi	Barikin Ladi/Riyom	<b><u>Plateau North</u></b>  Barikin Ladi/ Bassa/Jos East/ Jos South/ Jos North/Riyom
Riyom		
Jos South	Jos South/ Jos East	
Jos East		
Jos North	Jos North/Bassa	
Bassa		<b><u>Plateau Central</u></b>  Mangu/Bokkos/Kanke/Pankshin/Kanam
Mangu	Mangu/Bokkos	
Bokkos		
Kanke	Kanke/Pankshin/Kanam	
Pankshin		
Kanam		<b><u>Plateau South</u></b>  Langtang North/ Langtang South/ Mikang/Qua'an Pan/Shendam/Wase
Langtang North	Langtang North/	
Langtang South	Langtang South	
Mikang	Mikang/Qua'an	
Qua'an Pan	Pan/Shendam	
Shendam		
Wase	Wase	

Adebisi, R. O. (2007) *Nigeria: Federal Constituencies*. p.163



The state comprises numerous ethnic groups, including the Berom, Ngas, Afizere, Tarok, Goemai, Jarawa and Anaguta who consider themselves local or indigenous. However there are no verifiable data of the population sizes of these groups because ethnicity is not one of criteria used during census enumeration exercises due to its contentious nature. Within the state are the Hausa-Fulani who migrated to the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and while they consider themselves indigenes, they are still treated as settlers by the Berom, Tarok and other ethnic groups within the region.

This is a recurring problem in the Nigerian state where even though a group has resided in a certain place for decades, they are still considered as settlers and excluded from the social and political space. The situation in Nigeria is that issues of who is a settler or indigene do not erode over time, and settlers are only considered as indigenes when they fully adopt the identity, in terms of language, religion and culture of the main group of the area. The Hausa-Fulani's preservation of their culture has meant that they remain distinct in areas that they reside alongside other groups and this is significant during periods of conflict when they become easily identifiable targets.

## **5.2 AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONFLICTS IN PLATEAU STATE**

Since 1994, Plateau state has witnessed a number of violent conflicts as shown in table 5.2. Map 5.4 shows the conflict areas in the state, with the most conflict prone zones around the local government councils within Jos town and Wase, Shendam, Kanam, Langtang north and south local government areas in Plateau south senatorial district.



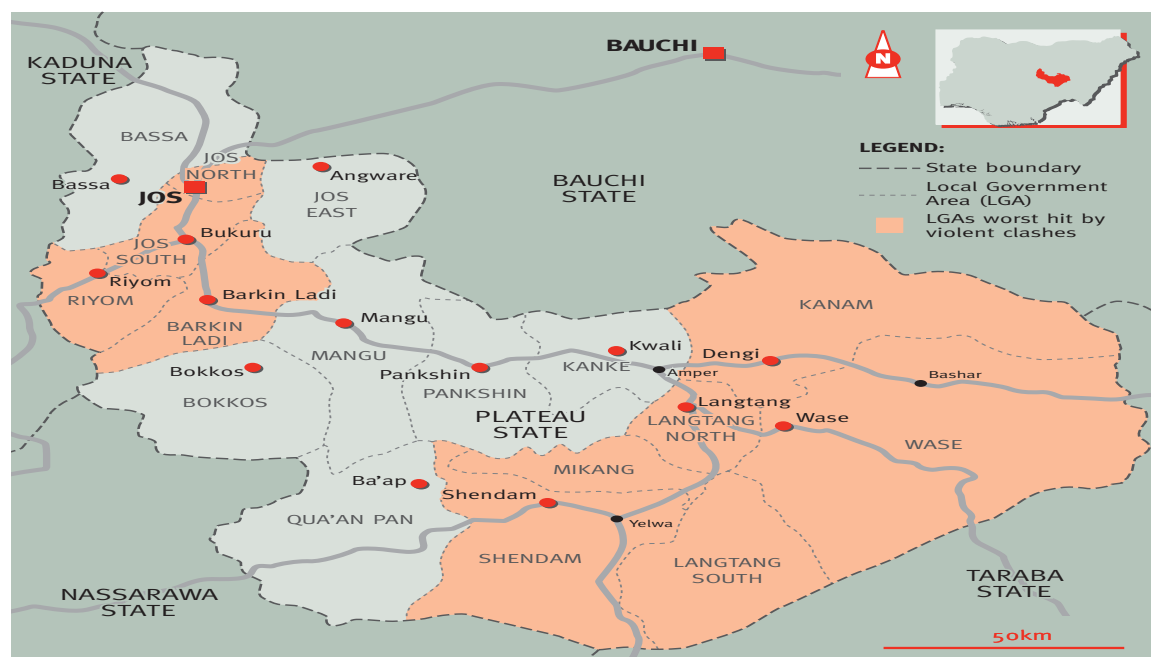
**TABLE 5.2**

Overview of Plateau State Conflicts.1994-2010.

Year	Conflict area	Number of estimated deaths
1994	Jos	770
2001	Jos	770 <sup>30</sup>
2004	Yelwa/Shendam	700
2008	Jos	312/632 <sup>31</sup> /118 <sup>32</sup>
2010	Kuru Karama	150 <sup>33</sup>
2011	Jos	N/A

Justice Bola Ajibola Commission of Inquiry. 2008; Justice Nikki Tobi Commission of Inquiry Report, 2002; Human Rights Watch Report. January 23, 2010.

**MAP 5.4**



Plateau State: the spread of violence. Krause, J. (2011) *A Deadly Cycle: Ethno-Religious Conflict In Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria* p.37

<sup>30</sup> Justice Nikki Tobi Commission of Inquiry Report, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> The figure of 312 is what was verified by the commission, while the figure of 632 is what the Muslim community presented. While this is unverified the commission acknowledged the huge loss of lives in the Muslim community. Justice Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Jos Riots. 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Estimated number killed by security forces. Human Rights Watch, submission to investigative forces of Jos Violence. November 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Human Rights Watch Report. January 23, 2010



Map 5.5 shows the major settlements in Jos urban area that are populated largely along ethnic divides. The area around the Plateau Specialist Hospital can be considered as the dividing line between Jos North and Jos South. The neighbourhoods of *Gangare*, *Rikkos*, *Dutse Uku*, *Nasarawa*, *Dilimi*, *Ali Kazaure*, and *Anguwar Rogo* are high density Hausa Muslim areas although *Rikkos* and *Dutse Uku* have pockets of Yoruba Muslims. In the east of the town the *Congo Russia* ward is a small remnant of Christian community surrounded by Muslims, while *Anguwar Rukuba* is a Christian area. *Apata* is a mainly Igbo populated area, while *Jenta- Kabong* complex to the west is a predominantly indigenous Christian populated with some Igbo Christians. *Tudun Wada* to the south is a low density Christian populated area with a small remnant of a Muslim community and from *Anguwar Rogo*, the Muslim population extends into Bauchi territory. *Anguwar Rogo* and other settlements to the north such as *Naraguta*, *Yelwa*, *Rafin Pa*, *Sabon Layin Rusau*, and *Babale* are Hausa-speaking Muslim areas; Nasarawa was formerly predominantly Yoruba but the Christians amongst them have now relocated to *Anguwar Rukuba & Eto Baba* with the latter area dominated by Plateau Christians. Other areas such as *Cikin Gari* covering *Dilimi*, *Gangare*, *Ibrahim Katsina*, *Abba NaShehu*, *Sarkin Arab*, and *Ali Kazaure* are predominant Hausa areas while to the west of this is a strip of territory covering the old Township which is populated by southern Nigerians.<sup>34</sup>

Due to the concentration of Muslims and Christians in certain settlements, the conflicts have occurred around the predominant Muslim and Christian areas with four Muslim neighbourhoods of *Dilimi*, *Nassarawa Gwom*, *Dutse Uku* and *Gangare* and the two majority populated Christian neighbourhoods of *Congo Russia* and *Anguwan Rukubu* the main areas of the conflicts. This has increased the segregation between the Hausa Fulani and the

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<sup>34</sup> Interview. Rabi'u Alhassan. Kaduna. July 28, 2013.



indigenous ethnic groups with the Igbo nestled in the middle, which puts them at risk during the conflicts.

**MAP 5.5**



Jos: the spread of violence and religious segregation. Krause, J. (2011) *A Deadly Cycle: Ethno-Religious Conflict In Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria*. p.34

### 5.3 ISSUE OF OWNERSHIP OF JOS TOWN

One of the main issues that has affected inter group relations in Jos is the claims of ownership of Jos town between the Hausa-Fulani, the Berom, Anaguta and the Afizere. The Vice President of COCIN noted that ‘the recent and other previous crises experienced in Jos



are about the ownership of Jos for the promotion of a long standing Islamist agenda being exploited from time to time for political gains.<sup>35</sup> This is a recurring narrative among the groups with ownership seen in the context of political and traditional control. The political aspect of ownership allows for the allocation of political favours at the local level such as distribution of contracts and the allocation of market spaces that enable upward economic mobility, while the traditional aspect facilitates the determination of land allocation which is in itself another form of economic benefit.

This issue came to the fore early in the late 1940s, with the Hausa and the Berom each claiming ownership of the town. The first reason relates to the relationship between communal ownership that existed under the native laws during the colonial period. Secondly as the country moved towards independence and political power was defined by territorial control the struggle between the different groups intensified and this manifested in the indigene/settler dichotomy that determined access to political and social benefits especially at the local level of governance. The realisation of the importance of power and social mobility increased the need to ensure control of political space as defined through territory.

These claims are best examined through a string of correspondence from 1954 that began with the appointment of a *Magajin Gari*<sup>36</sup> in Jos to serve on the town Council as executive vice president. The authority wrote a letter to the senior resident of the Plateau province where it noted that it was the council's prerogative to select the *Magajin garin Jos* and it did not make sense for a 'visitor' to be appointed to such a position. They argued that these

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<sup>35</sup> Address by Reverend Dr. Soja Bewarang COCIN Vice President to COCIN church leaders on the Jos crisis at the COCIN conference hall on Monday 8th February 2010

<sup>36</sup> *Magajin Gari* is similar to a Mayor and one of the main tasks is land control and allocation. This post still found in towns in northern Nigeria



‘visitors’ could not handle local issues such as land transactions because they had little knowledge about land ownership and the culture and way of life of the people of the area.<sup>37</sup>

They based their argument on the premise that in other cities in the northern region such as Maiduguri, Kafanchan, Zaria and Maiduguri, ‘natives’ were usually selected to oversee the affairs of the town and the management of the different ethnic groups. Further supporting their argument was the fact that in Kaduna, the *Magajin Gari* was appointed locally by the Emir of Zaria to oversee the affairs of the town. They saw the Hausa-Fulani group as overstepping its position as migrant-traders just like the Yoruba and the Igbo. The Berom suggested that non-native groups should be restricted to the selection of tribal representatives that will be responsible for the welfare of residents and workers from their ethnic groups with no other administrative responsibility within the town.

The Berom also proposed that the Hausa-Fulani should select a person who will only be recognised as a representative of Emirs outside their domain such as is the case with the *Sarkin Hausawa* in Ibadan in the western region, while the choice of a *Magajin Gari* who will have the responsibility for the management of areas within the town especially the expansion and construction within the town, should be made from amongst the Berom.<sup>38</sup> They stated that such an arrangement would reduce rancour and future calls for the appointment of a separate *Magajin Gari* by the Hausa Fulani and that if any ethnic group aspired to be part of a traditional institution, they should return to their places of origin. They warned that if this manner of administration was not accepted then there was every likelihood that contestations in the town would not stop.

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<sup>37</sup> Letter To The Senior Resident From The Berom Native Authority 25/2/1954. Translated From Hausa. Annual Report 7494

<sup>38</sup> The adoption of a traditional Hausa title by the Berom shows the effect the Hausa language and its traditional institutions had on the ‘indigenous groups of the area.



However, in 1956, the Hausa community through the Jos branch of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) wrote a letter to the Native Authority laying claim to ownership of Jos.<sup>39</sup> In the letter, they stated that the history of the establishment of the town showed that it was a Hausa town. They based this claim on the historical background of the town when it had been under the jurisdiction of the Bauchi province and had been ruled by ten consecutive Hausa rulers. However they did acknowledge that since the last *Sarkin Jos*, there had been a gap in the appointment of a *Sarki*, but saw this as a deliberate attempt to frustrate the Hausa-Fulani's role in the administration of the town. They implored the NA to revisit the issue so that the NA would 'enjoy the benefit of ruling Jos without any problems.'<sup>40</sup> This request was rejected by the Native Authority and prompted another letter by the Hausa, this time to the Senior resident of Plateau province where they requested that the decision be reconsidered based on their belief that the size of the Hausa population in Jos was sufficient enough for them to have a chief who would represent their interests and help improve relations within the town. The letter stated that;

the Native authority itself has recognised the number of Hausas is great and it is the opinion of this congress that Hausas are in very great majority in Jos and that their number far exceeds that number as may be claimed by any other tribe of Nigeria in Jos; and as such, the congress feels it is within reason that a Hausa chief is most certainly desirable.<sup>41</sup>

This request was based on the conviction that the Hausas were the main ethnic group in the area, however even if this was true, it did not necessarily entitle them to a Chief in an area that comprised other ethnic groups and their settlements. This demand triggered a response by the member for Jos district, Bitrus Rwang Pam, who wrote a letter addressed to the region's Premier and copied to the Minister for Local government affairs, where he expressed his surprise that there had even been a request for the appointment of a *Sarkin*

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<sup>39</sup> This supported the notion that the NPC was a Hausa-Fulani party

<sup>40</sup> Letter to the Jos NA, translated from Hausa. Annual Report 7949 3/1/1957

<sup>41</sup> Letter Nak/Josprof/Ro/S.94 Dated 12/1/1957



Jos by the Hausa Fulani. He felt they were trying to use the Hausa-Fulani control of the regional government to push through this demand for a Hausa chief in Jos. He warned that the;

Premier of the north, as appears from his response should not make the grave mistake in trying to retaliate on the recent Central State of Nigeria motion<sup>42</sup>, to even consider the possibility of appointing a Hausa Chief or *Magajin Gari* for Makurdi or Jos towns.<sup>43</sup>

He warned that if the regional government went ahead to make such appointments it would 'prove the verdicts of Lord Lugard since 1903 and Mr. Hudson in his recent report on provisional authorities in this very year 1957, that the ultimate aim of the Moslem north is to dominate other tribes in the region at all cost.'<sup>44</sup> While there was no clear evidence that Lord Lugard made such a statement, the member incorporated such an assertion into his letter to give it more credence. This letter indicated the growing concerns among the ethnic groups of the middle belt area of Hausa Fulani domination.

The Jos Tribal Party contributed to the debate through a letter to the senior resident in Bauchi where it argued that since there was already a Chief of Jos, the *Rwang Pam*, it saw no reason for the appointment of another *Sarki* for Jos.<sup>45</sup> The party, in line with Bitrus Rwang Pam's observation, also saw this as an attempt by the Hausa-Fulani controlled regional government to throw its support behind the request for the appointment of another *Sarki* against the wishes of the Berom. The Jos tribal party vowed that it would resist any encroachment of the Hausa Fulani into the affairs of tribal land the same way their parents before them had stopped the entry of the Hausa Fulani into their lands in the past.<sup>46</sup> The

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<sup>42</sup> This was during the period of the debate regarding the need for a central northern state at the northern house of assembly.

<sup>43</sup> Letter Nak/Josprof/Ro/S.94 Dated 12/3/1957

<sup>44</sup> Letter Nak/Josprof/Ro/S.94 Dated 12/3/1957

<sup>45</sup> Letter Nak/ Josprof./ Ro/ S.94 Dated 18/4/1957.

<sup>46</sup> Reference to the inability of the emirates of the caliphate to conquer the hill tribes in the area during the expansionist moves of the Sokoto caliphate



group noted the duplicity by the regional government and stated that they would not support the appointment of a *Sarkin Jos* when the Hausa already had a *Sarkin Hausawa* who already oversaw their welfare.

As already previously noted, the British in an effort to reduce the tensions replaced the position of *Sarkin Jos* with that of *Magajin Gari* who was appointed from amongst the members of the town council. This new structure remained in place until after independence, however the selection of a new *Magajin Gari* in 1964 raised some of the old issues with the Hausa community writing another letter of protest to the Commissioner, the Provincial secretary and the senior district officer in Jos regarding the manner of the appointment. The complaint was that the Berom were once again trying to suppress their rights in the town. The letter went through the history of the traditional institution in Jos, arguing that the Hausa were responsible for the introduction of the traditional institution to Jos at a time that the indigenous tribes were still living in the hills. They noted that even though the Berom claimed that they had traditional institutions, these were restricted to their villages and did not include Jos. The Hausa-Fulani argued that it was only when Mr. Maddock, a District officer installed Mallam Sanda as the *Rwang Pam* did the Berom became involved in the traditional institution of Jos.<sup>47</sup>

The Berom noted that it was after the death of one Mallam Isyaku who was the *Sarkin Jos* that the Hausa tried to install a new *Sarkin Jos*. This resulted in the creation of the position of *Magajin Gari* and the installation of M. Mammadi to the position that he held for three years until the *Rwang Pam* deposed him. His removal led to a reorganisation of the office with the President of the town council now appointed as the *Magajin Gari* thereby politicising the traditional institution, as was the case in other cities in northern Nigeria.

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<sup>47</sup> Letter Nak/Josprof/Ro/S.94 Dated 12/3/1957



The new President of the town council and *Magajin Gari* Jos, Mr. Dankarfalla held the position for three years before he was also deposed and replaced with M. Ali Kazaure who held the position for six years. The Hausa-Fulani wondered why even though he had been a very effective town council president, especially in his developmental efforts, he was not being considered for the position. Instead two Berom and one Hausa man who was a convicted criminal having served 9 months in prison, were those being considered for the position. The exclusion of Ali Kazaure was seen as a deliberate attempt to suppress the Hausa by offering a weak Hausa Fulani candidate that had no chance of being selected for the position and wanted the government to reconsider this action and install Ali Kazaure as the President of the town council due to his experience and hard work.<sup>48</sup>

These correspondences provide evidence of the development of contentious narratives that placed the Hausa Fulani and the local ethnic groups on opposing sides as they competed for the control of Jos township. Its control was important for fear of domination by either side if they lost control of the town. While the Hausa fear was restricted to Jos town, the Berom fear was part of a greater fear of Hausa domination that extended to other parts of the middle belt area of the northern region. As discussed in a previous chapter, these fears resulted in the establishment of the Willink commission in 1958, which acknowledged the existence of such fears but was of the opinion that such issues should be handled by the incoming independent government. The emergence of these contestations indicated that the new government had not succeeded in addressing some of those fears and there remained ethnic and religious divisions while the fears of domination and marginalisation were still widespread in the minds of the indigenous ethnic groups.

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<sup>48</sup> Letter Nak/Josprof/Ro/S.94 Dated 12/3/1957



The issue of the ownership of Jos was raised again in 1987 when the newly formed *Jasawa* Development Association, an umbrella body formed to protect the interests of the Hausa Fulani and Muslims in Jos town, called for the Muslim youth to seize control of the traditional institutions in the town. Once again the argument centred on the historical claims of ownership and their establishment of the traditional institution in the town.<sup>49</sup> They again reiterated this position when they made what was referred to as the 'Jasawa Declaration' in 1996. This declaration continued the theme of claims to ownership of Jos town, once again relying on historical evidence and claims of establishing the traditional institution.<sup>50</sup> These claims continued to be echoed, as was the case after the 2001 conflict and was also identified at the Plateau Peace conference in 2004.<sup>51</sup>

Some of those interviewed in Jos also raised the issue of ownership as a contentious issue between the Hausa-Fulani and the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere. One respondent noted that 'the Hausa community in Jos are claiming ownership of some parts of Jos you know, then the indigenes didn't allow them to take the ownership of what they are claiming.'<sup>52</sup> He went on to note that the Hausa-Fulani were visitors and that they should 'do whatever you [they] want to do and leave the owner of this place to take ownership of the place.'<sup>53</sup> Another respondent made the same observation noting that 'they [the Hausa-Fulani] are trying to claim ownership of the land.'<sup>54</sup> While another noted that he wonders why the Hausa-Fulani are to claim ownership of the land in Jos.<sup>55</sup>

At the Justice Ajibola commission, the 'indigenous' ethnic groups of Jos noted that the Hausa-Fulani had since the 1970s and 1980s insisted on ownership of Jos town, but argued

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<sup>49</sup> Government White Paper Report on 1994 Jos Conflict, 2004. Appendix S

<sup>50</sup> The Jasawa July 1996 Declaration. Presented to The Federal Government of Nigeria

<sup>51</sup> Plateau Resolves: Report of the Plateau Peace Conference. Main Report. 2004

<sup>52</sup> Interview, Jos. Mazi Okonkwo. November 15, 2011

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*

<sup>54</sup> Interview, Jos. G.G.Bot. December 12, 2011

<sup>55</sup> Interview, Jos. Sani Denge. November 27, 2011.



that this was nothing more than ‘a political agenda’ that should be ignored as it had no historical foundation.<sup>56</sup> The Hausa Fulani have always focused their argument on their role in the development of Jos town, noting that while the demand for labour in the mines attracted them to the area, the Berom were not in the town electing to remain in the hills and only migrating into Jos after it had begun to grow. These historical claims by the Hausa-Fulani continue to create a division between the groups and have become a recurring issue in the various conflicts in Jos town with contentious and radical narratives emerging that restrict negotiating options between the groups.

#### **5.4 THE NATURE OF THE PLATEAU CONFLICTS**

The 1994 Jos conflict provides a basis for understanding how groups see their roles in the conflicts in Plateau state and how it has formed part of the narratives of later conflicts indicating that groups see these conflicts as interlinked. The conflict was one of the most recent violent conflicts between the Hausa Fulani and the indigenous groups, but its background can be traced to the creation of Jos North Local Government in 1991 by the Babangida government. The new Jos north local government council comprised of mainly Hausa-Fulani populated wards within Jos metropolis. The local ethnic groups who had submitted a separate request for a local government that encompassed wards populated by indigenous ethnic groups of the Berom Anaguta and Afizere opposed the creation of this new council that was seen as gerrymandering by the ruling Muslim elite at the federal level, through Babangida, to provide the Hausa greater political power in Jos town and reduce the influence of the indigenous groups.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Verbatim Report to the Justice Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Jos Riots. 2008.

<sup>57</sup> Plateau State Government white paper On The Report Of The Justice Nikki Tobi Commission Of Inquiry Into The Riots Of April 12, 1994 In Jos Metropolis.



In an interview, Professor Bingel noted that Babangida acceded to the request of what he called the 'settlers' on the manner of the creation of the local government so as to separate them from the Berom thereby creating a local government that had a large Hausa-Fulani Muslim block.<sup>58</sup> This was also noted in the Fiberesima white paper report where it was noted that 'the former [indigenous] communities saw this arrangement as a grand plan by the Hausa-Fulani to seize Jos town from them. They also resented the pattern of the newly created LGAs because it left their paramount ruler, the *Gbong Gwom*, isolated in an enclave of the Hausa- Fulani in Jos municipality.'<sup>59</sup>

The Jos urban area comprises of three local government councils; Jos north; Jos south and Riyom, with most government institutions situated within Jos north local government. Also the traditional home of the *Gbong Gwon* the Berom paramount traditional ruler is situated within Jos north making it significant to the Berom who consider it Berom traditional space. This makes the control of the local government important, but because it has a significant Hausa-Fulani population, it makes the competition for its control very intense.

The first election for political offices at the local government was held in 1991 during Babangida's transition programme and was won by the Hausa-Fulani candidate. This confirmed the fears of these local groups of a move to ensure Hausa-Fulani domination within the local government. However the elected council was dissolved in 1993 with sole administrators appointed to administer them when Abacha took over power. The fears of the Berom and the other groups in the Jos was raised when the Military governor, Colonel Mohammed Mana announced the appointment of Aminu Mato, a Hausa Muslim as the new administrator for Jos north local government council. This led to more opposition from those groups with demonstrations held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1994. Even though he was sworn in on

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<sup>58</sup> Interview in Jos. Professor Bingel. October, 31 2011

<sup>59</sup> Justice Fiberesima White Paper Whitepaper On The Report Of The Commission Of Inquiry Into The Riots Of 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1994 In Jos Metropolis. pp. 5



the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, the local groups vowed to prevent him assuming office that was scheduled for the 8<sup>th</sup> of April (Ostein, 2009).

In an effort to ease the tension, the state government instructed the local government council's Director of Management services to administer the local government until the situation could be resolved. While this placated the indigenes, it infuriated the Hausa Fulani who through the *Jasawa* Development Association protested the decision.<sup>60</sup> This led to a clash between the *Jasawa* and local youth groups on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April resulting in four deaths and the destruction of a number of public and private properties.<sup>61</sup> Among these were the Jos modern and Gidan Biyu markets that had traditionally attracted a lot of economic activities since the 1950s and were largely controlled by Hausa and Igbo traders.<sup>62</sup>

The destruction of Jos market affected the economic base of the *Jasawa* and Igbo communities and the reluctance of the government to redevelop it is seen as an effort to ensure that the control of the economic activities of the town are wrestled away from the two groups.<sup>63</sup> After the 1991 conflict, the Hausa were now excluded from the administration of the affairs of the town, so that between 1994 and 2001 no *Jasawa* held any significant position within the local government council (Ostein, 2009). Even in 1996 when the government tried to appoint Ado Ibrahim, a *Jasawa* as the secretary of the local government, the indigenes protested the decision and the appointment was rescinded. It was clear that politically the town was divided between the Hausa-Fulani and the local ethnic groups comprising the Berom, Anaguta and the Afizere.

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<sup>60</sup> Plateau State Government whitepaper On The Report Of The Justice Niki Tobi Commission Of Inquiry Into The Riots Of April 12, 1994 In Jos Metropolis.

<sup>61</sup> International Crisis Group: Curbing Violence In Nigeria (I): The Jos Crisis: Africa Report N°196 – 17 December 2012

<sup>62</sup> Interview. Dr. Khalid, Secretary-JNI. Kaduna. November 21, 2011.

<sup>63</sup> International Crisis Group: Curbing Violence In Nigeria (I): The Jos Crisis: Africa Report N°196 – 17 December 2012



#### 5.4.1 Indigene/Settler dichotomy in Jos North Local Government and the 2001 Conflict

The contestation between the groups in 1994 and 1996 had laid the foundations for the dynamics of inter-group relations in Jos and would resurface in the build up to the 2001 conflict. This began after Frank Tardy, from the Anaguta ethnic group, was elected as the new Chairman of Jos north local government in 1999 and he introduced a policy that impacted on inter group relations. On assuming office, the chairman introduced a policy that altered the procedure for the issuance of certificates/letters of indigeneity. A letter from the council directed the *Gbong Gwom* to note that;

henceforth, applications for the Jos North Local Government indigene certificates must be duly endorsed by the Ward Head, Village Head and District Head before the Local Government processes such applications. In this respect, you are reminded that the Council recognises the following eleven (11) village areas only.<sup>64</sup>

The eleven village areas were all under the Gwong District in the local government, while the other ten wards in the local government were excluded, with requests for indigene letters to be processed through the head of Gwong district. The new policy involved the department responsible for births and registrations being moved to the chairman's office giving him greater control on the issuance of these letters.<sup>65</sup> He also centralised the process with just one district head, the *Ujah* of Gwong district, a Berom traditional leader now responsible for signing off on requests for certificates for the local government's final approval. These letters/certificates enable holders to claim social services such as education and employment at the local, state and federal levels and the policy affected the Hausa community and other 'settlers' and was contrary to what had previously been in place. The

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<sup>64</sup> Justice Nikki Tobi Judicial Commission of Inquiry. 2002. p. 100

<sup>65</sup> Interview Chief D.D. Bot. Jos. October, 20, 2011



Jasawa Development Association wrote a letter to the Chairman protesting this change in policy noting that it was obvious that it was designed to marginalise the other communities within Jos north local government. The association stated that 'the move to force our community to come under direct traditional control of Gwong district is not acceptable.'<sup>66</sup>

In an interview with a former Chairman of the local government, he stressed that this policy excluded non-indigenous ethnic groups access to certain political and social rights, with the Hausa Fulani the most affected.<sup>67</sup> This would raise tensions that would boil over in the form of the 1994 conflict. When asked why this never happened during his tenure, he explained that during his administration there was no distinction between indigenes or settlers, as letters of indigeneity was granted to all residents of Jos including the Yoruba and Igbo.<sup>68</sup> Evidently the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere had frowned upon his policy because it gave those they saw as natives equal rights within the local government and Tardy's policy was a way of addressing the situation.<sup>69</sup>

When the *Jasawa* protested to the state government, it directed the chairman to return to the previous arrangement until government took a final decision regarding the administration of the districts in the local government.<sup>70</sup> The Chairman ignored the directive and kept the policy in place and continued issuing only letters of residency that do not have the same legal power as letters of indigenisation that recognise indigeneity when implementing the quota system or taking federal character into consideration in the allocation of political, employment or education spaces. Given that this policy categorises people as either settlers and indigenes when providing social services such as health and

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<sup>66</sup> Letter from the Jasawa Development Association to The Chairman, Jos North local Government Council. October 20,1999

<sup>67</sup> Interview. Samaila Mohammed August 4, 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> Interview. Rabi'u Alhassan. Kaduna. February 12, 2011

<sup>70</sup> Letter dated May 11, 2000 from the office of the Executive Governor



education, it restricts those that can access such services and raises tensions between the groups.

These tensions were further raised when Alhaji Mukhtar Usman Mohammed, a Hausa Fulani Muslim, was appointed as the coordinator of the Federal government's National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in charge of Jos North Local Government Area. Once again the Berom opposed the appointment, while the *Jasawa* applauded it. This resulted in several petitions and protests from Berom groups such as the Plateau State Youth council and the Berom Elders Solidarity Forum.<sup>71</sup> Even with the opposition, the *Jasawa* were determined to ensure that the decision was not reversed and they wrote a letter to the Governor of the state where they warned that any attempt to reverse the decision appointment would be resisted. They also noted that the opposition was by 'some disgruntled elements and tribal cohorts operating as enemies of democracy...cabal of extremists who would 'run berserk and create instability, anarchy and chaos...Anarchists in tribal and religious garbs.'<sup>72</sup>

These two issues all occurred against the background of the expansion of the sharia legal system by 12 of the 19 northern states. In September 2001, tensions were heightened when the rather innocuous issue of Rhonda Haruna Nyam, a Christian lady's attempt to navigate her way through a path near her house during Friday Juma'a prayers resulted in the eruption of violence in Jos.<sup>73</sup> Miss Rhonda had attempted to gain access on her way home just before the prayers began and was barred by a Muslim aid worker and this is where the versions differ, with one version stating that she returned with a group of youths who attacked the praying Muslims while another states that after she was barred from proceeding, the Muslims trailed her to her parent's home where she was attacked, their property destroyed

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<sup>71</sup> The Justice Niki Tobi Judicial Commission Of Inquiry Into The Civil Disturbances In Jos And Its Environs, September 2002.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. pp. 18

<sup>73</sup> There is tendency for roads around Mosques and churches to be made inaccessible during Friday prayers and Sunday services



and her father assaulted.<sup>74</sup> While there is some uncertainty about the correct version of the event, this and other factors were enough to ignite the already tense situation and lead to violent conflict that resulted in the deaths of 770 people and destruction of property estimated at N3.3 Billion (approximately \$15 Million at current exchange rates).<sup>75</sup>

The non-issuance of letters of indigeneity positioned the groups on opposing sides and can be seen as an underlying factor that led to the violent conflict of 2001. This would also result in the emergence of radicalised and contentious narratives as each side tried justifying its role in the conflict and blaming the other side for the violence. This has made it difficult for them to find a middle ground to end the crisis and improve inter group relations.

#### **5.4.2 Southern Plateau and the Yelwa/Shendam Conflicts of 2002 and 2004**

By 2002 the conflicts moved to the lowland areas of Plateau state around the southern Plateau senatorial zone. This zone consists of six local government areas; Langtang North, Langtang South, Mikang, Qua'an Pan, Shendam and Wase. These local government areas comprise of a number of ethnic groups (see Map 5.6) that include the Tarok (Yergam), Ngas, Goemai, Jarawa, Montol, Pai, Tal, Doemak, Namu, Kwalla, Sayawa, Doka and Mirriam amongst others. These groups identify themselves as indigenes mainly through differences in culture, language and religion and claims of land rights from the Hausa Fulani with all the benefits that accrue to the status.

Land was seen as theirs to appropriate based on customary rights that existed since the colonial era, while there were also the benefits that came with the constitutional recognition of indigenes for political representation. While there is a large Hausa population that traces

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<sup>74</sup> White Paper On The Report Of The Justice Nikki Tobi Judicial Commission Of Inquiry Into The Civil Disturbances In Jos And Its Environs, September 2002. p. 12

<sup>75</sup> The Justice Nikki Tobi Judicial Commission Of Inquiry Into The Civil Disturbances In Jos And Its Environs, September 2002.. pp. 149-214



its roots to the pre-colonial period, as discussed in a previous chapter regarding the definition of settlers and indigenes, their distinctness of religion, language, lack of land rights and their inability to meet the constitutional definition of indigenes relegates them to the status of settlers that excludes them from access to certain political and social benefits.

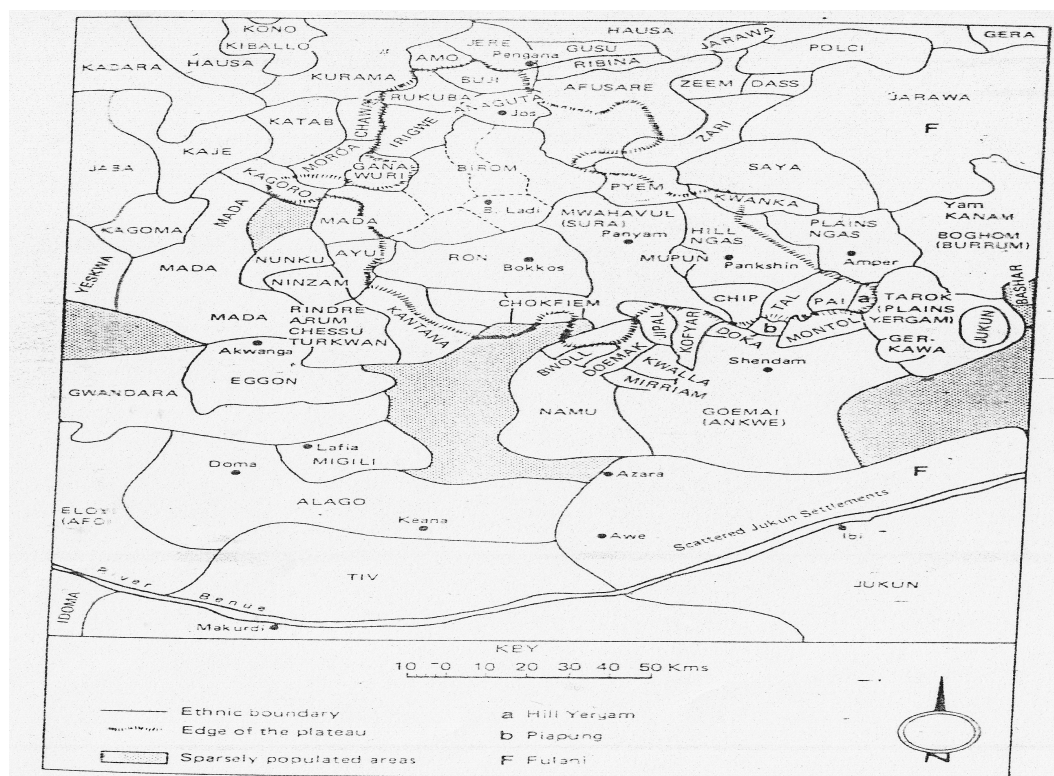
During the colonial period, this area formed part of the Shendam division and comprised of three districts; Shendam, Plain Yergam and Hill Yergam. Shendam was the largest of the three districts and was also the headquarters of the division (Ames, 1932). There were many ethnic groups in the district, including the Ankwe of the Ankwe tribal area which was the largest of the groups; Jukun; Hausa; Jarawa; Yergam; Abakwariga (pagan Hausas) and Taram tribes all within the tribal area. The Ankwe tribal area 'covered 2,103 square miles and had a population of over 16,000' (Ames, 1932:178). Even though the Hausa established their own traditional institutions as a way of entrenching their identity and space within the area, they still acknowledged the supremacy of Chief of the Ankwe, the *Long Kemai (Goemai)*, as their paramount chief (Ames, 1932). This is important within the current contestations between the various groups in the area.

Yelwa was one of the towns within the tribal area and historical data indicates that the Jarawa ethnic group from Dass in the current Bauchi state established it in 1826. The town is part of present Shendam Local government area that 'is situated at the foot of the Jalbang hills and by the fringes of the trough of the Benue' (Hoomlong, 2008:25). There were no violent incidents in the area prior to 2002, however between 2002 and 2004, there were three major cases of violent conflict between the Jarawa and the local ethnic groups such as the Goemai in Shendam local government area and the Tarok of Langtang north and south local government areas. The Yelwa conflict can be traced to a number of issues that date back to 1990.



The first issue was the introduction of a policy by the paramount Goemai chief of the area the *Long Goemai* to deny ethnic groups such as the Jarawa, indigene certificates. Human Rights Watch (2006) stated that in 1990 the local government with the *Long Goemai* directed district heads to stop acknowledging groups such as the Jarawa as indigenes and for the secretary of the local government to stop issuing such letters/certificates. This policy of exclusion would restrict employment and education opportunities to those considered as non indigenes as noted by the Yelwa-Shendam Muslim forum who in their submission to the Northern committee on Reconciliation, Healing and Security, stated that graduates from the committee were being denied employment opportunities due to the lack of indigeneity letters.<sup>76</sup>

**MAP 5.6**



Peoples of the Jos Plateau and adjoining lowlands. Isichei, E. (ed.) (1982). *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*. p.xvi

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*



The second issue related to the request of the Muslim community for the creation of Yelwa district in 2002, one that was based on the belief that Yelwa town was sufficiently developed to deserve a separate district. However when new districts were announced, rather than get their own district, some wards that had previously been under the Yelwa traditional institution were now subsumed under the Nshar district in Shendam. This included *angwan Barra* that was moved to Nshar ward. Also as a way of reducing the salience of the Hausa in the area, some wards within Nshar ward with Hausa names like *angwan Madaki* had their names changed to a Goemai name where it was now referred to as *angwan Kangtun* (Hoomlong, 2008). The people of Shendam protested these changes and called a meeting where they agreed to formally write the government protesting these changes, however this did not result in any reversals of the changes.

Politics also played a role in inter group relations as Muslims and Christians competed for political office. During the elections into party political offices for the ruling Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP) local branch in 2002, there were two candidates, Shaibu Mohammed, a Muslim and Zakka Ciroma, a Christian. Mohammed was the incumbent who was bidding to return to office. The primaries were keenly contested and as the voting proceeded Zakka was in the lead and the elections began to take a religious dimension with voters split along religious lines. There were allegations that Mohammed brought in Muslims from other areas outside Yelwa to disrupt the elections if the results were not going his way (Hoomlong, 2008).

The elections were inconclusive but it helped heighten suspicions between Christians and Muslims who were seen as deliberately trying to exclude Christians from political office. This raised tensions and the chairman of the local government council called a meeting of local religious and traditional leaders to broker peace. While this initially helped to alleviate the



tensions, the situation was aggravated when Tarok masquerades took to the streets of the town at night provoking the Hausa/Muslims even though the Goemai insist that the masquerades were there to maintain peace (Hoomlong, 2008). During this confrontation the Hausa/Muslims noticed a mosque on fire, which led to the escalation of the crisis that continued until 4am in the morning.

This conflict was the beginning of a cycle of violence between the Hausa and the local ethnic groups. By 2004 Human Rights watch estimated that there were at least 22 clashes between these groups from February 21 to May 6, 2004 with the most intense of these the clashes of February 24 and May 2-3 in Yelwa. The first of these began in the early hours of the day and lasted until mid afternoon on February 24. One of the worst incidents during the conflict was the murder of an estimated 78 people at the Church of Christ in Nigeria -COCIN 1- along the road to Langtang south local government with many of the victims men from the Tarok, Sayawa and Angas ethnic groups.<sup>77</sup> There were other Muslim attacks against Christians in the villages of Tabat, Timshat, Tukung, Zamwe, and Tumbi all in Shendam local government during the violence.<sup>78</sup> The attack on the church added a religious dimension to the violence and would form the basis for mobilisation in the conflict of May 2004. The May 2-3 conflict was even more intense and was a retaliatory attack by the Christian Tarok ethnic group of Langtang north and south against the Hausa-Fulani who they held responsible for the attack of Christians at the COCIN church in February (Adebanwi, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2005).

Another dimension that has added to the conflict has been the effect of the increasing attacks on the nomadic Fulani in the area who were seen by the indigenous ethnic groups as part of the settled Muslim communities because of their religious and cultural similarities even though they are distinct from the sedentary Fulani. These nomadic Fulani (*fulbe, peul*)

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<sup>77</sup> Human Rights Watch. Revenge in the Name of Religion . The Cycle of Violence in Plateau and Kano States. May 2005 . 17(8)

(A): 15

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.* p.19



have an estimated population of 10 million across West Africa with a large number of them resident in northern Nigeria (de Bruijn, 2011). Land ownership is disputed in many areas of northern Nigeria and the Fulani searching for grazing land have been accused by communities in these areas of allowing their cattle to destroy farmlands.

This has brought nomads into confrontation with local communities resulting in regular clashes against the Fulani that has resulted in their cattle stolen or killed. The Fulani consider cattle as their most important asset that helps define their identity, so the theft of their cattle is seen as an attack on their very existence. The significance of cattle to their identity is best exemplified by this statement by a nomad who noted that 'our herd is our life because to every nomad, life is worthless without his cattle. What do you expect from us when our source of existence is threatened? The encroachment of grazing fields and routes by farmers is a call to war.'<sup>79</sup> Attacks on nomads have pulled them into the conflicts, changing its dynamics with increasing number of *fulbe* attacks on surrounding villages in retaliation for attacks against them.

The level of the violence in Plateau state in 2004 led to the declaration of a state of emergency by the President. This lasted six months and involved the suspension of the state governor, Joshua Dariye and the legislature and the appointment of Chris Alli, a Plateau state indigene as the state administrator. The state of emergency was to prevent the violence spreading to neighbouring towns and states and was also an indication of the loss of confidence in the political elite to act as impartial arbiters in the conflict. The Christian groups of plateau state like the Berom, saw this as unnecessary and biased, because states such as Kano and Bauchi also had incidents of violence (against Christians) but were not being subjected to a state of emergency. Obasanjo defended this decision, arguing that this

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<sup>79</sup> IRIN. NIGERIA: Farmer-pastoralists' clash leaves 32 dead. Online [Available from] <http://www.irinnews.org/report/87525/nigeria-farmer-pastoralists-clash-leaves-32-dead> [retrieved. 12/02/2012]



was done to curtail further violence because first hand reports had shown that ‘violence has reached unprecedented levels and hundreds have been killed with much more wounded or displaced from their homes on account of their ethnic or religious identification.’<sup>80</sup> His speech acknowledged the fact that the conflicts were being fought along religious and ethnic lines and that there was a risk that it could lead to more violence in neighbouring towns as was witnessed in Kano where the violence in Shendam/Wase had led to retaliatory attacks against non-Muslims.

#### **5.4.3 Local Elections, Local Crisis: The 2008 Jos North Local Government Election**

Between 2005 and 2008, the state remained relatively calm with few clashes in Jos and the lowland areas of Plateau state. However Jos was to be the scene of more violence in 2008 after local government that resulted in the violence of November 27, 2008. As stated, local government elections are conducted by State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIEC) and because the members are appointed by state governments, during these elections, opposition parties allege government interference, bias and widespread cases of election tampering. In many cases where local government elections have been held, state electoral bodies are seen as aiding the ruling party, making opposition candidates/parties very suspicious of election results and the whole election process.

Both the Justice Uwais and Solomon Lar commissions noted that the impartiality of the SIECs have been questioned, with the Uwais commission stating that SIECs ‘have generally been adjudged as operating as appendages of the ruling party and the Executive arms of government.’<sup>81</sup> While the Lar commission also noted that ‘the lack of neutrality and

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<sup>80</sup> Urhobo Historical Society. Declaration of Emergency Rule in Plateau State of Nigeria by President Olusegun Obasanjo May 18, 2004 Online. Available from [http://www.waado.org/nigerdelta/FedGovt/Federalism/emergency\\_rule/plateau\\_obasanjo.html](http://www.waado.org/nigerdelta/FedGovt/Federalism/emergency_rule/plateau_obasanjo.html) [retrieved. 01/04/2013]

<sup>81</sup> Justice Muhammadu Uwais Electoral reform Committee. Main Report. Volume 1. 2008



transparency on the part of the state's Independent Electoral Commissions and the use of the power of incumbency were a national phenomenon.<sup>82</sup>

The local government elections in Plateau state were conducted under the tenure of the new Governor Jonah Jang who had been elected into office in 2007. Jang's relationship with the Hausa community is pertinent in understanding the relationship between the Berom and the *Jasawa* and the suspicions that trailed the elections. Jang is Berom from Du in Jos north local government (Ostein, 2009) and had unsuccessfully contested the 2003 elections, under the platform of the opposition All Nigeria People Party (ANPP). During his campaign for the elections he had sought the support of the *Jasawa*.

However both parties could not come to an agreement regarding distribution of offices due to the demands of the *Jasawa* that included the position of the Deputy Governor or the Secretary to the state government, both highly coveted positions.<sup>83</sup> Other demands included the creation of a district for the Hausa within Jos north that would be made up of the distinctly Hausa wards of *Ali Kazaure, Sarkin Arab, Garba Daho, Ibrahim Katsina, Naraguta A (Nasarawa), Naraguta B (Angwan Rogo, Angwan Rimi), Gangare, and Abba Na Shehu* (Ostein, 2009). Jang refused to accede to any of these requests insisting that all the area within Jos town was Berom land and therefore a district could not be created for the *Jasawa* from there. The *Jasawa* withheld their support for him in the elections that he lost to Dariye.

By 2007, Jang had decamped to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) where he won the nomination as the party's gubernatorial candidate. This time even though he did not solicit the support of the *Jasawa* he managed to win the elections. However, he still made overtures to accommodate the Hausa Fulani ethnic group by appointing members of the

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<sup>82</sup> Solomon Lar Report of the Presidential Advisory Committee n Jos Crisis. Volume II (Executive Summary) May, 2010. pp. 4

<sup>83</sup> Interview, Nasiru Nabage. Kaduna, November 5, 2011.



community into key political offices, including supporting the election of a Muslim member of the state legislature as Deputy Speaker. These moves were seen as positive and allowed a key number of elites from the *Jasawa* community to provide the link between the government and the community so as to improve relations.

However, some decisions taken by Jang affected the harmony between the groups, with the most significant being the decision in 2008 to expand the *Gbong Gwon's* palace situated in Jos North local government. This would entail demolishing mostly Hausa and some Yoruba and Nupe owned properties around the area. This was a contentious decision and when it was first announced it prompted complaints from those affected with growing anxieties that it could start a new round of violence.<sup>84</sup> The project has proceeded along with the relocation of the local government offices from its location next to the palace also seen by the *Jasawa* as a way of reducing their access to the political space in the town (Ostien, 2009).

The events leading up to the elections laid the foundation for the post election violence. The candidate of the PDP was Timothy Gyang Buba, a Berom from Du in Jos south local government. Buba was the brother of the then Comptroller General of the Customs service and current *Gbong Gwon*. What made his candidature surprising was that he held an indigene certificate from Jos south where he had contested elections and held office. The decision to allow him contest in Jos north was seen by the *Jasawa* as a way of imposing a Berom person as the head of local government given that no Berom had ever held that position or that of councillor in that local government (Ostien, 2009). The PDP also selected an Anaguta Christian as the candidate's running mate, a situation that completely excluded the main ethnic group in the local government, the Hausa, a decision that they saw as unacceptable. The *Jasawa* fielded one of their own as the candidate of the opposition All

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<sup>84</sup> Muhammad Lawal Ishaq. Relocation Of Jos North Local Government and the Local Government Polls. Online. <http://www.gamji.com/article6000/NEWS7611.htm>



Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) with an Afizere Christian as his running mate, thereby pitting the Berom/Anaguta against the Jasawa/Afizere (Ostien, 2009).

The elections were held on November 27, 2008, however even before counting had been concluded, violence erupted in Jos North local government area. The crisis took the security services by surprise because the elections had been considered free and fair with few cases of electoral malpractices reported. But as the results in Jos north local government were being collated, word began to spread that that the PDP candidate was heading for victory. This raised tensions because the *Jasawa* felt that their candidate was poised for victory given their numerical advantage in the local government.

At about 11 pm on the night of the elections, there were calls for Muslims to protest against the results of the elections and mobilisation of the youth began around 2am in the *Ali Kazaure* area of the local government. Many of the youth were residents of the area with others from the *Gangare* area of the local government.<sup>85</sup> As early as 5am on the day, the youths began attacking non-Muslims and destroying churches that in turn led to retaliatory attacks by Christians. Like previous conflicts, even though the immediate cause was political, the acts that followed targeted religious places such as mosques and churches, giving it a religious connotation and further exacerbating the conflict.

The elections affected the position of Muslim elites who had benefitted from their relationship with the state government. They were now treated with suspicion because they were seen as colluding with the state government to exclude the *Jasawa* from the political administration of the local government. This essentially closed the window of opportunity for resolving the conflicts between the groups and resulted in the rise of a more militant

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<sup>85</sup> Justice Bola Ajibola Commission of Inquiry, 2008



faction from the Muslim community that now viewed every action of the state government with suspicion.<sup>86</sup> This rise in suspicions between the groups increased cohesiveness within the Muslim community who saw these as deliberate actions against the Hausa Fulani Muslim community.<sup>87</sup>

This period saw an increase in the influence of the Council of *Ulama*, an umbrella Muslim body formed in 2001. The council was formed to protect the rights of the Muslim community but has moved beyond the realms of a religious body by playing a greater role in the political and social mobilisation of Muslims especially during elections, ensuring that they have a voice in the political affairs of the state especially at the local government level. The council has been able to easily mobilise the *Jasawa*/Muslims by framing many of the issues, including elections, along religious and ethnic lines.<sup>88</sup> This has helped in strengthening ethnic and religious identities of the Muslim Hausa making them a consolidated political force, but this had the counter effect of reinforcing Christian and indigenous identities as they now see the need for greater cohesiveness because of what they see as the increasing threat of the *Jasawa*/Muslim group.

The power of the council was evident during the 2011 elections into the Federal house of representative when they threw their support behind the candidature of the small opposition Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) against the Berom candidate of the PDP. Even though the PDP candidate won the elections, the results were overturned at the election tribunals in favour of the DPP candidate. This was challenged by the PDP candidate in court with the court of appeal cancelling the elections and ordering new elections. These were held in February 2012 with the ulama once again playing a major role in the mobilisation of the Hausa Muslims to ensure the DPP candidate's victory.

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<sup>86</sup> Interview. Rabiu Alhassan. Kaduna. July 28, 2013

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*



The *ulama* as a religious organisation has increased the role and presence of religion in the politics of Jos and the surrounding towns of Plateau state. As noted, Muslim unity has increased, which has also led to greater Christian cohesiveness, making the positions of the groups more rigid with the relationship becoming more confrontational. This has resulted in the narratives from within the groups more contentious and tinted with distrust and suspicion.

#### **5.4.4 Ongoing conflicts since 2010**

While there were no conflicts on the scale of the 2001 or 2004 conflicts, there continued to be underlying tensions between the various groups within Jos metropolis and in January 2010 a number of incidents led to the resurgence of violent conflict in Jos and the surrounding towns. There had been isolated incidents in *Babban Layi* quarters, *Nassarawa Gwong* area and around Duala junction in Jos. One such clash was between a Hausa man, Mallam Kabiru Muhammed, a resident of a mainly Christian area of Dutse Uku, who while trying to effect repairs to his property that had been destroyed in an earlier conflict, was attacked by local youth (Alubo, 2011). The Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) disputes this claim, stating that the violence erupted when Muslim youths numbering about 300 attacked a Christian lady and her child.<sup>89</sup> The confrontation led to attacks between the various groups with places of worship attacked and several properties destroyed. This quickly escalated into a new round of conflicts that went beyond Jos metropolis.

On January 19, 2010 the Berom attacked Muslim residents of the town of Kuru Karama in Jos south local government area, 30 Kilometres south of Jos on the Abuja road. Prior to the attacks, after news broke of the violence in Jos and the imposition of a 24hr curfew, the Muslim community met with community leaders at the police station, where it was agreed

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<sup>89</sup> Address by Reverend Dr. Soja Bewarang COCIN Vice President to COCIN church leaders on the Jos crises at the COCIN conference hall on Monday February 8, 2010



that they would not let the events of Jos affect the town. However when the attackers converged on the town, there was little the village Chief or its inhabitants could do to stop the attack. Many of the town's inhabitants tried to find places to hide, but many could not escape the violence and were killed, with the BBC<sup>90</sup> and Aljazeera<sup>91</sup> reporting that an estimated 100-150 people dead with many more reported missing, while many of the dead were dumped in wells.<sup>92</sup>

After the Kuru Karama killings there were other attacks against Muslims between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of January in Jos south, Barikin Ladi and Riyom local government areas by Berom men.<sup>93</sup> Higazi (2010) and Human Rights Watch (2013) noted that Fulani settlements were attacked across the three local government areas with the most violent of these in the settlement of *Dogo Nahawa* where there was a systematic killing of Fulani herdsmen and the looting of their property and theft or slaughter of their cattle. The victims did not bother to report to the police, even though they knew many of their attackers, because they did not trust them to take any action and were determined to take the law into their own hands.

This resulted in the Fulani launching retaliatory attacks against Berom villages in March of the same year with *Dogo Nahawa* the worst hit, with over 100 people reportedly killed during the attacks that began around 3am on the night of 10<sup>th</sup> March.<sup>94</sup> These attacks began a chain of night raids against Berom villages including *Zot*, *Ratsat* and *Kutgot* in Jos south, *Barkin Ladi* and *Riyom* local government areas. Figures show that between April 2010 and November 2013 more than 200 mostly Berom Christians in villages in these local government areas were killed (see table below), even though unverified figures quoted by

<sup>90</sup> BBC News. January 23, 2010. Online. [Retrieved 12/7/2013]. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8476534.stm>

<sup>91</sup> Al Jazeera News. January 20, 2010. Online. . [Retrieved 25/1/2015] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7XjFZSSF9Q>

<sup>92</sup> Interview. Dr. Khalid, Secretary-JNI. Kaduna. November 21, 2011.

<sup>93</sup> Human Rights Watch. (2013). "Leave Everything to God" Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria. New York, USA

<sup>94</sup> BBC News. March 11, 2010. [Online]. Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8561748.stm> [Retrieved 12/7/2013]



Mulders (2010) put the number of the dead as high as 1000 killed and over 20,000 displaced.<sup>95</sup>

**TABLE 5.3**

**Number of Deaths in Plateau State between 2010-2012**

Village	Local Government	Date of attacks	No. of Deaths
Dogo Nahawa	Jos South	March 2010	109* <sup>96</sup>
Wareng Village	Riyom	January 10, 2011	15
Bere Reti	Barkin Ladi	February 22, 2011	17
Mazah	Riyom	July 17	8
Gwanfi	Jos South	September 9, 2011	15
Kuru Jenta			200
Several villages	Barkin Ladi/ Riyom	July 7, 2012	65
<b>Total</b>			<b>429</b>

Culled from Human Rights Watch. 2013; Conflict Barometer, 2010. p. 35

Local communities have held the nomadic Fulani responsible for these attacks and even though the Fulani Cattle Breeders association has denied the responsibility of its members, one Fulani leader stated that the killings will continue because ‘we see our cows with them. We see someone holding our property. That is why the crisis will not finish... because there is no justice’ but that ‘if there is justice it would be the end of the crisis.’<sup>97</sup>

These spontaneous attacks became a recurring theme in the conflicts of the state, with some more severe than others. Many of these were largely unreported but on August 29,

<sup>95</sup> Mulders, A. (2010). Persecution of Christians in Jos (2) Open Doors International. Online. Accessed. [18/07/2014] [http://www.iirf.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDFs/Persecution\\_of\\_Christians\\_in\\_Jos\\_2.pdf](http://www.iirf.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDFs/Persecution_of_Christians_in_Jos_2.pdf)

<sup>96</sup> Some estimates put the figure at over 300 Muslims killed. See Higazi (2010)

<sup>97</sup> Human Rights Watch. (2013). “Leave Everything to God” Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria. New York, USA



2011, in Rukuba part of the town there was another incident between the *Jasawa* and the local community. Rukuba is a Christian populated area in Jos, however in the 1980s, a Muslim patron had donated a large parcel of land to the *Izala* Muslim sect that it used as an Eid prayer ground and a cemetery. The sect had decided to perform the year's Eid festival at the ground, but due to the apprehensions and tension in the town, the council of *Ulama* met and tried to persuade them to use an alternate site. However the sect was adamant, arguing that there was already encroachment on the land by the surrounding mainly Christian ethnic communities and there was a need to reassert their ownership of the land. Even though the state government was pro active by providing what seemed like adequate security on that day, the prayer ground was surrounded by the locals who attacked the Muslims, as the prayers were about to commence. However the presence of the security forces enabled most of the Muslims to escape the attacks, thereby minimising casualty numbers.

The risk of conflicts within the town remain high due to the radicalised nature of the narratives that have become common between the different groups with claims and counter claims of who should be held responsible for the violence. This high level of suspicion and distrust does not augur well for inter group relations.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has examined the conflicts in Plateau state, specifically those in Jos urban area and the southern lowlands of the state around Wase, Shendam and Langtang local government areas. It was acknowledged that the immediate causes of the conflict revolved around exclusionary policies mainly against the Hausa-Fulani communities and attempts by them to address these injustices. However by using the socio-psychological infrastructure developed by Bar-Tal, we saw how groups draw on historical memories to understand their relationship with other groups. A cursory look at the narratives showed that the



predominantly Hausa-Fulani Muslims and the ethnic non-Muslim groups have historically competed for dominance in the area and this is still the case. This struggle has resulted in each group positioning themselves on extreme ends of the rivalry making it difficult for them to acknowledge the claims of the other group as legitimate so that they can pursue any genuine conflict resolution efforts. These historical narratives have had the effect of entrenching identities and increasing group cohesiveness by highlighting the risks to the groups, which allowed them to rationalise their positions in the conflicts so that they could justify the violence against other groups.



## CHAPTER 6: ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN KADUNA STATE

### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on Kaduna state with the accounts of some of the major conflicts that have occurred there from available empirical data. While there have been several conflicts in Kaduna state see (Table 6.1), this chapter focuses on six of the conflicts between 1987 and 2011. These include the 1987 and 1999 Kafanchan crisis, the 1992 Zangon Kataf conflict, the 2000 Sharia conflicts, the 2002 Miss World conflict and the post election violence of 2011. The choice of these conflicts is based on a number of factors that include; the scale of the destruction and the number of deaths, the fact that the state government imposed a curfew to curtail the violence spilling into other parts of the state or other states. Also in all of the conflicts examined, even where the violence did not start from the southern Kaduna area where there are large number of ethnic groups and a reasonable population of the mainly Muslim Hausa-Fulani Muslim, violence still erupted in some towns there with mobilisation along ethnic or religious divides that pitches the Hausa against the other groups.

**TABLE 6.1 Selected list of Kaduna state Conflicts**

S/No.	Year	Location	Main groups
1	1980	Kasuwan Magani, Kajuru Local government,	Land dispute between Hausa Fulani and Kadara Host community
2	1983	Jere Town, Kagarko Local government area,	Land dispute between Gbagyi and Hausa Fulani
3	1984	Gure/Kahugu, Saminaka/Lere Local government area	Land dispute between Kahuru and Gure communities
4	1984	Yarkasuwa in Saminaka/Lere Local government area	Land dispute between Kurama community and Hausa-Fulani
5	1984	Zangon Kataf Local government area	Dispute between Hausa-Fulani and the Kataf
6	1987	Kafanchan College of Education	Muslim-Christian clash
7	1987	Kaduna town	Muslim-Christian clash
8	1988	Lere town, Saminaka/Lere Local government area	Communal clash between Kuram community and Hausa Fulani
9	1992	Zangon Kataf Local government area	Economic clash between Kataf and Hausa-Fulani



S/No.	Year	Location	Main groups
10	1999	Kafanchan Local government area	Dispute over traditional institution between Hausa-Fulani and local community
11	2000	Kaduna town	Sharia clash between Muslims and Christians
12	2001	Kaduna town	Miss World clash between Muslims and Christians
13	2011	Kaduna town and environs	Post election violence

Source: Alubo O. (2011) *Ethnic Conflicts and Citizenship Crises in Central Nigeria*. University of Ibadan.

The thesis uses the 1987 conflict as the starting point for the examination of the conflicts of the state because it was one of the most violent conflicts and spread to other parts of the state and into neighbouring states with the violence carried out on ethnic and religious basis. It also occurred after the country's admission into the OIC in 1986 when religious tensions were already high. In many of the narratives of the conflicts examined, the 1987 Kafanchan conflict is used as a point of reference for an understanding of intergroup relations between the groups that are based on ethnic and religious lines. This fits into the theoretical framework that is used as the basis of this thesis because this can be defined as an identity conflict.

## 6.1 KADUNA AND ITS EMERGING CULTURE OF CONFLICT

The history of Kaduna has been previously discussed where its development as the capital of the Northern region was expounded. However since 1966 when it became the north central state up to its current status as one of the 36 states in the country, the dynamics of the relationship between the numerous ethnic groups has been altered within this new administrative territory. The number of ethnic groups within this smaller political, economic and traditional space has resulted in new forms of political, economic and social competition for hegemony. The state is currently composed of 23 local government areas, 3 senatorial zones and 16 Federal legislative constituencies (see Table 6.1 below). There are eight local



governments in the southern part of Kaduna that constitute the Kaduna south senatorial zone and these are predominantly Christian with significant Hausa-Fulani settlements in Lere, Kafanchan and Kachia. Other local governments such as Chikun, Kajuru and Kauru also have large Christian populations and various indigenous ethnic groups bringing the number of predominantly Christian/indigenous local government areas to 11. With 12 predominantly Muslim local governments in the northern part of the state, the state is split between a mainly Hausa/Muslim populated north and a predominantly Christian south with the Hausa-Fulani claiming a population majority which is contested by the ethnic groups of southern Kaduna who claim to have higher population numbers.

There are no official figures to verify these claims but if we examine the 2006 census figures from the local governments in these areas it can be argued that the northern part of the state has more population even though the area is not homogenous with various ethnic groups due to migration. This is also the case in southern Kaduna with a number of Hausa-Fulani settlements in Kafanchan, Kachia and Jere and Igbo and Yoruba traders within the area. The major towns in southern Kaduna include, Kafanchan and Jere that have Hausa-Fulani Muslim traditional institutions while the other major towns in the area with a significant Hausa population are Kachia, Kwoi, Zonkwa, and Zangon Kataf.

**TABLE 6.2**

**Kaduna State Local Government Areas, Federal Constituencies and Senatorial Districts**

Local Government Areas	Federal Constituencies	Senatorial Districts
Kubau	Ikara/Kubau	<b><u>Kaduna North</u></b>  Kubau  Ikara  Makarfi  Kudan  Sabon Gari
Ikara		
Makarfi	Makarfi/ Kudan	
Kudan		
Sabon Gari	Sabon Gari	
Zaria	Zaria	



Local Areas	Government	Federal Constituencies	Senatorial Districts
Lere		Lere	Zaria
Soba		Soba	Lere Soba
Birnin Gwari		Birnin Gwari/Giwa	<b><u>Kaduna Central</u></b>  Birnin Gwari  Giwa  Kaduna North  Kaduna South  Kaduna South  Kauru  Chikun  Igabi
Giwa			
Kaduna North		Kaduna North	
Kaduna South		Kaduna South	
Kauru		Kauru	
Igabi		Igabi	
Chikun		Kajuru/Chikun	
Kajuru		Kajuru/Zangon Kataf	<b><u>Kaduna South</u></b>  Kajuru  Jaba
Jaba			
Zangon Kataf		Kaura	Zangon Kataf
Kachia		Kachia/ Kagrako	Kaura
Kagrako			Kachia
Sanga		Jema’a/Sanga	Kagrako
Jema’a			Sanga Jema’a

Adebisi, R. O. (2007) *Nigeria: Federal Constituencies*. p.107

**TABLE 6.3**

**Southern Kaduna Ethnic Groups**

Agworok	Igbiri	Gbagyi	Amirago	Atom	Bajju	Uzar
Atyap (Kataf; Katab) <sup>98</sup>	Adara	Gwong	Abisi	Abinu	Ningkyop	Mbang
Attakad	Bakulu	Fantswam	Aninka	Amalan	Kuvori	Atsam
Asholio	Bunu	Akurmi	Anu	Angan	Kiwollo	Nandu
Amap	Eggon	Attacherak	Nimdenanu	Ham	Nunku	

James, I. (2007) *The Politics of the Creation of Chiefdoms in Kaduna state*.

<sup>98</sup> these names are used interchangeably throughout this study



Table 6.2 is a list of some of the major ethnic groups in Kaduna state (*the list is not exhaustive*) while maps 6.1 shows the local governments and the headquarters within the area known as southern Kaduna. There are no verifiable figures regarding the size of many of these ethnic groups.

**MAP 6.1**



Map showing LGAs in Southern Kaduna. [Online] Available from <http://zitt.sourceforge.net/> [retrieved 12/01/13]

### **6.1.1 The College of Education Kafanchan Crisis of 1987**

The 1987 Kafanchan conflict is one of the defining moments in inter group relations both at the local and national level because it highlighted the tensions between the ethnic and religious groups within the state, other states in northern Nigeria and within the country. This is due to the intensity of the violence and the emergence of ethnicity and religion as mobilising factors in inter group relations. At the state level, the conflict prompted a debate regarding the relationship between the ethnic groups of southern Kaduna and their Hausa-Fulani counterparts, while at a the national level, debates examined the relationship



between the Hausa Fulani and the rest of the country on the one hand and Muslim Christian relations.

Kafanchan is a town in Jema'a Local government area and is home to a number of ethnic groups with the Atyap (Kataf/Katab) the main ethnic group, but the town also has a sizeable Hausa-Fulani Muslim community that has been resident there since the pre-colonial period and while the Kataf see them as settlers, they consider themselves as indigenes. The town has a strong Hausa traditional institution where it is home to the Jama'a emirate, one of the oldest emirates in northern Nigeria. The presence of the emirate has created a strong Hausa-Fulani cultural and religious presence within the town even though the Hausa are not the majority ethnic group.

The conflict began at the Federal College of Education, where on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1987 there was a confrontation between Muslim and Christian groups in the school, that led to violent clashes that spread to urban areas of Kaduna, Kankia, Daura in Kaduna state and Kano in neighbouring Kano state. The conflict began when the Federation of Christian Students (FCS) of the school planned a week of religious activities. These kinds of activities are not new on Nigerian campuses where they are usually held annually. However this was the first time that the FCS had decided to take what Kukah (1989:217) refers to as a 'high profile' approach to the event including the erection of a banner that read 'WELCOME TO JESUS CAMPUS.'

This offended the school's Muslim population who through the Muslim Students society (MSS) protested to the school authorities. The authorities had the FCS remove the banner, which in turn upset the Christian students. No reason has been given for the high profile approach that the FCS chose to adopt, but there was an increasing Christian consciousness



due to the country's membership of the OIC and the MSS had also just had a weeklong Islamic activity where they invited El Zakzaky, the head of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria to speak. All of these created the scene for the violence that occurred.

The immediate cause of the conflict was a confrontation between Muslim and Christian students during a sermon by a recent Christian convert, Reverend Abubakar Bako. His sermon disparaged Islam and its Prophet, which provoked the Muslim students who tried to assault him, however he was safely shepherded out of the area by Christian lecturers and students.<sup>99</sup> This initial disagreement led to rioting on the night of March 6, forcing the school authorities to hold an emergency crisis prevention meeting where a decision was taken to shut down the school to prevent more violence.<sup>100</sup> This decision was in line with the state government's directive that also called for the closure of the school to forestall any more conflict.

However there were reports that the Muslim students had decided to take retaliatory action for the destruction of the mosque situated in the institution that occurred on the first day of the violence. The attempt failed because Christians came out prepared to defend themselves, resulting in the death of 9 Muslims and the destruction of mainly Muslim property in the town. This sparked a new round of violence that was not immediately contained due to a slow reaction by security forces, leading to the death of 12 people and the destruction of more property. The inability of the security forces, particularly the police, to act quickly led to an escalation of the violence into other semi-urban and urban areas in the state. There was a steady flow of (mis)information out of the town regarding the events there and this inflamed tensions in other parts of the state resulting in the eruption of violence in other urban and semi urban areas within the state. At the Katsina Polytechnic,

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<sup>99</sup> Interview Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna March 21, 2012

<sup>100</sup> Kaduna State of Nigeria. White Paper report on Justice Dalhatu Ja'afaru Commission of Inquiry. Committee To Investigate Causes of Riots and Disturbance in Kaduna State. 1987. Government Printer, Kaduna



what was billed as a peaceful demonstration quickly went out of control with looting and burning of property. More violence was also reported in some parts of the state including Funtua (in the current Katsina state) Kankia and Zaria, which reported the highest level of violence after Kafanchan and Kaduna. The intense level of violence and the increasing spread of the conflict resulted in the imposition of a curfew around the state and a shoot on sight order.<sup>101</sup>

### **6.1.2 The 1992 Zangon Kataf Market Conflict**

The other significant conflict in the state occurred five years later in Zangon Kataf, which is also a town in the southern part of Kaduna state, approximately 100 kilometres from Kaduna. As the name indicates, Zango was originally a resting post for Hausa traders when it was known as *Zangon Fatake* (Yohanna, 2007). The settlement emerged around the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of Hausa and Kanuri traders who were granted land by the Atyap (Kataf) where they settled (Yohanna, 2007; Yusuf, 2010). Zango itself is predominantly Muslim populated but is surrounded by about 50 Atyap villages. This level of segregation between the Hausa Muslims in Zango and the Christian ethnic groups in Kataf remained in place even as the town grew. Yohanna (2007) states that by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the relationship between the two groups had began deteriorating with the Atyap resenting its decision to grant land to the Hausa traders because of the incessant slave raids by the nearby Zaria emirate. This relationship would deteriorate further after the advent of the British when the area was placed under the jurisdiction of the Zaria emirate. Inter group relations were strained during this period, with tax collections and issues of forced labour resulting in a number of riots against the Native authorities.

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<sup>101</sup> *ibid*



The political, social and economic space in the town was contested between the main Atyp and Hausa Fulani groups but never resulted in any violent conflict until 1992 when the riots referred to as the 'Zangon Kataf market riots' erupted. Its immediate cause was attributed to the decision of the local government council to relocate the main market in the town from the mainly Hausa-Muslim area to the Atyp populated part of the town on farmland belonging to the Hausa-Fulani. The land was alleged to have been forcefully acquired during the colonial period when the then district head of the town, Mallam Jafaru Isiyaku, who later became the Emir of Zaria, enacted a law that allocated a 4km radius of land around Zango to the Hausa as *hurumi* which was land for the use of the Zango dwellers (Yusuf, 2010). The current Atyp population thus sought to reclaim the land as theirs, a decision that was challenged by the Hausa community who made attempts to seek redress through official channels with little success.

Prior to 1989, the town was part of the Kachia local government council in Kaduna state and in 1988 a decision was taken to relocate the market. The argument was that the new location would enable for the expansion of the market and increase the revenue to the local government council (Yohanna, 2007; Akinteye, Wuye and Ashafa, 2001, Abdu, 2010). The Hausa community were not convinced of this reason, arguing that this was an attempt to reduce their economic power and restructure the economic relations in the town because of Atyp complaints of the monopolisation of the market and economic activities by the Hausa (Abdu, 2010; Yusuf, 2010). Part of their complaints of the Atypa was that there were no Atyp stall owners in the market and due to Islamic restrictions, pork and *burkutu*, a local brew were not allowed to be sold within the market.

With the creation of Zangon Kataf local government in 1990, the new chairman, Juri Babang Ayok, an Atyp man proceeded with plans for the relocation of the market (Akinteye, Wuye



and Ashafa, 2001). The Muslim community argued that the move was ill advised because the new site was not developed and was at that time being used as the Muslim *Sallah Eid* prayer ground. The Hausa community challenged this decision in the courts where they secured an injunction against the relocation (Abdu, 2010). Even with the injunction, the Chairman declared that the market day that was meant to hold on 6<sup>th</sup> February would be held on the newly acquired piece of land.<sup>102</sup> Mainly female Atyap traders proceeded to the new site where members of the Hausa community attacked them (Akinseye, Wuye and Ashafa, 2001). Meanwhile, Hausa traders had ignored the directive and had proceeded to the old market site, which resulted in an attempt by officials of the local government authority to forcibly remove them and demolish the stalls. During the confusion, the Atyap attacked Hausa traders, with official figures putting the number of dead at 115 people with 89 houses destroyed and 32 vehicles burnt.<sup>103</sup>

The riots subsequently spilled into Zaria, Kaura and Kaduna leading to loss of lives and destruction of property. After this riot there was an uneasy calm in the area and the state in general, however this peace was punctuated by a new round of violence on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1992 that was triggered by the uprooting of crops on Hausa farmland by Atyap youth. This was meant to cripple their economic base and even though the Hausa-Fulani tried to prevent this forced ejection by petitioning the relevant security agencies in Zangon Kataf and Zonkwa, no action was taken to protect them and pre-empt these acts. At the Justice Cudjoe commission of Inquiry the police confirmed that they had security reports that foretold of the attacks but even though they informed the state police headquarters little was done to prevent it. The police noted that;

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<sup>102</sup> Interview with ID Bisallah. Kaduna. March 9, 2012

<sup>103</sup> Submission of Hausa Fulani Community of Zango Kataf. November 21, 1994



the Kataf had unanimously resolved not to allow the Hausa to farm on those forcefully seized lands again and are also not prepared to go to any court of law because they have a feeling that the courts have never and are not likely to pass judgment in their favour.<sup>104</sup>

This was supported by the statement of the District head of Zangon Kataf who informed the commission that when he met with the various district heads of the Kataf community and asked them to allow the Hausa community to continue cultivating the lands until the ownership of the land was determined, they insisted that;

they would not agree except both the Kataf and Hausa communities will leave the land uncultivated pending the outcome of the complaint before the committee.<sup>105</sup>

and at a meeting of the Kataf people, they warned that;

if in two weeks time, the commission of inquiry does not bring out a positive solution to the issue of their seized land, that they are going to attack the Hausas at Zango town again.<sup>106</sup>

This resulted in retaliatory acts by the Hausa who uprooted crops from Atyap farmlands, an act that prompted a new wave of attacks against the Muslims by Atyap youth.<sup>107</sup> The violence quickly spread to other urban areas of the state and by 17<sup>th</sup> May, Muslims in Kaduna had taken up arms against Christians in retaliatory attacks to avenge the deaths of Muslims in Zangon Kataf. These attacks occurred in the urban areas within the state, most notably in Zaria. The Christians armed themselves and confronted the attackers resulting in a battle between Muslims and Christians in certain parts of Kaduna town including the

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<sup>104</sup> Kaduna State Government: Report of Justice Cudjoe Judicial Commission of Inquiry on Zangon Kataf (Market) Riots and Subsequent Riots. Government Printer. 1992. p.46

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.* p. 47

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.* p.47

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.* p.47



mainly Christian dominated wards of *Unguwar television, Unguwar Romi, Kabala West* and *Rigasa* and the mainly Muslim wards of *Tudun Wada, Malali, Unguwar Rimi* and *Unguwar Sarki*.<sup>108</sup> A total of 1,833 persons all over the state lost their lives during the two riots.<sup>109</sup>

### **6.1.3 Contesting the Traditional Space: The 1999 Kafanchan Conflicts**

Another area where narratives are created and contested is in the traditional space. The earlier chapters had identified the relationship between the Caliphate during its expansionist years and the minority ethnic groups. This coupled with the native authority system of administration during the colonial period ensured that Emirs and Chiefs were given pride of place in the Nigerian state. After independence even though these institutions were stripped of their constitutional roles, they remained important and continued to provide a link between the state and the traditional space. This resulted in increasing demands for their own traditional institutions by ethnic groups that did not have their own Chiefs or Emirs.

One such area where this demand was made was in Kafanchan in southern Kaduna and this demand would result in a conflict in 1999. The cause of the conflict had its roots in the Kaduna state government's creation of Chiefdoms in southern Kaduna in 1999. Chiefdoms are the equivalent of Emirates in non-Muslim areas and southern Kaduna ethnic groups such as the Atyap had demanded for their own Chiefdoms that would separate them from the control of the Zaria emirate. Between 1945 and 1947, the Atyap, Atsam and Bajju demanded for the removal of the district heads of Zangon Katab and Lere and the creation of their own separate chiefdoms (James, 2007). These agitations continued even after independence until, as discussed in a previous chapter, Mallam Bala Ade Dauke Gora was appointed as the

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<sup>108</sup> These are wards within Kaduna town that are populated by predominantly Christians including Ibo and Yoruba and the ethnic groups of southern Kaduna.

<sup>109</sup> Kaduna State Government: Report of Justice Cudjoe Judicial Commission of Inquiry on Zangon Kataf (Market) Riots and Subsequent Riots. Government Printer. 1992. Appendix 13



first indigenous district head in 1967 (Akinteye, Wuye and Ashafa, 2001, Yusuf, 2010). However this only eased the agitations with continued calls for separate chiefdoms for the ethnic groups up to the 1990s when new chiefdoms were created.

The first set of chiefdoms created in the late 1990s included those of the *Atyap*, *Bajju*, *Gwong/Nyakpa* and *Sanga* ethnic groups. This led to demands for chiefdoms by other ethnic groups such as the *Kadara*, *Gbagyi*, *Koro*, *Kuram* and *Kahugu* amongst others (James, 2007). The demand by the ethnic groups of Kafanchan was significant because there was already a Muslim emirate in the town that a Chiefdom would challenge. The indigenous ethnic groups were given an opportunity to press for their demands with the death of the Emir of Jama'a in 1998 when the process of selecting a new Emir resulted in a confrontation between the two groups. The indigenous ethnic groups noted their exclusion from the process and demanded all ethnic groups within the emirate that included, the *Bajju*, *Kaninkom*, *Fantwan*, *Gwandara* and the *Kanufi* along with the Hausa-Fulani be allowed to contest for the position. Alternatively they suggested that the emirate be scrapped and replaced with a Chiefdom that can be contested by all ethnic groups in the area.

The Muslims considered this an unreasonable demand because the emirate represented their Hausa/Muslim heritage. They suggested that if other groups coveted their own traditional institutions, they were aware of the necessary procedures required for the creation of chiefdoms.<sup>110</sup> After the selection of the new Emir, the non-Hausa groups filed a suit to stop his installation (James, 2007). The suit was struck out and this increased tensions in the town compelling the state government to arrange a peace meeting between the groups to find a solution. A compromise was reached where it was agreed that the Emirate would remain in place but with jurisdiction restricted to the Hausa-Fulani community of the

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<sup>110</sup> Interview. Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna. March 21, 2012.



area, while new Chiefdoms would be created for other ethnic groups that could justify their request. It was also agreed that the installation of the new Emir would be postponed until a new Chief had been selected from amongst the other ethnic groups with both installations done concurrently. However tensions remained high because the government proceeded with plans to install the new Emir, ignoring the earlier agreement (James, 2007).

The local ethnic groups stated that 'in going ahead with preparations for the installation of the Emir and having announced it on NTA network news without saying anything on the standing demands of the indigenous people, Colonel U.F. Ahmed (state governor) stands accused of acting in the most imprudent way a Chief executive could ever act.'<sup>111</sup> When the state government attempted to proceed with the official coronation of the Emir it sparked a clash between the groups on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1999. The governor was met with resistance by the local community who prevented him from gaining entrance into the town and the site of the ceremony. The violence that ensued resulted in the death of 110 people and the destruction of property worth thousands of Naira.

This demand for chiefdoms would continue to be a recurring issue and in an interview with the former state governor, Ahmed Makarfi, he acknowledged that this was a problem in the state with 'succession to traditional establishments where religion and ethnicity came to play' one of the reasons behind some of the conflicts in the state.<sup>112</sup> This position was also acknowledged by some of the interviewees who noted that many of the conflicts in the state had their roots in the demand for Chiefdoms with the conflicts seen as a strategy to actualise these demands.<sup>113</sup> It was acknowledged that both the Zangon Kataf and sharia conflicts had resulted in the creation of chiefdoms, which was identified as one of the goals

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<sup>111</sup> James, I. (2007) *The Politics of the Creation of Chiefdoms in Kaduna state*. p. 112

<sup>112</sup> Interview. Senator Ahmed Makarfi. Kaduna. November 27, 2011.

<sup>113</sup> Interview, Abdulganiyu Obatoyinbo. Kaduna. November 24, 2011.



of the people of southern Kaduna.<sup>114</sup> Even though these demands are framed around issues of self-determination, Kazah-Toure (1999) notes that they are more to do with providing an access to political benefits with many of those pushing through these demands, doing this to further their own ambitions.

#### **6.1.4 ‘Sai Sharia’: The Kaduna Crisis of 2000**

Nigeria returned to a multi-party democracy on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1999 with the inauguration of Olusegun Obasanjo as President. This was the country’s fourth attempt at democracy but the hope that a return to democracy would bring about the dividends of democracy as most Nigerians expected was quickly threatened with the extension of the sharia legal system to cover not just the civil but also criminal law in 12 of the 19 northern states, a move that was very popular amongst Muslims. Prior to 1999 the sharia had been operational in some form in the predominantly Muslim northern states, but the expansion of its scope began on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1999, when the Governor of Zamfara state in the northwest part of the country, declared his intention to include the penal code into the sharia legal system in the state. The governor claimed that the expansion of sharia had been one of his campaign promises, making it one of his first priorities on assumption of office.

The announcement led to an outcry from various non-Muslim groups with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) championing the opposition of the Christians (and non-Muslims) in the state and the country and condemning the Zamfara state decision. Even the states where this was introduced were majority Muslim populated, its introduction in Kaduna state that had a large Christian minority (this is still contested by Christians) would be contentious, raising tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims. The sharia issue quickly

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<sup>114</sup> Interview. Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna. March 21, 2012.



became a national issue and heightened religious consciousness around the country as Christian and non-Muslim groups rose in opposition to its expansion.

The governor of Zamfara state rejected these allegations, arguing that there was nothing political about his decision to expand sharia, rather he argued that aside from the fact that this was not unconstitutional, it was his responsibility as a Muslim to ensure that he carried out the demands of the people who elected him to be governed by laws that reflected their wishes. He however reiterated the position that the laws would only apply to Muslims and that Christians and other non-Muslims would not be governed by the laws and thus had nothing to worry about.<sup>115</sup> These assurances however did little to comfort the majority of non-Muslims around the country and there were continued agitations for the Federal government to step in and address the issue. The Muslim community on the other hand saw it as a welcome development given that similar demands had been made in the past. They also argued that as Muslims in a democratic setting, they had the right to be ruled by a system that reflected their wishes. They went as far as suggesting that sharia be introduced throughout the country for adherents of the Islamic faith, a call that further raised tensions between Christians and Muslims in the country with the level of debate between opponents and supporters increasing.

On January 27 2000, Zamfara state officially enacted the sharia laws and by then there were increasing demands from Muslims in other states like Kaduna, Niger, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Kebbi and Sokoto calling for its implementation. Ahmed Makarfi, the Governor of Kaduna state noted that even though 'the state government had not made any pronouncement on intent to do anything [and] there was no committee even looking at anything....people

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<sup>115</sup> Newswatch Magazine. March 6, 2000



themselves were agitating for it and some agitating.....against it.’<sup>116</sup> The call for its implementation resulted in states such as Kaduna and Niger establishing sharia implementation committees to consider the possibility of its introduction/expansion and implementation. This raised tensions within the state, with the former governor, acknowledging the fact that even before the state government took a decision regarding sharia, those for and against it ‘had thrown all caution to the wind’ and efforts to ease tensions were not successful, leading to the violent conflict in the state.<sup>117</sup>

Due to the large Muslim majority in Zamfara state, there was little or no risk of crisis that would pit Muslims against non-Muslims, however the situation in Kaduna with its large Christian minority was different. The Kaduna branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), decided to formally take their opposition to the state legislature and the government house through a peaceful march. Prior to the date of the march, CAN had agreed to postpone the march so as to forestall any risk of a violent confrontation. However on the eve of the march the decision was once again reversed and it was agreed that the march would proceed.<sup>118</sup> The decision to proceed with the march was attributed to the fact that Muslims had been allowed to hold five pro sharia marches and the Christians felt they should be accorded the same rights.<sup>119</sup>

The march attracted an estimated 50,000 Christians who converged at the Murtala Mohammed Square in the centre of the town from where they then proceeded towards the government house where eyewitnesses said the crowd was met by Muslim youths shouting ‘*Sai sharia ko anki ko anso* (sharia whether you like it or not).’<sup>120</sup> This resulted in a

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<sup>116</sup> Interview. Senator Ahmed Makarfi. Kaduna. November 27, 2011

<sup>117</sup> *ibid*

<sup>118</sup> Interview. Archbishop Idowu Fearon, Anglican Diocese. Kaduna. March 12, 2012

<sup>119</sup> Interview. Kaduna state Branch CAN President, Rev. Samuel Kujiyat. , Kaduna. February 15, 2012 and *The News*. March 6, 2000. p.14

<sup>120</sup> *NewsWatch Magazine*. March 6, 2000



confrontation that would spiral into violence that lasted two days with between 1,295 and 5,000 dead and an estimated £25 million worth of property destroyed. The violence was extremely fierce and when he visited the state, President Obasanjo stated that he 'could not believe that Nigerians were capable of such barbarism against one another.'<sup>121</sup>

The scale of the violence was such that Christians and Muslims did not feel safe in areas where they formed a minority and this led to the migration of Christians to predominantly Christian populated areas and vice versa leaving the town physically divided along ethnic and religious lines with later conflicts further entrenching these divides. Currently, the area south towards Abuja from across the Kaduna river has large settlements of mainly Christian ethnic groups from the southern part of the state with concentration of other Christian ethnic groups like the Igbos and Yoruba. In the northern part of the city north towards Zaria, wards such as *Tudun Wada, Ungwar Rimi, Malali and Ungwar Sarki* are predominantly Muslim populated. This has had the effect of reversing urban integration between Muslims and Christians and made the dividing lines during conflicts very clear.

#### **6.1.5 Thisday Newspapers, the Miss World Article and the Kaduna Riots of 2002**

The town was still recovering from the 2000 sharia riots when violence erupted between December 22 and 24, 2002. The immediate cause of the conflict was related to an article in one of the foremost newspapers in the country the 'Thisday' newspaper which asked '***What would the Prophet Mohammed had thought about the pageant?***' The writer stated that 'in all honesty, he would probably have chosen a wife from one of them.'<sup>122</sup> This remark was considered blasphemous by Muslims and given the already fragile relationship and the high level of suspicion between Muslims and non-Muslims around the country, this statement

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<sup>121</sup> Nigeria World Feature. (2000) President Olusegun Obasanjo. Address to the nation on 01/03/2000. March 1. Online. Available from [http://nigeriaworld.com/feature/speech/obasanjo\\_sharia\\_address.html](http://nigeriaworld.com/feature/speech/obasanjo_sharia_address.html). [Retrieved. 12/06/2012]

<sup>122</sup> Coleman. S. (2003). The Miss World Beauty Pageant. Nigeria: Beauty Turns Ugly. *World Press Review*. 50(2) Online. Available from <http://www.worldpress.org/africa/884.cfm>



was the spark needed for the eruption of violence in Kaduna. It is important to note that even though the article was the immediate cause of the eruption of the crisis, the existing tensions since the sharia riots had created an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust between Muslims and Christian within the town.

The article only served as a trigger that ignited a crisis that had been in the making since it was announced that the Miss World pageant would be held in Nigeria. The initial decision to host the pageant in November 2002 during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan was seen as insensitive by Muslims (Muhammed, 2008). The opposition and protests led to a change in the date to December after the Ramadan. So when the article was published on December 16, 2002, tensions were already high in the town and realising that the article had touched on the sensitivities of Muslims, the publishers quickly rushed to retract the piece and make an unreserved apology to the Muslim community.

Despite the retraction and apology, on December 20, Muslim youths mobilised to protest at the Kaduna offices of the newspaper on Attahiru Road in the Government Reserved Area of Malali. They arrived in three buses and motorcycles where they proceeded to burn the newspapers at the office, but fortunately there were no casualties at this time.<sup>123</sup> However, the following day the protests turned violent, with Christian homes, churches and Christian owned businesses the targets of the attacks. Human Rights Watch (2003) noted that all those interviewed confirmed that the first attacks were carried out by Muslim youth, although Christians mobilised to protect their lives and businesses and also to retaliate against the Muslim attacks.

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<sup>123</sup> Human Rights Watch. (2003) *The 'Miss World Riots' Continued Impunity In Kaduna*. 15(13) (A). New York.



### 6.1.6 Protecting Their Votes: The 2011 Post-Election Violence

The 2011 election would also provide a fertile ground for the creation of new narratives and the entrenchment of older ones that revolved around struggles between Muslims and Christians. The lead up to the elections were dogged by controversy because of the decision of the President, Goodluck Jonathan to stand for re-election despite the informal and unwritten power sharing agreement between the north and south. That agreement had seen Ya'ardua emerge as the candidate for the peoples Democratic Party in 2007. After his death in 2010, the north expected that it would field a candidate to complete his term, however Jonathan decided to seek re-election, thereby abandoning the previously agreed zoning agreement. The main opposition political parties, the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) all fielded northern candidates, with Nuhu Ribadu, the former head of the anti corruption agency the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ibrahim Shekarau the governor of Kano state and Muhammadu Buhari a former military head of state and three times Presidential candidate formerly of the ANPP, as their candidates respectively. During the campaigning there was a sense that the votes would be split along ethnic, religious and regional lines with Buhari as the main northern candidate.

In the build up to the elections, there were several cases of election related violence and killings.<sup>124</sup> These included the assassination of the gubernatorial candidate for the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Borno state and bombings in Niger, Bayelsa and Kaduna states. There was also a fear that Maiduguri might erupt in violence given the operations of the Boko Haram group, while Jos was also considered a volatile area due to the decade old ethno religious conflict in the area. There was little or no violence during the first elections into the national assembly, however the presidential election was marred by violence in

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<sup>124</sup> Amnesty International. (2012). *Nigeria Trapped In The Cycle Of Violence*. United Kingdom



some states in the north and this resulted in a curfew being imposed in Kaduna and Bauchi states with governorship elections in those states rescheduled for later dates.

In Kaduna there were other factors that contributed to the level of violence. When Goodluck Jonathan ascended the presidency after the death of Yar'adua, he chose the serving Governor of the state, Namadi Sambo as his Vice President. This resulted in his deputy, Patrick Yakowa, a Christian indigene of southern Kaduna assuming the office of Governor. While Sambo was under consideration for the post, there were clamours by Muslims in the state that he should remove himself from reckoning so that Yakowa would not become Governor.<sup>125</sup> In an interview, a respondent noted that Muslims felt that Sambo did the Muslim faith a disservice by accepting the position of Vice President.<sup>126</sup>

This campaign to exclude Christians of southern Kaduna from the office of Governor amplified the divisions between Muslims and Christians that continued to fester and would resurface during the 2011 elections. As the elections approached Muslims and Christians intensified their campaigns with the Christian slogan being '*Kaduna for Christ*' while the Muslim slogan was '*Kaduna sai mai sallah*' meaning that Kaduna should be ruled by someone that prays, in this case a Muslim.<sup>127</sup> With Yakowa the candidate for the PDP, the party was portrayed as a Christian party, while the opposition Congress for Progress Change (CPC) with its Muslim candidate was depicted as a Muslim party. It was noted that Yakowa's decision to contest the seat met with massive opposition that centred around 'why a candidate from the so-called minority should govern the majority.'<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Interview. Kaduna state Branch CAN President, Rev. Samuel Kujiyat. , Kaduna. February 15, 2012.

<sup>126</sup> Interview Saad Baloni. Kaduna. March 21. 2012

<sup>127</sup> Memorandum submitted by the Jama'atu Nasril Islam to the Justice Lawal Bello Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence. 2011

<sup>128</sup> Salisu, S. (2012) Yakowa: Kaduna's Delicate Dance. *Nigeria Intel*. December, 17. [Online] <http://www.nigeriaintel.com/2012/12/17/yakowa-kadunas-delicate-dance/>



The postponement of the first set of elections created fear that the government intended to rig the election thereby raising tensions, so that when the elections were held and the results favoured the PDP, the suspicions seemed to be justified in the eyes of northern Muslims. The presidential elections resulted in the PDP winning or achieving the required 25% of votes in many northern states that had been considered solid CPC states such as Katsina, Kaduna and Kano enabling its candidate to be declared the winner (see table 6.3).

**TABLE 6.4**

**2011 Election Results**

Candidate	Party	Votes	States Threshold (met the 25% criteria)
Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	PDP	22,495,187	31
Muhammadu Buhari	CPC	12,214,853	16
Nuhu Ahmed Ribadu	CAN	2,079,151	4
Ibrahim Shekaru	ANPP	917,012	0

**Note:**

- I. These results do not show all the candidates
- II. The number of states relates to the states that the candidates met the 25% of votes to show spread.

**2011 Presidential Election Results (INEC, 2011)**

The presidential election results set off demonstrations that erupted into violence in many northern states. Voters in the core Muslim states in the north believed that their candidate had been rigged out of certain victory, leading to violent protests. Out of the 15 states where the violence was severe, 14 were in the north with Kaduna having the highest number of casualties with over 87% of the deaths reported there (see table 6.5). While the initial attacks targeted members of the ruling PDP, the violence began to be directed towards Christians especially in Kaduna and Zaria towns where churches and Christian



owned businesses were burnt. As the attacks against Christians increased, they defended themselves and the violence spread to other parts of the state particularly southern Kaduna. In Kaduna town, Christians were killed along the northern highway leading into town while Muslims were killed along the Abuja expressway at the Christian settlement known as *Gonin Gora*. The local governments of Zangon Kataf and Kafanchan were two of the worst hit, with many of the towns and Muslim settlements, the scenes of violence. These included *Mararaban Rido, Zonkwa, Gidan Magwa, Matsirga, Samarun Kataf, Dadda, and Sabon Garin Kwoi* all in the two local government areas most affected by the violence.<sup>129</sup>

**TABLE 6.5**

**2011 Post Election Violence: Deaths and Arrests**

State	No. of Lives lost	No. of Injured	No. of Arrested
Adamawa	26	158	40
Akwa Ibom	5	30	-
Bauchi	36	200	-
Borno	3	20	-
Gombe	20	147	-
Jigawa	1	38	-
Kaduna	827	71	-
Kano	8	22	169
Katsina	7	59	169
Kebbi	0	0	1
Nasarawa	0	5	1
Niger	9	27	213
Sokoto	0	31	34
Yobe	1	3	120
Zamfara	0	27	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>626</b>

Justice Lemu Commission of Inquiry Report on Post Election Violence. 2011

<sup>129</sup> Interview. Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna. March 21, 2012



Zonkwa town in Zangon Kataf local government area of Kaduna state was one of the worst affected areas by the violence. The violence there erupted on 18<sup>th</sup> April when the Christian community accused the Muslim population of attempting to smuggle arms into the town in a truck that refused to stop at a roadblock mounted by youths. This led to a chase where it crashed in the Muslim section of the town with the driver managing to escape. The chasing mob burnt the truck and attacked the Muslim population who they claim had tried to stop them from taking possession of the truck.<sup>130</sup> The Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) stated that it was this incident that sparked the violence.<sup>131</sup>

SOKAPU also noted that prior to the violence of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April, there was an indication that the Muslim community had plans to attack the 'indigenous' groups of Zonkwa and its environs. They based this on the exodus of Muslim women and children from the town, which they claim was an indication that the Muslim community had fore knowledge of the attacks.<sup>132</sup> However since the first conflicts in southern Kaduna in the 1980s, Muslims usually move their vulnerable women and children from the conflict areas as they are at greatest risk and any exodus must have been carried out to protect them from the expected violence.

However, the union stated that;

In the evening hours of April 17, 2011, residents of Kafanchan heard usual calls to prayers at about 10pm from the Central Mosque. Unknown to the larger population of Kafanchan, this was a clarion call to arms.... We have it on record that one of the Muslim leaders in Kafanchan phoned 3 times to alert one of his friends in one of the nearby chiefdoms on an impending danger brewing amongst his men. Kafanchan soon vibrated with powerful gunshots that extinguished the silent and peaceful atmosphere of the town. This was followed by the burning of properties, killing and maiming of Christians and the destruction of their churches. Simultaneously, the violent attacks in Kafanchan were repeated in nearby

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<sup>130</sup> An Assessment of The Post-Election Violence. Press release by Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU), June 8, 2011. Online. <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/main-square/63390-assessment-post-election-violence-swept-kaduna-some-northern-states-nigeria.html>

<sup>131</sup> *ibid*

<sup>132</sup> *ibid*



Madakiya (Old Jema'a). Less than some twelve (12) hours later, some Fulani settlements in Southern Kaduna including Kagoro, Sabon Sarki, Abet and other villages spread over Southern Kaduna joined in attacking their host indigenous population. The indigenous population and other Christians were completely taken by surprise by the violent attack, as they could not respond to the heavy gunfire against them by their attackers.<sup>133</sup>

These claims were refuted by the Hausa Muslim community who in their submission to the Presidential Committee on the 2011 Election Violence and Civil Disturbance, stated that prior to the eruption of full scale violence they had informed the security agencies as early as 12 noon on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, 2011 of receiving information that some Christian youth had set up illegal road blocks in the area, where they attacked motorists leading to the death of one person who was identified as a resident of Jere town in Kagarko Local government area.<sup>134</sup>

The security forces took no action to dismantle the roadblocks and during the peak of the violence through the nights of 18<sup>th</sup> April to the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2011 the town remained under siege, with all points of entry and exit closed with the illegal roadblocks still in place. One respondent interviewed noted that this resulted in Muslims being 'specifically targeted in Zonkwa with the street where the Muslims lived beginning on the main street there, just completely burnt out.'<sup>135</sup> This made it difficult for Muslims to escape and probably accounts for the over 600 people that were estimated to have been killed during the violence.<sup>136</sup>

The inaction of the security forces even when contacted was also another factor in the number of casualties. Associates of the governor made several attempts to contact him so that security forces could be deployed there to curtail the violence, but got no response.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> ibid

<sup>134</sup> Interview. Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna. March 21, 2012

<sup>135</sup> Interview. Sister Kathleen McGarvey. Kaduna, November 18, 2011.

<sup>136</sup> Memorandum submitted by the Ummah Development Association to the Justice Lawal Bello Judicial Commission of Inquiry. 2011

<sup>137</sup> Interview. Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna. March 21, 2012



It is also estimated that between 15,000 and 38,000 people were displaced, many of them moving to refugee centres in Kaduna.<sup>138</sup> Another report of the events in Zonkwa noted that the attacks seemed well planned;

‘and not a spontaneous reaction to the violence elsewhere. The killings were systematic with women and children spared and hauled off to the police station by the very men who were doing the slaughtering. For the boys, most under the age of 10 were spared. The man who was our guide said, his son, who was 12, was killed. A woman, whose quick thinking saved her son, lied to her attackers that her son was 9.’<sup>139</sup>

The account noted that the victims knew their killers and in narrating the murder of her father ‘one of the girls whose father was decapitated and had his stomach torn open said she saw who did it. She knew him well. He was her history teacher.’<sup>140</sup> Another person whose grandfather was a victim in the Kafanchan area, narrated how one of those that perpetuated the act was someone he knew personally and he had called him and said ‘I have killed your granddad.’<sup>141</sup> The attacks were very personal and targeted and the inaction of the security forces to act even after statements by those affected has created a strong feeling of injustice amongst the Muslim community.<sup>142</sup> However in an interview with a Christian leader from southern Kaduna, he downplayed the incident, stating that the violence in Zonkwa was because the Christians in the area were ready for the expected Muslim violence allowing them to overwhelm the Muslims.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> These figures vary due to the fact that many did not move to the refugee camps but instead found refuge with relatives

<sup>139</sup> John, E. (2011). The Women Whose Men Were Taken. *The Dark Corner*. Online. 9<sup>th</sup> October. Available from <http://elnathanjohn.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/women-whose-men-were-taken.html> [retrieved: 12/10/2013]

<sup>140</sup> *ibid* and Human Rights Watch. 2013. “Leave Everything to God” Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria. New York, USA.

<sup>141</sup> Interview. Sanusi Maikudi, Kaduna. March 21, 2012

<sup>142</sup> *ibid*

<sup>143</sup> Interview Kaduna CAN President Reverend Kujiyat. Kaduna, February 15, 2012



There was also violence in Matsirga, a small farming village in Zangon Kataf local government area situated approximately 30km away from Zonkwa, where on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011 youths of the Bajju ethnic group attacked the Muslims in the town.<sup>144</sup> It began with the erection of roadblocks by youths of the town at the main access road into the town during the market day. When challenged by the town elders, the youths claimed that given the crisis in other parts of the state, the roadblocks were to guard against the possible influx of strangers to the town who could create trouble. However after an attack against a Hausa politician who was the zonal chairman of the opposition National Transformation Party, the Muslims feared that this might be a prelude to other attacks against the Muslim community.

The traditional head of the Hausa community, the *Sarkin Hausawa*, along with the District head and the *Yariman Ikulu*, a prince of the ruling traditional institution met with the youths that carried out the attack to try and ease the rising tensions.<sup>145</sup> They were assured that there will be no further incidents but the Muslim community was still wary and the men arranged for their women and children to leave the town to safer areas. This decision was justified when around 7pm, after the Muslim evening prayers, a Christian youth informed the Muslim men that the main youth group that had carried out the earlier attacks had plans to attack the Muslim community during the night. This was confirmed after violence erupted just after 8pm when the 'indigenous' youths began attacking and burning Muslim homes that lasted till the early hours of the next day.<sup>146</sup> Even though the crisis began under the cloud of the election results, the attacks specifically targeted Muslims with one respondent noting that the Muslim community in Ikulu including himself were attacked even though most of them were members of the ruling PDP.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Interview. Yakubu Ashafa. Kaduna. July 31, 2012

<sup>145</sup> *ibid*

<sup>146</sup> *ibid*

<sup>147</sup> *ibid*



The local groups in southern Kaduna also began targeting Fulani herdsmen who they saw as part of the Hausa-Fulani community. The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association notes that over 380 Fulani were killed in the local government areas during the conflicts since 1987, with over 24,000 missing cattle.<sup>148</sup> Another nomadic association, the Tabital Pulaaku International Nigeria chapter also reported that over 200 pastoralists were killed, 1,462 houses burnt and 953 cattle and 2,352 sheep/goats were killed during the post election violence in southern Kaduna, with over 30,000 displaced persons.<sup>149</sup> One respondent with close links to the military stated that he had to arrange for troops to be sent to the area to protect the nomadic Fulani who were being attacked by the local communities.<sup>150</sup> This drew the Fulani into the conflict and they have since then carried out night raids not dissimilar to those in Plateau state against villages in southern Kaduna further exacerbating the conflicts. One Fulani herdsman stated that when most of his cattle were killed after the post election violence, he sold what was left and bought a gun. He then became a gun for hire carrying out revenge killings on behalf of his tribesmen, with the funds for his services enabling him to recoup his lost cattle.<sup>151</sup>

Because the post election violence occurred in many states around the country, the federal government once again inaugurated a commission of inquiry to investigate the violence. The federal government committee was headed by Sheikh Lemu and was tasked with investigating 'the post election violence in some parts of the North, fish out the culprits who would be brought to book and made to face the full wrath of the law.'<sup>152</sup> The Kaduna state government also established its own commission of inquiry headed by Justice Lawal Bello that was charged with similar responsibilities at the state level. Both commissions of inquiry

<sup>148</sup> Human Rights Watch. 2013. "Leave Everything to God" Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria. New York, USA

<sup>149</sup> Memorandum Submitted To The Northern States Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security (Noscrehes), Submitted by Tabital Pulaaku International Nigeria Chapter. 2012. pp. 7

<sup>150</sup> Interview. Mahmood Modibbo. Kaduna. July 20, 2014

<sup>151</sup> Interview. Nasiru Zangon Aya. Kaduna. November 26, 2011

<sup>152</sup> Oke, G. (2011). Violence: How far can presidential panel go? *Vanguard Newspapers*, May 11. Online [Retrieved 5/2/2013]



have submitted their reports, but these are yet to be released to the public while no action has been taken regarding their recommendations.

## **6.2 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a description of the evolution of the conflicts in Kaduna state. Some of the information was easily available, such as submissions regarding the post election conflicts, but in some cases due to poor record keeping, data was unavailable. However, the available evidence suggests that the conflicts in southern Kaduna involved the Hausa-Fulani on one side and other groups that consider themselves as indigenous. Secondly it was observed that while like the Jos conflicts, several factors were responsible for the immediate causes of the conflicts such as political and economic factors, groups relied on historical narratives that enabled mobilisation along ethnic and religious lines that are intertwined in the areas of southern Kaduna with the indigenous groups largely Christian, while the Hausa-Fulani are mainly Muslim. The narratives highlighted the risks to the group ensuring that they were now positioned at extreme ends of the conflict where they did not acknowledge the claims of the other group thereby resulting in increased suspicions and distrust making conflict resolution more difficult.

The next chapter examines how these narratives that emerged from the conflicts in Kaduna and Plateau states are used to develop the ethos of the conflicts. These then result in the development of emotions that could be positive such as pride or negative such as fear and hatred that are used to determine inter group relations. If these emotions are positive they help in reducing the potency of the competition so that they do not lead to violence and are easily resolved, while where they are negative they exacerbate the conflicts leading to acts of violence against each other. It is a better understanding of the development of these



emotions, which are underlying factors in the dynamics of inter-group relations and the conflicts in these areas that can help in the improvement of conflict resolution efforts.



## **CHAPTER 7: CREATING THE ETHOS OF THE CONFLICT**

### **7.0 INTRODUCTION**

The thesis has so far provided the basis for understanding conflicts and also a general background to the conflicts in Kaduna and Plateau states. The adoption of a socio-psychological foundation in studying conflicts through the manner groups and actors use collective memories and the narratives that are created from these memories is examined here in the context of the Kaduna and Plateau conflicts. This chapter focuses on how the ethos of conflicts are developed and how groups cultivate radicalised and contentious narratives that they use to position themselves at extreme ends of the conflicts so that the other group's demands are not seen as legitimate, thereby enabling the in-group to justify its acts of violence against the other. The narratives explored emerge from interviews, reports of judicial commissions of inquiry, submissions by groups to these commissions of inquiry and statements of political and religious elites.

As already noted by Bar-Tal (2011) and Ross (2009), during conflicts narratives begin by focusing on the historical genesis of the conflicts that help the groups create the ethos that give them an understanding of the conflict and their roles in it. It has also been noted that during periods of intense competition, these narratives are radicalised by groups to justify their actions against other groups involved in the conflict (Cobb, 2013). This assertion is supported by Manojlovic (2010:5) who argued that contentious narratives help groups 'maintain divisions, exclusiveness and justification of violent actions' against the 'other' that is defined as the enemy. These kinds of narratives lead to the development of negative collective emotional orientations such as hatred, humiliation, anger suspicions, distrust and the need for revenge that affect inter group relations and determine group reactions to the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2012).



## **7.1 EMERGING FROM THE PAST- LINKING CURRENT COMPETITION TO THE PAST**

The conflicts of Kaduna and Plateau states have gone on for over a decade and while there have been periods of lulls, there continue to be episodes of eruptions of conflicts between the groups at the slightest provocation. The narratives will show that these conflicts are tied together because current conflicts are based on past conflicts and tense inter group relations. The current narratives from the conflicts take their starting point from collective memories that relate to the past and form the basis for the groups' understanding and goals, which are 'the configuration of shared central societal beliefs that provide a particular dominant orientation to a society for the present and the future' (Bar-Tal, 2000:139). These historical memories are framed within social, political and economic contexts around issues of marginalisation and domination and the struggle to modify the power dynamics between the groups.

In order to understand the reasons for the various conflicts, governments at the Federal and state level appointed commissions of inquiry to consider their immediate and remote causes. These commissions provided groups with a platform where they were able to voice their grievances. These grievances related to issues of exclusion and group inequalities in the socio-political, traditional and economic affairs between the Muslim Hausa-Fulani and the non-Muslim ethnic groups in many states in the north. These narratives are continuously replicated and restructured with every conflict creating new sets of grievances and reinforcing older ones. The conflict areas in Plateau and Kaduna states share similar historical trajectories resulting in comparable set of grievances being expressed by the competing groups.



In southern Kaduna, inter group relations begin from the period of the jihad of Dan Fodio when the emirates were expanding their territory and raiding many of the surrounding communities for slave labour. The communities of the area see this as the main factor that determined their historical relationship and still provides the background for their current relationship with the Hausa-Fulani Muslims. While these groups managed to resist the emirates during the period (Turaki, 2010), this changed after the advent of the British when the emirates were given greater jurisdiction over the area with the support of the colonial administration through the Native authorities. This increased the already existing suspicions and distrust between the groups that is still evident. In Jos the situation was similar to that of southern Kaduna, with the groups resisting the slave raids of the nearby emirates of Bauchi and Zaria. After the arrival of the mining companies in the Plateau, there were changes to the basis of the relationship between the groups as the colonial administration determined how the groups would relate.

## **7.2 GROUPS' UNDERSTANDING OF CONFLICTS**

The argument that narratives are used to provide groups with the ethos of the conflict (Bartal, 2000) and that they act as either reflectors, exacerbators or inhibitors and causes of conflicts (Ross, 2007) allows us to examine how groups understand conflicts through their narratives. Through the use of historical foundations, competing groups in the conflict areas have used narratives to justify their roles and provide them with a clear understanding of the reasons for the outbreak of the conflicts. There are certain patterns that have emerged from these narratives and depending on the demographics of the conflict area, we notice different narratives at different levels. The first pattern is that at whatever level, minority groups fear cultural and religious domination from the majority and they try to ensure that their positions are protected. These are exemplified by the narratives that emerged after the Kafanchan and Zangon Kataf conflicts of 1987 and 1992 respectively where the narratives of



the minority indigenous groups at the state level, portrayed them as the victims and Muslims as the perpetrators of the violence.

However at the local level in southern Kaduna, where the mainly Christian ethnic groups outnumber the predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani, Muslims have presented themselves as the victims with the local ethnic groups as the aggressors. With an estimated population ratio of 70:30<sup>153</sup> in favour of non-Muslim ethnic groups in southern Kaduna, Muslims have since 1987 always had the largest number of casualties during the conflicts in the area.<sup>154</sup> However Christians seem to suffer just as much violence directed at them in other parts of the state where Muslims have carried out retaliatory attacks against Christians. The reverse is the case in Plateau state where in most areas, like Jos township, Muslims are in the minority and usually bear the brunt of the violence. The narratives from Plateau state Muslims, notably in Jos north and Shendam local government areas, revolve around the fear of political insecurity and the issue of exclusion (Kwaja, 2008).

In northern Nigeria, there is apprehension of an Islamisation agenda by the Muslims especially in many of the states that have expanded the Sharia legal system which Christians fear will affect their rights and privileges and their access to social, economic and political benefits. These anxieties help each group define its purpose in the conflict, increase their cohesiveness and has raised tensions and maintained suspicions and distrust between groups that has affected the dynamics of inter group interactions and kept the flames of the conflicts alive.

The level of competition is determined by how the other groups see the legitimacy of the demands of the other group and where these demands are not seen as valid, there is every

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<sup>153</sup> There is no verifiable data regarding numbers with National Censuses not taking these into consideration.

<sup>154</sup> Interview. Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna. March 21, 2012



likelihood that the conflicts will be more intense if both sides are unwilling to compromise and find a middle ground. One area where groups attempt to redress these issues is in the public space which as Martin (1995) notes is where power resides and in the Nigerian context these are both, the political and traditional spheres and this is examined in the following section.

### **7.3 CONTESTING PUBLIC SPACES**

The supremacy in the control of public spaces in Nigeria is important because it affirms one group's dominance over another. This competition usually puts the groups on opposing sides so that when contestation is intense, seemingly insignificant issues such as the use of Christian symbols like crosses in public places such as hospitals, the use of classrooms in schools as Chapels and for choir practice become contentious with Muslims demanding that the authorities desist from granting them permission for these. On the other hand Christians challenge Muslim demands for the approval of an Islamic mode of dressing in state schools, shorter working hours on Fridays and during the Islamic month of Ramadan and the recognition of the Islamic calendar so that public holidays are given for the Muslim New Year.<sup>155 156</sup>

Christian resistance is because they see this as giving greater visibility to Islam and encouraging the Islamisation agenda. They also object to the indiscriminate construction of mosques in public places without proper planning permission and the closure of roads during Muslim Friday prayers that are a common feature in towns across the north, although this is also becoming common during church services.<sup>157</sup> Some Muslims in Jos were reported to have ignored such objections, with a witness at the Justice Ajibola commission of inquiry

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<sup>155</sup> Kaduna State Peace and Reconciliation Committee. Observations. December 8, 2012

<sup>156</sup> White Paper On The Justice Donli Judicial Commission of Inquiry Report of the Committee To Investigate Cause of Riots and Disturbances In Kaduna State. Government Printer 1987. p.31

<sup>157</sup> Plateau Resolves: Report of the Plateau Peace Conference. Main Report. 2004



stating that Muslims bragged that '*mun rufe hanya me zasu yi*' meaning 'we have closed the roads, what can they do?'<sup>158</sup> This inconvenience raises tensions between Muslim and Christian groups, with the Christian Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) stating that it 'frowned at the blocking of major roads on Fridays in Jos which it said is a predominantly Christian area.'<sup>159</sup> The closure of the road near the Jos central mosque in 2001 was partly responsible for the outbreak of the riots, making this a significant problem. Christians also condemned the use of loudspeakers for Muslim call for prayers because apart from being a public nuisance, is also seen as strengthening the visibility of Islam within the town.<sup>160</sup>

After the 2001 conflict, aware that these issues created frictions between Muslims and non-Muslims, the Plateau state government enacted new laws to address the issues. The laws were to control the use of public spaces, especially the construction of religious places of worship in markets and motor parks; the use of schools for religious worship and the erection of mosques in residential areas. However the Muslim community condemned the new laws that the Jos branch of the JNI claimed were being put in place to favour Christians, noting that the policies were specifically targeted against the Muslim community such that 'it is [sic] become clearer that Muslims have been singled out for total annihilation.'<sup>161</sup>

The JNI argued that the decision to ban the construction of mosques in public places such as motor parks and offices was also a confirmation of government's bias against Muslims and its tacit support of Christian groups. Given that this policy was intended to reduce tensions and that mosques were built in areas without the required building permissions, government's decision was in order and the Muslim claims of bias were clearly unfounded

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<sup>158</sup> Justice Bola Ajibola Commission of Inquiry to the 2008 Jos Riots. 2009

<sup>159</sup> White Paper On The Report Of The Justice Nikki Tobi Judicial Commission Of Inquiry Report. Into The Civil Disturbances In Jos And Its Environs. Plateau State Government. September 2002. p.112

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.* p. 112

<sup>161</sup> *ibid.* p.110



and aimed at increasing this feeling of 'us against them' that raised suspicions within the Muslim community of deliberate anti Muslim government policies.

Other areas of contestation involve competition over the use of public institutions such as state owned media establishments. Before the introduction of privatisation and commercialisation policies in the 1980s, federal and state owned media organisations were wholly funded by government through budgetary provisions. This allowed government to have a strong influence on their operations including content and their editorial and programming policies. However the commercialisation of public parastatals reduced government funding, with these establishments now having to seek new sources of revenue. This diminished role of government gave the government owned media organisations greater operational autonomy. However Christians still claimed bias in the level of access to programming slots. In 1995 a noted northern Christian, Ambassador Jolly Tanko Yusuf described Muslims in very derogatory terms by referring to them as 'agents of the devil' when he argued that Muslim control of the media ensured;

Islam continues to make inroads even though Jihad is no longer waged by sword. It doesn't have to. Those agents of the devil compound people's misery by using electronic and print media to heap insults on Christians (Yusuf 1995: 108 cited in Hackett, 2003:1)

However in an interview, a staff of Radio Nigeria stated that there was no difference in the level of access to programming between Muslim and Christian groups. In fact it was noted that complaints now emanated from Muslim quarters that now see a domination of the airwaves by Christian programmes, not acknowledging that they have the same opportunities for airing their programmes with Christians and Muslims allocated airtime on Fridays and Sundays respectively. However he stated that Christian groups were willing to pay for extra airtime outside of these allocations because of a need to penetrate the mainly Muslim areas, with Muslim groups not concerned about spreading their 'word' in already



predominant Muslim areas. There is also said to be little difference in the number of Christian and Muslim religious programming so that the cries of skewed access by Muslims is all about perceptions.<sup>162</sup>

This access to airtime is also a point of contention in Jos where Muslims accuse the Plateau Radio and Television Company (PRTV) of a Christian bias in its programming that has excluded the Muslim community. They noted that while PTRV ensured exclusive Christian programming on Sundays, this was not the case on Fridays, when even during Muslim programmes, Christian tunes were injected in between the programming.<sup>163</sup> Another Muslim group, the Miyeti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association also noted that 'despite being a public property, funded by money that accrue from both Muslims and Christians, the PRTV has been operating like the station established and funded by the Christian Association of Nigeria' (CAN).<sup>164</sup> Because the main media establishment in Jos is state government owned, it has a greater influence on its content and programming, which Muslims argue seek to restrict Muslim programming.

Christians protest the domination of Islamic perspectives on international media stations such as the BBC and VOA Hausa services, even though these organisations are independent and outside the control of Muslims and the Nigerian government.<sup>165</sup> However, because the programmes are broadcast in Hausa and most Hausa are Muslims, it is wrongly perceived as another way of ensuring Muslim hegemony. This is an unfounded accusation and only helps in promoting a false narrative of Muslim interference in news programming and a strategy of increasing the visibility of Islam. However, Hausa programmes on international radio stations have had the effect of internationalising local crisis while also localising

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<sup>162</sup> Interview. Suleiman Shitu. Kaduna. August 12, 2013

<sup>163</sup> Ishaq, M.L. (2000) Co-existence on the Plateau. *Weekly Trust*, 18<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> January. p.15

<sup>164</sup> White Paper On The Report Of The Justice Nikki Tobi Judicial Commission Of Inquiry Report. Into The Civil Disturbances In Jos And Its Environs. Plateau State Government. September 2002. p.145

<sup>165</sup> *ibid*



international conflicts. This results in conflicts such as those in Iraq, Afghanistan and the West Bank being brought to the doors of many homes in the north. Even though there is no clear link between local and international conflicts, there is an increase in the emotional attachments between local and international groups as we see in the continuous support for Palestinians in northern Nigeria and the moral support Christians get from international groups such as Open Doors International that highlights what it sees as the persecution of northern Christians.

In many northern states, the denial of land allocation for the construction of churches is a complaint by Christians who see this as another way in which Muslims attempt to restrict Christian visibility. In states such as Kano, Kaduna, Gombe and Bauchi, Christians observe that they 'have been turned into second class citizens in the region' even though 'the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria stipulates that there should be freedom of worship but Christians in most states across the region are constantly denied land to build churches and were denied freedom of worship.'<sup>166</sup> ECWA and CAN both note that the denial of land for the construction of churches continues in many northern urban areas with the northern headquarters of CAN stating that 'some governors have revoked certificates of occupancy issued to churches by their predecessors.'<sup>167</sup>

The Joint Chapel Committee of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, also noted that efforts to build churches within the university were being denied by the school authorities even after prior approval had been granted. This was due to protests by Muslim religious leaders in Zaria who wanted to limit the number of churches within the university in Zaria, even though the university is a federal government institution. Of particular note was the

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<sup>166</sup> Memorandum To The Northern States Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security Submitted By The Christian Association Of Nigeria (CAN), North –East Zone . 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2012

<sup>167</sup> Memorandum Submitted by the Christian Association Of Nigeria (CAN), Northern States Headquarters, Kaduna to The Northern States Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.



demolition of a Catholic Church under construction by the university authorities and the conversion of the land to a public motor park.<sup>168</sup> They also noted that while there were over 37 mosques within the Kongo campus, Muslims were finding it hard to tolerate the two chapels-one protestant, one Catholic-within the campus.<sup>169</sup> The Kaduna CAN President noted that:

I asked my Muslim counterparts, please tell me, what is it that you see in the church that irritates and make you angry? If you see you don't like it, what is it? .... the whole community of Zaria, Tudun Wada and so forth, that they don't want any more additional church building in Kongo, in a federal institution.<sup>170</sup>

Christians also claim that that they 'are discriminated against in terms of employments, appointments, promotion, discipline, sponsorships (local and foreign) and award of contracts.'<sup>171</sup> There are also allegations of inequitable allocation of offices between Christians and Muslims in Kaduna state, with southern Kaduna Christians contending that 'parastatals that are considered "juicy or lucrative" are an exclusive preserve for the Hausa-Fulani Muslims, both at the State and Federal levels.'<sup>172</sup> They also note that they continue to be treated as 'underdogs reserved to 'lap' at the feet of the Hausa-Fulani Muslim lord who often time is unqualified for the position, incompetent and inept to occupy and function in that office.'<sup>173</sup>

In their submission to the 1987 commission of inquiry the 'indigenous' groups raised issues of marginalisation, noting that they did not have adequate representation in the state

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<sup>168</sup> Memorandum To The Secretary, Committee On Reconciliation, Healing & Security Joint Chapel Committee from the Chapel Committee, Ahmadu Bello University, Kongo Campus, Zaria. 2012

<sup>169</sup> *ibid*

<sup>170</sup> Interview. Kaduna CAN President, Reverend Kujiyat. February 15, 2012.

<sup>171</sup> Memorandum Submitted To The Northern States Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security. By The Christian Association Of Nigeria (CAN), Northern States Headquarters, Kaduna. 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.

<sup>172</sup> On Perennial Crises In The Northern States, With Special Reference To Kaduna State Memo By Southern Kaduna Indigenes Progressive Forum (SKIPFO) To The Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security, Panel Set Up By The Northern States Governors. September, 2012.

<sup>173</sup> *ibid*



executive council, the posts of permanent secretaries and into board of parastatals.<sup>174</sup> Every ethnic or religious group can make the same claim depending on which part of the country is being examined and which group is in the majority. Because political offices confer the power to distribute favours to different groups, those in control of the highest political office in any of the tiers of government are accused of favouring their own ethnic groups. So when you examine the conflict at different tiers of government, accusations of marginalisation are common but differ depending on the group in power.

In Kaduna state another area of contestation relates to the distribution of federal and state institutions within the state, with the northern part of the state having a greater presence of such institutions. This has led to calls for a more even spread of development within the state so that southern Kaduna would benefit because previous efforts had focused on the Hausa Fulani areas such as Zaria and Ikara.<sup>175</sup> In March 2013, members of the PDP from southern Kaduna took their case to the President, where they noted that even though the zone produced over 54% of the votes during the 2011 elections, there was no Minister from the zone.<sup>176</sup> They also noted that;

...Kaduna North, which gave only 16 per cent of the total votes, got 15 appointees, taking up 50 per cent, followed by Kaduna Central with eight appointees (27 per cent). Kaduna South, for all its efforts, got seven appointees (23 per cent) and of the seven, in a Christian-dominated area, two were Muslims.<sup>177</sup>

The group noted that at the state level;

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<sup>174</sup> White Paper On The Justice Donli Judicial Commission of Inquiry Report of the Committee To Investigate Cause of Riots and Disturbances In Kaduna State. Government Printer 1987.

<sup>175</sup> The Causes And Solutions To Crises In Kaduna State. Memorandum To The Northern States Governors' Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security. A Presentation By The Southern Kaduna Peoples' Union (SOKAPU) National Headquarters, Kaduna. September 2012

<sup>176</sup> NBF News. (2013) Southern Kaduna Leaders Seek Military Base, Federal Appointments. March 30. Online. Available from <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/blog/southern-kaduna-leaders-seek-military-base-federal-appointments/>

<sup>177</sup> *ibid*



Out of the 31 federal appointments made in Kaduna State to date, only seven are in the southern senatorial zones which is the only PDP stronghold in the state given our 51 percent of the votes cast for the ruling party in the last presidential election<sup>178</sup>

These claims do not reflect the true position with seven of the eight Ministers appointed to represent Kaduna state into ministerial positions since 1999 all from the southern part of Kaduna. These narratives create a false perception where the group feels that its members are being systematically excluded in opportunities and benefits.<sup>179</sup>

These issues also resonate in Plateau state, where the minority Hausa Fulani Muslim protest their marginalisation and exclusion in the distribution of political, economic and social opportunities, noting that this was a deliberate policy by the non-Muslims in the state. They cite the resistance to the appointment of a Hausa-Fulani person to the position of Chairman of the caretaker council of the local government, the opposition of the groups to the issuance of indigeneity letters to the Muslim community of Jos north Local government and Shendam local government area and the hostility to the appointment of another Hausa-Fulani as the chairman of the Poverty Alleviation and Eradication Programme in Jos North local government as examples of this exclusionary policy. They have also protested the lack of proportionate representation in the state cabinet and elective offices, all under the guise of indigenisation.<sup>180</sup>

This situation is similar in Yelwa-Shendam where the Muslim community also stressed the denial of indigeneity letters to the Hausa-Fulani, who are still categorised as settlers by the majority Goemai community, thereby denying them access to political and social benefits. They noted that these were part of a long history of grudges against the Hausa-Fulani

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<sup>178</sup> *ibid*

<sup>179</sup> Interview. Ibrahim Iro Yusuf. Kaduna. March 30, 2013

<sup>180</sup> Memorandum Submitted by the Jos Branch of Jama'atu Nasril Islam to the Northern States Committee on Reconciliation, Healing and Security. 2012



Muslim community, where the indigenous ethnic groups had ‘opposed, threatened and issued incitive [sic] documents’ against them.<sup>181</sup> Even though these are genuine grievances, however they are not peculiar to these areas, as it is evident in every part of the country with the oppressors and the oppressed differing depending on which groups are in the majority.

#### **7.4 ‘REALLY THEY ARE SO ENVIOUS’: THE ECONOMIC ASPECT OF CONFLICTS**

Another area where these groups compete for control is the economic space and economic factors have been identified as playing a role in the conflicts of Kaduna and Plateau states. Abdu (2012) noted that economic competition contributed to the changing dynamics of the conflicts in Kaduna while Hoomlong’s (2008) analysis of the Plateau crisis also identified economic factors as underlying causes of the conflicts. One area where this has been contested is the issue of land ownership due to its economic importance with this becoming a common narrative after the 1992 Zangon Kataf conflict.

The whole of Zangon Town covers a 4-mile radius surrounded by the Chawai River and the Zango stream leaving little room for expansion. It is within this area that the Hausa-Fulani have their farmlands and if the Kataf had taken control of them it would have negatively affected the economic base of the Hausa community. It is this resistance that was partly responsible for the outbreak of violence in 1992 as noted by the former secretary of the Zangon Kataf Hausa-Fulani community who stated that the decision to relocate the economic ‘livewire’ of the Hausa-Fulani was partly responsible for the crisis.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Memorandum submitted by the Jasawa Development Association to the Justice Opened Judicial Commission of Inquiry into inter Communal Conflicts in Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau States. 2002. p. 7.

<sup>182</sup> ID Bisallah. Interview. March 9, 2012



Kataf demands for ownership are based on historical claims that date back to the colonial period when the administration of the area was placed under the Zaria Native authority. It was during this period that the Kataf claim that land belonging to them was appropriated and given to the Hausa community. They state that the land 'belonged to their great great grandfathers and was only given to the Hausa/Fulani community on loan.'<sup>183</sup> They made strong demands at a peace meeting after the February 1992 conflicts where they insisted that:

even if the last drop of blood of their kinsmen was to be shed, they would not allow the Hausa Fulani to cultivate their farmlands again until the Hausa-Fulani community apply for ownership since they are 'strangers in the area.'<sup>184</sup>

This position was further reiterated when they vowed in a letter dated April 21, 1992 signed by the Kataf village heads that;

we have decided with immediate effect to take back the ownership of our farmlands that were confiscated by the Emirate council through the then Hausa District Head of Zangon Kataf and shared out to their kith and kin.

and that they;

formally notify the local government council of our resolve take back with immediate effect our farmlands;

request the Local Government to restrain the Hausa community in Zangon Kataf town from further farming on these lands, as that will amount to trespassing.<sup>185</sup>

These narratives were extremely confrontational and were sure to elicit an extreme response by the other group with the Hausa community noting that the claims of land

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<sup>183</sup> Memorandum on Zangon Kataf Riots by the Hausa/Fulani Community to the Military Administrator of Kaduna State. November 20, 1994

<sup>184</sup> *ibid*

<sup>185</sup> *ibid* p. 27



ownership by indigenous groups were because of 'the envy and bitterness with which they hold against an average Hausa-Fulani business man, which [who] is far ahead of his Kataf counterpart because of his dominance in the area of commercial activities.'<sup>186</sup>

They stated that the Kataf have created a narrative that blames Hausa ownership of land as the reason for the disparity in economic power, as the reason for the clashes, but note that this is just part of a greater goal of the Kataf to expel them from the town and take over the space where they operate their businesses.<sup>187</sup> During the inquiry into the conflict, the commission noted that these claims were only part of a bigger problem of contestation between the two groups, noting that 'the market and farmlands issue been [sic] bandied as the cause of the riots are the final straws of an emotive relationship that has boiled and inevitably has to find expression in a bloody clash.'<sup>188</sup>

Land ownership is also a point of contention in Plateau state, with the Berom resisting demands by the Hausa for the creation of their own districts in Jos North local government council because 'the creation of district is tied to the issue of land ownership.'<sup>189</sup> Any attempt to create a district was seen as acceding to land ownership, something that the Berom saw as an 'open declaration of war.'<sup>190</sup> The state government noted that 'the insistence of the Hausa settlers in Jos to assume status of indigeneship [sic] has continued to be a source of conflict with the indigenes of Jos and other residents of Jos.'<sup>191</sup> While the Berom insist on the status quo being maintained in regards to district creation, the Jarawa of Yelwa Shendam, demand that local government areas and chiefdoms be created that will

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<sup>186</sup> Submission by Hausa-Fulani Community of Zangon Urban District, March 3, 2012

<sup>187</sup> *ibid*

<sup>188</sup> *ibid* pp. 48-49

<sup>189</sup> Berom Youth Movement. Letter to the Governor of Plateau State dated 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005

<sup>190</sup> *ibid*

<sup>191</sup> Memorandum submitted by the Plateau State Government to the Justice Opene Judicial Commission of Inquiry set up to Look Into Inter-Communal Conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba States. 2002



recognise minority groups so as to reduce the existing tensions.<sup>192</sup> Local communities continue to resist any attempts by groups that they see as settlers for their own districts as this would give these groups claims to land that is considered indigenous land.

In Wase local government, the Tarok criticise the operation of the land system known as 'FURMI' where all land belongs to the Emir who determines and charges a rental fee for its use.<sup>193</sup> The Tarok maintain that this is feudalistic and has empowered the Hausa Fulani, allowing them greater access to land, with the 'Wase Tarok and other ethnic groups reduced to the status of tenants', a situation that affects their economic status.<sup>194</sup> They demand for an overhaul of the system so as to make it fairer, but the Hausa resist this request arguing that it exists under the customary land rights and it is communal land with the Emir just a custodian.<sup>195</sup>

These claims and counter claims over land ownership have led to conflicts such as when a disputed piece of land between a Tarok and Bogghom man was granted to the Tarok man by the courts. This led to a communal clash in Lamba district in 2001 that resulted in the death of eight persons and the destruction of property.<sup>196</sup> It is clear that land ownership forms a point of contention between the groups in the conflict areas examined and this has resulted in confrontation between the groups, pitching them at opposing ends of the spectrum, helping to fuel the conflicts in the areas.

While land ownership is one area of economic contestation, the control of markets is also another area of dispute because it relates to economic power. Although markets form part

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<sup>192</sup> Southern Plateau Crises: Root Causes And Solutions. A Memorandum Submitted To The Northern States' Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security (NOSCREHES) By Yelwa Progressive Association. September, 2012

<sup>193</sup> The Justice Opene Report of The Judicial Commission of Inquiry Into Inter-Communal Conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba States on Wase And Other Contiguous Areas (2<sup>nd</sup> Mandate). Vol. 3. April 2003

<sup>194</sup> *ibid*

<sup>195</sup> *ibid.* p. 32

<sup>196</sup> *ibid.* p.31



of the private sphere, their control by local governments determines who has control and economic power. Within the markets, there is the competition for the control of commodity chains between various ethnic groups that sometimes leads to conflict due to existing 'deep-seated structural factors' (Porter, et.al., 2005:2). While it has been noted that the Zangon Kataf conflict was tied to the issue of farmland ownership, there was also an attempt to alter economic power from the Hausa Fulani to the Kataf through the relocation of the market, a move resisted by the Hausa-Fulani Muslims.

In Yelwa-Shendam, the control of the market has remained contentious because of the strong presence of the Hausa community in economic activities. Muslims own the main businesses such as the 'commercial motorcycle business, lorries and bakeries' (Hoomlong, 2008:45) and also control the agricultural trade as middlemen for Christian farmers, which has allowed them to dominate the economic sphere of the town. This brought them into direct confrontation with the local ethnic communities who are not as economically prosperous. The Hausa claim that other groups became envious of their prosperity, which resulted in an attempt to weaken them through the establishment of a parallel market that resulted in a drop in activities in the Hausa controlled market and a loss of revenue for the Hausa community. The Hausa community saw this as a 'deliberate policy by the local government council in cahoots with the Shendam traditional council to economically destroy us.'<sup>197</sup>

Since the colonial period, the control of the markets in Jos has been between the Hausa and Igbo communities and this continued largely uncontested by the ethnic groups until recently when structural adjustment programmes were introduced in the 1980s. One of the effects of this was a reduction in the size of the public sector that shifted focus to the private sector

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<sup>197</sup> Memorandum Submitted By Abdullahi D. Abdullahi On Behalf Of Yelwan - Shendam Muslim Forum Committee To The Secretary On Reconciliation, Healing & Security, September 2012



for employment and other economic and commercial opportunities. This led to increased competition between the various groups for control of the private sector. Within this sector were the markets that are controlled by the local governments with allocation of stalls having ethnic and religious undertones (Egwu, 2001).

The Jos market was originally built in 1954 but was destroyed in a fire in 1975 and was rebuilt in 1984 with 3977 stalls. The table below shows the distribution of the stalls according to ethnicity. It also shows that the Hausa and Igbo community controlled over 60% of the stalls in the market with the 'local' ethnic groups having just over a quarter of the allocation. While Egwu (2001) does note that there are cases where even when stalls are allocated to these groups, due to their economic disadvantage they either sell or rent out these stalls to the Igbos and Hausa traders, giving those groups a greater presence in the market and economic activities of the town. This meant that the market was seen as representative of Hausa Fulani (and to some extent Igbo) economic dominance with the Hausa community noting that when the ethnic groups of the plateau look at the Hausa-Fulani commercial success 'they are so envious.'<sup>198</sup>

**Table 7.1**

Jos Ultra Modern Market Allocation of Stalls

Hall	Igbo	Yoruba	Hausa	Plateau & Others
Jos	133	37	98	40
Mangu	30	19	68	34
Wase	35	40	215	55
Kanam	111	67	96	64
Awe	304	93	160	397
Keffi	330	93	254	99
Akwanga	50	52	185	223

<sup>198</sup> Interview. Dr. Khalid, Secretary-JNI. Kaduna. November 21, 2011.



Hall	Igbo	Yoruba	Hausa	Plateau & Others
Shendam	142	56	96	97
Exterior Stalls	50	39	65	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>1185</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>1237</b>	<b>1059</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>29.79</b>	<b>12.47</b>	<b>31.10</b>	<b>26.62</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>3,977</b>

Egwu. S. G.(2001) *Ethnicity And Citizenship in Urban Nigeria: The Jos Case 1960-2000*. p.226

The importance of the market made it a target during the riots of 1994 when it was burnt down and remains unrepaired 20 years later. However, the state government has proposed for the relocation of the market from its current location under the guise of decongesting the town. This proposal was seen by the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders and the Jos branch of the JNI as a deliberate attempt to weaken the economic base of the Muslim community. The JNI stated that the indigenous groups target control of the markets due to their importance to Muslims, a claim that is rejected by the Berom.

While the control of the markets is viewed from an economic perspective, there is also a religious angle that is manifested in the struggle for control of the abattoirs within the markets. Muslims have traditionally had control of abattoirs so as to ensure that animals slaughtered comply with *halal* standards. This has led to a monopoly of Muslim butchers in the meat business in the abattoirs where they do not handle pork and other products considered *haram*. Even though this was never an issue, Higazi (2011) notes that as tensions between the groups increased, Christians began challenging Muslim control of the abattoirs making it another point of contention.



## 7.5 RESISTANCE TO THE 'ISLAMISATION' OF NORTHERN NIGERIA AND MUSLIM RESPONSES

As stated in previous chapters, religion has maintained an important place in northern Nigeria and the 1999 expansion of Sharia in some of the northern states increased the fear amongst non-Muslims of the continued hegemony of Islam and the possible agenda to Islamise the north, something that will be discussed in this section. The struggle for greater influence in the Nigerian state between Islam and Christianity is manifested at different levels of the state, beginning from the local government all the way to the federal level. Narratives emerging from Christian groups relate to a fear of what they see as the increasing Islamisation of the north since the country's membership of the OIC in 1986 and more recently with the expansion of the Sharia legal system in some of the northern states.

Christian narratives revolve around fears of Muslim plans 'to eradicate in all its forms all non-Muslims in Nigeria'...and all other tribal modes of worship unacceptable to Muslims.'<sup>199</sup> The growing number of Muslims in Jos due to natural increases and the increasing migrant numbers of migrants from other parts of the north is said to be alarming Christians who have always seen Jos as a Christian town.<sup>200</sup> As Christian narratives have focused on these fears, Muslims have risen to provide an alternative narrative that challenges the Christian position, arguing that this is being used to justify the continued oppression of Muslims in non-Muslim areas such as Jos. The Jos branch of JNI stated that;

the whole issue is of religious, economic, ethnic and political suppression, hate, repression, and vandalisation of a people for no cause other than the wicked whims and caprices of a people of shameful history and antecedents of moral bankruptcy in their entire history

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<sup>199</sup> Memorandum submitted to the Justice Abisoye Presidential Panel of Investigation into the 2008 Jos riots by Chief. D.A. Bot. December 2009, p. 3.

<sup>200</sup> Interview. Dr. Khalid, Secretary-JNI. Kaduna. November 21, 2011.



and that;

there was an animihilistic [sic] agenda against the Fulani in the state<sup>201</sup>

An examination of group narratives in a later chapter will reveal that these kinds of narratives are common and provide the basis of how groups understand the conflicts and determine group relations. These radicalised and contentious narratives make it difficult for groups to see the legitimacy of the demands of other groups.

One issue that keeps being revisited is the perceived threat of the large number of *almajirai* children in many northern states and their role during conflicts. The *almajirai* system is an Islamic educational system that has been in existence since the presence of Islam in the northern region and involves the provision of Islamic education to young boys outside their homes. This is a 'northern phenomenon where parents give up their children of school age to a cleric to travel to distant places on discipleship training.'<sup>202</sup> It is estimated that there are currently over 9.5 million children enrolled in Quranic schools in the country with about 8.5 million in the north, however there are no clear numbers of those that can be considered *almajirai* because there is no available data (Hoechner, 2013).

The phenomenon is considered a form of temporary rural-urban migration where Islamic scholars migrate to urban areas during the dry season. However, dwindling opportunities in rural areas due to the contraction of the rural economy after the introduction of structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s has also contributed to the increasing numbers of these young boys who, apart from migrating to get Islamic education, come to the urban areas for the increased economic opportunities available there.

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<sup>201</sup> White Paper On The Report Of The Justice Nikki Tobi Judicial Commission Of Inquiry Report. Into The Civil Disturbances In Jos And Its Environs. Plateau State Government. September 2002. p. 147

<sup>202</sup> Justice Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Jos Riots. 2008. p. 60



However, many of these boys are forced to fend for themselves and end up begging on the streets where they constitute a nuisance. Christians accuse them of taking part in the violence during periods of conflict where they are 'used by their sponsors to kill, maim loot and vandalize properties of victims, burn and loot.'<sup>203</sup> During the Maitatsine riots of 1980, they were accused of being used by the sect to carry out the violence in Kano. It was noted that 'Maitatsine exploited the poverty of rural youths and unemployed young boys from neighboring countries such as Niger Republic, who migrate to urban centers to seek employment' where '90% of the captured militants were under the age of 20' (Awofeso, Ritchie and Degeling, 2003:321). The *almajirai* were linked to the sect where it was noted that 'Maitatsine was provided with a means of livelihood through the alms he received from his students.'<sup>204</sup>

However, Hoechner (2012) argues that labelling these young boys as the foot soldiers during conflicts ignores the greater problem of a lack of adequate educational opportunities within the region where many of the youth have little access to secular education. This position was also highlighted by the Jami Al Hakeem Foundation that noted the lack of access to secular education was one of the reason why there continues to be a rise in the number of these boys.<sup>205</sup>

Recommendations have been made for how to tackle this social problem, however the ineffectiveness of state governments to successfully address the problem resulted in the Federal government stepping in to take responsibility by introducing policies for their rehabilitation. However the central government's involvement in itself has raised other issues with CAN noting that;

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<sup>203</sup> *ibid.* pp. 60-61

<sup>204</sup> Federal Republic of Nigeria. Views Of The Government Of The Federation On The Report' Of The Kano Disturbances Tribunal Of Inquiry. Government printer. 1981

<sup>205</sup> Submission to the Northern Governors Security Forum by Jami Al Hakeem Foundation. September 2012



that the Federal Government is reported to have allocated about N5 billion for the construction and equipping of Almajiri schools to offer Islamic and western education. We await an equivalent amount to enable us, Christians in the north, to develop and equip our Christians Schools.<sup>206</sup>

CAN has demanded that for fairness, missionary schools that had previously taken over by the government should be returned and the missionaries compensated as a way of counterbalancing the allocations made for the provision of these *almajiri* schools.<sup>207</sup> Muslims do not see any connections between the two issues arguing that the decision to takeover the Christian schools is not in any way related to the current *almajiri* problem. These claims and counter claims are indicative of the way policies are be framed and viewed along ethnic and religious lines.

## **7.6 THE POLITICS OF EXCLUSION: 'NO CHRISTIANS NEED APPLY'**

Politics at all levels remain highly contested because groups understand that political power helps determine social mobility either for individuals or groups because 'in Nigeria, politics determines economic activities.'<sup>208</sup> Groups thus see the capture of political power at all levels as an important goal that they strive to achieve at all costs. When we examine group narratives in Kaduna we see that the struggle between ethnic and religious groups manifests in the political arena, where the mainly Christian southern Kaduna ethnic groups express the perception of a Muslim feeling of entitlement regarding control of the main political offices. This issue was traced to the period after the division of the Kaduna state into Kaduna and Katsina states in 1987 when it was argued that 'the Northern ruling class, by policy seemed

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<sup>206</sup> Christian Association Of Nigeria (CAN) Northern States Headquarters, Kaduna Memorandum Submitted To The Northern States Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.

<sup>207</sup> Christian Association Of Nigeria (CAN) Northern States Headquarters, Kaduna Memorandum Submitted To The Northern States Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.

<sup>208</sup> The Causes and Solutions To Crises In Kaduna State. Memorandum To The Northern States Governors' Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security. A Presentation By The Southern Kaduna Peoples' Union (SOKAPU) National Headquarters, Kaduna. September 2012



to have erected an invisible sign that read: No Christians need Apply to enter what would later be called Kashim Ibrahim House or represent the State at the highest levels.<sup>209</sup>

Even during the military era, no Christian was ever appointed Governor of the state, which Kukah states was to ensure that Muslims continued to dominate the political space.<sup>210</sup> It was argued that this exclusionary policy 'turned Kaduna State into a political mecca and laid the foundation for the unnecessary and sad religious tensions that have continued to dog the state.'<sup>211</sup> This exclusionary policy was not seen as just limited to the office of Governor, with appointments into positions such as ministers, Federal permanent Secretaries and ambassadors seen to favour the Hausa Fulani Muslims of the north. Even with the adoption of an informal zoning strategy in the allocation of offices, it was argued that the main offices in the executive, judiciary and legislature were still reserved for the Hausa-Fulani.<sup>212</sup>

The tensions created regarding Muslim entitlement and control of the political establishment was highlighted by Kukah who noted that 'when a community perceives that its neighbours are favoured, these neighbours suddenly become enemies because the deprived community feels that what their neighbours have rightly belongs to them.'<sup>213</sup> With Christians feeling excluded from the political space, it has led to 'bitterness and resentment' against Hausa-Fulani Muslims.<sup>214</sup> This position has been repeated by other Christian groups including the Christian Association of Nigeria, North West Zone, CAN Kaduna and Bauchi states and SOKAPU who see this happening in other states in northern Nigeria where Christians are in the minority.

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<sup>209</sup> Kukah, 2012 Sahara Reporters.[Online] <http://saharareporters.com/interview/bishop-kukahs-speech-governor-patrick-yakowas-funeral-kaduna>

<sup>210</sup> ibid

<sup>211</sup> ibid

<sup>212</sup> On Perennial Crises In The Northern States, With Special Reference To Kaduna State Memo By Southern Kaduna Indigenes Progressive Forum (SKIPFO) To The Committee On Reconciliation, Healing And Security, Panel Set Up By The Northern States Governors. September, 2012.

<sup>213</sup> Kukah, M. Crises, Conflict and Incorporation: Options For A Democratic Nigeria. Paper presented at the National Bar Association Conference, Ibadan, 2002. Theme: Conflicts, Crisis & Democracy

<sup>214</sup> Interview with Kaduna State, CAN President, Reverend Kujiyat. Kaduna. February 15, 2012



A demonstration of this sense of entitlement was evident when in 2010, Muslims began a campaign to convince the governor of the state not to accept the offer of the position of Vice-President after the death of Yar'adua so as to prevent the ascension of the first Christian governor of the state. They implored him to reject the offer so that his deputy who was Christian did not become governor, something they saw as unacceptable. One interviewee noted that text messages were sent pleading with the Governor that 'please don't leave for the sake of Muslims and Islam...and so forth and begging him that he should not accept, in order to protect this place.'<sup>215</sup> After his acceptance of the position, his Christian deputy was installed as Governor, but as the 2011 elections approached there was a renewed campaign for Muslims to vote for a Muslim candidate that resulted in a massive mobilisation for the opposition Muslim Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) candidate.

However, even while tensions were high before the governorship elections, it was the results of the presidential election that ignited the post election conflicts. Even though the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) maintained that the elections were free and fair, Muslim voters claimed that the results that were announced at polling stations differed from the final results announced by INEC, indicating that the elections were rigged in favour of the PDP. This resulted in violent attacks that initially focused on PDP members but quickly degenerated into attacks against other groups, mainly non-Muslim ethnic groups within the town and other parts of the state.

This led to retaliatory attacks against Muslims in parts of southern Kaduna even where they were members of the PDP. The violence there was seen as an opportunity for the majority ethnic groups to attack the Muslim community that they long considered as settlers.<sup>216</sup> Yakowa's death in December 2012 returned power to the Hausa Fulani Muslims, creating a

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<sup>215</sup> Interview Kaduna CAN President Reverend Kujiyat. Kaduna, February 15, 2012

<sup>216</sup> Interview, Yakubu Ashafa. Kaduna, July 31, 2012



fear that any political gains that the 'indigenous' groups made during Yakowa's rule would now be reversed and the issue of Muslim domination in the governance of the state would be reasserted and continue to be a problem.

This intense competition between the groups is what has led to the recent calls for the creation of a separate state that is considered long overdue and a possible solution to reducing intergroup competition.<sup>217</sup> The people of southern Kaduna argue that a new state would remove their domination and marginalisation by the Hausa-Fulani because 'everyone will have their own position, southern Kaduna will have their own position, let them leave us to fight on our own. That aspect will reduce.'<sup>218</sup>

The argument is that a state that reflects their ethnicity and religion, rather than being part of a Muslim dominated state, would be more harmonious and conflict free. A southern Kaduna indigene interviewed noted even after the creation of Katsina state from the old Kaduna state, the Hausa Fulani of Kaduna ensured that when new constituencies were created, it favoured the Muslim majority north, because the committee was headed by a Zaria indigene.<sup>219</sup> The expected borders of the new state will also be a point of contestation because it is expected to include Kaduna town because of its historically ties to traditional Gbagyi land, a demand that is already being contested by the Hausa of the state.

These narratives of marginalisation and domination are prominent within the ethnic groups of southern Kaduna and serve to aggravate the relationship between the ethnic groups in the area. This has increased group cohesiveness and their positions in the conflicts ensuring that the agitations for more inclusion within the Kaduna state political structure remain a point of contention. This results in the struggle within the social, economic and political

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<sup>217</sup> Interview with Kaduna State CAN President, Reverend Kujiyat. Kaduna February 15, 2012.

<sup>218</sup> *ibid*

<sup>219</sup> *ibid*



spheres being mobilised along ethnic lines to counter the perceived dominance of the Hausa-Fulani Muslims of the northern part of the state.

## **7.7 TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND SELF DETERMINATION**

Traditional institutions are important as preservers of culture and provide the link between the local and the state and play a major role in the Nigerian state leading to demands by groups for their own districts and chiefdoms. However, because not all of these demands have been met, this continues to generate agitations that have led to pockets of conflicts in parts of the middle belt. The history of northern Nigeria is linked to the Hausa-Fulani Muslim Emirate system and as discussed in an earlier chapter, this was a hierarchical system within the northern region, even in non-Muslim areas. After the withdrawal of the British, the pagan and Christian areas began to request for self-determination through the establishment of their own traditional institutions.

After the Kafanchan conflict of 1987 in Kaduna state, the issue of the appointment of District and Village heads was raised. The local communities repeating their historical demands for Chiefdoms that reflected their ethnicity and culture. The groups also demanded for the dismantling of the existing Jama'a emirate and the establishment of Chiefdoms where all ethnic groups could contest, a demand that was resisted by the Muslim community and formed one of the main reasons for the 1999 Kafanchan conflicts. This demand was partially granted to some of the ethnic groups in southern Kaduna with the number of chiefdoms increasing from 4 in 1987 to 24 by 1993.<sup>220</sup>

In Wase, the composition of the traditional council is contested by the Tarok who are protesting the fact that even with their numerical supremacy, where they constitute over

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<sup>220</sup> Interview, Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna, March 21, 2012



half of the population of the local government, they were still not adequately represented on the council.<sup>221</sup> As a group they did not have a Chief or a district head, while out of the 14 salaried village heads, they only had one. This led to violence in 2002 after death of the village head of Kadarko in the local government and the appointment of an acting district head that was resented because the Tarok saw him as an imposition by the Emir of Wase. When the conflict broke out he and a number of other people were killed.

## **7.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has examined the dynamics of inter group relations that have been emphasised through group narratives. Many of these narratives were shown as contentious and radicalised and used by the groups to understand the ethos of the conflicts from the group's perspective. For non Muslim ethnic groups in Kaduna state, especially those in southern Kaduna, the purpose of the conflict revolves around redressing their marginalisation in the social, economic and political spaces in the state while at the same time ensuring that any attempt at the Islamisation of the north is resisted. However at the local government areas where they are in the majority, Muslims resist the exclusionary policies of the majority ethnic groups, such as the Kataf in Zangon Kataf, the Bajju in Kafanchan local government, the Berom in Jos north and the Tarok and Goemai in southern Plateau.

The next chapter examines the final stage in the socio-psychological infrastructure where as the conflicts endure, collective emotional orientations develop that provide an emotional aspect and affects the dynamics of the conflict. It becomes important to understand the process responsible for this and one way is to examine the process of delegitimisation of the 'other' where the out-group is always viewed with suspicion and their claims are not accepted thereby making conflict resolution difficult and further prolonging the life of the

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<sup>221</sup> The Justice Opene Report of The Judicial Commission of Inquiry Into Inter-Communal Conflicts in Benue, Nasarwa, Plateau and Taraba States on Wase And Other Contiguous Areas (2<sup>nd</sup> Mandate). Vol. 3. April 2003



conflicts. This process of delegitimisation is examined through different ways in which groups carry this out, such as elite remarks, inflammatory pamphlets and flyers and the role the media, especially the print media plays in the process.



## **CHAPTER 8: NARRATIVES AND MUTUAL DELEGITIMISATION**

### **8.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the preceding chapter, narratives were identified as forming the foundation of how groups understand conflicts and frame their grievances against other groups. These narratives were radicalised and contentious and used to develop the groups' ethos of the conflict that helped them legitimise their acts of violence against other groups that they perceived as the enemy. During protracted conflicts, a culture of conflict develops between the groups, where the conflicts are 'intense, vicious, violent and prolonged' (Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012:29).

This creates a process of exclusion where there is mutual delegitimisation between groups that try to keep each group out of the circle of normal affairs (Volpato, et al, 2010). During this period groups develop Collective Emotional Orientations that can be either positive, which can help reduce the intensity of the conflict or negative that exacerbate the conflict. This chapter examines group narratives to identify the dominant collective emotional orientations that have evolved during the conflicts under examination and how these have affected the dynamics of the conflicts and the efforts at resolving them.

### **8.1 THE PROCESS OF DELEGITIMISATION**

In order to understand the process of delegitimisation we need to comprehend the idea of legitimacy in intergroup relations as expounded by Kelman (2001), who states that legitimacy forms the basis for social interaction. He notes that during the process of interaction, individuals or groups make claims, which may or may not be rejected by other individuals or groups. The acceptance or rejection of the claims depends on whether the other person or group see the claims as legitimate so that the rights due individuals or



groups are acknowledged (Kelman, 2001:58). However, Kelman (2001) notes that over time legitimacy of such claims can change either positively such as the changing attitudes towards segregation in the United States in the 1960s and more recently in South Africa in the 1990s or negatively such as the attitudes towards Jews in Germany in the 1930s.

In the process of delegitimisation any claims made by an individual or group are rejected and removed from the 'domain of moral acceptability or moral obligation' (Kelman, 2001:58) so that during extreme competition or conflict between groups, groups reject the other group's claims and justify their actions by classifying them in 'extremely negative social categories' that dehumanises and categorises them in non human terms (Bar-Tal, 2000:122-123; Oren and Bar-Tal; 2007:112; Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012). Delegitimisation begins through the use of the groups' collective memories that 'need not reflect truth' (Rotberg, 2006:4) or draws on a 'history of conflict or dehumanisation' (Kelman, 2001:59) that help create the group's ethos of the conflict that is used to justify and legitimise their goals. This also provides them with a positive image where one group is portrayed as the aggressor while another is depicted as the victim. The delegitimised group is portrayed in the most negative way by describing them in such terms as 'bloodthirsty, murderer, terrorist etc.' (Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012:37) indicating that they do not conform to the norms and values of the delegitimising group.

As an explanatory tool, delegitimisation helps explain the use of violence and all other immoral acts by the other group. The argument is that because violence is seen as an immoral act, the in-group rationalises its use by justifying it as a response to the immoral and inhuman nature of the delegitimised group. Examples of these include, the delegitimisation of the Tutsis by the Hutus that led to the 1994 genocide, Albanians in Kosovo by the Serbs, Jews in Germany and the Tamils in Sri Lanka (Bar-Tal and Hammack,



2012:38; Kelman, 2001). In Nigeria, as the conflicts have continued, the process of delegitimisation has become a common feature in inter group relations, with all sides creating narratives that delegitimise the other. The main process of delegitimisation has been through the print media including paid adverts by religious & ethnic groups and individuals, other printed material from competing groups, submissions by groups at different fora such as commissions of inquiry and religious sermons in places of worship such as mosques and churches.

Manojlovic (2010:9) notes that 'elites throughout history used discourses to legitimise and delegitimise, give and take power to various groups on the ground in order to promote their own interests.' Salawu (2009:75) also notes that group narratives that are used to delegitimise are based on; 'a history of humiliation, oppression, victimisation, feelings of inferiority and other forms of experiences which wear away a person's dignity and self esteem and lead people to resort to vengeance' that creates the 'pathological dimensions of ethnicity.' This produces emotions such as fear, hatred, disgrace, triumph, and defeat that provide an emotive aspect to the conflicts such that 'passions overwhelm reason' (Salawu, 2009:75). Delegitimisation thus 'denies the humanity of the out-group' and 'when threat, trauma and insecurity support the delegitimising discourse, this narrative has profound psychological appeal to members of the society' (Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012:46).

An examination of the current group narratives in Nigeria assesses how radicalised and contentious narratives are employed during the process of delegitimisation as groups compete for political and social supremacy with this intensifying as political power has become more important and opportunities have dwindled. The next section analyses how groups use different methods to delegitimise each other and the consequences that emerge from such actions.



## 8.2 CONTROLLING THE NARRATIVES: THE MEDIA AND THE RADICALISATION OF NARRATIVES IN NIGERIA

*The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses.*<sup>222</sup>

*The newspaper press is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole country sides and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy.*<sup>223</sup>

Groups delegitimise each other through the media by promoting radicalised narratives, because the media, even with its limited reach in Nigeria, remains an important tool in shaping perceptions. The media's role in creating perceptions is evident even in countries where even though the media is considered as fair and balanced in its reporting, editorial policies usually determine what is reported and how it is reported, thus moulding readers' opinions, making it a powerful tool in shaping ideas, stereotypes and prejudices. Abdu (2010:177) stated that the role of the media has increased due to the shrinking of global borders through globalisation, which has resulted in the media being the 'builder of public opinion-defining social reality and determining social action.'

However these perceptions are not necessarily a call to arms because as Bello (2005:176) notes, we must understand that the news is not a cause of violence per se, rather what it does is instil a feeling of disillusion, despair and hatred against a target group that are said to be latent and simmering 'so that the slightest provocation, real or imagined, could blow the trumpet for violent clashes.' The media can also have a positive effect in pushing national integration policies through the spread of values that unite rather than divide a country. The role of the print media in the process of delegitimation is the main focus of this chapter

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<sup>222</sup> Goodreads. Malcolm X. Online. [retrieved 12/07/2014]. <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/74430-the-media-s-the-most-powerful-entity-on-earth-they-have>

<sup>223</sup> <https://cancerhitsthestreets.wordpress.com/2013/08/18/gandhi-the-journalist/>



due to the ease of collecting archival print materials as opposed to accessing archival electronic material from television and radio stations. However it is important to take a cursory look at the evolution of the electronic and digital media in Nigeria.

In northern Nigeria, the population has a great reliance on the radio for news with the UNDP noting that 'the broadcast stations have more reach than the print media because of the pervasiveness and cost.'<sup>224</sup> Apart from the local radio stations in the northern states that broadcast Hausa service programmes to enable them reach a wider audience especially in the rural areas where there is little print media penetration (Bello, 2005), major media corporations such as the BBC, VOA and Radio China also broadcast Hausa programmes.

The wide reach of the radio makes it a strong tool for the propagation of false information about groups that can lead to the development and entrenchment of stereotypes. However there is not enough evidence to determine the effect it has had in pushing ethnic stereotypes. Nonetheless because it is widely used by religious groups to promulgate their message, it remains a strong channel for developing narratives that support negative attitudes between groups and thus helps in entrenching religious identities. The radio also has the effect of allowing international issues such as the conflicts of the middle east and the current war against terror in Afghanistan to be brought to the doorsteps of many northerners so that northern Muslims now see local conflicts in the context of a greater attack on their religion resulting in deep emotional consequences in how they relate to non-Muslims.

In Nigeria, the early television stations were established by the regions with the first one in the western region just before independence, followed by the eastern region that in 1960,

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<sup>224</sup> Guide to the Nigerian Media Prepared by the Communications Unit, UNDP Nigeria. Available Online at <http://web.undp.org/comtoolkit/reaching-the-outside-world/docs/Best%20Practices/AGuidetotheNigerianMedia.pdf>. [retrieved: January 25, 2015]



while the Federal government and the northern region both established theirs in 1962 (Uche, 1989). Even though each region had its own television station, the focus was not for the promotion of regional agendas, rather they were established to supplement the educational system by providing the youth with images of the outside world (Uche, 1989).

However, due to the proliferation of foreign shows, in 1975 the federal government increased its regulation of programming to ensure a greater local content component in its broadcasting. The government owned Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) formerly Nigeria Television (NTS) was established in 1974 and it expanded rapidly, with branches in every state capital (Uche, 1989). After the deregulation of the sector in the 1980s, there was the establishment of privately owned television stations but these do not have the same level of penetration of government owned television stations, thereby restricting their influence in spreading ethnic, regional or religious agendas.

Also government regulations treat the establishment of electronic media stations as a security issue, with the final approval only granted by the President after clearance by the office of the National Security Adviser, ensures that the number of new stations are controlled and those granted licenses are cautious in broadcasting divisive religious and ethnic messages for fear of sanctions or having their licenses revoked.<sup>225</sup> However just like Muslim complaints of PRTV spreading anti-Islam messages, Christians also complain that TV stations such as the privately Muslim owned DITV in Kaduna air anti Christian messages, however these complaints have been limited.

The recent rise in online editions of print media has also provided a new and different avenue for accessing news. However, these online news feeds still have a limited reach

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<sup>225</sup> Interview. Ambassador Yusuf Mamman, Kaduna, May 21, 2013



unlike in the more developed countries where they play a significant role in the dissemination of information. The Internet was only introduced in Nigeria in 1996 and is still evolving, however it has become more relevant now with increased penetration and a rise in the number of Internet users. Current figures indicate that there are almost 50 million Internet users in Nigeria with a 30% penetration based on population figures of 178 million.<sup>226</sup> There has been a rise in online bloggers who use this medium to spread their views while also reaching a wider audience so that more people can engage in political and social issues. However data shows that most Internet usage is for social media networking with over 72% visiting social networking sites.

Even with the Internet news services increasing, it is noted that newspapers still provide the main source of verifiable information and due to a lack of standards in internet news reporting there is still a greater reliance on established news organisations.<sup>227</sup> Similarly, even though there are several news blogs, these are also largely unregulated and do not share the same ethical standards as established newspapers and there is a tendency for the publication of 'rumours or false reports with potentially harmful/disastrous consequences'<sup>228</sup> As Aday et.al. (2010:26) note, this results in the Internet being used 'to promote polarisation and to provide targeted communication channels for already polarised groups.' This has meant that while the emergence of new spaces for Nigerians to voice their opinions is a welcome development, it has helped the spread of divisive commentary that has become a worrying trend affecting inter group relations and ultimately any genuine attempts at forging a more united country.

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<sup>226</sup> State Of Digital Media Nigeria. Terragon Limited 2013. Online. Available at [http://www.slideshare.net/Ennie\\_mo/nigeria-state-of-digital-media](http://www.slideshare.net/Ennie_mo/nigeria-state-of-digital-media). [Accessed. March 14, 2015]

<sup>227</sup> Africa Practice (2013). The Social Media Landscape in Nigeria 2014: the who, the what and the know. Online. Available at <http://www.africappractice.com/blogposts/?id=5843> [Accessed. March 14, 2015]

<sup>228</sup> *ibid.* p.16



The internet was not a source of news analysis during the conflicts on 1987 and 1992, but it has now become a memory bank where groups draw on it to evoke memories of past conflicts such as those of Kafanchan, Zangon Kataf and Jos as a basis for understanding current ethno-religious conflicts in northern Nigeria. Its use as a medium for recalling past conflicts enables these conflicts to become part of present day narratives. Groups involved in the conflicts recall these events to justify current actions by evoking fears of a repeat of past events. Several Christian websites such as Open Doors, Jubilee Campaign and International Day of Prayer for the persecution of Christians, have all internationalised Nigerian conflicts, bringing the plight of Christians to a wider international audience.

As stated, this section focuses on the manner groups use the print media to promote their goals. Newspapers remain the main source of news and the main vehicle for delegitimisation due to their ability to sustain narratives that help maintain stereotypes. Therefore, in order to understand the effect of the role newspapers play in the creation of narratives, it is useful to examine the evolution of the Nigerian newspapers and their use as a tool for entrenching identities and perceptions.

Since the colonial era, the print media served as a voice for nationalists during the struggle for independence and then became a voice for the regional governments to promote their agendas after independence, a process that helped entrench the regional, ethnic and religious identities. The history of the Nigerian media dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when the first pre-colonial newspapers were established in Lagos. This was followed by the colonial press of 1900-1960 and the post-colonial press after independence (Daniel, 2005). News coverage during each of the periods had a specific focus, with the newspapers of the post-colonial era focused on the role of the missionaries. During the colonial period, nationalists such as Herbert Macaulay, Obafemi Awolowo and Nnamdi



Azikiwe established the *Lagos Daily News*, *The Nigerian Tribune* and the *West African Pilot* respectively, as vehicles for their fight against the colonial administration. These papers were the voice of the nationalists and played an important role during the period, helping to set the nationalist agenda.

After independence the regions established their own newspapers, including the *Nigerian Citizen* in 1960, a precursor to the *New Nigerian Newspapers* established in 1965 in the northern region; the *Sketch* in the western region and the *Post* in the eastern region (Daniel, 2005). As already stated, these were established to serve as mouthpieces for the regional governments, with their editorial policies determined by regional goals and they created narratives that promoted regional, ethnic and sometimes religious agendas. Uche (1989:41) also noted that these regional newspapers 'were used as powerful political instruments for the integration of each region and cultivation of regional awareness more than national consciousness and integration.' After independence more state owned newspapers were established in the country and when the sector was liberalised in the 1980s, private newspapers and news magazines were founded alongside the existing state and federal owned newspapers.

Currently there are more newspapers in the south, including the *Vanguard*, *Thisday* newspapers, *Punch*, *Sun* and *Tribune*. This is attributed to the wider circulation and audience in the region. The editorial policy of these papers have been determined by the age long regional competition between the south and the north. In the north, there are a number of both private and government owned newspapers and news magazines with the most prominent including the privately owned *Daily* and *Weekly Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers and the government owned *New Nigerian* newspapers. Of these, the *Daily and Weekly Trust* published by Media Trust Limited are considered the conservative voices of the northern



Muslim establishment while the *Leadership* newspaper is seen as providing a more balanced reporting. The *New Nigerian* is owned by the 19 northern states but due to the divisions within the states, there are issues regarding its control and the focus of its reporting, with accusations of the paper being pro Islam/Hausa-Fulani. The editorial policies of Nigerian newspapers show a clear north/south divide, with national issues routinely analysed based on ethnic, religious or regional cleavages with Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003:183) noting that 'the North/South divide in Nigerian politics is so deep that public policy defers to it, and mass media outfits skew their reports and analyses to accommodate the interests of its adherents.'

In the northern states, there are a number of other publications that focus on the mainly Hausa speaking population of the region. One of the oldest Hausa newspapers is *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo*, established in 1937, later becoming a subsidiary of the northern region owned *New Nigerian* Newspapers. This paper remains the main source of news for a large section of the Hausa speaking population of the north. It was established as an independent paper and not a mouthpiece of the north, a position that was reflected in its first editorial where it stated that 'we do not stand for the north against the south but on the contrary hope that we shall work for the common good and that *Gaskiya* will bring the peoples together' (cited in Smith, 2004:71). However it was still perceived as the voice of the north with Smith (2004) noting that it was observed then that the paper;

will be controlled by men selected in the first place by government and also in the consequence of the autocratic political structure of the Moslem states, [and] it must be dependent to a large extent on the goodwill and support of the native rulers for its popularity and distribution among their people.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Cited in Smith (2004). p. 71



The paper thus pushed a northern agenda and an early commentary titled 'Are we not Nigerians?' typified the perception of the relationship between the north and the south. The article stated that;

You have heard the kind of things they say, that they want North and South to co-operate...this is the kind of cooperation Hitler said he wanted with the small nations before the war started....until the end of time the western and eastern regions will not be joined together-just so with the north and south. The north is the north, the south is the South.<sup>230</sup>

*Gaskiya's* promotion of a northern regional agenda increased fears among northern Christians of it being the voice for the Muslim establishment, however the paper took the middle ground in its reporting to allay fears of northern Christians while still managing to shape northern views of the rest of the regions (Ado-Kurawa, 2006). Since the restructuring of the region, states such as Kano and Sokoto have since established their own Hausa language newspapers in order to provide their citizens with access to news. However these papers have poor circulation due to high poverty levels and the rural nature of the population that makes it difficult for them to have any significant reach or impact.

Nigerian newspapers have a significant impact in creating stereotypes and perceptions and have been accused of focusing on reports that 'divide rather than unite the nation.'<sup>231</sup> The Catholic Archbishop of Jos stated that the press was responsible for inflaming the conflicts by reporting false and unsubstantiated stories. He noted that the 'media tends to worsen the conflict by conveying false information and publishing numerous pictures in order to draw as many readers and viewers as possible' and that 'many people would believe these reports as "gospel truths" because they are unaware that the reports are often not factual but only contain the opinions of journalists.'<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> *ibid.* p. 73

<sup>231</sup> Alao, O. (2001) Media Aid Collapse of Governments. *New Nigerian*, September 18. p.2

<sup>232</sup> Spero News (2010). Archbishop says Media has Inflamed Ethnic-Religious conflict. 22 January. Online. Available from: <http://www.speroforum.com/a/26054/Nigeria-Archbishop-says-media-has-enflamed-ethnicreligious-conflict>. [retrieved April 21, 2015]



The media in Nigeria especially newspapers have been shown to play a role in accentuating divisions between groups through selective and one sided reporting of common prejudicial stereotypes about groups and publishing unfair and discriminating advertisements. Their use of inflammatory language, the publishing of letters that make inflammatory statements and their use of misleading headlines to sell newspapers aggravate conflicts. Finally by demonising certain ethnic, religious or political and their use pictures or cartoons that add to prejudice and malign a community, group or an individual are not healthy in an already divided society (Albert et. al., 2002).

Abdu (2010:177) notes that the media has 'become an instrument of ethno-religious mobilisation, division and violence' so that it 'is not only representative of the ideas of the economic interests of the ruling class, it also represents the ethnic and religious interests of its owner.' This view is also supported by Bello (2005:193) who noted that a common feature in Nigeria is for media organisations to portray certain sections of the country as 'enemies, rivals or simply non-conformists who have no regard for divine or man-made laws.' This is not restricted to the southern press with some Hausa publications taking an adversarial position against the south. Abdu (2010) noted that the Daily Trust newspaper in an attempt to counter the southern press' anti-Islam/anti-North stance resulted in a loss in its objectivity and ethics with all the news reporting showing one side of the story which was anti-Islam/anti-North.

Olomojobi (2013) views media reporting in Nigeria as focusing on re-echoing preconceived notions about groups rather than objective reporting, an opinion reiterated by Ado-Kurawa (2006) who observed that the mass media contributes to the level of intolerance in the country with both Muslims and Christians accusing the media of biased reporting. However



while the media insists that it does not deliberately fuel these already existing tensions, its insensitivity to the issues in Nigeria have not helped in alleviating ethnic and religious tensions. Muslims accuse the Lagos-Ibadan newspapers of inflaming religious tensions by promoting anti Islam perceptions with a noted northern columnist Mohammed Haruna accusing the Guardian newspaper of 'blind prejudice against the north, if not against Islam'.<sup>233</sup> On the other hand Christians argue, with evidence pointing to the contrary, that 'because Christians often have no voice in the media, they were in many cases portrayed as the aggressors.'<sup>234</sup>

Abdu (2010:181) also noted that there was a strong anti Hausa/Muslim slant in the way southern papers covered national issues. He noted that an examination of the coverage of the 2000 sharia crisis and the 2002 Miss World crisis showed that the media played an active role in 'ethno religious mobilisation' with the reports from both southern and northern papers dividing the country along ethnic and religious lines. He observed that the southern press used terms such as 'enemies of democracy,' 'Muslim fundamentalists,' 'Fanatics,' 'Jihadists' to describe northern Muslims, while the northern press used terms such as 'anti-North and anti Islam', 'Secularists', 'crusaders', and promoters of Western and Judeo-Christian Interests' (Abdu, 2010:181). All of these heightened group suspicions and distrust and deepened the divides between the groups in the country.

The role of the press in inflaming conflicts was also noted by Musa (2010) and Abdu (2010) when they examined the manner of reporting of the various conflicts in the north. Musa's (2010) assessment of the reporting of the 2001 Jos conflict showed that there was clear evidence that northern newspapers such as the *Daily Trust* focused on attacks against

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<sup>233</sup> Text of review of 'The Whole Truth' selected editorials of the Guardian (1983-2003). December 15, 2005, at the National Institute of International Affairs, Lagos

<sup>234</sup> Spero News (2010). Archbishop says Media has Inflamed Ethnic-Religious conflict. 22 January. Online. Available from: <http://www.speroforum.com/a/26054/Nigeria-Archbishop-says-media-has-enflamed-ethnicreligious-conflict>. [retrieved April 21, 2015]



Muslims while southern papers such as the *Guardian* focused on southern casualties. He further noted that after the Jos conflict of 2001, Mohammed Haruna was attacked by Christian writers for his article where he accused the government of complicity in the attacks against Muslims.

A former editor of the *Sunday Standard* accused him of 'being a bigot and supporter of the Hausa-Fulani/Muslim extremism' and that he did not have any moral basis to accuse the government of anti-Muslim bias when he 'had previously used his position as the Managing Director of the government-owned Daily Times newspaper to further the interest of Muslims to the disadvantage of Christians' (Musa, 2010:5). Abdu (2010) on the other hand while examining news coverage during the sharia debate singled out the Punch newspaper of fuelling anti-Islam sentiments with its column 'The Great Sharia Debate' providing an avenue for strong anti-North and anti Islam sentiments that heightened tensions.

The prejudices against the north and Islam have continued and are linked to the current discourse of Islamic fundamentalism around the world. However the UNDP notes 'there have been conscious—but not very successful—efforts to create a counterforce to the Lagos Press largely from the Northern part of the country.'<sup>235</sup> This has resulted in northern elites becoming more vocal in challenging these perceptions and Mohammed Haruna in a review of a compilation of the Guardian Newspapers 'best' editorials between 1983 and 2003 pointed out that the editorials had a distinct anti-north slant. One of the things he noted was the paper's treatment of the 1991 census where it argued that the north that was sparsely

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<sup>235</sup> Guide to the Nigerian Media Prepared by the Communications Unit, UNDP Nigeria. Available Online at <http://web.undp.org/comtoolkit/reaching-the-outside-world/docs/Best%20Practices/AGuidetotheNigerianMedia.pdf>. Accessed 25 January 2015



populated could not be more populous than the densely populated south, something that he referred to as 'voodoo demography' because density does not imply population size.<sup>236</sup>

He also noted that the paper's editorial of January 4, 2001 blamed the north for the ills of the country with the paper stating that 'those that take the most are those who supply the least to the common pool' an argument which he notes ignores the fact that 'the issue of oil wealth is a matter of interest mostly only to the country's upper class which cuts across, tribe, region and religion.'<sup>237</sup> He argued that these were just a few examples of how the paper was helping to shape negative views about the north.

Mohammed Haruna was also involved in a diatribe with a noted social activist and Catholic Priest, Mathew Kukah after he wrote an article challenging Jerry Gana, a northern Christian's presidential ambition. His article 'Why Jerry Gana can not be President' published on July 12, 2006 in the *Daily Trust* newspaper was attacked by Father Kukah, who wrote a rejoinder titled 'Mohammed Haruna – Limits of Demagoguery' published in the *Daily Trust* of July 21, 2006. Kukah argued that in Haruna's eyes, the only reason that disqualified Gana was his choice of religion even though there was nowhere that Haruna used this as a basis for his argument in his article. However Kukah's decision to make it a religious issue highlights the problem where issues are examined through the lenses of religion and ethnicity.

Muslims began to challenge anti north/Islam narratives and recently when Christians opposed the introduction of Islamic banking, which they claimed was part of a wider Islamisation agenda in Nigeria, one Muslim leader stated that;

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<sup>236</sup> Text of review of 'The Whole Truth' selected editorials of the Guardian (1983-2003). December 15, 2005, at the National Institute of International Affairs, Lagos

<sup>237</sup> *ibid*



we are the majority in this country whether the Christians like it or not. We have taken a lot of nonsense; we have come to the end and from now on it is tit for tat. There [sic] quite a number of rascals in cassocks that have been talking recently; we'll meet fire for fire this time. Whether it is an Archbishop or whoever he is who talks nonsense, we'll get people to answer him in the same language. *If he talks as a rascal we'll answer him as a rascal*<sup>238</sup>

He went on to state that;

We cant live under bloody idiots dictating to us how we live our lives even within the laws of the country<sup>239 240</sup>

Finally warning that;

If they want us to live in Nigeria peacefully as we want to do, then let them respect our rights as we concede to them their own rights<sup>241</sup>

These remarks were confrontational by its positioning of Muslims on one side and Christians on the other and even though it was a response to the concerns raised by Christian groups regarding the introduction of the Islamic banking system, it reflected deeper issues around Muslim/Non-Muslim relations. What was also significant, is that the remarks were made by the President of the Supreme Council of Sharia in Nigeria, which gave them more weight as a reflection of widely held Muslim views. By publishing it, the pro-Christian, *Sunday Standard* newspaper was confirming to its readership the extreme position of Muslims.

More recently, in a press statement he made in December 2013 on behalf of the sharia council, Datti made more claims regarding an agenda against Muslims in Nigeria. He stated that there was a plan by Christians against Muslims in the country, accusing the government of using all its resources to marginalise Muslims. He noted that;

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<sup>238</sup> Gobum, K. (2011) Datti and The Future of Nigeria. *Sunday Standard*, August 7. p.3

<sup>239</sup> The Islamic Bank granted operational license by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2011.

<sup>240</sup> Gobum, K. (2011) Datti and The Future of Nigeria. *Sunday Standard*, August 7. p.3

<sup>241</sup> *ibid*



This ugly development, now appropriately christened a “transformation agenda”, appears to have reached its zenith, involving practically all Federal Government Institutions and resources, with the active support of all security agencies and the Armed forces, all pursuing in unison, the objective of collective punishment, marginalisation, intimidation and demonisation of Muslims and Islam.<sup>242</sup>

He accused the government controlled security agencies of planning to intimidate and arrest prominent Muslim scholars while claiming that acts against Muslims were largely ignored with Christians caught in criminal acts not being brought up for justice. He cited cases in Bauchi, Gombe and Jos where individuals caught with arms and explosives to be used against Muslims remained free.<sup>243</sup> These claims were meant to highlight the position of that there was a grand design to delegitimise Muslims, a claim that further exacerbated the tense relations between Muslims and Christians.

It is clear that the print media has played a role in promoting negative stereotypes in Nigeria. These narratives demonise sections of the country through the publication of inflammatory headlines and negative advertisement. The impact of this is that it entrenches perceptions about groups and helps in the delegitimation process before, during and after conflicts. The next section examines different type of mutual delegitimation carried out by groups and how these help raise inter group tensions and perpetuate conflicts.

### **8.3 RADICALISED NARRATIVES AND DELEGITIMISATION IN NIGERIA**

The delegitimation between groups in Nigeria takes a number of forms; between the north and the south; between the states; within states; and between religions. The most evident delegitimation practices are between the south and the north and by Hausa Fulani Muslims and the non-Muslim groups in northern Nigeria. These processes occur during competitions

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<sup>242</sup> Datti, A. (2013) *Nigerian State is waging a war on Islam and Muslims - Sharia Council*. Elombah, December 3. Online Available at <http://elombah.com/index.php/articles-mainmenu/19322-nigerian-state-is-waging-a-war-on-islam-and-muslims-sharia-council> [retrieved: April 20, 2015]

<sup>243</sup> *ibid*



at different levels, with the southern/northern process occurring at the national level as they compete for control of the centre, while the others occur at the state and local government levels. The manners of these processes are examined in the following sections to understand how they affect the dynamics of conflicts.

### **8.3.1 Fear of Muslim Violence**

As already noted, religion is a foundation for mobilisation during conflicts and this is no more evident than in northern Nigeria. The use of contentious and radicalised narratives that evoke emotions and raise the issue of 'us against them', make it easy for groups to be mobilised along religious lines. In northern Nigeria, non-Muslim ethnic groups frame their narratives within the broader context of social, economic and political marginalisation by the Hausa-Fulani Muslims. One of the most recurring examples of these religious narratives revolves around the issue of the expansion of sharia 1976 and 1999 and the country's membership of the OIC. These narratives reveal the fears of non-Muslims of a process of Islamisation in the country and the increasing hegemony of Islam in the north.<sup>244</sup>

Non-Muslim narratives suggest that the Muslim goal is aimed at the eradication of all other religions. This is nothing new in the region, where pre-independence there were tensions between the various ethnic and religious groups, with a sense that "Moslems were hell bent that the Islamisation of Nigeria becomes a reality."<sup>245</sup> This was seen as a goal 'to make Muslim religion the religion of the whole world.'<sup>246</sup> Muslims challenge these narratives, insisting they are used to generate fear among Christians to justify the introduction of exclusionary policies that restrict Muslims from the political, economic and social spheres in parts of the country. However, Muslim narratives are also radicalised and portray non-

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<sup>244</sup> Verbatim Report to Justice Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Jos Riots. 2008. P. 60

<sup>245</sup> Gopar, D. (2000) The Nature Of Ethno-Religious Crisis in Nigeria. *Nigerian Standard*, October 3. p.17

<sup>246</sup> Interview, December 12, 2011 Jos, Chief D.A. Bot



Muslims in a negative light so that rather than providing a counter narrative to non-Muslim narratives that will enable better engagement with non-Muslims, the narratives also heighten suspicions and distrust between the groups.

An examination of group narratives before, during and after conflicts indicates cases of Muslims being depicted as having a violent nature. After the 1987 Kafanchan conflict, news reports from the southern press focused on underscoring this stereotype with the *New Nigerian* newspaper accusing the southern press of biased reporting. Newsmagazines such as the *African Guardian* carried commentaries that reflected this position with one of these stating that 'we cannot afford another civil strife...this is one fact we must impress on the *mullahs-of-easy violence*.'<sup>247</sup> It went on to note that '*fanatics* with sticks, matches, knives and other deadly missiles took over the town's major streets attacking Churches and generally harassing persons believed to be non-Muslims.'<sup>248</sup>

The press also picked on a statement of the Kaduna state governor, Dangiwa Umar, a Muslim, after the 1987 conflict, where he stated that, 'I feel ashamed to be associated with Muslims who perpetrate this havoc.'<sup>249</sup> This was used to confirm the fears of non-Muslims and indict the Muslim community of being the perpetrators of the violence. The media further stressed that 'it is significant that he (Governor Umar) had to say....that he felt ashamed to see fellow Muslims go so berserk' and that 'Governor Umar was so categorical that the Muslims were the *bad guys*.'<sup>250</sup> The governor's position helped in providing a platform in which the emerging reports regarding the conflict were based. Other reports emerging from the southern press argued that the crisis was aimed at 'dislodging the Nigerians from the north' by their often violent and reactionary Northern Muslim

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<sup>247</sup> Lamba K. (1987) Kaduna Crisis: Reflections On Press Reports. *New Nigerian Newspapers*, April 2. p.7

<sup>248</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> *ibid.*



counterparts.’<sup>251</sup> These radicalised and contentious narratives were common and helped create a fear of attack by fanatical Muslims against non-Muslims.

Another set of narratives of Muslim violence emerged after the ‘Miss World riots of 2002’ when the southern press focused on what they saw as the misplaced reaction of the Muslim community to the *Thisday* article that led to the violence (Salawu, 2009). The Yoruba newspaper, *Alaroye* questioned the Muslim response to the article noting that;

we are opposed to the Hausa’s crazy fight, we are opposed to their stupid conduct. We are equally opposed to the idea of perpetrating evil under the guise of Islam...If a Hausa person were in power, we know the Hausa would not start the Sharia system... *there are many people in Hausa land who can slaughter their mothers for politics....there are many satanic children among them*<sup>252</sup> (Salawu, 2009:76).

This differed from the northern perspective of the crisis, with the northern press accusing the author of the article of being insensitive to Muslims, something they said was characteristic of how the southern press treated anything Islamic. One article stated that:

it is very clear that some newspapers and writers (especially from the south) find it difficult to accept and respect the values of other people....Most commentaries on sharia especially have been not only negative but utterly antagonistic...and others are written with unlimited mischief (New Nigerian, December 9, 2002 cited in Salawu, 2009:76).

In Jos, Christian narratives continue this trend with their depiction of Muslims as an aggressive group that does not want peace but ‘want to bring Jos to its knees’ with all attempts at resolving the conflict unsuccessful ‘because if one group [Christians] is ready to embrace peace, the other one [Hausa-Fulani Muslims] only pretends to embrace peace. The other is like the elder brother of the prodigal son who is full of evil, anger, malice and

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<sup>251</sup> Bature, A. (1987) Kaduna Disturbances: Beyond The Smokescreen. *New Nigerian Newspapers*, April 6. p.5

<sup>252</sup> emphasis mine



jealousy.<sup>253</sup> The Justice Bola Ajibola committee also noted the existence of contentious narratives between the actors in the conflicts with several of the publications by various sides in the conflict 'provocative and inciting' and instead of reducing tensions they caused distrust, ill feeling and disunity leading to escalation of the unrest.<sup>254</sup>

The Tiv community's presentation at the commission also supported this assertion, with the group accusing the Hausa-Fulani of 'always the first to strike to plunder, burn, intimidate and when your enemies run, proceed to occupy.'<sup>255</sup> Another witness, stated that Muslims in Jos 'were chanting that this was a Jihad and were calling on other Muslims to come out and conquer and dominate.'<sup>256</sup> The Du Elders Council went on to note that Muslims in Jos had a 'Jihadist plan' that 'must be carried out by force' and that 'in order to carry out such a plan, any small provocation or misunderstanding is enough reason to carry on with the planned agenda.'<sup>257</sup>

These radicalised narratives between the groups support the perception of non-Muslims of Muslim plans to dominate the non-Muslims in the region that has continued to generate suspicions and distrust so that each group does not feel that it can engage with the other because it does not accept the legitimacy of the other's claims.

### **8.3.2. Fear of Northern Muslim Domination**

The issue of Muslim domination and their goal of subjugating other ethnic and religious groups in the region is also a common theme that runs through non-Muslim narratives. News reports after the two 2004 conflicts in Yelwa-Shendam by newspapers such as *Tell* and *Tribune* depicted Christians as victims of Muslim aggression. Most of their sources were

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<sup>253</sup> Adidi, F.N. (2010). Who Will Deliver Plateau. *The Nigeria Standard*, March 17. p.13

<sup>254</sup> Justice Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Jos Riots. 2008.

<sup>255</sup> *ibid*

<sup>256</sup> Verbatim Report to the Justice Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Jos Riots. 2008. p. 1440

<sup>257</sup> *ibid*. p. 1286



from Christian eyewitnesses and survivors thus ensuring just one perspective of the conflict. The *Tribune* focused more on apportioning blame, ignoring other issues around the immediate and remote cause of the conflict, with the newspaper attributing the attacks to the 'marauding Fulani militia.'<sup>258</sup> On the other hand the distinctively conservative and pro-north *Daily Trust* newspaper and its sister publication the *Weekly Trust* provided alternative viewpoints of the conflict. These publications focused on the loss of lives and properties within the Muslim community and depicted that community as the victims with the minority ethnic Christian groups as the perpetrators of the violence. The papers focused on different narratives that highlighted the culpability of each group in the violence, choosing to selectively report on those who they saw as being responsible for the violence.

Even the declaration of a state of emergency in Plateau state after the 2004 violence in Yelwa-Shendam, was seen by Christians as a confirmation of a Muslim agenda against the state. They wondered why no state of emergency was declared in neighbouring Kano and Bauchi states even though they both experienced violence against non-Muslims. The Plateau CAN youth group 'threatened to resist the imposition of the state of emergency describing it as a *jihad* on the state.'<sup>259</sup> This supported their perception of bias against non-Muslim groups. Oddly, even though no state of emergency was imposed in the neighbouring states, Muslims in Kano state also accused the federal government of an anti-Muslim agenda noting that the;

deployment of well armed mobile police and military troops in our various mosques both within and outside Kano metropolitan. The aim was to intimidate the Muslim ummah in the state and to protect the kin and kith of Obasanjo from retaliatory attack, ironically, there has never been such security arrangement in Lagos where a Yoruba terrorist called Ganiyu Adam was killing and maiming northerners<sup>260</sup>

<sup>258</sup> Talban Bauchi. (2004) Media Lied on Jos Crisis. *Weekly Trust*, February 28- March 5. p.9

<sup>259</sup> Cover (2004) ...declaration is a jihad- Plateau CAN youth. *Daily Trust*, May 20. p.1

<sup>260</sup> Kofarmata, A.I. End of the Road for Kwankwaso. Online Available at <http://www.gamji.com/article4000/NEWS4878.htm> [retrieved on 1/6/2014].



In Jos after the 2008 conflict, a witness accused Muslims in neighbouring states such as Nasarawa, Bauchi and Taraba of 'building up arms and ammunition in preparation of an attack on the indigenes of Plateau state.'<sup>261</sup> These arms were allegedly being transported into Muslim settlements in Jos north, Wase and Shendam local government areas to help support Muslims in their fight against local communities. The aim of this was seen as part of a greater agenda that was funded and provided with logistical support from *Jihadists* in the form of 'arms and ammunitions, human resources [and] training skills.'<sup>262</sup> CAN support this claim, noting that terrorism had found root in the northern part of the country with terrorists being used in the conflicts across the states.<sup>263</sup> The conflicts are seen thus seen within the context of the continued expansion of the historical Sokoto caliphate and a Muslim *jihad* to ensure 'that the dreams of their grandfather Uthman dan Fodio of the ownership of the Nigerian estate is achieved.'<sup>264</sup>

These narratives from non-Muslim groups focus on generating fear by stating that Muslims continue to attempt to take control of non-Muslim land, economically, politically and spiritually.<sup>265</sup> Christians fear that having previously failed during the immediate years after independence at fully taking control, the sons of the *jihadists* 'still fight the same fight with the *jihad* taking on a new dimension and 'in recent times there seems to be a new lexicon being added to the meaning of *Jihad*, that of the acquisition of land and political power through violence.'<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Memorandum submitted by Chief Da. G.G. Bot to The General Emmanuel Abisoye (Rtd.) Presidential Panel of Investigation into Jos Crisis of November 2008. December 2009. Appendix D

<sup>262</sup> *ibid*

<sup>263</sup> Cover Story (2004). JN1 Decries 'genocide' in Plateau. *Daily Trust*, May 5. p.1

<sup>264</sup> Mutua, M.A. (2010) Bombing On Christmas Day, Swallowing Jonah On Sunday: Reflections for Hajiya Bilkisu. *Sunday Standard*, March 14. p.3

<sup>265</sup> *ibid*

<sup>266</sup> Eyoboka, S. (2011) That Kafanchan may not become another Jos. *Vanguard*, May 18. p.40



In a letter to the Senate President, a Christian leader noted that current Muslim narratives were very confrontational. He highlighted preaching by some Muslims scholars, which he said were very divisive and meant to instil fear and hatred.<sup>267</sup> He singled out a number of Muslim preachers in the Bauchi- Jos area notably Sheikh Sani Yahaya Jingir of the Izala sect based in Jos who he claimed preached hate against Christians and his insistence that Muslims must 'hate Christians in this country and that Muslims will continue to kill non Muslims.'<sup>268</sup> He also cited other Muslim scholars who preached this message of hate and have called for Muslims to get ready to defend themselves against plans by Christian elites to wage war against Muslims. While there is little evidence to substantiate these claims, the narratives have still managed to increase fears between both groups and have resulted in increasing the cohesiveness of both Muslim and non-Muslim groups which also increased the divide between the groups.

### **8.3.3 Muslim Narratives Challenging Christian Narratives**

While the previous sections have focused on the negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims, Muslim have tried to provide alternative narratives in their relationship with non-Muslims, however these narratives are also usually confrontational, which further inflamed inter group relations. Muslim elites have criticise the way Hausa-Fulani Muslims are portrayed with one noting in 1995 that;

The Hausa Muslim of the far North appears to be the target of the frustration of all other Nigerians. They are hated for the reasons of the political leadership imposed on them by the mutual suspicions of other Nigerians. They are subjected to humiliation by the South-Western Yoruba powerful media by which their culture, religion and leadership are daily treated to insults. They are also excluded from full economic participation by the Yoruba control of the financial institutions. In the private sector they are open to the exploitation of the Ibo control of the modern sector of private business activities. Ibos fix prices unilaterally,

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<sup>267</sup> Letter to the President of the Nigerian Senate. Pastor Kallamu Musa Ali Dikwa, July 4, 2012

<sup>268</sup> *ibid*



by which Hausa money is siphoned daily. The Hausa are reduced to utter poverty and a large percentage of them rendered street beggars.<sup>269</sup>

A noted Islamic scholar, Dr. Mahmud Gumi while reacting to Reverend Kukah's speech at the funeral of the governor of Kaduna state, Patrick Yakowa where he said some Muslims were rejoicing at the death of Yakowa, noted that it was ironic that little was said about attacks against Muslims in Kaduna state during the Governor's administration where he claimed over 500 Muslims had been killed between 2010 and 2012.<sup>270</sup> He said this was a period of genocide against Muslims and accused the state and federal governments of doing little to identify the perpetrators. While appreciating Kukah's grief over the death of the Governor, he stated that;

I am not questioning these peoples genuine concern of the death of their bosom friend and comrade. What I am questioning is the apathy when Muslims are killed by criminals and the sadness when Allah has done His justice<sup>271</sup>

He went on to note;

What are we witnessing as an Ummah, when thousands of Muslims are and were killed, maimed and displaced (today all Muslims in Tafawa Balewa are exiled and their properties confiscated) and yet, look at this blatant hypocrisy!<sup>272</sup>

These remarks were sure to affect the Muslim community by echoing the sense of injustice against Muslims in the state during the administration of a Christian Governor that they had strongly opposed during the 2007 elections.

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<sup>269</sup> Ibrahim, J. (2012) Nigeria: Hausa/Fulani Oligarchy and the Marginalisation of Citizens. *Daily Trust*. 5 November. Online Retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201211050912.html>

<sup>270</sup> Sahara Reporters (2012) Gumi Reacts To Kukah's Sermon At Yakowa's Funeral, Challenges Sultan, Buhari. December 27. Online. Available at <http://saharareporters.com/2012/12/27/gumi-reacts-kukah%E2%80%99s-sermon-yakowa%E2%80%99s-funeral-challenges-sultan-buhari> [retrieved on April 3, 2015]

<sup>271</sup> *ibid*

<sup>272</sup> *ibid*



The Muslim community in Jos portray themselves as victims of a planned genocide, with the JNI noting that ‘the killing of over 350 people in the renewed crisis in Plateau state was genocide.’<sup>273</sup> The use of the word ‘genocide’ by Muslim groups in the Plateau crisis to describe the violence against Muslims has become common not just in Jos but also in other conflict areas in the country and is used by the press. Its use by Muslims is meant to give weight to the conflict as one that aims to expel Muslims from Jos and other parts of Plateau state, with the Hausa-Fulani community accusing the Governor ‘of genocide and claimed they have reported him to the World Court.’<sup>274</sup> In Kaduna, one respondent while describing the Zonkwa post election violence, noted that the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU), did not bother to ‘disown the genocide’ during their press conference after the crisis.<sup>275</sup>

After the 2008 post election violence in Jos, the media was accused of inflaming the tensions with the ‘indigenous’ groups particularly critical of the *Daily Trust’s* reporting that was seen as having exacerbated the conflict. The newspaper had carried a story on November 26, 2008, by one of the elders of the Jasawa Development Association, Alhaji Nakande where he stated that;

Governor Jang is not sincere about the Local Government Polls. So far, utterances coming from Government officials is [sic] to the effect that they will manipulate the election, and they will declare results even while elections are going on; because they say it has happened elsewhere in Nasarawa and Lagos States<sup>276</sup>

Even though Alhaji Nakande was unable to support these claims with proof, the allegations increased suspicions within the Muslim community regarding the partiality of the state government and the electoral body in the conduct of the elections. This meant that any

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<sup>273</sup> Cover Story. (2004) JNI Decries ‘genocide’ In Plateau. *Daily Trust*, May 5. p.1

<sup>274</sup> Justice Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Jos Riots. 2008.

<sup>275</sup> Interview. Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna. March 21, 2011

<sup>276</sup> Justice Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Jos Riots. 2008.p. 70



other result apart from a victory for the Muslim candidate was bound to result in a crisis. This was exactly what happened when the candidate of the ruling PDP candidate was declared the winner of the elections leading to violence after the release of the results.

The Plateau state owned media was also accused of assisting the local ethnic groups in the delegitimisation of the Muslim community. One of the publications is the '*Nigerian Standard*' newspaper that was established in 1972 and is owned by the Benue and Plateau state governments. Its role was to give a voice to the ethnic groups of the middle belt area and to counter the *New Nigerian* newspaper that was seen as pandering to the core northern establishment.<sup>277</sup> The newspaper is seen as anti Muslim with its editorial policy focusing on the perspectives of the mainly Christian minority ethnic groups of Plateau and Benue states but also of the entire north. The groups' control of the mechanism for narrative creation allows them to propagate radicalised anti Muslim/Hausa-Fulani narratives.

While the print media has played a role in the creation of narratives, another way in which these have developed has been through the distribution of inflammatory pamphlets. After the 2001 Jos conflict, the Jasawa community released several flyers that warned that:

death is the best friend of Hamas. Be rest assured that we will do it even better;

and;

Blood for Blood. We are ready. Lets see who has more deposit of ready strikers with a chance of venue - Hausa-Fulani Youths (under 25).<sup>278</sup>

These flyers were very provocative and confrontational, helping to heighten tensions between the groups in Jos. Images and video recordings of the conflicts have also been

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<sup>277</sup> Thomas, D. (2004) Emergency Exit. *The Week*, May 31. p.26

<sup>278</sup> Pamphlets distributed in Jos by Hausa-Fulani (Jasawa) Youth



utilised to create narratives with images circulated that show members of certain groups carrying out violence against members of other groups. These videos help in sensationalising the conflicts, thereby inciting groups against each other and increasing their need for vengeance. In some cases these images are those of past conflicts that are reproduced and captioned as those of current conflicts, all with the sole purpose of inflaming the already tense situation in the area while also entrenching prejudices against groups.

The Muslim community has a catalogue of images of attacks against Muslims, many of them forwarded by the perpetrators as they were committing the acts and others compiled by Muslims after the conflicts. The video of violence during the 2009 Eid violence in Jos is one such example. This was widely circulated and it showed the Berom eating the flesh of Muslim corpses. This portrayed them as completely dehumanised and cannibalistic, infuriating Muslims who hold the bodies of their dead sacred. Images of the 2011 post election violence that showed Christian groups in Zangon Kataf attacking and killing members of the Muslim community were also circulated. These were presented to the commissions of inquiry and one Muslim group, Justice Network in Kaduna is collating these images for a submission it intends to make to the ECOWAS court of Justice.<sup>279</sup>

The use of images, CDs and DVDs that show the violence against group members has a deep negative psychological effect on how groups perceive other groups by enabling them see first hand the cruelty against their members. This entrenches the already existing perceptions of the 'other' as the enemy, heightening suspicions and making it more difficult for the groups to sit down and resolve the conflict. The consequences of these narratives are examined in the next section.

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<sup>279</sup> Interview. Sanusi Maikudi. Kaduna. March 21, 2012



## 8.4 CONSEQUENCES OF DELEGITIMISATION

The mutual delegitimation carried out by groups has emotional, cognitive and behavioural implications on the sensibility of the delegitimising group and those being delegitimised. This results in the strengthening of fear and feelings of threat from the delegitimised group so that acts of revenge, attacks against them are not seen as unjust. This is due to a 'moral disengagement' where members of the delegitimised group are seen as inhumane so that any acts against them do not result in personal distress (Oren and Bar-Tal, 2007; Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012:41).

When the Nazis wanted to justify their acts against Jews they created narratives that 'Jews were responsible for the alienation of humanity from the natural order and were the main obstacle to human redemption' while in America, American Indians were portrayed as 'savages, inferior or animals' allowing the settlers to justify their cruelty against them (Bar-Tal, 1990:76-77). This allowed them to justify and legitimise their actions against Jews that excluded them from the 'economic, political, societal and cultural aspects of life and to deny their humanity' (Bar-Tal, 1990:77).

A more recent example of how delegitimation was effectively used was by the Hutus against the Tutsis during the Rwandan conflict in 1994. The pro Hutu newspaper *Kangura* carried out a campaign of delegitimation by evoking past Tutsi actions as being similar to present day actions and in one of the most damaging articles titled 'A Cockroach Cannot Give Birth to a Butterfly', the paper commented that;

We began by saying that a cockroach cannot give birth to a butterfly. It is true. A cockroach gives birth to another cockroach...The history of Rwanda shows us clearly that a Tutsi stays always exactly the same that he has never changed. The malice, the evil are just as we knew



them in the history of our country. We are not wrong in saying that a cockroach gives birth to another cockroach. Who could tell the difference between the Inyenzi who attacked in October 1990 and those of the 1960s. They are all linked...their evilness is the same. The unspeakable crimes of the Inyenzi of today...recall those of their elders: killing, pillaging, raping girls and women, etc.<sup>280</sup>

These are examples of how delegitimisation is used by groups to justify their exclusion, maltreatment and acts of violence against other groups. In Nigeria radicalised narratives that carry messages of hate and distrust have become more common. As the conflicts in Kaduna and Plateau states have continued, group narratives have become more simplistic taking that 'us against them' position that puts groups on opposing sides so that their options of negotiation are narrow.

The consequence of these narratives is that they serve the purpose of refusing to see the other group as 'a legitimate partner in dialogue because it does not share the in-group's basic humanness' (Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012:39) with contentious narratives reflecting the struggle for changes in 'social and structural conditions as well as power relations in a particular society' (Manojlovic, 2010:3). Groups also decipher information based on what is consistent with their beliefs and what reinforces their fears of attack by the rival group so that they 'may even unintentionally bias and distort information in order to validate their delegitimising beliefs' (Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012:39).

Delegitimisation also increases the feeling of victimhood by one group and the justness of their goals as the conflicts persist, with each group seeing the other as being responsible for the injustice against it and the continuation of the violence. This affects the way groups manage the conflicts and the overall peace process because each group begins to believe that the other group is the responsible for the conflict and that they are being victimised

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<sup>280</sup> March 1993, newspaper Kangura, Des Forges, 1999, pp. 73-74 cited in Human Rights Watch. (2004). *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*



(Bar-Tal et.al., 2009:232). This sense of victimhood takes its basis from past harmful events that have affected the group and this has a psychological effect on the group and is evident in their narratives. This is the position that the groups involved in the conflicts in Jos and southern Kaduna have taken, with each of them depicting itself as the victim of the other group's actions and this increases cohesiveness within the group so that mobilisation during conflicts are easier.

This also creates a sense of moral superiority by the in-group while also justifying their delegitimisation of the other group (Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012:39) and results in the fourth consequence, which is the increased cohesiveness within the groups. There is an increased level of cohesiveness amongst Northern Muslims and Christians that has increased suspicions and the level of distrust between the groups leading to a heightened level of tension within the region. As groups become more cohesive, moderate voices that do not conform to the group's ideology are drowned by the more extreme majority voices. The moderates are kept on the periphery so that they do not question the methods and goals of the in-group during the conflict making conflict resolution more difficult.

It is obvious from the foregoing that the groups involved in the Jos and Kaduna conflicts have adopted a strategy of mutual delegitimisation by employing radicalised narratives to justify their actions against groups that they label as their enemies. Each group now sees the outcome of the conflict as having a direct effect on its very survival so that the slightest trigger can result in new cycles of violence.

## **8.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter examined group narratives and found that during periods of competition narratives were radicalised and contentious so that groups find themselves at opposite ends



of the conflicts with little negotiating room. Groups used these narratives to delegitimise each other and also increase group cohesiveness. What was important to note was that even where there was little evidence to support some of their claims, the narratives were effective in raising suspicion and distrust between groups so that each group saw itself as a victim of the other group's aggression whose goal is to exterminate them. Competition for control of the political, economic and social space becomes intense so that the most insignificant act by either group being treated with suspicion and mistrust.

The delegitimation of the 'other' is carried out through the spread of negative stereotypes using the media and other forms of information diffusion. For non-Muslim groups, these narratives help create fear amongst group members by delegitimising and portraying Islam as a violent religion. Non-Muslims see Muslim goals as pursuing a goal of eradicating all non-Muslims and turning the region and the country into an Islamic state. On the other hand, Muslims justify their acts against non-Muslims by employing narratives that degrade Christianity and portray Christians as unbelievers through the use of derogatory words like *arne* (pagan), making a mockery of their practices and depicting them as lower than Muslims so that whenever possible they are excluded in the political, social and traditional sphere. Delegitimation thus helps to question the 'claims of the out-group and even the existence of the out-group as part of the same moral community as the in-group' (Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012:46) making it easier for the groups to justify their violence against the 'other.'

The next chapter provides a summary of the thesis by answering the research questions highlighted in Chapter 1. It then examines attempts by the Nigerian government to reduce identity competition and provides policy recommendations of other possible options that can help reduce the existing tensions between groups so as enable more effective conflict



resolution strategies. Some of these options include structural changes that will reduce inequalities so that groups do not feel excluded, while others are legal and constitutional changes. However these must be seen alongside policies that will help change how groups see each other by legitimising the 'other' so that groups can begin to see each other as viable partners in the resolution of the conflicts.



## **CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY, POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **9.0 SUMMARY**

This chapter provides a summary of the thesis and the conclusions reached in the examination of the nexus between identity and conflict. The focus of the thesis was not on the causes of conflicts but on why there remained underlying emotions between conflicting groups. These emotions ensured that groups found it hard to resolve issues so that even when there were periods of lull in the fighting, conflict could erupt at the slightest provocation due to existing negative emotions such as fear, hatred, distrust and suspicion that made it difficult for groups to negotiate the permanent end of the conflict. While acknowledging that the immediate causes of the conflicts relate to competition over access to political, social and economic rights and issues of exclusion, the thesis found that mobilisation has occurred along identity lines with the narratives revolving around the survival of the group. The thesis also found that groups use identities to mobilise during period of conflicts by employing narratives that focus on historical memories of inter group relations and how this kind of mobilisation affects the dynamics of conflicts through the development of negative emotions such as fear, hatred, suspicion and distrust.

This thesis focused on trying to understand how some conflicts remain intractable by finding answers to the research questions identified in the beginning of the dissertation. These were; what the main identities in the country were and how they evolved and have been maintained?; what were the factors that helped heighten group identities in northern Nigeria?; the role past narratives play in helping these groups understand present intergroup relations; and finally how these identities form the platforms for mobilisation during conflicts and the effect this has on both the nature of conflicts and the conflict resolution process.



The research began by examining the development of group identities and noted that even though it is argued that most identities are constructed, fluid and situational and are used by elites to further their own instrumentalist agendas, in many African societies, identities remain relevant, continuing to play a very important role in how groups make sense of the world by providing them with the foundation for intergroup relations. The thesis found that groups used Identities as a basis for mobilisation because they provided a strong sense of security for individuals (Ashmore et.al. 2004) and in times of conflict they were the safety net that reduced human anxiety. Identities in Nigeria were shown to have emerged through the intersection of social, political, economic and religious processes during the pre-colonial and colonial periods and after independence.

Religion and ethnicity were identified as the main identities, with Islam and Christianity the main religions struggling for dominance. The country was found to have over 200 ethnic groups with the main groups being the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the south-west and the Igbo in the South-East. There were also several other ethnic groups such as the Nupe, the Ijaw, Kanuri, Tiv, Igala and Berom and Istekiri all of which were concentrated in different parts of the country. These ethnic groups were the main basis for mobilisation in the conflicts in northern Nigeria as they competed for access to social, economic and political benefits.

In northern Nigeria, Islam was the dominant religion and its development and entrenchment was linked to its long history in the region. This was further embedded during the colonial period when the Emirate system was used as the basis for the indirect system of administration through the native authorities that created a hierarchical structure where Muslims were at the top of the system. However during the same period, the advent of Christianity increased competition for hegemony between the two religions and this was



made more intense due to the colonial administration's restriction of missionary work to the middle belt area keeping them out of the core north. This created a sense of bias against Christianity and was challenged by the non-Muslim ethnic groups who saw this as a deliberate attempt to ensure Muslim hegemony. Group relations between Muslims and non-Muslims was further exacerbated during this period due to the use of forced labour from the non-Muslim groups and the use of sharia courts to adjudicate in these areas.

It was also noted that the Native Authorities that were based on the emirate system of administration helped create a hierarchical structure within the northern region that had Muslims at the top of the pyramid. The system helped exclude non-Muslims from certain areas of political and social administration, however the advent of Christianity provided education services that increased the number of educated elites amongst the minority groups in the region who began to challenge Muslim hegemony. These were the early factors that helped entrench Islamic and Christian identities in the region.

As religion became more salient in the 1970s', the divides in the country widened due to the religious revivalism that began with the advent of Pentecostal churches and the emergence of the *Izala* Muslim sect. The emergence of the Pentecostal movement saw the explosion of churches in the southern part of the country and quickly spread to the north with increased proselytisation that began to challenge Islam's hegemony. On the other hand, the emergence of the new *Izala* group led to a struggle between it and the older *Tijanniya* and *Qadriyya* sects as they competed for control of public space. It was during this period that there were increased calls for the expansion of the sharia legal code by Muslims. This manifested during the Constitutional Drafting exercise in 1975 and by the 1980s, the Christian rejection of the country's membership in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) raised the profile of religion in the country's politics. By 1999 with the expansion of the



sharia legal system in 12 of the 19 northern states, Christian consciousness increased as they challenged the rising profile of Islam in northern Nigeria and this resulted in religion taking a firm root in the public space in the country with groups using it as a basis for mobilisation.

Several factors contributed to the development and entrenchment of group identities in the country and in northern Nigeria, with the process of identity formation beginning prior to the colonial era. Some of the early factors contributing to identity formation included the internal slave trade; the role of Islam and Christianity in the northern region; internal migration in the region and the colonial policies of urban segregation that were introduced by the British. After the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate, there was an increase in internal slave trade that was carried out through raids by the emirates in the non-Muslim areas of the middle belt such as southern Kaduna and the Jos plateau as a way of providing labour for the land owner ruling class on their farms. This increased tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims leading to the strengthening of ethnic and religious identities and anti Muslim sentiments amongst the groups in the area and is seen as the basis for the current relationship between them.

The second factor identified as affecting the development of identities was migration. During the colonial era, the completion of the rail network into the north increased migration as people moved to new areas for the emerging economic opportunities. This resulted in increased competition between the indigenous and the migrant groups as was evident in Jos, where the local groups challenged migrant groups, such as the Hausa-Fulani and the Igbos who now made up large numbers of the population of the new town, for dominance. This was because as the town grew, the Hausa Fulani attempted to stamp their cultural and religious identity in the town, bringing them into confrontation with the local communities. The competition increased during the period leading up to independence as



the minority groups became more cohesive and formed a notable block that challenged the hegemony of the main Hausa-Fulani group.

This was also the case in southern Kaduna where the arrival of migrants also resulted in entrenching identities and the indigene/settler dichotomy in the area. The Hausa-Fulani had always had a presence in these areas through the trade routes and the emergence of *Zangos* helped them establish strong economic and traditional roots that brought them into confrontation with the local ethnic groups. This was evident in Zangon Kataf where due to their economic dominance there was a struggle with the indigenous Kataf ethnic group that resulted in the 1992 conflict. On the other hand, their traditional presence in the form of the Jema'a emirate led to the Kafanchan conflict of 1999 due to demands by the local ethnic groups for their own traditional institutions.

The provision of education to the minority ethnic groups of the north by Christian missionaries that resulted in the emergence of a crop of educated Christian elites. This helped in challenging Muslim hegemony especially in the political sphere as political activities increased in the country, with elites of the minority areas using politics as a foundation for demanding greater autonomy, thus pitching them in confrontation with the ruling Muslim elites of the region. This led to the demand for new regions that would reflect ethnic diversity in the regions that eventually resulted in the creation of 12 states out of the regions in 1966. The creation of states, with six in northern Nigeria altered the dynamics of the relationship between the majority Hausa Fulani Muslims and the non-Muslim ethnic groups of the region. The demands for new states and local government areas continued until the last creation exercise of 1996 that resulted in the current 36 states structure. However these have done little to ease the problem of ethnic divisions, as these new states



have resulted in the emergence of new minorities who allege domination and exclusion by the new majority ethnic groups within these new states.

Constitutional changes in the 1970s, such as the introduction of the federal character principle and quota systems also led to stronger alignments to group identity by individuals as this was a certain way of ensuring access to political, economic and social benefits. Both policies were meant to ensure that all groups were guaranteed representation in the system through employment and education places. However, this had the negative effect of excluding qualified applicants from some sections of the country into educational institutions and the civil service creating a sense of unfairness, with the north being accused of benefiting even when it did not have qualified people to fill the spaces. This has rallied sections of the country against the north and even at the state level, such as in Kaduna, these accusations also resonate from the minority groups who accuse the Hausa-Fulani of using the quota system to their advantage by filling education and employment spaces with unqualified applicants.

Economic factors also played a role in entrenching identities as was evident after the introduction of the structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s. This was because the period saw a decline in economic activities in the country that affected identity formation in two ways; at the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, the policies of SAP shrunk the state reducing available employment opportunities, forcing many to rely on communal, ethnic and religious networks as safety nets with organisations such as the Christian Association of Nigeria, the Jama'atu Nasir Islam, town and village associations became more important in the lives of many people. At the macro level, competition for control of the central government between the north and south, between ethnic groups at the state and local government levels all increased ethnic and religious importance, with these becoming



more important as they were used as a basis for mobilisation. While this was a national problem, SAP affected the northern economy more due to the region's reliance on the agricultural sector that was severely affected and led to a greater downturn in economic activities.

The long periods of military rule between 1966-1979 and 1983-1999 also had an impact on shaping regional, ethnic and religious identities. As already stated, the military was responsible for restructuring the Nigeria state including the creation of states and the centralization of power. This led to increased political competition as groups struggled for control of power that will give them complete control of determining how political and economic favours were distributed. At the federal level this has pitched the major groups against each other at the expense of the smaller ethnic groups. However the effect of this is felt more at the state and local levels where the demographics of the states due to migration has resulted in a significant number of ethnic groups living side by side jostling for political and economic benefits.

In order to understand how social-psychological factors affect intergroup relations and conflict dynamics, the thesis examined how groups use narratives to increase cohesion so that mobilisation during periods of competition was made easier. This was because narratives provided the lens in which groups understood the world in terms of their relationship with other groups, their roles and goals in the conflicts and the effect this has on them as a group. The narratives were usually based on collective group memories that were selectively chosen with the main focus on historical events that highlighted group strengths or threats (Ross, 2001). For these groups what is important is that 'what is remembered, what has been forgotten or repressed, provides the template through which the world is understood' so that their interaction with other groups depends on 'what tales



of injustice, oppression or betrayal are told' (Suny, 2001:864). Groups thus understood their relationship with other groups from this perspective and this allows them to employ narratives as a tool for justifying group acts and also to increase group cohesiveness during periods of contestation or conflict.

The examination of group narratives in northern Nigeria found that there were strong ethnic and religious fault lines between groups that existed even before the colonial period and have since manifested at different periods during the country's existence. An early manifestation was the calls for new regions to reflect the different ethnic groups, which led to the establishment of the Willink committee to examine the fears of the minorities. The group narratives that emerged during the committee's investigation highlighted minority fears of domination and marginalisation by the dominant groups. In the northern region, the fears were of Hausa-Fulani and Islamic domination that smaller groups claim were exhibited in the social, economic and political spheres. As competition between the groups became more intense, the narratives became radicalised and contentious and positioned groups on opposing sides as they tried to address these issues and fears. This increased group cohesiveness and suspicions against what they perceived was a common enemy, thereby allowing them to justify their sometimes violent actions against other groups.

The radicalised narratives were also emotional laden so that groups perceived conflicts as an existential crisis that affected the very survival of the group against a common enemy. This also helped increase internal group cohesion as members banded together to challenge the other group. The increased cohesion made these conflicts more difficult to resolve because some of the concessions required were seen as part and parcel of the very survival of the group with the demands by one group usually more than the other group can concede. Kelman and Fisher (2003:316) note that this made it difficult for groups to come to the



negotiating table for fear that they will make concessions that will 'leave their very existence compromised.'

After narratives provided groups with an understanding of the ethos of the conflict and their role in it, it led to the development of Collective Emotional Orientations that would determine the position groups took during conflicts. In the conflicts examined, the most common emotions identified from group narratives were fear, hatred, distrust and suspicion. The dominance of these emotions meant that groups could not negotiate with one another, as they did not see the legitimacy of each other's claims. This led to a process of delegitimisation that involves the dehumanisation and demonisation of the other group so that they are not seen as partners in any attempts at resolving the conflict. The groups now see the conflicts strictly in terms of 'us against them' with the delegitimisation of the other helping them justify any negative acts against each other.

The thesis also found that the social-psychological aspect of conflicts continues to be ignored with the focus on the instrumentalist causes of conflicts with Akinwale (2011:127) noting that 'most violent conflicts in Nigeria have been traced to contested bases of citizenship rights, greed, predatory rule, autocracy, and unresolved grievances.' However this thesis argues that greater focus has to be on the socio-psychological aspect of conflicts so that we can identify the deeper issues around such conflicts, as the Northern Ireland and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts reveal, to appreciate that group differences matter and narratives help entrench stereotypes and raise suspicions that have made inter group relations tense and conflict resolution more difficult. These fears make it difficult for groups to think and act rationally and help them delegitimise the 'other' so that they can rationalise their actions, no matter how immoral.



In order to address this issue in Nigeria, it is suggested that there has to be a process of legitimisation of the 'other' that acknowledges the rights of all group. However this process needs to be supported by constitutional changes that will include abolishing the indigene settler dichotomy and other policies that will help reduce social economic and political inequalities that exacerbate the conflicts. While some forms of power sharing are already in place, these have been shown to be ineffective and in some instances have actually deepened the divides between the groups. Whatever policies are adopted, they will need to be institutionalised through constitutional amendments such as what exists in Burundi where the main groups are guaranteed representation. But unlike Burundi that has just two main ethnic groups, Nigeria's over 200 groups makes the formulation of such an arrangement difficult, but some effort will still be required for peace to return and be maintained.

Stewart (2010:21) in her examination of HIs made certain recommendations on how to reduce the risk of conflict which include the introduction of quota systems for political positions and for education and employment spaces; the adoption of a consociational constitution; power sharing voting system; freedom of religious observance with no state religion; the pursuance of civic citizenship education and the advancement of a national identity. As already noted some of these policies have already been introduced in Nigeria as a way of tackling the intense competition in the country. The first step has been to try answering what is known as the 'Nigerian question' that refers to addressing the ethnic and religious issues and the development of a Nigerian identity that will integrate the various ethnic and religious groups for peaceful coexistence.

One such attempt was through the establishment of the Willink commission to address the issues raised by the minority ethnic groups in the country. Since then other attempts have



been made to address some of these issues and these have included negotiations during the various constitutional drafting committees. However, these have had little success in improving inter group relations due to intense competing goals between the various groups. Judicial commissions of inquiry have also provided a platform for the examination of the cause of intergroup competitions as groups use these to express their grievances and demands for redress. However many of the recommendations from such commissions are rarely implemented due to a lack of political will by governments in adopting the recommendations proposed.

The use of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission is seen as an option of diluting the effect of narratives because they are seen as 'fashioned to grapple with the challenge of producing robust and authoritatively objective truth in the midst of contending subjectivities associated with competing perspectives on bitterly divided and contested pasts' (Posel, 2008:120). This option was adopted in South Africa after apartheid and helped in creating new narratives that broke with the past in post-apartheid South Africa (Andrews, 2003). The Nigerian government attempted something similar after the return to democracy in 1999, but this had less success because the focus was more on apportioning blame rather than creating a new narrative that, while acknowledging past grievances and atrocities, focused on creating a dominant narrative that spoke of reconciliation rather than seeking retribution.

This aspect of conflicts continues to be ignored and we need to appreciate that group differences matter and narratives help entrench stereotypes and raise suspicions that have made inter group relations tense. These fears make it difficult for groups to think and act rationally and help them delegitimise the 'other' so that they can rationalise their actions, no matter how immoral. The high level of suspicion and distrust makes it difficult for groups to see each other as partners in the resolution of the conflict. The next section examines



several government policies that have been introduced to help promote integration. Given the importance of politics, it will also examine political modifications that have been used while also examining other political restructuring options. Finally it will look at role of non-state actors in conflict resolution efforts.

## **9.1 GOVERNMENT EFFORTS AT NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

The national government remains the best hope for creating a national identity that will reduce the effect of intense group competition, because it has institutions that can promote greater group cooperation by creating a strong national identity. This can be done through the creation of new narratives or the recreation of old ones that will focus on issues that unite rather than those that divide. Several Nigerian governments have introduced programmes aimed at reducing the salience of ethnic and religious identities, however these have not been very successful due to a number of reasons that will be examined in the following sections.

### **9.1.1 Unity Schools**

One policy that was introduced was the establishment of unity schools aimed at bringing together youths from all parts of the country so that they can understand the different cultures and forge national integration. These schools are federally funded secondary schools with admissions based on a proportionate intake from every state of the federation. Prior to 1973, there were only four such schools in the country; the Kings and Queens Colleges in Lagos and the Federal Government colleges in Warri and Sokoto. Gowon speaking in 2009 stated that the reason for the expansion of the system in 1973 was to provide a sense of unity and to boost national integration.<sup>281</sup> Initially there were 2 colleges

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<sup>281</sup> NBF General Topics. (2009). Why I Established Unity Schools. June 22. Online. Available at <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/generaltopics/why-i-established-unity-schools-gowon/> [Retrieved 21/03/2011]



per state and with the rising revenue from oil sales; the federal government was able to maintain these schools.

However, maintaining 2 schools per state became more difficult as the number of states increased, a situation that was worsened with a downturn in the economy in the 1980s when government funding began drying up due to a fall in oil revenues. With more pupils vying for fewer places, admission became more difficult forcing applicants to tap into existing ethnic and religious networks to ensure placement, thereby altering the criteria for admissions into these schools. These schools still exist but are not able to achieve the goals for which they were established so that while this policy still endures, unlike the early stages where students came from all over the country, the situation is different now with most students remaining within their areas of birth resulting in these schools losing their effectiveness in creating a sense of national unity.

### **9.1.2 The National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC)**

In 1973, the government introduced the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC), a yearlong scheme where graduates are sent to live and work outside their states of origin. The scheme was introduced to help foster national integration and came a few years after the civil war (1967 – 1970) that had widened the ethnic, regional and religious divisions. The initial focus of the scheme was to provide unemployed youth with a source of livelihood, however this was expanded to the promotion of national integration. Decree No.24 of 22nd May 1973 in establishing the scheme stated that it was established ‘with a view to the proper encouragement and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity.’<sup>282</sup> While the scheme was aimed at promoting national unity

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<sup>282</sup> Nigerian Youth Service Corps. Official Site. [Online] Available from [nysc.gov.ng](http://nysc.gov.ng) [retrieved. 21/03/2013]



by providing young men and women with an insight into other parts of the country, the programme was gradually abused and failed to meet its set goals and objectives.

In an assessment of the scheme, Marenin (1990) noted that the success of the scheme was dependent on the successful deployment of corpsers (name given to participants in the scheme) to areas outside their states' or regions of origin. However the abuse of the deployment process corrupted the scheme as the increased use of ethnic and religious networks resulted in corpsers influence their postings, making it difficult for the programme to achieve its goal of national integration. The goal was further undermined when the decline of the Nigerian economy in the 1980s reduced available employment opportunities for those corps members that had concluded the year long programme and expected to gain employment, with greater priority being given to indigenes for employment at the exclusion of non-indigenes (Marenin, 1990).

This increased the feeling of exclusion amongst corpsers that eroded the initial gains of the programme and affected government efforts at the establishment of a national identity that the scheme was meant to promote. Also the increased violence against corps members during periods of conflict in some of the states especially in the north has made many graduates reluctant to accept postings to states that are considered high risk. The attack on corps members during the election violence of 2011 in Bauchi state highlighted the risk against corps members.<sup>283</sup> These have all affected the ability of the programme to achieve its goal of national integration.

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<sup>283</sup> Human Rights Watch (2011) Nigeria: Post-Election Violence Killed 800



### **9.1.3 Preferential Policies: The Federal Character Principle**

As advocated by Stewart (2010) quota systems can help in ensuring that marginalised groups are guaranteed political and economic opportunities. In Nigeria, the quota system was introduced in the 1979 constitution under the Federal Character principle to reduce horizontal inequalities (HIs) by providing marginalised groups access to political and economic benefits. Its introduction was a result of the acknowledgement that because the country was plagued by religious, ethnic and regional tensions there was a need to address these issues (Olagunju, 1987). However some argued that while we must acknowledge the existence of these divisions, it would be wrong to entrench the principle in the constitution because this would be counter productive as it would magnify the importance of these identity differences, with greater sectional representation leading to divided loyalties.

Ultimately the idea was adopted but this has led to increased tensions because, as feared by opponents, it amplified the focus on ethnic, regional and religious platforms for access to political and economic power. Its entrenchment has now resulted in a greater emphasis on the community/local level as the most important link for individuals because it determines their first access to the state. This ensured that ethnic identity remains important in the country's politics, resulting in the promotion of exclusionary policies especially at the state and local government levels against those considered as non-indigenes. The institutionalisation of these identities provides authorities with a legal foundation to base their actions of exclusion and inclusion, thereby exacerbating ethnic and sectional tensions.

Since its introduction in the 1979 constitution, all public sector, military and political appointments have been made based on it. Even admissions into federal and state educational institutions are made on this basis. The effect of this is that it has encouraged



mediocrity especially in appointments into and promotions in the public sector and admissions into public schools. Recent information released by the Federal Ministry of Education showed that the cut off points for admission into federal unity schools varied from as high as 130, 133, 134, 134 and 138 for southern states such as Abia, Lagos, Enugu, Delta and Imo respectively, while northern states such as Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Taraba and Yobe had cut-off points of 9, 9, 4, 3 and 2 out of 200 respectively.<sup>284</sup> This has led to frustrations among candidates from states with high cut off points that decry their inability to gain admission when places are offered to candidates from states with low cut off points. This helps fuel the narratives of preferential treatment being accorded to the northern region by allowing it to benefit from poor educational standards while other students from states with higher levels are denied access to educational places.

This frustration is also evident in the public sector, where the system penalises more qualified persons from certain states by denying them employment opportunities in favour of less qualified candidates, something that usually results in affirmative action policies such as is the case in the United states. The frustrations have been directed at candidates from the northern states that have fewer qualified persons, with southern states demanding a reversal of the policy so as to create a level playing field. The north on the other hand insists the policy remain in place so that it does not close the window that enables northern appointments into public office. While this policy was introduced to enable smaller groups with fewer qualified candidates access to more opportunities, it needs to be revisited to reduce the sense of injustice and unfairness, which has increased the feeling of marginalisation from sections of the country, especially in the more developed southern states, that feel that it promotes mediocrity.

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<sup>284</sup> Raymond. U (2013) Cut-Off Marks For Unity Schools In Nigeria, A Celebration Of Educational Bankruptcy. *TNV.The Nigeria Voice*. June 13. Online. Available from <http://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/116314/1/cut-off-marks-for-unity-schools-in-nigeria-a-celeb.html>. Retrieved on 2/11/2013



Even in the economic sector, the preferential system was adopted during the privatisation and commercialisation programme of the Babangida government in the late 1980s and 90s to ensure an equitable distribution of the shares of the companies being privatised. Although the programme was implemented to improve the operation of these enterprises and was 'approached from purely economic and efficiency points of view' (Osaghae, 1995:30), it was acknowledged that it must be managed so that it did not worsen the already existing economic inequalities between different sections of the country. Osaghae (1995:55) noted that 'the government recognised the political nature of what ought to have been an economic programme' and saw it as an opportunity to 'redress regional imbalances in the location of industries which are concentrated in Lagos, Kano and Rivers states while states like Adamawa, Yobe, and Taraba have only state government owned industries' (Osaghae, 1995:55).

The government ensured that the public offers would reflect an even geopolitical spread of share allocation around the country so as to ensure an equitable distribution guaranteeing that no section of the country dominates the ownership of these enterprises. However there were a few problems with successfully implementing this policy. One was the income difference between the southern and northern states that made it difficult for many citizens of the north with their low incomes to purchase shares. Another was the low level of education in the north that made it difficult for northerners to understand the benefits of acquiring shares. This problem was compounded by the fact that more than 300 of the issuing houses and stockbrokers were situated in Lagos alone, giving them a stronger presence in the privatisation programme (Zayyad, n.d.).

The poor investment culture in the north saw a low response to the programme with the shares allocated to the region remaining undersubscribed unlike in the south where the



offers were oversubscribed. Even where northern state governments provided support by granting loans to potential investors, the loans remained unutilised with shares remaining unsubscribed. It was noted that even with the efforts of the state governments and northern chambers of commerce, there was still a fear that the southern section of the country will retain control of the economy. On the other hand, southerners feared the north would use its political dominance to ensure that enterprises were sold to northern interests. While the programme was aimed at increasing economic efficiency, it resulted in increasing regional, ethnic and religious cleavages in the country (Osaghae, 1995).

#### **9.1.4 Political Engineering**

Politics is important in Nigeria and is highly competitive, something that former President Obasanjo referred to as a 'do or die' affair.<sup>285</sup> This is not a new phenomenon and it is noted that the excessive competition by the main ethnic and regional groups contributed to the collapse of the first republic (Orji, 2008). The end of the civil war of 1967-1970, brought new considerations of how the Nigerian state should be structured with the elites adopting a more wide spread form of political coalition. Orji (2008) states that political elites of the different ethnic and regional groups converged to ensure that the political process was not truncated again. One of the areas in which the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) of 1975 sought to do this was in the formation of political parties. Party formation prior to independence was regionally based with the main parties having their main base in their regions with little presence in other regions.

The CDC approached the required changes by advocating a reengineering of the political landscape that involved insisting on more broad based political parties that did not restrict themselves to a section of the country or to an ethnic or religious group. The new criteria

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<sup>285</sup> Larewaju, K. (2007) Nigeria: Obasanjo Explodes - April Polls Do Or Die Affair for PDP. *Vanguard Newspapers*. 11 February. Available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200702110015.html>



required political parties to have offices in each of the states while candidates at the federal, state and local government elections must have votes from at least 25% of states, local government areas or wards respectively. This led to a wider consultation between politicians to ensure that they met these criteria and at the end of the exercise, five (5) parties that applied for registration were successful. The registered parties reflected a wider national spread and this had some success in reducing intergroup competitions with wider consultation between groups that enabled the UPN win the governorship elections in the northern Plateau state and the NPN winning in the south-south states of Rivers and Cross Rivers.

Another informal political reform was introduced in the zoning of party political offices in the form of a consociational arrangement that was aimed at creating a coalition between the different geopolitical zones so that they are adequately represented. This system operated by creating channels for all groups to ensure their participation in the political sphere of the country. This system has not been institutionalised in Nigeria and is still dependant on the role of elites and how much they want to form coalitions. There have been instances where geopolitical groups have competed over which offices are allocated to them during the zoning process, while there have also been cases of intra zonal conflicts. Some of these attempts have met with some measure of success, while others have been less successful due to the very nature of the Nigerian state where identity affiliations continue to affect social interactions and competition for social and political space.

Appreciating that political struggles play an important role in the outbreak of conflicts, the Nigerian Government established the Electoral Reform Committee to review the electoral processes in the country to find ways to moderate the extreme competition that is characteristic of the current process. The committee headed by a former Chief Justice of the



Federation, Muhammadu Uwais, identified several issues regarding the current political process that will need to be changed to reduce inter group competitions. These include, reorganising the electoral monitoring bodies both at the federal and state levels, which will involve reducing government influence in the appointment of members while also including more civil society representation in the membership of the agencies. The commission also recommended for the neutrality of the security agencies so as to reduce the current perception of bias where they are seen as an appendage of the government.<sup>286</sup>

The current situation where the benefits that come with holding political office are absolute, resulting in groups doing all they can to capture it, has to be transformed through some of the options highlighted in this section. This will involve greater cooperation between groups so that they can all have the opportunity of sharing political office in one form or the other. The Kaduna and Plateau state crisis have shown that periods of conflicts have coincided with election periods where groups have struggled to take control of the political machinery because political power remains one of the main factors that determine social mobility.

## **9.2 REVERSING THE DELEGITIMISATION PROCESS**

This thesis has focused on the effect social-psychological issues have on the dynamics of conflicts. These issues are expressed through radicalised and contentious group narratives that are maintained and recreated to justify group actions during periods of conflicts. It thus becomes important to alter the narratives from ones that position groups on opposing sides, to more unifying narratives that encourage group cooperation and allows them to negotiate with each other.

Because the process of delegitimation perpetuates mutual suspicions, stereotypes and

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<sup>286</sup> Justice Uwais Committee Report of the Electoral Reform Committee. Main Report. Volume 1. 2008



breed the high level of distrust between groups, there needs to be a reversal of the process through the creation of counter narratives that highlight the positive characteristics of the 'other' and accept the legitimacy of their demands so that differences can be resolved peacefully. This would involve de-radicalising the dominant narratives with five approaches suggested for achieving this. These include; 'pragmatic conflict resolution; recognition and political protections; structural symmetry; deinstitutionalisation of delegitimisation and finally the re-scripting of master narratives' (Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2012:42).

A pragmatic conflict resolution approach refers to the restructuring of the basis of current inter group relations so that the focus is less about material resources, issues of political exclusion or territorial control so as to enable groups focus around superordinate rather than group goals. The first step to achieving this is through the deinstitutionalisation of delegitimisation and the re-scripting of master narratives, which are the dominant narratives that influence group perceptions of other groups. This is because as Manojlovic (2010:9) notes 'once these master narratives infiltrate individual narratives of the people, they become part of their reality and identity.' Changing these master narratives will involve the creation of strong counter narratives that can reverse the current negative dominant group narratives.

An example of this was after the civil war, when the Nigerian government attempted to produce a new set of narratives that sought 'to transform northern propagandists ethnic poison into medicine' (Diamond, 2002:119). The northern narratives had been 'openly ethnic' and inflammatory as the region tried to justify its actions against what they said was Igbo provocation after the 1966 coup. The new set of federal government narratives were transmitted by the administrator of the eastern state, Ukpabi Asika himself an Igbo and centred on issues of reconciliation, with the mantra 'no victor, no vanquished.' This helped



alter perceptions between the groups and something similar will be required in the current situation if the conflicts in northern Nigeria are to be resolved. There are current attempts by civil society and community leaders to alter the perceptions of the groups involved in the conflict, however the effect of these have not been fully translated to the cessation of conflicts. Various non-governmental associations in the country are currently attempting this.

There will also be the need for the recognition of the legitimacy of the demands and the rights of all groups involved in the conflict (Cobb, 2013) while also restricting power relations to ensure greater equality so that 'as groups begin to inhabit spaces of social, economic and political equality, they can no longer make claims about the differential humanity of moral worth of the other, for they share a common social structure' (Bar-Tal and Hammack, 2013:43). This position is also acknowledged by Kelman (2010:6) who notes that for successful conflict resolution, conflicting parties must acknowledge the other group's 'nationhood and humanity, which involves acceptance of the other as an authentic nation and inclusion of the other in one's own moral community.'

Cobb (2013) also states that the new narratives have to focus on flexibility in the relationship between the groups, so that former narratives that give little room for negotiation are now more adaptable allowing for more successful conflict resolution efforts. If these new narratives can be developed it should allow for what Kelman (2010:6) states is the 'development of a common moral basis for peace, allowing for a peace that both sides perceive as consistent with the principles of fairness and attainable justice.' Finally, altering the delegitimisation process will require 'confrontation with history, which does not require a joint consensual history, but does require admitting the other's truth into one's own narrative' and the 'acknowledgment of responsibility, expressed in both symbolic and



material terms' (Kelman, 2010:6).

### **9.2.1 Non-State Actors and Alternative Narratives**

Addressing these radicalised narratives is important because as long as they remain dominant, they will further entrench identities and strengthen group cohesiveness, which will continue to hamper conflict resolution efforts with mutual suspicions between groups persisting. One way in which alternative narratives can be created is through local institutions and civil society. This is because these groups, especially faith-based organisations are seen as having a role to play in conflict resolution through the creation of counter narratives that focus on peaceful coexistence between the groups.

Even though many civil society organisations emerged after the sharia conflicts of 2002, efforts at improving Muslim Christian relations in Africa began before independence in the late 1950s (Frederiks, 2010). Between 1957 and 1959, Christian groups began to change their attitude towards Islam and traditional religions leading to the establishment of the '*Islam in Africa*' project that since 2003 became the '*Programme for Christian Muslim relations in Africa*' (Frederiks, 2010:7). However as discussed in previous chapters, relations between both faiths worsened with the rise of conservative Islamic groups such as *Izala* and Pentecostal Christian groups in the 1970s that increased tensions and heightened the intensity of competition between them, leading to conflicts.

The narratives emerging from faith based CSOs have been for greater tolerance and understanding between the faiths. One such association is the Bridge Builders Association established by the Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese of Kaduna and a Muslim cleric. The purpose of this inter faith organisation is to promote a better understanding between the two faiths. The Inter Faith Council of Muslim & Christian Associations Kaduna (aka Women



Interfaith Council- WIC) is a combination of the women's wing of religious organisations such as CAN and JNI and brings together both Muslim and Christian women that have lost loved ones during various conflicts so as to reduce the animosity that has become common between Muslims and Christians and improve interfaith understanding.<sup>287</sup>

The Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna was formed in 1995 to correct some of the negative perceptions between the main religious groups. The Sultan of Sokoto who is the spiritual leader of Muslims in Northern Nigeria and Cardinal Onaiyekan, the head of the Catholic church in Abuja established and head the Interfaith Initiative that also works towards bridging the religious divide in the country and improving relations between Muslims and Christians. Other notable Christian and Muslim leaders have also taken the initiative of establishing similar civil society organisations all with the aim of reducing religious tensions in the north. Nigerian religious leaders also signed the 2007 declaration *A Common Word* with Muslim leaders from North Africa (Frederiks, 2010:7).

However even with the efforts of these organisations, there is little evidence to indicate that they have had much success due to what Mbillah calls the wind of 'religious tribalism' sweeping across the continent where leaders are categorised based on religion (Frederiks, 2010:10). This is evident in Nigeria and has led to greater polarisation between the faiths especially in northern Nigeria where the competition between the Muslims in the core north and the Christian middle belt region is intense and has raised animosities that have become so entrenched that the work of these organisations is only chipping at the surface. In one interview, a respondent noted that some Christian leaders have little understanding of Islam making it very difficult to alter their views and that apart from Catholics, 80% the leadership

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<sup>287</sup> Interview. Sister Kathleen McGarvey. Kaduna. November 18, 2011



of the Christian Council of Nigeria, Organisation of African Dependent Churches and ECWA, ECWA TETAN that make up CAN are ignorant of Islam and Muslims.<sup>288</sup>

The head of the WIC also acknowledged that the task of bridging this divide is very difficult, noting that she found that widows find it difficult to relate with women of other faiths without feeling a sense of bitterness.<sup>289</sup> She also noted that 'the fact that violence and destruction are perpetuated in Kaduna, as in many other parts of Nigeria would indicate that Muslims and Christians have difficulties in living together.'<sup>290</sup> She thus suggested that 'we take concrete and positive steps to understand one another, accommodate our diverse ways of looking at life and cooperate in building our country for the well being of each other.'<sup>291</sup> However achieving this level of understanding has proven difficult with the Inter-Faith Mediation Centre noting that one of its major challenges is the 'misconception and blind followership that is being used by some elements of misguided religious and political leadership in the name of God.'<sup>292</sup>

In Plateau state The Young Ambassadors For Community Peace and Interfaith Foundation was established to challenge the negative stereotypes that exist between groups in Plateau state. The foundation has carried out several workshops to educate youths that have been involved in the violence in the state on the need to eschew peace.<sup>293</sup> This approach has also been adopted in Kaduna where the WIC had begun working with Muslim and Christian youth by bringing them to work together. There were also plans to establish an inter faith youth council so that youths can have a forum to come together and analyse the reasons for the conflicts.<sup>294</sup> There have also been some informal practices to maintain peace such as when

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<sup>288</sup> Interview. Bishop Idowu Fearon. Kaduna, March 12, 2012

<sup>289</sup> Interview. Sister Kathleen McGarvey. Kaduna. November 18, 2011

<sup>290</sup> Fwah, J. (2011) Post Election Violence and Interfaith Initiative. *Sunday Standard*. Aug 7. p.7

<sup>291</sup> *ibid*

<sup>292</sup> Interfaith Mediation Centre. Online Available from <http://www.imcnigeria.org/> [retrieved 12/08/2014]

<sup>293</sup> <https://yacpif.wordpress.com/tag/nigeria/> [Accessed. 21/02/2015]

<sup>294</sup> Interview with Sister Kathleen. Kaduna, November, 18, 2011



during the fuel subsidy protests in 2012, Muslims and Christians showed solidarity during prayer times by protecting each other from any attack so that the protests did not take a religious or ethnic dimension. This has been seen in parts of northern Nigeria as a way of protecting groups during periods of protest that are seen as affecting all groups irrespective of ethnicity or religion.<sup>295</sup>

### **9.2.2 The Role of Non-State Actors and Traditional Institutions in Conflict Resolution**

Even though civil society organisations have taken the mantle to improve inter group relations and this is commendable, they still face some challenges. The creation of narratives to counter existing negative radicalised narratives is still an ongoing process and must involve all parties in the conflicts, including traditional and religious leaders and religious organisations such as CAN and the JNI working hand in hand with civil society organisations to ensure its effectiveness. However it is important that the government take the lead in ensuring that it uses its institutions such as the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and the ministries of Information and Education to create alternative narratives through civic education programmes that will reduce the toxic nature of the current dominant narratives.

The creation of alternative narratives will need to be enhanced by the role of non-state actors especially traditional institutions in conflict resolution especially when the state is seen as detached from the people as is the case in Nigeria (Ross, 2010). This will require an approach that involves conflict prevention on the one hand while also providing a platform where different groups can articulate their grievances to be transmitted to the state for formalisation and institutionalisation. Group differences will need to be acknowledged so that there can be a better understanding of what each group holds important (Ross; 2010),

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<sup>295</sup> <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/12/muslim-youths-protect-christians-xmas-service-kaduna/> . [Accessed: February 1, 2015]



and this will entail the involvement of community, traditional and religious leaders. As already discussed, the role of traditional rulers has always been relevant in northern Nigeria especially in the core Muslim areas where they are seen not just as the preservers of the culture of the area, custodians of the Islamic religion but were also responsible for the 'maintenance of law and order' during the colonial era (Olaniran and Arigu, 2013:120).

Even though their responsibilities have diminished since the removal of their constitutional roles, traditional leaders still have some moral leverage in mediating conflicts. In the north, many of the Emirs continue to be revered enabling them to have some measure of influence during conflict mediation (see table below). In many cases they already head security councils in their emirates that usually cut across several local government areas. An example of this is in Kaduna state, where the Emir of Zaria is the head of the Council of chiefs and has been active in conflict mediation. However, Obasanjo's attempt to use the Emir of Zaria as the head of a reconciliation committee investigating the conflicts in Jos raised ethnic tensions with the Berom and other 'indigenous' groups opposing the appointment, arguing that because he was part of the Hausa Fulani Muslim aristocracy, he would favour the Hausa Fulani groups of Jos.<sup>296</sup> There remain suspicions regarding the role of traditional rulers especially in areas where there are several ethnic groups and the ruler represents the major group.

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<sup>296</sup> Justice Cudjoe Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Zangon-Kataf (Market Riots) and Subsequent Riots. 1992



**TABLE 9.1****Traditional Rulers Conflict Resolution Efforts**

Conflict	State	Groups	Traditional Ruler	Year
Lata	Kwara	Farmers/Pastoralist	Ilorin, Pategi, Lafiagi	1999-2005
Kainji Grazing Rights	Niger	Pastoralists/ Park Officials	Borgu	1995-2006
Fishing resources	Kebbi	Silame/Augie	Argungu	1999-2003
Grazing Rights	Zamfara	Pastoralists/ Park Officials	Gusua	2002
International grazing rights	Maradi <sup>297</sup> /Katsina	Pastoralists/Farmers	Katsina	1997-2003
Wetlands	Jigawa	Pastoralists/Farmers	Hadejia	1993-1997
Ethno Religious	Kaduna	Ethnic/Religious	Zaria	1987-2000

Culled from Blench, R. et. al. (2006). *The Role of Traditional Rulers in Conflict Prevention and Mediation in Nigeria*. pp.95-98

As Riruwai and Ukiwo (2012:4) note, the increased suspicions have resulted in an erosion ‘in relations between traditional authorities and government officials and also with their community members.’ Clearly religious differences have been a factor in many conflicts, but the position of religious leaders in the community still makes them relevant for conflict mediation because;

religious individuals and faith-based organisations, as carriers of religious ideas, can play important roles, not only as a source of conflict but also as a tool for conflict resolution and peace-building, providing early warnings of conflict, good offices once conflict has erupted, and contributing to advocacy, mediation and reconciliation (Haynes, 2009:52).

These leaders are expected to help ‘in checking inflammatory preaching and the

<sup>297</sup> Maradi is in Niger Republic and borders Katsina state in Nigeria



fractionalization of sects' (Riruwai and Ukiwo, 2012:4). However, the capability of Muslim religious leaders to carry out these functions has been impeded due to the increasing radicalism amongst Muslim sects that has created a fear of reprisal attacks. Boko Haram's attack against traditional rulers such as the Shehu of Borno and the late Emir of Kano and attacks against religious leaders that have openly criticized it is a case in point. This results in the likelihood of intense ethnic and religious tensions that can lead to violent conflicts escaping the notice of the traditional authorities.

Aside from this fear, traditional rulers have also been accused of partiality and helping to inflame the conflicts. In Jos, the Gwon Gbong, who is Berom, has been accused by the Hausa-Fulani community as aligning with the other ethnic groups in Plateau state against them. In Yelwa-Shendam the Goemai Chief is also criticized for being partisan and frustrating the Hausa-Fulani community within his domain. Even in Kaduna state, the minority ethnic groups of southern Kaduna have accused the Emir of Zaria of supporting the majority Hausa Fulani. Efforts by these rulers continue even with their diminished roles and an increase in their constitutional roles can help in conflict resolution efforts.

### **9.3 BETWEEN UNIVERSAL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS AND MULTICULTURALISM**

After independence, African countries, such as Nigeria, adopted universal citizenship but the legal guarantee that this provides has not achieved the national integration that is evident in western countries. Citizenship can be understood from three perspectives, either through the republican; the liberal and the communitarian ideas of citizenship. The republican concept sees citizens as individuals of the state involved in the political process and the formulation of laws within a territory. This differs from the liberal concept that assures citizens of the provision of citizenship rights by law and does not require individual involvement in the political process or the formulation of laws. While this idea of citizenship



focuses on the individual and his ability to transcend group or collective identities, the communitarian concept on the other hand looks at citizenship from the perspective of cultural or ethnic group ties and not the state.

The legacy of colonial rule resulted in Nigeria adopting the western liberal concept of citizenship. This concept was tied to the development of the nation state when there was a need to identify citizens of the state with citizenship defined as 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of the community' which 'requires a bond of a different kind, a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilization which is a common possession' (Marshall and Bottomore, 1996:20). Liberal citizenship thus aimed to strip individuals of their personal identities and provide them with one that will be used in their interaction with the state. However, as Miller (1995) notes, while this is based on a sense of social justice, it becomes contentious when there is no shared common heritage or way of life that can determine how citizenship can be defined or how rights can be dispensed.

The application of these laws was affected by the colonial legacy where citizenship rights were more of a group phenomenon rather than a set of individual rights, privileges and obligations. This resulted in a two-tier system of governance with civil and native laws, with the racialisation of civil law and the ethnicisation of native laws (Adejumobi, 2001). An example of this was when after independence, the northern region introduced the northernisation policy that sought to protect northerners in terms of employment in the region. This increased regional tensions and ensured that identities remained important for accessing certain rights in the region thus affecting the universal application of rights within the country.



After the coups of 1966 and the civil war, new attempts were made to correct this, but even with the liberalization of central laws relating to citizenship, state and local laws remained ethnicised and remain one of the current challenges in the country. Thus the provision of universal rights in Nigeria is threatened at the state and local government levels because the quota requirement ensures that there are two sets of citizens within the Nigerian state entrenching the indigene/settler dichotomy that has resulted in 'the creation of a massive population of Nigerians who are 'foreigners' in the area where they live, without any of the benefits enjoyed by the 'citizens' of that place without crossing any international border' (Manby, 2009:110). This makes citizenship rights fluid in the Nigerian state and rather than a universal right, it has become a set of rights that differ depending on location.

Nigerian citizenship laws were meant to ensure that the legal guarantees would allow individuals access rights at all levels without any restrictions. However the Nigerian state is shown to have four levels of citizenship with access restricted according to indigeneity at different levels (Adejumobi, 2005). The first level is the community level; then the local level; the state level and finally the federal level. The huge number of ethnic groups in the country and the fact that individuals are forced to acknowledge their ethnicity when relating with the state, results in citizens placing more emphasis on their ethnicity when dealing with the state. The effect of this is that attempts at integration which focuses on the provision of legal provision of universal rights, has had little success, while also making it more difficult for the development of a strong national identity and the successful integration of the various ethnic groups.

This differs from western countries where rights are guaranteed for all citizens by law irrespective of the culture and identity, enabling citizens to develop a sense of national identity, which reduces the risk of identity based competition. While these divisions and



ethnic and religious allegiances are common in multi ethnic African countries, it is also becoming a problem in developed countries where increasing migrants numbers has changed the population demographics in many of these countries. In order to address the changing population structure, some countries have adopted multicultural policies to accommodate the different cultures within the country.

The adoption of multiculturalism in western countries allows different minority groups maintain their cultural identity while still having a strong allegiance to the host country. However it is important to note that even though this has been adopted in some western countries, opponents argue that allowing multiple cultures to thrive within the countries, results in a dilution of the core values of these countries. This can raise tensions from majority groups within the country, as evident with the rise in nationalist groups in Germany against Muslims, the BNP in the UK against Asian groups and in France against Muslims. This has led to demands for a review of the approach and a return to universal rights that ensures one dominant culture, values and norms.

Beiner (1995) argues that any attempt to accommodate all cultures through multiculturalism results in citizenship becoming 'nothingness' and that it should be based on political and not social or ethnic allegiance. However even with the rise of calls to revert the emphasis back to the provision of universal rights, Parekh (2008) argues that it is important for citizenship to focus not just on universal rights but also acknowledge the importance of cultural differences and ensure that these differences are not ignored in the pursuit of universal rights and obligations.

While the current liberal notion of citizenship in Nigeria is one that legally guarantees equal rights, it has been ineffective because it ignores the importance of the diverse cultures and



identities that are still very relevant to the numerous ethnic groups in the country. Multiculturalism on the other hand acknowledges these cultural differences and might be better suited to multi ethnic countries because it strives to accommodate various groups. However in western countries, different groups co exist because there is an overarching national identity that guarantees their rights. This is not the case in many African countries and adopting multiculturalism might be fraught with problems because individuals will now be more aligned to their ethnic or religious identities. So since the country lacks a strong national identity, multiculturalism will only ensure the entrenchment of religious and ethnic divides and might not be effective in closing the existing divides and reducing group tensions.

#### **9.4 IMPROVING THE SOCIAL CONTRACT**

Another option to reducing group tensions is to improve the social contract between the state and citizens by ensuring that all citizens have equal access to social and economic benefits so that competition for tangibles is reduced. One way to achieving this is through guaranteed access to social and economic benefits irrespective of place of origin, an approach already adopted by the Lagos state government. The state has approached this by using taxation as the foundation for the relationship between the individual and the state, allowing for some level of impersonality that has ensured that indigeneity is not as relevant in Lagos as it is in other parts of Nigeria. This is a welcome approach to reducing competition, especially in countries where social, economic and political benefits are still determined by indigeneity status.

However, Lagos state came under a lot of criticism in 2013 when it deported indigenes of other states that were considered constituting a nuisance. While the deportation of Igbo people was what brought this to the fore, other deportations of indigenes of neighbouring states such as Ogun and Oyo had previously been carried out. This action tested the unity of



the country especially regarding the inability of the federal government to guarantee the constitutional provisions of freedom of movement and full residency rights for all Nigerians in every part of the country.

These deportations led to various human rights activists denouncing the policy and the dangers that it portends for ethnic groups around the country. Other states have also began deportations of non-indigenes and the fact that it remains unchallenged does not bode well for inter group relations, because any state can decide to 'deport' Nigerian nationals within the borders of the country without any repercussions. As recently as 2014, the Kano state government had also began 'deporting' non-indigenes to neighbouring states. The fact that the federal government did nothing to stop these acts has opened a Pandora's box regarding the relationship between different groups in the country.

To address this issue, there has been a suggestion that residency or place of birth be used as the criteria for determining access to rights, so that residents who were born or have spent at least 10 years in an area have equal rights with those considered indigenes. However this debate is still in a nascent stage and no strong criteria or clear basis of how it will be operationalised has been suggested. This idea was debated at the 2014 National dialogue conference in Abuja, with advocates suggesting that it should form the main determinant of rights at the local levels as an alternative to citizenship rights. This has led to the proposal for the amendment of the clause in section 147 (3) of the constitution so that;

The clause "...who shall be an indigene of such State" contained in Section 147 (3) should be deleted to read as follows: "Any appointment under subsection (2) of this section by the President shall be in conformity with the provisions of section 14 (3) of this Constitution.



Provided that in giving effect to the provisions aforesaid the President shall appoint at least one Minister from each State.”<sup>298</sup>

In western countries, residency rights differ but are not considered a substitute for citizenship rights, with rights guaranteed irrespective of place of residency. Rather these refer to rights that allow access to social services like health and education and voting rights and are linked to where taxes such as council taxes in the UK are paid. This means that the issue of residency might ensure access to social services and economic rights but while people vote where they are resident in Nigeria and are guaranteed the right to be voted for wherever they choose, the informal divide of indigeneity and settler will still restrict them from doing so and a change in the laws might not alter this strong link attached to place of origin.

While the Lagos state government has provided a template for the provision of social services to all residents of the state irrespective of indigeneity through its taxation policy, the deportation of non-Lagos indigenes has affected the overall aim of the policy and this might result in a backlash from other states or the adoption a similar deportation policy in other states that will inevitably end up increasing tensions and the deep divisions that already exist between the different ethnic groups in the country.

## **9.5 REIMAGINING ETHNICITY AND RELIGION IN POLITICS: TOWARDS STRONGER OR WEAKER IDENTITIES?**

Politics remains an important arena where ethnic and religious tensions manifest and because the current system has not been able to douse such intense competitions, there have been calls for some form of political reengineering of the existing political and institutional structures so that they either allow for a more equitable representation of the

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<sup>298</sup> National Conference Final Draft Report. (2014)



numerous ethnic and religious groups or provide incentives for greater cooperation between groups. The calls for alternative approaches have evolved because of the failure of the initial approach of newly independent states at 'nation building' and 'national integration' because the goals of these projects were deemed too 'maximalist' in their objectives for true national integration (Horowitz, 1985:566). Many states such as Sudan, Burma and Iraq that used such approaches in the past saw a rise in ethnic consciousness and separatist tendencies, making it difficult for successful national integration (Horowitz, 1985:567).

Since political parties are the main vehicles for political demands, proposals focused on reengineering how political parties are formed so that they have broad based membership that would promote the formation of ethnic coalitions (Reilly, 2002, 2006, 2011). The current 'winner-takes-all' federal majoritarian system used in some African countries do not promote healthy inter group competition and has been responsible for the increasing confrontation between groups. As earlier noted, the Nigerian government in 1976 put in place laws that ensured that parties must have a broad national base comprising of members from various ethnic and religious groups so as to dampen the effect of identities.

This led to the emergence of broad based parties such as the National party of Nigeria in 1979 and more recently the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the newly formed All Progressive Congress (APC). However while these have allowed for greater representation at the national level, at the lower tiers of governance it has been less effective because states and local governments tend to have majority groups that continue to dominate as we have seen in Kaduna and Plateau states with minority group's struggle for greater representation leading to conflicts.



It has thus been argued that it is necessary to restructure how political power is distributed between different ethnic and religious groups. Two sets of ideas are examined here; the 'centripetalist' approach that focuses on using electoral systems to reduce the salience of ethnic and religious identities and 'consociationalism' that insists that identities need to be acknowledged and accommodated so that different groups are adequately represented in the political affairs of the country.

Lijphart developed the Consociationalist approach in 1969 when he examined different forms of political systems. It has four main features; a grand coalition between group elites; group autonomy; proportionality and finally the minority veto. These four elements are seen as creating an enabling environment for better collaboration between groups (Lijphart; 1969). The idea of a grand coalition is the basic foundation without which the power sharing arrangement will not work. Elites from the different groups must be willing to work together to ensure the survival of the system. This also allows the incorporation of smaller groups that would otherwise be excluded from the entire political process. Proportionality involves small groups being assured a number of representatives in decision making bodies and the criteria could be based on population size or as Njoku (2006:84) suggests, on a 'formula that would allow for a more equal number of representatives for all groups, regardless of size.'

The third aspect of this system is group autonomy whereby groups are allowed to have some form of regional autonomy that enables them a measure of control over their affairs (Njoku, 2006). The final aspect of this model is the minority veto that allows smaller groups to veto decisions by majority groups that they deem unacceptable which could lead to increased tensions from the majority groups.

Lijphart (1969) argued that the adoption of such a model would reduce the intense



competition that currently exists for political power in multi ethnic/religious countries. This would help reduce the tensions between groups that feel they are being excluded from the political sphere. However, this approach has also found to work better if there is no clear ethnic majority in the country with no dominant groups, coupled with a geographical concentration of groups in different territories so that regional autonomy can be implemented. The existence of a common enemy also reduces ethnic strife by enabling different elites to unite against the enemy while also increasing national identity. The lack of huge socio-economic disparities between the groups reduces economic competition and a sense of economic domination between the groups, which could affect inter group relations. Finally, a history of accommodation and compromises will all help in ensuring the success of such a power sharing arrangement (Njoku; 2006). Because these may not be present across many conflict countries, success of the approach will tend to differ country by country.

The effectiveness of Consociationalism has been challenged, with Lijphart (1999) identifying some of the criticisms of the concept. It is argued that the concept is more suited to a parliamentary system where power is more evenly spread and decisions are taken based on deliberation rather than a federal system with an executive who is the final decision maker. The model is also seen as Eurocentric in its core foundations making it difficult to adopt it in multi-ethnic countries. Other criticisms include the argument that the system is not sufficiently democratic and does not contain incentives for moderate behaviour because granting greater regional autonomy might lead to greater calls for secession and partition by strengthening rather than weakening group identities. This of course indicates that given the already deep ethnic and religious divisions in Nigeria, adopting the system might further entrench religious and ethnic identities so that they continue to be the main platforms for mobilisation, which would not be healthy for the country.



An examination of the current Nigerian state in the context of this system leads to the following observation as it relates to group competition for political power, which remains the main theatre where these competitions are enacted. Conflicts might still be a feature of the Nigerian state because the quasi form of consociationalism it operates has only been marginally effective at the federal level where the focus is on maintaining the coalition between the political elites of the main ethnic groups. This is in an informal arrangement where most elected offices rotate between the main ethnic groups in the six geo-political zones that results in the main political offices, such as the offices of the President, Vice-President, Senate President, Deputy Senate President, Speaker and deputy Speaker allocated between the six geopolitical zones so as ensure fair representation. However, the system still keeps the smaller ethnic groups out of the political space and this problem is more evident at the state level as seen in Kaduna and Plateau states where smaller groups continue to be excluded in the political space and their attempts for more inclusion sometimes results in violent conflicts.

The current situation at the federal level was disrupted after the death of the northern President Umaru Yar'adua in 2010 that changed the dynamics of the arrangement. This is currently being contested by the northern political elites who demand that the terms of the original agreement be respected, with the office of the President reverting back to the north so that the region can complete its truncated term. This power sharing arrangement has also been adopted between political elites from the various groups at the state and local governments, however as already noted while this has been easier to implement at the federal level, it has been more difficult at the state levels where some states have very large ethnic groups that dominate the political space.



Proportional representation is in place in the upper house of legislators, the Senate, where each state has three representatives irrespective of size. However even with this, there are no constitutional provisions for smaller ethnic groups to ensure that they are adequately represented, so that the larger ethnic groups in the states continue to dominate. For this to be effective in Nigeria a system similar to that of Burundi or Lebanon where certain groups are guaranteed political representation with a fixed number of elective seats will need to be applied and this will require a review of the federal character principle.

The condition of regional autonomy existed in Nigeria since before independence when the country was made up of 3 administratively autonomous regions. However this had a negative effect on intergroup relations because rather than reduce competition, autonomy led to extreme regional competition during the years leading to and immediately after independence between 1954 and 1966. It was hoped that the restructuring of the regions into states would ease ethnic tensions but factors such as migration have resulted in heterogeneous states and local governments with large ethnic majorities and smaller groups. This makes the application of regional autonomy more difficult and will result in contestations between the majority groups and the smaller ethnic and settler groups within states and local governments.

The autonomy of states and their power to create their own laws led to the introduction of sharia in some northern states and the conflicts that this triggered, is an example of the effect of regional autonomy and more powers might exacerbate inter-group relations in many of the states in northern Nigeria. The final issue is the minority veto that is meant to guard against the domination of the minority by the majority groups. Critics of this proviso argue that providing this power will create gridlock in governance.



The problems identified with the Consociationalist system led Horowitz (1985) to argue for the introduction of an alternative power sharing system that would encourage a broad coalition of the various groups in plural nations, with the focus being a reduction of ethnic salience rather than its promotion. This is because it was observed that 'the most powerful electoral systems for encouraging accommodation are those that make politicians reciprocally dependent on votes from groups other than their own (Reilly, 2002:157). This will involve introducing 'electoral rules that promote reciprocal vote-pooling, bargaining, and accommodation across group lines' (Reilly, 2002:157). This conflict management approach is referred to as 'centripetalism' whereby political elites from different groups are forced to discard their extreme views and move towards more moderate centres (de Briey, 2005). This system restrains ethnic tendencies by forcing politicians to 'move to the center on policy issues' (Reilly, 2002:158) so as to attract voters.

One way of achieving this involves the adoption of representative voting system or a power sharing system that will encourage coalition between different groups (Stewart, 2010). One such system is the Alternative voting (AV) system during elections that requires 'the winning candidate to gain not just a plurality but an absolute majority of votes' (Reilly, 2002:158). With the AV system, in a situation where no clear winner emerges after the first ballot, the candidate with the lowest vote is eliminated and his votes redistributed amongst the other candidates based on preferences indicated with this continuing until a clear winner emerges. The system encourages candidates to campaign not just for first place votes but second place votes in case there is no clear winner after the first ballots. It ensures that candidates do not restrict themselves to their areas of strength, forcing them to seek for votes from other areas that might lead to entering into coalitions with other political parties from other constituencies.



It is clear that even though Nigeria has adopted some loose form of Consociationalism, because these have not been institutionalised, unlike in countries such as Burundi and Lebanon, it has not been as effective. It can also be argued that even if this system were institutionalised the effect would be the further entrenchment of ethnic cleavages as groups compete for political power.

The introduction of a centripetal system might have a more positive effect on dousing existing ethnic tensions and conflicts, however this will only succeed if there are multiple parties and if political elites feel the need to form broad based coalitions. In the case of Nigeria where there are currently only two major parties that can be considered multiethnic and broad based, the options are limited and even though elites might feel the need to adopt the system at the federal level because of the centralised nature of the state, this might not be the case at the other tiers of government where states have large ethnic majorities that do not feel the need for creating such coalitions.

## **9.6 CUTTING OFF THE NOSE TO SPITE THE FACE: CALLS FOR PARTITION AND SECESSION**

In divided countries, feelings of exclusion and domination by minority groups have led to calls for secession or partition. This was the case in India just after independence that led to the creation of Pakistan in the first instance and Bangladesh from Pakistan. The Tamils in Sri Lanka and the Kurds in Turkey, Iraq and Iran have also demanded for their own states and recently South Sudan emerged from Sudan. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia resulted in the restructuring of the country into six countries.

Similar calls are being made in Nigeria, and while the Yoruba southwest is not demanding for secession, it is calling for a regional system and the implementation of a 'true' federal



system, which would involve each region having greater control over its revenue and its security. The south-south region also wants greater control over its oil resources due to the lack of development and huge environmental issues in the region.<sup>299</sup> There has also been a gradual increase in calls by the Muslim north for a division of the country due to the increasing ideological and religious differences and the increased delegitimisation of northern Muslims who are blamed for all the woes of the country.<sup>300</sup> This call in the north is based on the assumption that because Islam is the overriding identity in the region, chances of ethnic conflicts will be smaller.

However this position ignores the lack of a dominant Islamic ideology, with various sects already fighting for hegemony. A predominantly Islamic Northern Nigeria might result in the eruption of intra religious competition between the various Islamic sects. On the other hand, a separate south-south region might quite easily plunge into interethnic competition, while even with its distinct Yoruba identity, the south-west has not been immune to ethnic conflicts and these might become more pronounced when there is no longer a common enemy. The current situation in Nigeria is that the demands are being made by the majority ethnic groups/regions, however if this occurs, it might result in the minority groups experiencing greater oppression as they become part of a more homogenous nation with dominant ethnic groups.

However, those making such demands disregard the consequences and ignore the complexities that come along with partition or secession, simply assuming that this would

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<sup>299</sup> Torulagha, P.S. *The Case for Resource Control*. Online Available at <http://www.unitedijaw.com/resourcecontrol.htm> [Accessed April 20, 2015]

<sup>300</sup> Briamah, P. (2013) *Northern Nigeria supports split. 'We're ready for 2015 break up'* Online. Available at <http://naijagists.com/northern-nigeria-supports-split-were-ready-for-2015-breakup/> [Accessed April 20, 2015]



lead to the emergence of more homogenous states but Horowitz (1985) argues that this could lead to the development of heterogeneous states. This is evident in Nigeria where state creation has not reduced identity competitions, rather this has increased as is the case in south Sudan, where previous ethnic divisions that bubbled below the surface when the region was fighting for independence, have now resurfaced and have led to the current state of conflict.

As stated at the beginning of this section, the calls for partition or secession ignore the underlying difficulties with this option, but Nigeria has been faced with such a situation in when Biafra seceded in 1967 and also in 1990 when coup plotters excised parts of the country. For secession or partition to be successful, there cannot be a great disparity in power relations, because if this exists then one group might feel shortchanged which might lead to civil war between the groups after the creation of the new nations. The current calls by southern elements is based on the belief that their perceived position of strength enables them to make such demands, however while some northern elements acknowledge this fact, they are willing to accept this because they feel the region is already being ignored and is not benefiting much from the state and the situation will only worsen.

## **9.7 TAINTED JUSTICE THROUGH THE LENS OF IDENTITY**

Contestations between groups are seen as a way of expressing the need to redress perceived injustices. Most of the judicial commissions of inquiry have acknowledged this and suggested that these issues needed to be address to forestall future conflicts. The Opene commission of inquiry specifically noted that in the Jos case, 'the non-implementation of the reports of previous judicial commissions of inquiry is a basic issue militating against peace



among communities in the state.’<sup>301</sup> Other commissions have also made similar recommendations, focusing on the removal of inequalities, the need for equity in the distribution of resources, the removal of exclusionary policies and justice for those affected by the conflicts.

The Plateau peace conference of 2004 recommended the arrest and prosecution of individuals and groups involved in inciting groups against each other to serve as a deterrent to others.<sup>302</sup> The non-prosecution of the Hausa Fulani who were accused of being the perpetrators of the 2001 violence in Jos and their transfer to Abuja raised suspicions and questions about the fairness of the system with the non-Hausa ethnic groups demanding for their return to face prosecution.<sup>303</sup>

Justice is said to come in four forms; ‘It can be retributive and based on prosecution; restorative and based on mediation; truth commissions produce historical justice and finally they could be reparation policies that aim for compensatory justice’ (Bloomfield et. al, 2003:97). However, Bloomfield et. al. (2003:97) note that even though western countries see justice as best achieved through retribution by the prosecution of the perpetrators, this might not achieve the desired outcomes because;

Political circumstances may mean that retributive justice is simply not possible as a post-conflict strategy;

Retributive justice tends to ignore or sideline the real feelings and needs of victims;

Material obstacles can seriously hinder the delivery of adequate justice; and

Trials have the potential to thwart reconciliation processes.

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<sup>301</sup> The Justice Opene Report of The Judicial Commission of Inquiry Into Inter-Communal Conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba States on Wase And Other Contiguous Areas . Main report. Vol. 2. pp. 223. (2003)

<sup>302</sup> Plateau Resolves: Report Of The Plateau Conference 2004. Main Report. Plateau State Government

<sup>303</sup> *ibid*



In spite of these drawbacks, a lack of justice might result in continued suspicion between groups and the need for revenge by those who feel unfairly treated. Advocates of some form of justice argue that groups require a sense of retaliation to overcome the sense of loss after the conflicts. The individualisation of guilt where specific individuals that carry out the violent acts are identified and punished will also help reduce the sense that the acts were a collective group crime that stereotypes the group as violent (Bloomfield, 2003:98). A final goal of persecutory justice is that it helps break the cycle of impunity so that it guards against future atrocities (Bloomfield, 2003:98). The Nigerian state has rarely employed these forms of justice with the focus on providing compensation for victims and resettling those that have been displaced due to conflicts while ignoring the greater sense of injustice that exists.

The issue of how justice is administered is contentious in Nigeria, because like conflicts, it is also seen through the lens of identities, making it difficult for groups to see it as fair when it negatively affects their group members. With each group blaming the 'other' for the conflict, they only see justice where it is members of the other group that are prosecuted for any acts of violence. This was exemplified when after the 1992 Zango Kataf conflicts, several Kataf elders including Zamani Lekwot, a retired army general, who were accused of being responsible for some of the violence were arraigned and prosecuted for their crimes, the Kataf community and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) made claims of persecution by the Hausa Fulani.

Kukah (2011) went as far as claiming that the projected outcome of the trial had already been set because all the Muslim members of the tribunal were northern, while northern Christians were excluded. As a prominent southern Kaduna Christian elite, his claims gave some indication of the thinking of Christians who saw this as a deliberate attempt to use the



men as scapegoats. After the trial where Lekwot was found guilty and sentenced to death, the Kataf pursued a campaign for his release that resulted in the reduction of his sentence and eventual release and pardon in December 1995. This blind support ignored his possible guilt purely on ethnic and religion grounds and was very myopic given that other groups can use the same argument if their members were ever arrested after a conflict.<sup>304</sup>

The also resulted in the Muslim community seeing his release as a perversion of justice and arguing that it gave the Kataf a sense of invulnerability and has allowed him to continue to incite the Kataf against the Muslim community and thwart the peace efforts put in place after the conflict.<sup>305</sup> This is the kind of injustice that makes groups lose faith in the state's impartiality that results in groups taking the law into their own hands. This was acknowledged when the former governor of Kaduna state stated that if the state and its institutions are seen as biased it becomes hard to build trust between the groups that feel victimised by the state.<sup>306</sup>

So long as the perpetrators of the violence are not charged and persecuted, there will remain a sense of injustice among the victims of the conflicts and every likelihood that they will seek revenge whenever the chance arises, thereby helping to continue fuelling the cycle of crisis that this sense of loss and injustice produces. This is one of the social psychological effect of conflicts that continues to be largely ignored that allows grievances to simmer and eventually erupt when the opportunity arises leading to violent conflict as groups try to avenge the perceived injustice.

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<sup>304</sup> B.O.Adesuyi. (1993) Of Lekwot, Justice and National Stability. *Citizen*, March 8. p.26

<sup>305</sup> Memorandum submitted to the Kaduna State Peace and Reconciliation Committee by the Hausa-Fulani Community of Zango Urban District. March 3, 2012.

<sup>306</sup> Interview. Senator Ahmed Makarfi. Kaduna. November 27, 2011.



## 9.9 CONCLUSION

This thesis identified factors such as the competition for social, economic and political benefits as being responsible for the conflicts in Nigeria. However while acknowledging the role of these factors in inflaming inter group relations and the conflicts that have followed, it recognised that there remains a gap in understanding the psychological nature of conflicts and how groups use narratives to evoke emotions that affect the dynamics of conflicts and have ensured their longevity. The Jos and Kaduna conflicts showed that there are ethnic and religious cleavages along which groups mobilise with emotion-laden narratives making it difficult for groups to think and act rationally, helps them justify their delegitimisation of the 'other' so that they can rationalise their actions, no matter how immoral. This also helps increase group cohesiveness that makes their positions rigid and conflict resolution more difficult. The fact that these conflicts are based on what groups see as unresolved long-term grievances that are tied to economic, political and social issues ensures that there remains an undercurrent of frustrations that erupt at the slightest provocation. This high level of suspicion makes it difficult for groups to see each other as partners in the resolution of the conflict.

The social-psychological effect of conflicts remains one of the major barriers to successful conflict resolution in Nigeria because of the emotional effect it has on groups involved in the conflicts. This is why this thesis has argued that this must be taken into consideration and that for the successful resolution of conflicts there has to be a long process of legitimisation of the 'other' that acknowledges the rights of all group. However this process needs to be supported by constitutional changes that will include abolishing the indigene settler dichotomy and the introduction of other policies that will help reduce social, economic and



political inequalities that exacerbate the conflicts and help create radicalised and contentious narratives that fuel these emotions.

While some forms of power sharing are already in place, these have been shown to be ineffective and in some instances have actually worsened the differences between the groups. Whatever policies are adopted, they will need to be institutionalised through constitutional amendments where all groups are guaranteed representation. But unlike Burundi that has just two main ethnic groups, Nigeria's over 200 groups makes the formulation of such an arrangement difficult, but some effort will still be required for peace to return and be maintained.



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# JOS INTERVIEWS

	Name	Place		Date	Duration
			Jos Interviews		
1	Ajang David	Jos	Afizere Community leader Jos	22/10/2011	35 minutes
2	Azi Chwuak	Jos	Mangu Community leader Jos	24/10/2011	17 minutes
3	Pam Leotuknan	Jos	Afizere Community leader Jos	24/10/2011	20 minutes
4	Da Joshua Nyam	Jos	Tiv Community Leader	25/10/2011	20 minutes
5	Bingel B.T.	Jos	Berom	01/11/2011	25 minutes
6	Danboyi Mathew	Jos	Berom Priest	02/11/2011	25 minutes
7	Ismail B.	Jos	Hausa resident of Jos	08/11/2011	20 minutes
8	Ahmed Jali Musa	Jos	Hausa	10/11/2011	30 Minutes
9	Mazi Okonkwo	Jos	Igbo resident of Jos	15/11/2011	20 minutes
10	Eze Chuks	Jos	Igbo resident of Jos	15/11/2011	15 minutes
11	Ikom Paul	Jos	Bekwara resident of Jos	18/11/2011	17 minutes
12	Mohammed Musa	Jos	Hausa	20/11/2011	20 minutes
13	Saleh Ataker	Jos	Bassa	25/11/2011	15 minutes
14	Sani Denge	Jos	Anaguta	27/11/2011	25 minutes
15	Abdullahi Mai Lafia	Jos	Hausa	04/12/2011	35 minutes
16	G.G. Bot	Jos	Berom Community leader	12/12/2011	40 minutes



# KADUNA INTERVIEWS

1	Kathleen Mcgarvey	Kaduna	Catholic Nun and Civil society activist	18/11/2011	1 hour 30 minutes
2	Dr. Khalid	Kaduna	Secretary JNI	21/11/2011	2 hours
3	Mohammed Haruna	Kaduna	Journalist/Publisher	23/11/2011	2 hours
4	Abdulganiyu Oguntoyinbo	Kaduna	President General of the Yoruba in Northern Nigeria	24/11/2011	1 hour 45 minutes
5	Nasiru Zangon Aya	Kaduna	Media person	26/11/2011	30 Minutes
6	Ahmed Makarfi	Kaduna	Former Governor of Kaduna state 1999-2007	26/11/2011	30 Minutes
7	Rabiu Alhassan	Kaduna	Historian and Plateau state indigene	15/12/2011	2 hours
8	Rosemary Kato	Kaduna	Civil Society Activist	15/01/2012	1 hour
9	Mahmood Modibbo	Kaduna	Politician	21/01/2012	1 hour
10	Reverend Samuel Kujiyat	Kaduna	President CAN, Kaduna Chapter	15/02/2012	1 hour 45 minutes
11	Archbishop Idowu Fearon	Kaduna	Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese Kaduna	12/03/2012	50 Minutes
12	Sanusi Maikudi	Kaduna	Executive Director	21/03/2012	1hour 30 minutes
13	ID Bisallah	Kaduna	Former Secretary, Zangon Kataf Hausa Community	23/03/2012	3 hours
14	Saad Aliyu	Kaduna	Political activist	12/04/2012	1 hour 30 minutes
15	Tunde Balogun	Kaduna	Chairman Waff Road Mosque Trust	21/07/2012	45 minutes
16	Yakubu Ashafa	Kaduna	Community Leader,Ikulu, Southern Kaduna	31/07/2012	1 hour 45 minutes



17	Ibrahim Iro Yusuf	Kaduna	Former Commissioner Kaduna State	30/3/2013	2 hours
18	Yusuf Mamman	Kaduna	Former Party Chairman AD	21/05/2013	2 hours
18	Samaila Mohammed	Phone Interview	Former Chairman Jos North Local Government Council	04/08/2013	45 minutes
19	Suleiman Shitu	Kaduna	Media Worker	12/08/2013	30 minutes
20	Nasiru Nabage	Kaduna	Hausa	12/10/2013	30 minutes
21	Zainab Sandah	Phone Interview	Civil Society Activist	30/11/2013	30 minutes

### **Questions**

The interviews were unstructured and open ended with no specific questions. I usually began with a general question asking them to give me an idea for the reasons for the conflicts and asking follow up questions based on the answers they provided.



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