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COLLEGE OF LAW, GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES

ETHNO-RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL CONFLICTS: A STUDY OF

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ABSTRAK


Kata kunci: Konflik politik, ethno-agama, penstruktur semula harajaan persekutuan, governan yang baik.
ABSTRACT
Nigeria is a multi ethno-religious society with a great potential for social and economic development, although this development is seen by many people as an easy way to enjoy the democratic dividends; others see it as a way to express their grievances. Therefore, the result is the persistence occurrence of ethno-religious and political conflicts. Since the return of democracy in May 1999, more than one hundred ethno-religious and politically motivated conflicts have occurred in the country. The purpose of this study therefore is to examine the root cause and the persistent occurrence of ethno-religious and political conflicts from 2000-2007 and the threat they pose to the democratically elected government. The study investigates the history of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria and argues that the foundation of ethno-religious and political conflicts was laid by the issue of colonialism, and which has been supported by the Nigerian military dictatorship, followed by the contradictions compounded in the Nigerian federalism. During the study, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ninety respondents, and a session of focus group discussions with participants from the six states of north-east region. An interview guide based on a conceptual frame work was established based on literature review. These data were then analyzed qualitatively. The study also outlines the general background of ethno-religious and political conflict in Nigeria, with particular reference to north-east region. It also discusses its origin and highlights the key concepts used in the dissertation. The study revealed that ethno-religious intolerance, poverty occasioned by unemployment, corruption, illiteracy and ignorance, economic hardship, and poor leadership are the most significant hindrances to the peace process, unity and political stability in the area. The study concludes that good governance, accountability, alleviation of poverty and unemployment, education reform and the restructuring of federalism in Nigeria are most important issues to be addressed in order to control the impact of ethno-religious and political conflicts.

Key words: Political conflict, ethno-religious, restructuring of federalism, good governance.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title Page</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission to Use</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstrak</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study ............................................. 1
1.1 Root of Ethno-Religious and Political Conflicts in Nigeria ........ 5
1.2 Problem Statement .................................................. 8
1.3 Research Questions ................................................. 9
1.4 Objectives of the study ............................................ 10
1.5 Significance of the study .......................................... 10
1.6 Scope of the study ................................................ 11
1.7 Limitation of the study ........................................... 11
1.8 Operational Definition ............................................ 12
1.9 Organisation of the Study .......................................... 13
1.10 Summary .......................................................... 13

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Literature Review ................................................... 15
2.1 Introduction ......................................................... 15
2.2 Factors Responsible for the Persistent Occurrence of Ethno-Religious and Political Conflicts ......................... 16
  2.2.1 Economic Factor .................................................. 22
  2.2.2 Ethno-Political Mobilization ................................... 25
2.3 The Impact of Ethno-Religious and Political Conflicts ............ 26
  2.3.1 Sectarian violence ............................................... 29
  2.3.2 Political intolerance ............................................ 30
  2.3.3 Indigenous/Settlers factors ................................. 30
2.4 Diversity of Nigeria ................................................ 33
2.5 The Nature and Scope of Nigeria’s Identity Diversity .............. 35
  2.5.1 Ethnicity ....................................................... 36
2.6 How Ethnic and Religious Conflicts Threaten the Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria ........................................................................................................ 39
2.7 Diversity Implications ................................................................................ 42
2.8 Ethno-Religious and Political Conflict in Nigeria: A Colonial Legacy ... 43
2.9 The Role of the State in Managing Ethno-Religious and Political Conflict in Nigeria ........................................................................................................ 45
2.10 Federalism and Its Contradictory Effects in Nigeria ............................. 47
2.11 Theoretical Framework ........................................................................... 48
2.11.1 Structural Conflict Theory ................................................................. 49
2.11.2 Economic theory of conflict ................................................................. 54
2.12 Gap in Literature ...................................................................................... 56
2.13 Summary .................................................................................................... 57

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA
3.0 Introduction ................................................................................................ 59
3.1 Reasons for Adopting Qualitative Research ............................................. 59
3.2 Sources of Data ........................................................................................ 60
3.3 Method of Data collection ........................................................................ 61
3.3.1 Interviews ............................................................................................. 61
3.3.2 In-depth Interview Method .................................................................. 64
3.3.2.1 One-on-one interview method .......................................................... 64
3.3.2.2 Focus Group Interview .................................................................... 66
3.4 Method of Data Analysis .......................................................................... 68
3.5 Validity of Data ......................................................................................... 72
3.6 Sample Size .............................................................................................. 74
3.7 Background of the Study Area .................................................................. 74
3.7.1 North-Eastern Region ........................................................................... 74
3.7.1.1 Adamawa State .................................................................................. 75
3.7.1.2 Bauchi State ...................................................................................... 76
3.7.1.3 Borno State ....................................................................................... 76
3.7.1.4 Gombe State ..................................................................................... 77
3.7.1.5 Taraba State ..................................................................................... 77
3.7.1.6 Yobe State ....................................................................................... 77
3.8 Summary ..................................................................................................... 78
CHAPTER FOUR
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION IN NIGERIA

4.0 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 80
4.1 Religious Pluralism in Nigeria ..................................................................................... 80
4.2 Traditional African Values as a Religious Belief ......................................................... 81
4.3 Early Development of Islam in Nigeria ......................................................................... 84
4.4 The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio (1804-1808) ............................................................... 88
4.5 Colonial Government and the Spread of Islam ............................................................ 92
4.6 Unification of Islamic Communities in Nigeria ............................................................ 93
4.7 Eastern Nigeria and the Spread of Western Islam ......................................................... 95
4.8 Revitalization of Islam in Northern Nigeria ............................................................... 96
4.9 The Introduction of Izala Sect in Northern Nigeria ..................................................... 98
4.10 The Emergence of Christianity in Nigeria ................................................................... 100
4.11 How Christianity Spread in North-Eastern Region ...................................................... 101
4.12 The Spread of Christianity in Yoruba Land ............................................................... 102
4.13 The Niger Mission of Christianity in Northern Nigeria ............................................. 105
4.14 The Coming of Christianity to Ibo Land ................................................................. 111
4.15 Convergence of Politics into Islam in Northern Nigeria ............................................ 112
4.16 Convergence of Christianity and Politics in Northern Nigeria ................................. 116
4.17 The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) ........................................................ 121
4.18 Conclusion ................................................................................................................. 124

CHAPTER FIVE
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Data Collection and Analysis ...................................................................................... 126
5.2 The Sharia Conflicts .................................................................................................... 129
5.3 Religious Intolerance .................................................................................................... 135
5.4 Illiteracy and Ignorance ............................................................................................... 136
5.5 Refugee Problems and other Impacts of the Conflict .................................................. 138
5.6 State failure .................................................................................................................. 144
5.7 Deprivation, Marginalization and Dominance ............................................................. 148
5.8 Case of Ethnic Conflict in North-East Region ............................................................. 149
5.9 Consequences of Ethno-Religious and Political Conflict in Nigeria .................... 155
5.9.1 Diversity of National Unity ..................................................................................... 156
5.9.2 Weakening the Stability ....................................................................................... 157
5.9.3 Undermining of National Security Agencies ......................................................... 157
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 162
6.1 Summary .................................................................................................................. 164
6.2 Discussion of Findings ........................................................................................... 166
6.3 Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 170
6.4 Contribution of the study ...................................................................................... 170
6.5 Recommendations ................................................................................................. 171
   6.5.1 Educational Development among Citizens ...................................................... 171
   6.5.2 Religious Tolerance .......................................................................................... 172
   6.5.3 Illiteracy and Ignorance .................................................................................. 173
   6.5.4 Sharia Penal Code ........................................................................................... 174
   6.5.5 Committed to True Federalism in Governance ............................................... 175
   6.5.6 Reduce Unemployment rate through initiation of good plans ...................... 176
   6.5.7 Religious Enlightenment Programme ............................................................. 177
   6.5.8 Improvement of Socio-economic Conditions of the Citizens ...................... 178
   6.5.9 Dispatching Commensurate Security Agents ................................................ 178
   6.5.10 Proactive Measures ....................................................................................... 179
   6.5.11 Recommendations for Further Study ............................................................. 179

References .................................................................................................................... 181
Appendices ................................................................................................................... 193
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

The political context called Nigeria was constituted by the British colonial masters in the year 1914. The protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria which comprises up to 371 ethnic nationalities has the majority of mainly the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba while others are lumped together as minorities (Otite 1990; Suberu 1996; Mustapha 1998; IDEA 2000 in Alulo2003). Nigeria is situated in the West African sub-region and lies between 3 and 14 degrees longitude and between 4 and 14 degrees latitude. The land mass is 923,768 sq km, Nigeria shares borders with the Republic of Chad and Niger Republic to the north, the Republic of Benin to the west and the Cameroon Republic to the east. With an estimated population of over 137 million people (Adebisi, 1999), ethno-religious and political conflicts is an endemic feature of most of the world’s political systems. This is particularly true of the developing countries, including Nigeria, where ethno-religious and political conflicts become essential characteristics of the political process, especially after the 1960 independence. However, it is rather unfortunate that after independence, Nigeria stumbled from violent conflicts and near disintegration as the country witnessed a marked increase in the bitterness of party, ethno-religious antagonism and intolerance.

Specifically, Nigeria has demonstrated a very high propensity for ethno-religious and political conflicts during the fourth republic (1999-2007); ethnic, religious and regional tension was widespread. Episodes of violence were ethnic or religious on the surface were often caused by political competition and economic influence, in a country where politics is seen as one of the few avenues to a mass wealth. In Nigeria,
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