Managing Ethno-Religious Identity Conflicts in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Nigeria,Africa's most populated country,has faced varying levels of internal conflicts in almost all the regions of the country. Having coexisted for over 100 years as a country since its creation by the British colonial administration in 1914, it would have been expected that the different ethnic and religious groups in the country could coexist in peace and harmony but the situation is not so, as ethnic and religious violence is a common occurrence in the country, most especially in the northern regions with Kaduna State among the most affected. This study is undertaken to understand how ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna and Nigeria can be prevented. This will be done by trying to understand how previous conflicts were managed and how new management strategies could assist in preventing the reoccurrence of a common problem that defy solutions for decades. The study adopts cross-sectional survey method in collecting data with a sample of 1600 respondents resident in Kaduna metropolisselected for the study.Findingsreveal that the lack of implementation of recommendations by reports into the numerous conflicts by committees set up to do so is one of the reasons why the conflicts keep reoccurring. As such it is recommended that the government must be seen to be just in the implementation of reports and that community exchange programmes should be initiated to promote more interactions among the divergent peoples in Kaduna State.

Keywords: Ethno-religious identity, violent conflicts,Management, Kaduna State
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I. INTRODUCTION

Today more than ever before, the Nigerian socio-political and economic sphere is shaped around ethno-religious identities with corresponding conflict erupting from the quest to acquire and control the scarce socio-economic benefits of the nation following suit with violent outcomes in most cases. At different parts, ranging from the Northern to the Southern parts of the country, citizens have engaged one another in violent confrontations on the premise of fear of socio-economic and political domination. Ethno-religious violence and conflicts "generated on the basis of real or imagined difference in ethnic and religious identities" (Egwu, 2011) have unfortunately become an emblem of social, economic, political and cultural life in Nigeria. "The incessant ethnic and religious clashes all over the country have produced unprecedented amounts of deaths since the colonial era" (Olabanji, 2012) with different ethnic and religious militias terrorising many parts of the country most especially inthe northern region.Hence in what Adebanwi (2004) refers to as "the balance of terror" in the country, aggrieved ethnic and religious groups have observed the logic of "democratic violence in practice" since the return to democracy in the country in 1999.

In addition to its status as Africa's and by extension the world's most populous black nation, Nigeria with over 190 million people contains more than 300 ethnic groups who speak several languages and dialects. Its ethnic diversity cuts across religious and class divides which makes the country one of the most diverse sociocultural, political, economic, religious and multi-ethnic societies in the world. However, the quest for a national identity amongst the people of Nigeria since the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates in 1914 by the British colonial administration remains elusive as ethnic and religious conflicts continue to polarize the citizens of the country.

With Nigeria being ethno-religiously heterogeneous, conflict has been a reoccurring feature in the socio-political sphere of the nation with these conflicts seeking refuge along ethnic, regional and religious lines. Identity conflicts like those experienced in Nigeria involves contests between and amongst groups (ethnic, religious, cultural, gender and class) in the society over socio-economic and political resources especially when a group or groups perceives to be treated unfairly. Hence, ethno-religious identity politics are tactics usually utilized by the political class to pursue their goals as often seen during electoral campaigns in the country where you have the political class or the elites inclining towards the use of ethnicity and religion to garner support

which has often led to clashes between opposing groups. This quest for the realization of goals by different identities is what triggers conflicts, some of which are resolved peacefully or sometimes through violence.

Conflict in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society like Nigeria in general, and Kaduna in particular, is inevitable and the need to understand its dynamics is paramount to ensuring sustainable peace. To achieve sustainable peace, it is important to understand and trace the root causes of ethno-religious tensions and conflicts in Kaduna State with corresponding violent consequences and how it has been managed.After the neutralization of violent conflicts that erupt in the State, the government sets up commissions of inquiry into the crises but violent conflicts seem to manifest again and again. With violent conflicts reoccurring in the State, it can be argued that there are some critical elements that are not being addressed which creates favourable environment for its reoccurrence.

It is therefore pertinent to assess conflict prevention and management strategies deployed by the government to address the lingering conflicts in Kaduna State with the view of providing alternative strategies to neutralize the tensions and return the State to peaceful and harmonious coexistence by the numerous ethnic and religious groups and peoples. To this end, this study set out to assess how conflict prevention and management strategies in the past has been successful or unsuccessful in managing violent conflicts in Kaduna State with a view to proposing new strategies for managing the reoccurring ethno-religious conflicts that have become a common decimal in the State.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Jega (2002), ethno-religious conflict is "a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic group and another, or generally amongst ethnic groups in a multicultural polity such as Nigeria is characterized by a lack of cordiality, by heightened mutual suspicions and fears, by quarrelsomeness and by a tendency towards violent confrontations". Conflict from an ethno-religious perspective erupts when varying groups feel threatened by the activities of other groups which could as a result of a minor disagreement between their respective members over non-trivial issues lead to the manifestation of tensions in the society. It has been posited that "there are two major types of sources of this category of tension in Nigeria, namely that associated with the character of the relationship between the so-called 'settlers' and their 'host' community; and that associated with perceptions of how kinsmen are being treated in distant locations, which attracts reprisal attacks or sentiment". This scenario is so common in the northern part of the country with Kaduna State among the most prominent places of occurrence.

Overview of Violent Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Kaduna State

Documentary evidence suggests that Kaduna State has been ravaged by ethnic and religious conflicts prior to the independence of Nigeria in 1999. Most often than not, accounts have shown a significant level of synchronization or intertwining between ethnic conflicts and religious conflicts in the State based on the demography of the actors involved. Ethnic groups like the Kaje of ZangonKataf district have within the colonial period of 1942 "protested over perceived domination and discrimination by the Native Authority Administration". These perceived domination and discrimination has led to the persistence of "violent demonstrations in the Southern Kaduna province over certain oppressive features of the emirate system, particularly the headship of the Fulani ruling families over predominantly non-Fulani districts".Other scholars further validated the assertion of ethnic marginalization where they highlighted that "in the 1970s the people of Southern Kaduna mobilized over frustrations with the Emirate officials who until the 1976 local government reform also dominated the system of native administration".

Not until the 1980s, violent conflicts in Kaduna State have been that between ethnicities but due to social orientations and ethnic categorizations, and settlement plans, these conflicts began to mobilize based on religious sentiments. Political violence also got its footing in Kaduna State in the 1980s with the occurrence of violence in districts like KasuwarMagani (1980), ZangonKataf (1984), Kafanchan (1987) and ZangonKataf (1992). With these conflicts apparent in the Southern part of the State since the 1980s, the 21st century has led to the city of Kaduna being one of the flashpoints for the eruption of violent conflicts in Nigeria, both in terms of ethno-religious and political conflicts.

Although the incredible resilience demonstrated by Nigerians has somehow prevented the dismemberment of the country, the tension still hang in the air like thick clouds, such that, for example, a mere argument between two traders of different ethnic backgrounds in a market in one Statecan ignite widespread violent conflict and reprisal attacks elsewhere. A simple example can be drawn from the violence that broke out in Kaduna State after the June 17, 2012 tripartite suicide bomb attack on churches in Zaria claiming lives and leaving several others injured. This attack paved way for "reprisal attacks by Christian Youths in the city of Kaduna whose protest turned violent claiming lives and injuring many". In another instance of reprisal attack which was carried in Aba town in Abia State in retaliation to the killings of Igbos by Hausa-Fulani Muslims in Kaduna duringtheyear 2000 religious violence, "about 450 people were killed in the mayhem". Tensions always

build up at the slightest level of conflict that may seem to involve indigenes and settlers especially between local traders.

Ethno-religious clashes have been proven to be the most violent inter-group conflict in Nigeria largely because of their inclination towards a spill over from a particular immediate location to a farther range. Prominent examples of such ethno-religious conflictsin Kaduna State with a spill over effect since the return to democracy in the year 1999 include "the Kafanchan - Kaduna crisis in 1999, ZangoKataf riot of 2001, the Kaduna Sharia riot of 2000" andmost recently is the 2011 post-election violence which took a religious turn even though politically motivated. More often than not, history has shown that when there is a breakdown of law and order as a result of ethnic or religious violence, reprisal attacks always come into play.Ithas been largely argued that the inability of the Nigeria government to meet up with the basic needs of its populace despite its abundant economic resources has been a thing of great concern and a tipping point for recruitment into violence and the poor or inefficient conflict management measures put in place is giving rise to the reoccurrence of violent conflicts in different parts of the country and Kaduna State in particular.

III. METHODOLOGY

Study Area

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

The State has twenty-three (23) Local Government Areas (LGAs) but the data for this study was collected in two (2) LGAs that make up Kaduna metropolis (Kaduna North and Kaduna South LGAs) whom are usually the flashpoints of ethno-religious conflicts on the premise of significant population of both Muslims and Christians and varying tribes in the State. Kaduna North and Kaduna South LGAs have a population of 364,575 and 402,731 respectively according to the 2006 census. The two LGAs has high number of both Muslims and Christians, Hausa-Fulani and native ethnic groups as well as many Nigerians of different ethnic groups like Yoruba and Igbo, making them perfect locations for understanding ethno-religious identity politics and violence in the State.

Data Collection

The study adopts a triangulation approach often referred to as methodological pluralism. Triangulation connotes mixing of data or methods such that a researcher uses different techniques to get access to different facets of the same social phenomenon (Danermark, 2002; Sayer, 2000). Data for this study was collected using both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection. Quantitative data was generated through questionnaire while qualitative data was generated through in-depth interviews.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The sampling techniques used for this study are the purposive sampling technique and the simple random sampling. The adoption of the two techniques is in essence due to the diverse nature of the population under study in terms of ethno-religious affiliations. The choice of the purposive sampling technique is premised on the fact that, the primary data required for this study can best be provided by religious and traditional leaders who are well informed and possess adequate knowledge on the causes and management of violence in Kaduna State. This necessitates a conscious approach in identifying such individuals with such uncommon characteristics for the study. The simple random sampling was used to distribute questionnaires amongst other residents of Kaduna North and South local government areas respectively.

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

Where: n= the sample size

        N= population of study

        1= constant

        e= marginal error at 5%

Data Analysis

With data for the study collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews, this study uses the descriptive statistical model to analyse the data. The quantitative data was entered into SPSS software and frequency tables generated for analysis while the qualitative data is presented verbatim after transcribing from the audio recorder.

IV. RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents data on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender, age, religion, and educational attainment. The data presented is for the 1412 questionnaires found to be worthy of analysis after checking for errors and adequacy of responses by the respondents.

As indicated on table 1 below, majority of respondents were males with 64% while the females constitute 35%. With regards to age of respondents, the data shows that they cut across all age groups with the majority (55%) being within the ages of 18-29, and ¼ of them in the age group 30-39 years, while 13.6% were within ages 40-49. This has shown that majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of the most active actors in violent conflicts in Nigeria.They may have either participated in conflicts or have been victims of conflicts in the past and also they are potential actors in conflicts in the future.

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

Table1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

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

Source: Field Survey, 2017

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

Management of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Kaduna State
This section presents data on respondents' assessment of how violent ethno-religious and politics conflicts in Kaduna State were managed.

Table 2.1: Respondents' Duration of Residence in Kaduna Metropolis

Years		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Missing	52	3.7	3.7	3.7
	01-05	168	11.9	11.9	15.6
	06-10	124	8.8	8.8	24.4
	11-15	120	8.5	8.5	32.9
	16 - 20	288	20.4	20.4	53.3
	21 - above	660	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Respondents were asked about the duration of their residence in Kaduna State to ascertain their knowledge and experiences about conflicts in the State. To this end, over 2/3 of them indicated they have lived in Kaduna for over 15 years (with about 20% having resided for between 16-20 years and about 47% have lived for between 21 and more years). With this, we can say that majority of the respondents have at one time or another witnessed and/or participated in at least one conflict in the metropolis, as such they stand in good position to give accounts of the management of conflicts in the State.

Table2.2: Number of Violent Conflicts witnessed in Kaduna

Number		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Missing	96	6.8	6.8	6.8
	0	184	13.0	13.0	19.8
	1	56	4.0	4.0	23.8
	2	192	13.6	13.6	37.4
	3	304	21.5	21.5	58.9
	4 & above	580	41.1	41.1	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Majority of the respondents have witnessed at least one violent conflict during the period of their stay in Kaduna State. In particular, 4% have witnessed it once, 13.6% have witnessed it on two occasions, 21.5% witnessed it three times and 41% have witnessed at least four violent conflicts in the State. This has indicated that there is high prevalence of violent conflicts in the State and majority of the respondents have witnessed it. As such they can give insight into how violent conflicts were managed.

Table 2.3: Assessment of Security agencies response to violent conflicts in Kaduna

Assessment of Security agencies		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Missing	48	3.4	3.4	3.4
	Effective	656	46.5	46.5	49.9
	Ineffective	308	21.8	21.8	71.7
	Strongly ineffective	44	3.1	3.1	74.8
	Very effective	180	12.7	12.7	87.5
	Cannot say	176	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Respondents indicated that the measures taken by security agencies to tackle and prevent violence in Kaduna are to a large extent generally effective; 46.5% of respondents agreed and 13% of the view that they were very effective. However, 22% feels the security agencies were ineffective in their response.

Table 2.4: Assessment of Measures taken by the government to manage violence in Kaduna

Assessment of Government		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Missing	52	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Effective	472	33.4	33.4	37.1
	Ineffective	444	31.4	31.4	68.5
	Strongly ineffective	92	6.5	6.5	75.0
	Very effective	208	14.7	14.7	89.7
	Cannot say	144	10.2	10.2	100.0
	Total	1412	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Respondents assessed the effectiveness of measures taken by governments to manage violent conflicts in Kaduna differently: 33% were of the view that the measures were effective with another 15% showing they were very effective. However, about 38% felt the measures were either not effective or very ineffective.

V. DISCUSSION

This study set out to assess how ethno-religious violent conflicts in Kaduna State were managed with the intention to identify gaps and recommend alternative strategies towards addressing the problem of violent conflicts in the State. In this regard, findings from this study indicates that the security measures taken and the response of security agencies during crises can generally be described as effective as shown on table 2.3. To this end, it can be said that the response by the security agencies is commendable even though there is much room for improvement as 22% felt they were generally not effective. Also, it means that the reoccurrence of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna State may be caused by other factors and not as a result of failure by security agencies.

On the part of government measures in managing ethno-religious violent conflicts in Kaduna State, approximately 48% of respondents assessed the government measures as generally effective. However, 38% ndicated the direct opposite as being generally ineffective (Table 2.4). With the narrow margin of assessment by the state residents on government efforts, this shows that the government needs to do more than they were doing regarding the numerous violent conflicts in the State. The State government needs to develop and adopt additional measures towards addressing ethno-religious violent conflicts in the State.

On their part, the religious and traditional leaders separately interviewed in this study lamented the disregard for implementation of reports of commissions of inquiry aimed at dousing ethnic and religious tensions by subsequent administrations of Kaduna State. They particularly praised the late Yakowa administration for setting up and implementing the White Paper report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the 2011 Post-Presidential Election Disturbances in Kaduna State. This particular report highlighted previous reports of commissions of inquiry set up by the government in respect of past crises were not strictly implemented. They stressed the need for firm implementation of these recommendations as it would not only ensure justice is met but also help prevent further eruption of violence. With this, the Kaduna State should government take proactive measures to prevent the eruption, and containment, of violence and protection of lives and property in the State.

The report went on to make recommendations on issues about segregated settlements based on religious affiliation at which the Yakowa led government established a standing committee on prevention of segregated settlements in Kaduna Metropolis comprising eminent personalities from the Islamic and Christians faiths. The committee was being coordinated by the Bureau of Religious Affairs (Christians and Islamic matters).

VI. CONCLUSION

A suitable solution to the problem of ethno-religious violent conflicts is good governance through sustainable socio-economic and political institutions where accountability for violation of national integration polices are guaranteed. Good governance at its full potential will without a doubt foster the desired development on the premise that ethno-religious inclusion is attained based on justice and fairness. Governments at all levels

must ensure and promote peaceful coexistence by providing the goods of governance to the populace. Provision of jobs, eradicating poverty and hunger and providing quality education for all will go a long way in preventing and reducing the occurrence of ethno-religious violent conflicts not only in Kaduna State but in Nigeria as a whole. The government should institute community exchange programmes for the citizens to have avenues of coming together to appreciate the necessity of harmonious coexistence. Also, government must ensure that all those responsible for causing ethno-religious violent conflicts are made to face the wrath of the law and nobody should be spared irrespective of religious or ethnic groups he or she belongs to.

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