

Inter-Religious Conflicts And Crisis Of Development In Nigeria: Who Benefits?

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Abstract

In this article we explored the link between the incidences of inter religious conflicts will always and crisis of development in Nigeria with a view of determining whom it benefits. This paper relied on data from secondary sources especially books, journals and magazines that dwelt on religious conflicts and crises of development in Nigeria. We consciously blended and adopted the intractable conflict and political economy theories in our analysis. We argued that inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria defy resolutions and seem unending because they are intractable conflicts and that these conflicts are sustained largely because they serve the economic interest of certain religious leaders who conceal the economic matrix behind their support for fanatic religious values. This article recommends that the Federal Government should strive to provide the foundation upon which a Sovereign National Religious Conference with emphasis on nationality, purity, morality, love and honesty to enable these conflicting religious groups to reunite through dialogue for national development

Keywords: conflict, intractability, religion, economic interest.

Introduction

Human history is the history of conflicts of values expressed in various inter and intra religious, ethnic, regional or class conflicts and contradictions. This idea was aptly expressed by Marx and Engels (1968) when they argued that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Conflict therefore is synonymous with initialization and aggregation of

human interest. This implies that conflict (religious, ethnic or class) is impossible unless there exist incompatibility between different values, desires or needs of people that co-exist (Stewart 1987).

While class conflicts exist between social classes, inter state conflicts exist between nation states. While ethnic conflicts exist between ethnic groups, religious conflicts exist within and without class; ethnic groups and nation states (see Marx, 1968; Ake, 1981; Nnoli, 1978; Igwe, 2003 and Okolie 2001). Religion exists at the level of super structure, expressed as an ideology. However, ideologies and values remained the main cause of conflicts across the globe since the end of cold war.

Although inter-religious conflict dates back to constant upheavals between Judaism and Christianity in 16th century AD, it became more prominent with the ascendance of Christianity as a state religion in Rome during the reign of Emperor Constantine (306-336AD) (Kegan, et. al. 1991). The ultimate expression of which was the 30 month war that sought among other thing to separate the sacular and secular worlds.

Islamic- Christianity conflicts known in Nigeria and elsewhere today may have originated from the military campaign by Christian to capture the Holy land where Jesus lived from the Moslems. The crusade claimed a lot of lives and properties of both groups (see Mear and Schneider 1985:247).

The argument above suggests that religious conflicts could be Judaism VS Christianity; Christianity VS Islamic; Islamic VS Traditional religions; Christianity VS Traditional religion, Buddhism VS Hinduism or Islamic VS Buddhism etc. The invasion of Jihadist group in Northern Nigeria brought Islamic religion in that part of Nigeria earlier than Christian Missionaries that later captured the Southern Nigeria and introduced Christianity. Notably, the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 brought together the two religions demarcated by ethnicity. These two religions subdued the Traditional religion hitherto known by various ethnic groups that makes up Nigeria. Hence, ethnic chauvinism, border disputes and Islamic VS Christianity conflicts remain the main source of instability in Nigeria.

However, these religious conflicts are not peculiar to Nigeria as it is also known in other regions like the Middle East, and other parts of Africa like Egypt, Sudan, Chad and Tanzania (Waqf, 1993). Meanwhile, Islamic VS Christianity crises in Nigeria has reached the state that it could be referred to as war in various parts of the country ranging from Kano revolt (1980); Bulunkutu Bizarre (1982), Kaduna crisis (1982), Jimeta War (1984), Gombe revolt (1985), Kastina crises (1999), Kano riot (1995), Sharia crises in

Zamfara, Kadunna, Bauchi, Sokoto etc in 1999, Sharia reactions in Aba, Onitsha, and Owerri in 1999, Jos crises in 2008 and Boko Haram in 2009. These instances are few as there was no year without three to four instances of religious conflicts in Nigeria.

These conflicts are not without cost to the Nigerian people. The disintegration, dispersion, instability, lost of lives and properties, discontinuing economic programmes and projects. The increase in the number of FDI that escapes the country can not go without notice alongside the consequent unemployment; hunger; diseases; infrastructural decay; corruption and low income per capita that still pervade the economy. It has equally been explained that these violence have continued to exist because they serve the political and economic interest of ethnic religious leaders in Nigeria who use the violence as bait for federal negotiations (Chukwulozie 1986:42; Stewart, 1981:393; Berghe, 1973:205 and Maduagwu 1991: 218-228).

While previous studies have tried to use various theories to explain the logic of emergent religious crises in Nigeria ranging from frustration-aggression to elite, class, and relative deprivation theories. These theories have little or no interest in ascertaining the implications of incessant religious conflicts on the socio-economic development of the nation. This therefore paper seeks to re-explain the mounting religious crises in Nigeria with a conscious blend of intractable conflict and political economy theories with a view of determining the effect of these conflicts in Nigeria development. We shall turn to this later, meanwhile; let us attempt a brief conceptual clarification. What is conflict and development?

Conflict

Historically the attempts by scholars to conceptualize conflict have been conflictual. The ideological differences among scholars affect the concept because it is a social science concept. Nwanegbo (2006) noted that two groups that try to explain conflict exist. In the first group are Zartman (1985) and Coleman (1988) etc. They see conflict as inimical and anti-social growth. On the other hand, the second group sees conflict as a situation or condition of argument between parties or groups. They believe that conflict is an inevitable part of human existence the major proponent is (Francis, 2006).

Since McEnery (1985) defined conflict as the overt or cover coercive interaction of contending collectivities, the concept becomes subject of discussion for both domestic and international systems since interests of groups clash. More so, conflicts are empirical reality of social behaviour.

Similarly, Coser and Rosemberg (1964), and Blumer (1954) argued in their separate studies that conflict is a consequence of power relation. Again, Clair (1966:156) rightly noted that consciousness in Africa revolves around ethnic and religious tendencies. In the context of this paper and prevalence of inter-ethnic and inter religions conflicts in Nigeria since 1960 especially Christians VS Moslems, we define conflict as a condition of uneasiness, turmoil and or riot which disrupts social calmness and peace.

Development

This is another social science concept that is subject to the value judgment of scholars and political actors reflecting their position to the social relation of production. Modernization theorists like Rostow (1960) and Pye (1966) see development as economic growth and modernization hence moving from the realm of traditional to the realm of modern. At worst they see development as becoming like the West thus westernization. This type of development is based on artifact.

Marxian or radical scholars who we also reference to as neocolonial or dependency scholars see development as not based on artifact rather on human beings. Prominent among these scholars are Seers (1977); Mabogunje (1998); Nnoli (1978) Rodney (1982) and Thirlwall (1989). These scholars see African, rather Third world poverty, and underdevelopment as a consequence of their contact with the West. They believe Africa had been developing before their development process was distorted by the West through Transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and neocolonialism. These scholars in fact borrowed much from the method of Marxist-Leninism largely attributed to Karl Marx and Fredrick Engles in their combine and separate works in the 19th century. These scholars did not look into the internal dynamics of the third world politics to determine the effect of let say ethnics religions conflicts and corruption on the human welfare or development of the people. In this paper the working definition of development sees it as the condition of improved knowledge of science and careful application of same hence technology to alleviate human plight in all spheres of life (political, economical, legal, social, and otherwise). In this paper we shall hold development to mean qualitative and quantitative increase in political, social and economic fronts. Now let us turn to the theoretical framework of analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Almost all social science theories have been applied to explain inter-religious conflict in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the essence of theorizing is to explain in order to reach generalization, predict and control. Despite these supposed explanations of inter-religious conflict in Nigeria, efforts at controlling it appear disappointing as more inter-religious conflicts continue to erupt in different parts of the country with its consequent economic backwardness and underdevelopment. We shall blend the intractable conflict and Marxian political economic theories to explain inter religious conflict and crises of development in Nigeria to determine “cui bono” who benefits?

Intractable conflicts are conflicts that defy every resolution attempts. The major proponent is Northrup (1989). He argued that intractable conflicts defy resolution even when the best techniques are applied. These conflicts are stubborn. Intractable conflicts are protracted, destructive, resolution resistant, intransigent, grid locked, identity based, need based and complex. The possible agreement often requires giving up some very fundamental value of the group. Intractable conflicts are irreconcilable, and persistent. They are harmful yet parties are unable to extricate themselves either alone or with external help because the cost of getting out of it is more than staying in it. Onuoha, (2005) has used the theory to explain the Middle East conflicts.

Again, Marxian political economy expounded by Karl Marx in one of his classics *A contribution to the critique of political economy* in selected works (1968), he critically reviewed the Hegelian philosophy of right which appeared in 1844 and found that material (economic) life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. In the words of Marx, “it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being determine their consciousness”. Hence, dialectical materialism, as its defining method is characterized by:

- (1) Dynamic character of social reality
- (2) Inter relatedness of different levels of structure
- (3) Primacy of material condition

From the foregoing explanation therefore, inter-religious conflict in Nigeria has continued and seems to defy resolution because they are intractable conflicts. These conflicts are impelled by groups who believe the conflicts are fundamental for their survival as a group. The emphasis on religious values by ethnic-religious leaders on the primacy of these religious values conceal more than it reveal. It concealed that behind these religious

value preservation lie the economic interest of the religious leaders. They preserve the value because it favours them and they would embark on even intra-religious conflict to preserve these interests. It is the consciousness of these groups about the economic undertones of this value preservation by religious leaders that will facilitate inter-group openings for negotiations and possible management of these conflicts.

Pre-Independence Inter-Religious Conflict

Colonialism was a distorter variable in the political economy of the ethnic groups that were later forced to become Nigeria. It changed the trends of events in the historical process of these groups. It was a radical departure from original and traditional setting to distorted cultural and political values of Nigerian people. Colonialism came with new religion, rejects indigenous cultural values and introduced alien culture through new education style and religious teaching.

Agbodike (1999:113) noted that:

Colonial policy of indirect rule and divide-and rule and helped in no small way to promote and foster the spirit of political, social, economic and educational dichotomy between the Northern and Southern sections of the country. The policy did not encourage horizontal interactions among the various peoples of the nation.

This structure sowed the seed of discord in the polity. Notably, Nigeria was in communal stage of development when western capitalism was foisted through colonialism. This changed the mode of production and produced clientele structure and magnetized the polity. Forced labour, taxes and punitive laws or ordinances were employed to achieve these exploitative economic motives. The construction of roads, rails and ports was to facilitate easier evacuation of goods and other resources from the hinterland to the coast. Classes emerged along ethno-religious live. Class conflicts were as well ethnic and religious conflict. Hence, at any given point in time, the interest of a given group is at stake. When it affects the group that has strong ties to religious bodies, they resort to insinuations and appeals to religion to express their disagreement and therefore, applying religious violence.

The new religions have re-oriented the people and destroyed traditional pre-colonial non-capitalist economic system; dismantling of the pattern and structure of indigenous socio-economic life; generation of a

culture of dependency and the creation of a class of natives that are exploitative and ethno-religious conscious.

In-fact, colonialism imposed enclave economies on Nigeria. Economy based on extraction of primary products for export and for colonial appropriation and expropriation. This led to individual atomization because commodity mode of production was entrenched. Peasants were separated from their land forcefully. Colonialism therefore, established vertical relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. The colonial state represented monopoly capital. The state controlled the economy, the social life and the political activities of the people. The state was interventionist. These created tension in the economic system and further conflicts within the ruling class who were then made-up of the local surrogates and the colonial masters who made exclusive claims on the state.

The divide and rule applied by the British was to enable them control the Nigerian political economy. They incited one ethnic group (religion) against the other and assume moderator when struggles ensued hence distracting the people from identifying the British as their common enemy. Most conflicts occurred between the North (Moslem) and South (Christian) though these categories are not exclusive.

Kalu (1980:196) observed that:

Missionaries gave ideological support to alien colonial rule and assisted it in many overt and covert ways to rivet its regime of force upon Nigeria's people, also that they were guilty of frustrating the African members of the priestly class. Nigerians were not properly educated and they were denied advancement to positions of responsibility.... education given was in one hand more literary than practical and so did not fully equip Nigerians to control their own destiny in modern world.

Agi (1987:89) rightly noted that the brand of Christianity which came with colonialism was the one with a secularizing tendency. The disparity in the level of Christian penetration of Southern part of Nigeria and Northern Nigeria was pronounced. This was aptly explained by Jihadist capture of the Northern Nigeria and the comfort the colonialists found with the already existing Northern political structures which they tended to preserve. This disparity notwithstanding, both religions served the purposes the colonial masters assigned to them. The two religions were used to consolidate the

status quo that is continual impoverishment of the mass and orchestrated exacerbation of class conflicts.

After the assignment of British destruction of native culture had been completed, class witch-hunt ensued and ethnic leader began to resort to the use of religions to express class conflict. It was in fact the colonial administration, education and religiosity that sowed the seed of ethno-religious consciousness in Nigeria and hence inter-religious-conflicts.

Post- Independence Inter-religious Conflicts

The colonialists creating antagonistic ruling class along ethnic and religious line before independence in 1960. These classes so formed were indoctrinated and acquainted with the norms and values of the colonialists. The socio-economic and political lives of Nigerians did not change significantly with exist of the colonial masters.

Agbodike (1999:113) aptly stated that with the regionalization of the country which restructured the nation into tri-national state, sectional loyalties were introduced into the politics of Nigeria and this continued even after independence. Moreover, it bred serious intra-class conflicts within and outside regions. It created the dominance of a given sectional ruling class and soured hegemonism. He insisted that the formation of political parties and the game of politics played on ethnic basis ignited the embers of ethnic and religious Chauvinism in Nigeria, which tended to result in the marginalization of ethnic minorities in the country.

Ethnicity defines both the sub-structural and the super-structural activities in Nigeria, their relationships and their effects on the generality of Nigerian people. The interests of the constituents of ruling class are mutually exclusive and often antagonistic. Numerous mechanisms have been used by this institutive ruling class to express their exclusion in decision making process of the state. These methods range from religious violence to military coup d'état. In between these two methods, there have been several ways like: 1962/63 census crises, the declaration of state of emergency in Western region in 1983, the 1964 general strike under the auspices of Joint Action Committee of all Nigerian trade unions, creation of states, indigenization policy, privatization attempt, 1967/70 civil war, election annulment of 1993, rigging and religious conflicts which occur mostly in Northern Nigeria. This explains the mass impoverishment in the Northern Nigeria. This is contrasted by affluent orchestrating Southern businessmen who live there. Some Northern elites are always aggrieved at the business ingenuity of Southerners, especially the Igbos. This prompts them to incite the masses using religious

appeal to destroy Southern property whenever their economic interests are severed. This usually results in wars often fought using religious labels.

Religion has formed the basis for expression of disequilibrium in the system hence-religions institutions become important vehicle for the expression of popular discontent and for elaboration of alternative survival strategy. Hence the expression of class discontent using religion has been prevalent in Nigeria. This occurs often between Muslims and Christians.

These ruling classes who incite the masses for these religious conflicts hardly partake in the actual hostilities. The ignorant masses have been usually utilized under religious banner to destroy, kill and main. It was in consideration of this contradiction of religious conflicts in Nigeria and the actual participants that led Agi (1987:14) to conclude that:

The most morally depraved sector of our society is not the illiterates, the mass of workers or farmers, not even the innocent youths who are reacting to the example to the larger society. The most immoral are the elite, be they in business, teaching, government, professional, military, religion or police uniform.

From Maitatsine to Boko Haram

BEGE Ministries is an NGO which specializes in Muslim/ Christian community relations in West African-Sub-region The NGO estimates that between 1976 and 2009 Nigeria has lost over 100,000 of its citizens to religious crises and properties worth billions destroyed (Abimboye, 2009:11)

After Maitatsine religious riots (1980) in Nigeria when Muslim sect fought, maimed and tirelessly killed innocent fellow men from another religious sect prematurely in the name of religion, Boko Haram conflict reminded Nigerians of such maiming and killing in 2009. This however does not mean that between 1980 and 2009 acute religious crises did not occur, they did in fact occurred but Maitatsine and Boko Haram cases were so fanatic and ignoramus that we mention them as special cases in this paper.

Between 1980, and 2009 more than 50 religious crises occurred in Nigeria with the consequent economic, political and social implications. See table I below for details.

Table 1: Selected Cases of Ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria

S/N	Date	Location	Principal Actors
1.	Thursday, May 01, 1980	Zaria (Kaduna State)	Disturbances in Zaria during which property belonging to mainly Christians were destroyed
2.	December, 18-29m 1980	Yan-Awaki Ward in Kano (Kano State)	Riots by <i>Maitatsine Sects</i> . 118 people died. Extensive damage to property
3.	October 29-30, 1982	Bullumkutu, Maiduguri (Borno State)	<i>Kala-Kato and Maitatsine sects</i> . 118 people died. Extensive damage to property.
4.	October 29-30, 1982	Kano (Kano State)	Muslim demonstrators burnt down churches
5.	February 27-March 5, 1984	Dobeli Ward,	<i>Maitatsine Sect</i> . 568 died. Wanton destruction of property
6.	April 26-28, 1985	Pantami Ward, Combe (Bauchi State)	<i>Maitatsine Sect</i> . 105 died. Wanton destruction of property
7.	March, 1986	Ilorin (Kwara State)	Muslims and Christians clashed during a Christian procession at Easter
8.	March, 1987	Kafanchan (Kaduna State)	Class between Muslims and Christians at the College of Education, Kafanchan. Loss of some lives and the burning of some mosques by Christians and natives Kajes.
9.	March 1987	Katsina, Funtua, Zaria, Gusau and Kaduna (Kaduna State)	Wave of religious riots in which Muslims burnt down numerous church building s, and damaged properties belonging to Christians. Many lives were lost.
10.	February. 1988	Kaduna, Kaduna Polytechnic (Kaduna State)	Religious riots, ostensibly among students, destroyed the foundation walls of the Christian chapel
11.	April, 1991	Katsina (Katsina State)	Religious violence spear headed by Malam Yahaya Yakubu, leader of the fundamentalist Shiite sect in Katsina. It was protest over a blasphemous publication <i>Fidi Times</i> . Several lives were lost and property destroyed.
12.	April, 1991	Tafawa Balewa (Bauchi State)	Started as a quarrel between a Fulani man and a Sayawa meat seller in Tafawa

			Balewa. Escalated into full blown violence and later took the colouring of a religious war in Bauchi. Several lives were lost and property valued over hundreds of million naira was destroyed.
13.	October, 1991	Kano (Kano State)	A peaceful procession initiated by the <i>Izala</i> sect to halt Rev. Reinhard Bonnke from having a crusade in Kano later degenerated into a very violent and bloody religious confrontation. Thousands of lives were lost and properties valued in millions of Naira were destroyed.
14.	May, 1992	Zangon Kataf, (Kaduna state)	A communal feud between the Katafs and the Hausas later took the dimension of inter-religious ware between Muslims and Christians in other major cities of Kaduna State. Several lives were lost and properties were destroyed
15.	January, 1993	Funtua, (Katsina State)	The <i>Kalakato</i> religious sect assaulted the village head and burnt down the police vehicle. Lives and property were also lost
16.	December, 1994	Kano (Kano State)	Communal violence triggered oil by the beheading of a Christian who had allegedly desecrated the Quoran.
17.	May, 1995	Kano (Kano State)	Communal violence triggered off by quarrel between Hausa and Ibo led to the burning of houses, churches and shops and killing of innocent people.
18.	Thursday, July 22, 1999	Kano Reprisal Killing	Hausa/Fulani youth took vengeance on the killing of their Kith and Kin in Sagamu. Their target was the Yoruba community.
19.	February 28, 2000	Kaduna Mayhem (Kaduna State)	Kaduna city exploded in violence as Muslim and Christian extremists and other hoodlums clashed over the proposal to introduced Sharia.
20.	Friday, April 14, 2000	Agyragu Crisis (Nasarawa State)	Communal clash that started with a protest again the location of Local Government Headquarters. The militant youth group started the riot and later took to the streets, killing and destroying.
21.	July 2000	Tsagari Crisis (Kwara)	Clash between Tsagari and Share communities of Kwara State which claimed several lives
22.	September 8, 2000	Kaltungo religious (Combe State)	A religious violence that was sparked off by the presence of the states Sharia implementation committee.

23.	October 17, 2000	OPC-Hausa/Fulani (Kwara)	A face off between the militant members of OPC and Hausa/Funlani community over supremacy of Emirate system in the state.
24.	Saturday, October 27, 2000	Minna reprisal (Niger)	Violent ethnic crisis erupted after the OPC assaults in Kwara and Lagos States.
25.	Saturday, December 02, 2000	Hadejia Crisis (Jigawa)	A sectarian disturbance that was caused by a debate between Muslim and Christians in Hadeja (Jigawa). There was wanton destruction of worship places
26.	Thursday, June, 28,2001	Azara crisis (Nasarawa)	An ethnic conflict between the Tiv and the Azara indigences. It started with gruesome killing of an Azara traditional leader, and later spread to the Tiv village, with the Tiv community on the defense.
27.	Friday, September 07, 2001	Jos crisis	A violent ethnic/religious crisis between the Muslim/Hausa Fulani and Christian/Indigences. The subject of discoved between the Jasawa Development Association and Plateau Youth council was over political appointment in Jos North.
28.	October 12, 2001	Kano Riot	A peaceful anti-American protest over the bombing of Afghanistan turned violent, taking ethnic and religious dimension, it degenerated into uncontrollable violence which claimed lives and damaged properties and places of worship.
29.	Monday, October, 29, 2003	Tiv-Jukun/Fulani Conflict	An ethnic clash between Tivs and Jukwun/Fulani which was an extension of the May 2001 clash and could be linked to the protracted dispute between both sides. <i>Newsivatch</i> reported that 16 soldiers were killed which later led to the gruesome revenge on the Tives, by the Nigerian Army.
30.	Friday, November 02, 2001	Gwantu crisis	A clash that started on a political ground (over the relocation of LG Headquarters) later took on ethno-religious dimension in which places of worship were destroyed
31.	Sunday, December 30, 2001	Vwag crisis	A violent communal conflict in Vwang district between the indigences and non indigences, exploded in the backdrop of the September 7 Jos crisis. It started when an illegal group of 40 men attacked the district Head of vwang. It also had

			religious colouring.
32.	January 18, 2002	Awe crisis	A renewed communal clash between two indigenous communities in Awe Local Government of Nasarawa State. The cause was not certain but two people were killed and several others injured.
33.	May 2, 2000	Jos Mayhem	Another mayhem that followed PDP congress but later took an ethno-religious colour
34.	May 2, 2002	Fulani-Irigwe crisis	An ethnic clash between the Hausa/Fulani and the Irigwe indigenes in Basa, Plateau which was said to be a reprisal attack.
35.	Saturday, June 01, 2002	Yelwa-Shendam Mayhem (Plateau)	A religious-cum ethnic fracas between the native people (predominantly Christians) and Hausa settlers (predominantly Muslims). This violence extended to about four Local Government councils in Southern Plateau.
36.	Monday, July 01, 2002	Wase (Plateau)	The Yelwa-Shendam riots spilled over to Wase
37.	Tuesday, July 01, 2003	Edo/Kogi	Communal clashes between border communities in Edo and Kogi States Ekepedo and Ogori over land ownerships.
38.	Thursday, January 1, 2004	Ganye, Adamawa	Clash between Fulani herdsmen and farmers over grazing lands.
39.	Thursday, January 1, 2004	Yobe	Militant Islamic group operating under the name of <i>Muhajiran</i> launched a Taliban-like attack on police. Men of the Nigerian Army killed five and arrested several others.
40.	Sunday; February 1, 2004	Wase/Kanam (Plateau)	Violent clash between Mavo and Taroh communities, which claimed 11 lives. Suspected Taroh youth were alleged to have raided Mavo villages.
41.	Saturday, February 1, 2004	Wase/Kanam (Plateau)	Communal clash over land ownership between Minda and Kparev groups. Several lives were lost.
42.	Saturday, April 3, 2004	Makarfi, Kaduna	Religious protest in Makarfi town over the desecration of the Quran by a Christian teenager.
43.	Sunday; April 11, 2004	Lantang South, Plateau	Continued clashes that led to the sacking of Taroh villages in Lantang South LGC by suspected Hausa-Fulani insurgents.
44.	Monday,	Bakin Chiyawa	Renewed hostilities launched by suspected

	April 26, 2004	Plateau	displaced Fulani herdsmen. The conflict was believed to be spill over of the ethno religious crisis that has been bedeviling southern Plateau Local Government of Langtang South and North, Wase, Kanam and Shendam.
45.	Saturday, May 1, 2004	Yelwa Shendam, Plateau State	A fresh ethno religious mayhem that claimed over 650 lives and over 250 women abducted by suspected Taroh militia.
46.	Wednesday, May 12, 2004	Kano	Kano mayhem following the Yelwa Shendam ethno religious crisis in Plateau. Non Muslims were attacked in reprisal of the Plateau crisis. Over 200 lives were lost and the traditional ruler of the area deposed.
47.	Saturday, June 8, 2008	KonshishaGwer, Benue	Boundary disputes between neighbouring Konshisha and Gwer communities. Thirteen lives were lost.
48.	Tuesday, June 8, 2004	Numan, Adamawa	Ethno-religious crisis in Numan over the construction of a mosque minaret over the Humma Bachamas palace. Over 50 people were feared killed and the traditional ruler of the area deposed.
49.	Tuesday, August 3, 2004	Quanpam, Plateau	Fresh outbreak of violence in Lankaka village. Suspected armed militia from neighbouring state allegedly stormed the village community killing two and razing twenty houses.
50.	Monday, September 27, 2004	Limankara, Borno	A self-styled Taliban group hiding on the Goza hills and Madara mountains on the north-eastern boarder with Cameroon raid police station killing officers and stealing ammunition.

Source: Newswatch Magazine November 2, 2009.

The table above showed that most of these conflicts destroyed properties of non Muslims mainly suggesting that these conflicts want change of property relations between Christians and Muslims where they occurred. Religious conflict became rampant during civilian rule of Obasanjo. Between July 1999 and September 2004 Nigeria recorded 33 different conflicts.

The Maitatsine magneto again had shaken the political leadership of Shehu Shagari who feared the second civil war was about to erupt in Nigeria. The 10 days Maitatsine claimed lives and property that Rwanda and Burundi's civil wars could not destroy in years. Shagari reportedly followed it up and signed into law, the unlawful society order of 1982 which prohibited groups such as the Maitatsine sect from operating under whatever guise in Nigeria (Akaeze 2009: 13).

Recently, a group of religious zealots who tagged themselves Boko Haram orchestrated an Orgy of religious conflict in four Northern states – Borno, Banchi, Kano and Yobe. Between July 24th and July 30th 2009 a group of men who were allegedly anti-Western education killed thousands of innocent citizens mainly Christians. This incidence only reminded Nigerians of the ugly Maitatsine Saga in the 1980's (Okanya 1995).

Nigerians now live in fear in Nigerian for one religious group is capable of unleashing violence or any other form of inhumanity against the other over night without cause. These attacks and killing of Christians in Northern Nigeria some times attracts reprisal attacks on Northern dwellers in the Southern Nigeria (Aba, Onitsha and Umuahia) these tendency constitutes cog in the wheel of Nigerian development.

Consequences of Inter- Religious Conflicts in Nigeria

We shall look at the social, economic and political consequences of inter-religious Conflicts.

Social Consequences of Inter-Religious Conflicts

Igwe (2003:379) observed that:

Both Christianity and Islam have been introducing into Africa mostly as instruments of colonialism, feudal conquest, and the destruction of the local culture and traditions. These foreign religions sowed strife where peace used to prevail; the killing of the innocent had become part of the African cultures. They cite their "civilizing missions" without mentioning the local civilizations they destroyed. They are silent on the mass annihilation, weapons, genocides and ethnic consciousness they introduced their.

Notably, religious intolerance and inter-religious conflicts have continued to threaten the peace, unity and stability of our nation. More so, politicians now exploit these religious differences as well as ethnic division for selfish ends. No wonder Ilaogu (1974:V111) argued that religion that took no account of people's way of life would only destroy the man's soul.

Inter-religious conflicts have strained relationship between the Moslem dominated Hausa/Fulani of Northern Nigeria and the Christian dominated Southern Nigeria. Religious conflicts have escalated ethnic rivalry in Nigeria. The fact is that religious conflicts have increased ethnic consciousness among Nigerians and hence to sort explanation from such dimension and even fight them out in line of ethnicity. Religious violence has brought mutual and persistent suspicions between the two dominate religions.

The Southerners living in the Northern part of the country are not larger safe like the Northern in the South. Religious differences have varying problems ranging from problems of recruitment in job of non-indigenes especially of different religions using the interdenominational analysis of religion as basis for socio-cultural rivalry in Nigeria. Amucheazi (1980:22) observed that road construction; school project; electricity' water; maternity homes and other projects were either frustrated by religious conflicts or sited in wrong places where utilities are near zero. The prevalence of religious conflicts sets in frustration and feeling of deprivation. These conflicts further breed enmity and hatred among adherents of the two dominant religions- Muslims and Christians.

Economic Consequences of Inter-Religious Conflicts

The importance of human resources to the economic development of a country cannot be over emphasized. Since 1960 so many people have lost their lives to religious conflicts, properties worth billions destroyed, trade stifled and banks closed down in Nigeria.

In fact the lost to these conflicts cannot be calculated accurately. In agreement with our theory, the powerful religious elites use religion to achieve their economic safety and resort to conflict by appeal to religious sentiments when it suits them. So, they seek religions sentiment in order to deceive the public hence Marx rightly observed that religion is the opium of the masses, where man once again losses himself (Lobkowitz, 1979:124). Religious conflicts and intolerance retards economic progress, hampers economic activities and consequently breeds unemployment, poverty and starvation. There is a tendency for religious conflicts to disrupt trading and other commercial activities. It claims the lives of able bodied men and

women who would have engaged in productive ventures and contribute to the economic development of Nigeria. The cost of rehabilitating and reconstructing destroyed buildings after each religious conflict in Nigeria is so high and could be channeled to more useful direction for further development of our productive forces in Nigeria.

Largely these conflicts persist because some religious elites utilize these violent opportunities to enrich themselves. Sometimes, these religious elites appeal to adherents of the same religion outside the country therefore, giving room for infiltration of illegal arms into the country. Hence Nigerian economy continues to be integrated in a subordinate manner to the global system. The elites under the cloak of religion connive with foreign capitalists who are interested in exploitation to foment religious troubles to subsist their exploitative motives. Thus, religious conflicts have become mean through which few alienated segment of the ruling class assent their economic power thus primitive accumulation by deals on arms.

Political Consequences of Inter-Religious Conflicts

No doubt Nigerian political system is seriously overheated with religious conflicts. One can even argue that Nigeria is threatened with disintegration. This becomes more intense as each of the two dominant religions in Nigeria (Muslim and Christianity) tries to control government activities or to shape activities of government following the tenets of her religion. The question now becomes is he a Muslim or Christian President, Minister, Governor or even Local Government chairman? The consequent abuse of human rights following these religious conflicts cannot go unnoticed. Such rights as freedom of speech, life, association, religion and movement are no longer observed.

In the face of political instability following these conflicts Southern (Christians) no longer settle in the Northern (Muslim) Nigeria for fear of lost of life and property and vice versa. Remarkably, Baum (1975:15) summed it up and argued that bad religion promotes structures of domination in human history while Nwachukwu (2001:212), further buttressing this point noted that:

Policies are carried by emotional sentiments rooted in ethnicity or religion, politics in Nigeria is characterized by religious cleavages. The education religious and political elites (class) prey upon the masses and use them as satellite to achieve their socio-political and

economic objectives. This is done through orientation, indoctrination or violence using the masses on the already conceived stereotypes against their political and religious opponents. Right from formation of political parties to campaign processes and voting patterns, all tend towards religious affiliations and tribalism. As a result, politics in Nigeria is associated with violence and lack of accommodation. Thus religious conflicts have chartered the routine of political process in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria defy resolutions and seem unending because they are intractable conflicts. These conflicts are sustained largely because they serve the economic interest of certain religious leaders who conceal the economic matrix behind their support for fanatic religious values. Behind these seeming passion and love for religious values and dogma shown by religious leaders lies the domination of religious values by religious leader's selfish economic benefits.

This paper recommends that the Christian/Muslim beliefs, teachings and dogmas should be reviewed to accommodate Nigeria's development objectives through a Sovereign National Religious Conference with emphasis on nationality purity, morality, love and honesty as the basis for peaceful co-existence. The Federal Government should also strive to provide the foundation upon which this conference would take place through judicious policy implementations to avoid the feeling of domination among Nigerian religious groups. Proper funding of education would also to enable the masses appreciate and identify the voice of a fanatic religious elite who seek to advance his economic interest through religious mask at the masses' Perils

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