Ethno Religious Conflict and Settlement Pattern in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract *The preponderance of violent ethno religious fracas in Nigeria, especially in Northern part of the country, has acquired such a dreadful level of reoccurrence. This violent insurgence has started taking its toll on the response and organization of the real property market. The study seeks to examine the influence of ethno religious conflict on settlement patter of some selected cities in Northern Nigeria. Empirical survey revealed that the level of notoriety it has acquired has shaped and influenced the real property market enterprise and ushered in settlement pattern along religious and in some cases ethnic lines. This development has negative impact on land use and administration as some activities are inaccessible in some areas of dominant religion. Government and community leaders should checkmate this hideous development which is fast-spreading and can dramatically disrupts land use planning, spill over borders and reduce growth and prosperity across entire regions.*

Keywords: Ethno-religious, violence, settlement pattern

1. Introduction

Nigeria since independence has remained a multi-ethnic nation state with over four hundred ethnic groups (Chidi, 2005; Salawu, 2010), belonging to several religious sects has been trying to cope with the problem of ethnicity on the one hand, and the problem of ethno-religious conflict on the other. In the last decade, ethno-religious conflict, which is a form of urban violence, has been reported in most major towns in Northern Nigeria. The religious contradictions that Nigeria faces are daunting. The country is essentially heterogeneous society, with the two monotheistic religions-Christianity and Islam enjoying the loyalty of most Nigerians. The origin of the employment of religion as an instrument of politics in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era. Although the British colonialists claimed to have Nigerians on the imperative of secularity in a multi-religious society, available evidence suggests that the colonial administration consciously employed religion as an instrument of pacification. Agbaje (1990:288) correctly established, the colonial administration underwrote Islam in the Northern part of colonial Nigeria and used it as the basis of political authority in local administration. It not only kept the Christians missionaries from the North, so as to preserve the assumed Islamic homogeneity of the region, it also adopted the emirate system of political administration with its strong religious content. In spite of this early trend, the issue of religion did not come to the front burner as a critical issue dividing Nigeria along religious streak until 1986 when General Babangida regime upgraraded Nigerian's membership in the Organization of Islamic Countries, OIC, from observer to a substantive one (Mimiko, 1995:261). This move was seen by Christians as a ploy to turn Nigeria into an Islamic State against the spirit and the letter of the constitution. This singular action of the Babangida regime marked the epoch of intractable intra (in the case of Islam) and inter-religious violence in Nigeria. This precarious situation has worsened recently, with the promulgation of Sharia law in the North. This new move takes Sharia away from its constitutional and historical domain in customary law in the North, and places it in the criminal/civil law domain. Although this move seems motivated by the political dynamism of contemporary Nigeria and by politicians' quest for popularity, empirical evidence so far shows that it is the harbinger of future ethno-religious conflict in the country. Also, the recent Sharia law, apart from its political undertones, is a potent tool for restricting economic migration. This hideous development informed people choice of where to live in the wake of consciousness for safety and influence in many instances choice of business operations. The degree of segregation can vary substantially from place to place even within cities. In this paper, the concern is with religious and ethnic segregation

2. Trends of Ethno Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria

It has been recorded by peace workers and researchers that most of the violent conflicts in Northern Nigerian have been either purely religious or ethno-religious (see Bako, 1994; Mohammed, 2002; IPCR, 2003; Bogoro, 2008; FAcE PaM, 2008). The recent increase in violence in intra- religious conflicts is a very worrisome new development that has caught the attention of clerics. It is surely a very dangerous dimension to religious intolerance, even within a particular religion. In some cases, ethnicity has been the basis for violent intra- religious conflicts adding a new dimension to religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria (Bogoro, 2008). The tendency to identify some ethnic groups with a particular religion easily gives credence to the use of religion for the manipulation of other differences. It is a fact according to Bogoro (2008), many modern secular nations fraternize with some religions, depending on the peculiarity of such countries especially the wishes of the majority of the citizens. Similarly, a number of theocratic states whose political system is generally guided by the dictates of a dominant religion still find it convenient to accommodate one or more prominent minority religions. IPCR (2003:314) North- West Report maintained same position. 'It reported that:

> *"there is a definite feeling, especially in Kano, that the zone's identity is mainly religious, particularly Islamic, and that such identity should be protected at all cost. The options are: The acceptance of such identity, or the division of the country. The constitutional means of dividing the country is a preferred option. If otherwise, then Sharia should be applied to Muslims only and the rest of the citizens in the Sharia implementing states should live according to the rules of the majority".*

There are two types of religious conflicts in the geo-political region. They are the conflict between followers of two different religions and conflict between followers of the same religion, particularly between Muslims (IPCR, 2003). The identifiable causes of inter religious conflict range from extremism to politicisation of religion. A factor that contributed to this development is the politicisation of religion that took place at both national and local levels. The attempt at the national level by the Ibrahim Babangida's administration in the late 80's to enlist Nigeria into the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) had raised the spectre of religions division at the national level (IPCR, 2003). The expansion of Sharia legal system by some state governments further heightened the tension between Muslims and Christians. The situation is made worse with the presence of religious armed groups, the Hisbah to monitor the implementation of the sharia legal system at local level. The activities and proliferation of the new generation Christian churches in terms of aggressive preaching and indiscriminate constructions of churches in residential areas that are dominated by Muslims have the potential of generating conflict is some states in the region. Bako (1994) viewed inter religious conflict consisting of different ethnic groups belonging to Islam and Christianity, battling along majority/minority and indigene/settler divides within a frame work of ethno religious domination and struggle for liberation. This form of religious conflict he added, exist between minority Hausa- Fulani Muslim groups resident in predominantly non Hausa Christian areas, in the northern towns and cities. Example of such conflicts he substantiated, are those between the Hausa and Southern Kaduna ethnic groups from Kafanchan; the Hausa and the Kataf; the Hausa and the Sayawa; the Hausa and the Jukun; the Hausa and the Birom etc over the ownership of towns, sharing of religious space, land, market, fishing ponds, rulership, chieftaincies and participation in local government election.

The increase in religious intolerance and the use of religion for political ends was made possible because of the public perception that access to power and resources at the national level became politicised along religious and ethnic lines. This claim supported by Human Rights watch report. *"The country is divided along religious lines, with the boundaries between Muslim and Christian often overlapping with some of the most important ethnic and cultural divides".* (HRW Vol. 18 No 3 (A) pg.7, April, 2006)'.

The intra religious tension, especially among Muslims is another palpable generator of conflict. The cause of such conflict according to IPCR report has both international and local dimensions. The overseas training Muslims receive either in the Middle East or the Izala group represents the Saudi brand of Islam and the Muslim Brothers represents Iran's brand of Islam. Related to this is the struggle for legitimacy between the traditional Islamic scholars and the young and western educated Muslims. In the opinion of Bako (1994), in northern Nigeria, Muslim intra sectarianism has manifested itself eloquently in the large scale maitatsine insurrections which took place in the northern cities of Kano, Maiduguri, Kaduna, Gombe, Yola and Funtua between 1980 and 1993. Recently the Boko haram, an Islamic sect known for its detest for western education had raided the cities of Maiduguri and Bauchi agitating for implementation of Islamic law in Northern region of the country. While no claim of Christian intra religious conflict by the IPCR, Bako maintained that a Christian movement similar to the maitatsine can be identified in the 'militant,' born 'again' movement among the urban

poor and proletarian groups opposed to the dominant, orthodox Christian movements, though he concluded that their operation is less organized and violent than the maitatsine.

Another glaring factor that sparks up ethno religious violenct conflicts is indigene/settler divides. In many parts of Nigeria, the issue of indigeneity has seemed to create new kinds of parochialism where none had existed before. The settler question in urban areas in Nigeria has produced violent conflicts in varying capacities as witnessed in Kasuwan Magani (1980), Zango Kataf, Gure Kahagu (1984), Kafanchan, Kaduna, Lere (1987), Ilorin, Jere (1987), Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi (1991), Zango Kataf (1992), Tiv and Idoma (1993), (see Ibrahim, 1993; Dung, 1994). Dung (1994) asserts that these conflicts often start as local conflicts but later spread to other areas. He further states that religious factors have also played a crucial role in the generation and expansion of these conflicts, especially in situations where the religious and political boundaries overlap. The issue of indigene/settler divides began to take on increased importance not long after Nigeria's independence according to HRW (2006), "with regional policies that discriminated against the indigenes of other region in areas as diverse as employment and the acquisition of land" (Brennan, 2005).
The following excerpts speak volume of indigene/settler dichotomy:

> "We do not want to go to (Lake) Chad and meet strangers catching our fish in the water, and taking them away to leave us with nothing. We do not want to go to Sokoto and find a carpenter who is a stranger nailing our houses. I do not want to go to the Sabon Gari in Kano and find strangers making the body of a lorry, or to go to the market and see butchers who are not Northerners".{ Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, Premier of Nigeria's Northern Region, 1965. House of Chiefs Debates, 19 March 1965, p. 55 From Albert and Godfrey, "Inter Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria", (New York: Lexington Books, 1999), p.73 in Human Right Watch Vol.18, No.3(A), April 2006}.

The Indigene/settler fracas most often than not culminate into ethno-religious violent conflicts in the north. Example of 'religious conflicts are: Maitatsine insurrections which took place in the northern cities of Kano, Maiduguri, Kaduna, Gombe, Yola and Funtua between 1980 and 1993; Kano riot (1984) as a result of the coming of Rev. Bonke; Tungdo – Wudugu (1989); Hausa/Fulani and Sayawa in Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi State (1991, 1995, 2001, 2005 and 2011); Bauchi religious crisis (1991, 2006, 2007 in Yelwa Kagadama); Hausa and Kataf (1992); Hausa and Berom in Jos (1994); Kaduna sharia conflict (2000); Jos/Plateau State (2001,2002, 2008, 2010 and 011).(See Bako, 1994; IPCR, 2003; Bogoro, 2008; FAcE–PaM, 2008, Gambo, 2009). The increasing level of violence informed largely by intolerance, hatred and stereotypes in Northern Nigeria has risen to such fratricidal levels. The role of religion as reinforcing with ethnicity as instrument for assertiveness is provoked not as an end in itself but by a social and economic conditions to resist extinction, domination and marginalization, it is the combination of perceived ethnic threat and personal vulnerability that force people to fall back on community, groups, religion and other cleavages (Raji, 2003).

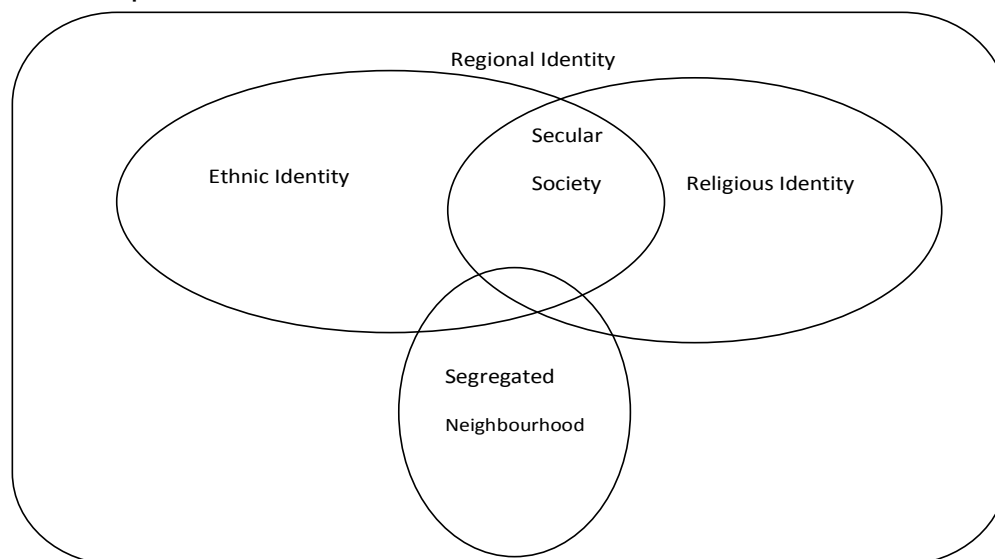## 3. Theoretical and conceptual clarification

Figure1: Conceptual Framework

Nigeria presents a complex of individual as well as crisscrossing and recursive identities of which the ethnic, religious, regional and sub-ethnic (communal) are the most salient and the main bases for violent conflicts in the country. This is both from the point of view of the identities most commonly assumed by citizens especially for political purposes and the identities often implicated in day-to-day contestations over citizenship as well as competitions and conflicts over resources and privileges. To emphasize the inter-connectedness of ethnic, regional, and religious identities and the fact that they are often mutually reinforcing, they are sometimes compounded or hyphenated as ethno-regional and ethno-religious. The latter references have historical, geographical and political origins. They evolved from the old regional structures of the Nigerian federation, where identities were shaped by leaders of the dominant ethnic groups – Hausa/Fulani in the Northern region (predominately Muslim), Igbo in the Eastern region and Yoruba in the Western region – that exercised some form of hegemonic control over the regions. As a result, ethno-regional identities were, and continue to be, used as shorthand references to the dominant ethnic groups acting as regional 'hegemons'. This is the sense in which conflicts among the three dominant groups are generally referred to as ethno-regional. With the division of the country into six semi-official geo-political zones in the late 1990s, which not only have ethnic referents but have also gained currency in the political lexicon, the usage of ethno-regional categories is likely to expand, but so far the old regional references remain dominant.

Similarly, the category of ethno-religious identities initially owed its origin to regional formations. It has been useful for differentiating the predominantly Muslim North from the predominantly Christian South. The category has also helped to differentiate the dominant Muslim group in the North from the non-Muslim minorities in the region. Indeed, unlike the south where majority groups are distinguished from minority groups on the basis of ethnicity, majority-minority distinctions in the north have been more religious than ethnic (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). Thus, a member of the Hausa/Fulani majority group in the north who is Christian is as much a minority in the overall scheme of things as say an Idoma or Igala,(both of which are northern minority groups) and is actually likely to enjoy lesser privileges than an ethnic minority person who is Muslim. Since the early 1980s when the Maitatsine riots ushered in a regime of religious fundamentalism in the Northern parts of the country, ethno-religious categories have been more frequently used to describe conflicts that involve an intersection of ethnic and religious identities. Again for partly historical reasons, this has been true of the North where, as has been pointed out, religious differences play a major part in ethnic differentiation. Thus, conflicts between Hausa/Fulani and minority ethno-religious groups are described as ethno-religious. However, the increased politicization of religion by the state, including the adoption of Islamic penal law by several Northern states in the Fourth Republic, has led to the generalization of ethno-religious conflicts all over the country.

In the recent past, other 'primordial' identities that have gained wide currency and greater political significance, especially in contestations over citizenship, are those of 'indigenes', 'non-indigenes', 'migrants', and 'settlers'. These categories have ethnic, communal, religious and regional origins, and have evolved from an entrenched system of discriminatory practices in which non-indigenes, migrants and settlers are shunted out or denied equal access to the resources, rights and privileges of a locality, community, town or state, to which 'sons and daughters of the soil' have first or exclusionary access. The system produces and sustains a hierarchical, unequal, and ranked system of citizenship that has provoked violent conflicts all over the country, and goes to the very heart of the 'National Question'. Although these identities have grown in significance in the recent past, which obviously has to do with the aggravation of the 'National Question', they have deep historical roots in pre-colonial patterns of inter-group relations, and the discriminatory practices and ethnic inequalities entrenched by both the colonial regime and continued by post-independence administrations. These have cumulatively provoked various forms of self-determination agitation by different groups.

Ethnicity is generally regarded as the most basic and politically salient identity in Nigeria. This claim is supported by the fact that both in competitive and non-competitive settings, Nigerians are more likely to define themselves in terms of their ethnic affinities than any other identity. Indeed, according to the authoritative 2000 survey on "Attitudes to Democracy and Markets in Nigeria", ethnicity "is demonstrably the most conspicuous group identity in Nigeria" (Lewis and Bratton 2000: 27). Thus, the survey found that almost one-half (48.2%) of Nigerians chose to label themselves with an ethnic (including linguistic and local-regional) identity, compared to almost one-third (28.4%) who opted for class identities, and 21.0% who chose a religious identity (Lewis and Bratton 2000: 24-25).

Ranking next to ethnicity is religious identity. In fact, in parts of the North commonly referred to as the 'core' or 'Hausa-Fulani North' - which is roughly coterminous with those states that adopted Sharia law in the Fourth Republic - religious identity is more critical than ethnic identity and in fact serves to activate ethnicity. This ushered in segregation pattern along ethnic and religious lines in most states in Northern Nigeria specifically pronounce in Bauchi and Jos (Gambo, 2009). Best & Idyorough (2003) in examining the Jukun-Tiv conflict observed different pattern of settlement in the course of the study. They reported settlement along ethnically homogenous lines such as Tiv people in Wukari Township; settlement based on wage employment and also settlement which emerged along the major roads after the

conflict. The measurement of segregation in populations has been the focus of a large amount of research and a variety of segregation indices have been proposed and examined. The degree of segregation can vary substantially from place to place even within cities. Poole and Doherty (1996) and Doherty and Poole (1997) in Northern Ireland examined the segregation between Protestants and Catholics. Residential segregation has major political and policy implications in Northern Ireland because of the legacy of communal division and conflict (Anderson and Shuttleworth, 1998). The extent of segregation in Northern Ireland as a whole has been a focus particularly in media discussions (see, for example, Anderson and Shuttleworth, 1994) which have attempted to evaluate the extent to which Northern Ireland has become a more communally-divided society in terms of residence. The general consensus has been that segregation in general has increased through time in a 'ratchet effect', with large increases particularly after outbreaks of violent conflict, with little or no decrease when violence declines. Undoubtedly, violence has been an important element in driving changes in the geographical distribution of population since 1969 (Poole and Doherty, 1996) but other forces driving changes in the distribution, such as counter-urbanization as seen in other cities (Power and Shuttleworth, 1997), cannot be discounted. Besides a focus on segregation in Northern Ireland as a whole, there have also been analyses of residential patterns in sub-units such as Belfast and its various parts, as well as selected towns and rural areas (Doherty and Poole, 1997; Poole and Doherty, 1996). Doherty and Poole (1997) consider the evolution of residential segregation in the Belfast Urban Area (BUA) and sub-areas through time using grid-square data. The analysis was extended by Poole and Doherty (1996) who outlined segregation patterns in towns and in locations such as the border. High levels of segregation were found in Belfast, Derry, Lurgan, Portadown, and Armagh with lower levels in locations like North Down and parts of East and North Antrim. This approach moves quite a way to recognizing that residential segregation varies between places and that presenting information on Northern Ireland as the 'given unit' of analysis conceals significant local variations.

4. Pattern of Settlement in the North

Complex interconnectedness between ethno-regional, ethno-religious and ethnicity presents a new phenomenon in the springing of settlement pattern in almost all the northern states. Combine as exacerbating factor, preponderant violent ethno-religious fracas had ushered in new phenomenon in neighbourhood/settlement arrangement in most northern towns and cities. Empirical survey revealed settlement pattern along religious lines and ethnic formations in the cities of Kano, Kaduna, Jos and Bauchi. With religious fundamentalism of the 1980s, the struggle to preserve Kano's identity shifted from ethnic and assumed a religious dimension. By 1859, Kano was organized into 74 quarters each headed by Mai Ungawa - the Emir's representative. The quarters were divided into two – Birni (the walled city for Kano indigenes and other Muslim Hausas), and the Waje (the outside city for non - indigenes) (Nwaka, nd). The preservation of Islam from pollution informed the separate settlement. This development continued in almost all the core Northern cities. The non-Muslims and non-indigenes settle outside the traditional city walls of Kano, Kaduna (Zaria), and Bauchi. The insurgence religious crises compelled the non-Muslims and the non-indigenes to settle outside the city walls for perceive safety. In the case of Jos the capital city of Plateau state which is a Christian dominated State the non-Christians which are majorly Hausa/Fulani also settle in isolation of Christians, along religious divides.

Table 1 Settlement Pattern in Jos along Religious Line

Christian	Muslim
Unguwan Rukuba	Yanshanu
Rock Heaven	Rikos
British-America	Gangare
Tudun Wada	Ungwan Rogo
Bukuru	Ali Kazaure

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table 2 Settlement Pattern in Bauchi along Religious Llines

Christian	Muslim
Yelwan Tudu	Jahun
Yelwan Kagadama	Nasarawa
Rafin Zurfi	Gwallaga
Gwallameji	Kobi
Gudum Sayawa	Bakaro

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table 3 Settlement Pattern in Kaduna State along Religion Lines

Christian	Muslim
Barnawa High cost	Kawo
Barnawa Complex	Tudun Wada
Sabon	Unguwan Dosa
Unguwan Pama	Unguwan Rimi
Unguwan Sunday	Mando

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table 4 Settlement Pattern along Ethnicity Divides in Bauchi State

Neighbourhood	Tribe
Igbo Quarter	Igbo
Gudum Sayawa	Sayawa
Rafin Zurfi	Ngas
Birshi Fulani	Fulani
Yalwan Kagadama	Sayawa
Turum	Gerawa

Source: Field Survey, 2011

In Kano State the Christians and non-indigenes settle at Sabon Gari where they feel secured and safe. Albert (1994) asserts that by 1948, the population of the Igbo (6,680) had surpassed that of the Yoruba (4,415). By 1950s, the population of Sabon – Gari Kano was: Igbo-54%, Yoruba-24%, Hausa/Fulani 4-%. Most non-indigenes and non-Muslims settling in core north do that along religious and/or ethnic (native) divides as seen in table 4. It is obvious that security is perceived along religious and native affinity indicated in table 5. This arrangement applies in some northern states with Christian domination as seen in the case of Jos, the Plateau State capital (see table1). The pattern of settlement also in the north informs people choice of where to live and whether not live. This has compelled some people to swap lands and in some cases residential apartments to areas of dominant religion. Table5 shows criteria for judging safe areas, what people consider before deciding where to live and/or not live. Religion ranks first followed by native affinity in Bauchi and Jos. Proximity to town (CBD) is the least considered. It is not uncommon to have settlements along religious and ethnic lines.

Table 5 Relative Importance Index of Factors used in Judging Security

Variables	BAUCHI		JOS	
	RII	Rank	RII	Rank
Religious Affinity	0.99	1	0.97	1
Native Affinity	0.93	2	0.82	2
Non-Indigene settlement	0.70	3	0.59	3
Proximity to town	0.61	4	0.55	4

Source: Gambo (2009)

5. Conclusion and recommendation

Empirical survey revealed that violent outbreaks affect settlement arrangement as such perceive safety compelled people to settle along religious and ethnic divides as commonly found in most northern cities. This has great consequences on land uses and administration thereby causing floating of property values as the case may be in safely advantageous neighbourhoods. Government should therefore checkmate the incessant ethno-religious conflicts ensure adherence to land use and planning regulations.

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