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**Persistent Faith-based Crises in Nigeria: Causations, Implications and New Management Paradigm**

**Paulinus Okechukwu Agbo Ph.D,**  
**Humanities Unit, School of General Studies,**  
**University Nsukka**  
[paulinus.agbo@unn.edu.ng](mailto:paulinus.agbo@unn.edu.ng)

&

**Christian Onuorah Agbo Ph.D**  
**Humanities Unit, School of General Studies,**  
**University of Nsukka**  
[onuorah.agbo@unn.edu.ng](mailto:onuorah.agbo@unn.edu.ng)

**Abstract**

It is to state the obvious that faith-based crises in Nigeria is endemic. The crises have snowballed into catastrophic loss of lives, properties and an ensuing psychic damage on a good number of the people. Several researchers have pointed unhealthy competition among religions, fanaticism, hate speech, poverty and ignorance as the cardinal causations of the crises. Various peace initiatives and efforts to either quell or put an end to the crises have been ineffective. Put differently, the crises appear unabated and have worsened. Inferentially, the religious consciousness and awareness of a people reflects/shapes their attitudes. And so far the conditions that fuel religious crises in Nigeria are rife, it appears herculean for such crises to be curbed or stopped. Nonetheless, this work tries to explore the effectiveness of orientating and guarding young Nigerians against religious teachings. The research employed quantitative method in analyzing the religious phenomena and data for the study. The findings indicated that non-teaching of faith-based subjects in school among other concerns, could encourage a generation inclined to empiricism than superstition thereby making religious crises unfashionable.

**Keywords: Faith-based, crises, bigotry, fanaticism, superstition**

**Introduction**

There seems to be an endless search for potent solutions to the worsening faith-based crises in Nigeria. Researchers and laymen as well have suggested litanies of strategies and means to control or stop the crises. These solutions so far proffered have been largely unsuccessful. Part of the reasons is the fact that the conditions that fuel such crises are endemic/common-place in Nigeria

The turn of events have influenced some authors and researchers to hypothesize an impending degeneration into conflagration and war if the crises are not checked (Duru,2018, Falola, 2010). Indeed, the causations and implications of the crises are well known and documented. The concomitant influences from ignorance, bigotry, poverty, unhealthy rivalry among religions, and related issues have fuelled faith-based crises in no small measure. Nigerians caught up in the violent crises recorded loss of properties and lives. Others have been maimed and terminally injured. The ensuing conditions of hopelessness, rife, mutual suspicion, suffering and so on, have not only become issues of national discourse that demand emotional response but a reality many Nigerians directly or indirectly have to grapple with.( Agbo, 2017)

The aforesaid destructions through violent confrontations are a testament of the ever expanding conglomeration of wrong use of religion which results into crises. The greater percentage of Africans holds tenaciously the beliefs and practices of their religious affiliations. Mbiti (1990) rightly observed that Africans are notoriously religious ...The adherents of the three major religions- Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion are in constant struggle and in an unhealthy competition. Also worrisome is the manner of schisms and rivalries that exist among them. Each religion has various sects or denominations especially Christianity and Islam that seem to outshine the other mostly in a fashion that is crises imbued. Some Christians and Muslims treat with disdain the remnants of the dying and defenseless African Traditional Religion. Their worship centres, paraphernalia and other sacred objects are profaned, desecrated; burnt and sometimes carted away for reasons that bother on evangelism/conversion.

More so, the Islamic sharia and its implementation in a religious competing nation like Nigeria, brews discordant atmosphere of crises. The deepening divisions among the religious groups were made worse by the introduction of Sharia (Sampson,2014). Besides, Nigerian membership in the Organization of Islamic nations

could be interpreted in the light of the edge Islam has over other religions in Nigeria by wielding greater power to include the nation in an organization that could mean that the country is an Islamic nation. No matter the interpretation, the inclusion of Nigeria in the organization has set other religions especially Christianity in a war of words and collision course with Islam.

The members of the African Traditional Religion are not immune to crises. Like the Palestinian youths throwing pebbles and stones to the arm to teeth Israeli security personnel to drive home their perceived grievances, youth adherents of the African Religion sometimes will go on rampage to protest the bastardization of their religion by the worshippers from other religions. Several other beliefs and practices of African Traditional religion are in themselves source of crises to the worshippers and others that are not in their fold.

From the foregoing, the thrust of this work is to investigate the reason for the incessant faith-based crises and their implications in Nigeria. Besides, there is the focus on exploring new ways that could put an end or reduce the incidence of the crises.

### **Understanding Faith-based Crises and their Causations in Nigeria**

The adjective faith-based is concerned with “being or associated with religion or religious group (American Heritage Dictionary, 2016). The term crises are the plural form of the word crisis. It connotes ‘a time of great difficulty or danger ... (Crowther:1998). Etymologically, crisis is derived from the Greek word Κρισις transliterated krisis. It explains any event that is capable of causing or leading to dangerous situation that affects the society; the individual, family, community and the nation at large. At this point it is fitting to affirm that faith-based crises are disturbances influenced by religion or religious ideas. On the other hand, there are various reasons for faith-based crises in Nigeria. They are:

#### **a. Religious Teachings as Impetus-Agitat**

There is the driving force or what actually ignite the obsession for crises associated with religion. The litanies of inciting statement of ambiguities expressed in Christian and Islamic texts and scriptures, and the belief system of African Religion are the flash points and impetus agitat to most, if not all the religious crises in Nigeria. It is not out of place to infer that the foundation of every faith-based crisis lies on the knowledge and interpretation of certain teachings and beliefs of the three main religions in Nigeria. Right and wrong interpretation of a particular text of a scripture could lead to devastating consequences. And as it is well known, scriptures such as Bible and Quran are read at the liberty of the adherents of Christianity and Islam respectively. Sometimes, the right meaning and interpretation rendered could lead to intolerance and crises. This is partly because of the fact that religious ideologies, symbols, teachings, belief etc are all coined by man and supposedly filled with imperfections. Religion as part of Culture is learned and not biologically inherited. Man creates all the myths; legends etc that are found in those scriptures nonetheless ascribed to God. No matter the origin of the writings of the texts, it goes without saying that some statements ascribed to God in some religious books including the scriptures of these religious groupings are smeared with crises. In Deuteronomy 17 for instance, “God” commanded those who choose to worship other gods than Him to be stoned to death. The following was the original command God instructed His worshippers which may include Nigerian Christians, if there be found among you within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth the, man or woman that has wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God in transgressing his covenant, and hath gone and served other gods and worshipped them, either the sun or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded,...17:5 then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing unto thy gates even that man or that woman and shalt stone them with stones, till they die(Deuteronomy 17:2-5).

Many stories in the Old testament attest to the fact that God was really in support of the killing of the enemies of His worshippers- the Jews. The “sin, punishment and repentance construct” is discernable from God’s interaction with “His people”. Wars are dedicated to Yahweh- God and He approves of them. When His worshippers sin, he orders for drought or war as punishment and only to change the situation if they repent. God ordered for the annihilation of a nation ( 1 Samuel: 15:3), what may be termed genocide in modern parlance. In some places, the statements are so ambiguous that they may be interpreted to suit the interpreter’s state of mind. For example, the injunction, that thou shall not suffer a witch to live (Exodus 22:18) according to Blue(2010) provided encouragement to the witch hunters of the renaissance, and justified their putting to death those they had identified as witches. Tens of thousands of the unfortunate who, in some way or other had earned for themselves the title ‘witch’ had little hope of mercy when faced with the seemingly ambiguous nature of this commandment. The point to make here is that there are numerous verses; ideas/statements in the Bible that lead to crises.

Similar to the questionable biblical command attributed to God, the Quran shares the same inciting statements dotted therein (Burdan, 2003). Many injustices in the eyes of modern man are lying bare in these scriptures. Women and children are treated with disdain. And it seems that those paradigms and actions at the time of writing of those texts were ideal and acceptable. Certain oral transmitted beliefs and practices of African

religion have the same effects like their Christian and Islamic counterparts. However, time has cast doubt on their relevance and this is the likely reason why religion and modernity are in constant clash

#### **b. Manipulations of Religion for Selfish Purposes**

In Nigeria, it is common place to manipulate religion for selfish reasons. The Nigerian environment is a fertile ground that gives such thrust and impetus. There are wild spread poverty for the majority of the citizens (Spletton, 2008) and the attendant problems associated with it. Many Nigerians are suffering from excruciating and unending pains of diseases, trauma, frustrations, injustice, psychological issues and the likes.

On the other divide, there are the very few Nigerians enjoying the wealth and living sometimes better than the rich in the ultra-rich countries in Europe and America. No doubt, the gains of living life as a rich person are irresistible. The rich exploit and trample upon the poor. When the poor are “gnashing their teeth in penury” and in search of food, they (rich) are well off with the necessities of life. In addition, many of them are above the law of the land; they can do anything against the poor and get away with it.

Many Nigerian religious leaders capitalize on this to manipulate and use religion to their own favour. Some of the wealthy Nigerians who exploit the poor would go to the worship centres to give special offerings (sometimes in Christianity it is called covenant offering or whatever disguised name) for God to sustain their wealth as if God wants them to continue such exploitation. Also, the fear of falling aside to the group of poor may propel the rich to give offering through slightest conviction from the religious leaders, so that God keeps them in that class. On the part of the poor, a religious leader may through telepathy and hypnosis reveal to them pockets of secret pertaining their life and on that premise adduce the reason for their pitiable condition. The poor after parting with his hard earned and meager resources, would be tuned to be in collision course with some perceived “enemies of progress” mostly his relations and friends. He may be told that his uncle Mr. A is a wizard and had spiritually blocked his way to join the league of the rich. This revelation eventually would open the gates of acrimony/crisis that could in an extremist case lead to maiming or lynching of the perceived enemy (Oguejiofor, 2012). Indeed, these manipulations go on in almost all the activities; in politics, social circles etcetera.

It is disheartening to observe that many Nigerians believe that the inability to get married, rich, good health, promotion at work, political position, job and so on are the spiritual machinations of the evil doers and some perceived enemies. Through inferential understanding of some concepts in the scriptures, the position appears to be real. The effect of this is the fact that there are growing numbers of people who are enemies; enemy A is accusing enemy B of some sort of machinations and vice versa. The truth remains that so long as those socio-economic imbalance that exist in Nigeria are not addressed many people are going to be experiencing poverty and harsh conditions no matter the manner at which blame- game associated with religion is apportion to one another.

#### **c. Lack of awareness and Ignorance**

Many Nigerians lack appropriate awareness and are ignorant of the right approach to deal with the challenging phenomena in religion. Knowing and imbibing the right way or means of dealing with these phenomena in a way to eschew crises appear to be difficult for a good number of Nigerians. It is worrisome the way many students, academics in different disciplines and the intelligentsia show how ignorant and lack of awareness they are about religion. This is shown in the way many of these people including some other Nigerians beckon on religious ethics and morality (even when they are sources of crises) as a rule of action thereby engaging in those attitudes that sustain faith-based crises.

#### **d. Poverty**

Although there have been series of writing and supposition that “poverty could be the driving force of crises that include violence in Nigeria”, a critical assessment of this fact could affirm otherwise. Poverty connotes. The vulnerability of the poor cannot be denied. Granted, in their weakness, they can be influenced to engage in appalling activities including religious crises or violence. A poor man in his abject condition and desperation can be so corrupt to swindle, maim or even kill his fellow human being in an attempt to survive; to have access to food, shelter or even kill himself to end the agony of poverty. But it is different when he kills to spread his religion, when he commits suicide, homicide or genocide with the premise for some sort of rewards from God and when he treats others with contempt/condescension as approved in his religion. Therefore, it is not out of place to infer that poverty does not make one to display attitude that encourage religious violence, rather, the teachings, beliefs and practices of the religions are the remote cause. Poverty is only but a part of the means of expression and display of the carefully written or orally transmitted ideas that cause religious crises.

#### **e. Religious Fanaticism**

Religious extremists, sometimes called fundamentalists, are people who in their desire to see their religion retain or regain what they consider its pure state, knowingly or unwittingly violate the rights of other people (Akwanya & Onyeneke, 1999) A fanatic is one who assimilates and demonstrates his religion in an extremist

way. He may be indoctrinated to believe that his ideas about God, scripture, religion are perfect and most authentic. He usually shuns criticism or dissenting views. He may fight with words, attitude or physically maim or kill another person to defend his position or to gain salvation/reward in the hereafter. A fanatic is so drunk with “religious opium” that it blocks his sense of reason, emotion and humanity. It is possible that many fanatics are honestly acting in line with the dictates and admonitions inherent in their scriptures or belief systems. Sometimes, some ideas are taken out of context and misinterpreted which makes crisis inevitable. No matter the cause of this, it is pertinent to observe that “many Nigerians are religious fanatics in their varying degrees” . This is the reason for killing suspected witches, the killing and destruction by extremist groups; Boko Haram, Maitasine etc , burying a king with human heads, and countless other heinous activities .It appears certain that fanaticism is one of the major contributing factors of faith-based crises in Nigeria.

### **Unhealthy Competition**

The interaction among the three major religions especially between “Christianity and Islam is mutual suspicion and rivalry” (Martinson,1994). Agbilibeazu (1995) rightly pointed out that “ there seems to be a difficult understanding between the church and some other religious sects in Nigeria, particularly the Islamic group. Christians as well as Muslims have destroyed the worship centers of the traditional religion in an attempt to convert worshippers to their religions.

The competition has degenerated to numerous crises between Christianity and Islam in Nigeria. Within Christianity and Islam, the numerous denominations and sects are in constant competition among themselves borne out of fight for supremacy, chauvinism and the likes.

### **Poor leadership**

It was Achebe (1981) who argued that the problem of Nigeria is squarely on leadership. Truly, Nigeria has been bedeviled with poor leadership since independence. Many Nigerian leaders are corrupt and inept. Leadership as maintained by Alamu (2004) has to do with organizing and adequately coordinating the resources of time, relationship, skills, expertise and finances to achieve a goal for the common good of all. Some actions of the leaders in Nigeria fuel religious crises. Former President Ibrahim Babangida was alleged to have spearheaded the controversial inclusion of Nigeria in the Organization of Islamic Countries. Normally, this action that could lead to crises which also is antithetical to the constitutional provision of Nigeria as a secular state would not have been initiated and ratified.

### **Implications of faith-based crises in Nigeria**

Religious Crises affect Nigerians in many different ways. In Nigerian, every misfortune most often is erroneously blamed on a person especially the unfortunate members of the society. For instance, some individuals accused of invoking evil against another through witchcraft will not only suffer stigma or rejection from the family, friends and community but psychic (mind) or emotional crises. More so, some individuals who experienced varying degrees of crises related to religion including indoctrination are suffering psychological trauma. Psychological trauma is a type of psychic damage that occurs due to severely distressing experience. (Bruce,2018) Many Nigerians who are suffering this type of disease are in constant crises and not contributing meaningfully to the nation. In an extreme or chronic case, some tend to be living with a devastating mental condition that among other things makes them prone to substance abuse and insanity’. (Seyle,1976). Others are taking more time to nurse their condition than engaging in act of production of goods and services. In this regards, the aggregate work force in the nation is reduced which invariably leads to low productivity and crises. Many job positions in Nigeria are occupied by individuals that are not qualified notwithstanding the fact that there are competent individuals seeking for the same opportunity (). One of the major bases for such employment is the influence of religion. However, the poor output and performance from these quacks cannot be denied. All these, no doubt make crises situations rife and could adversely affect development. Moreover, members of a particular family may align with different religious groups, sect or denominations. Therefore, a family may be made up of Christians, Muslims and adherents of African Traditional Religion or of different sects or denominations. The jumbling of these religions most often leads to disagreements and crises. Precious time allotted for crises and dispute would have been channeled to engaging in activities that will lead to national development. Family members who ought to be active workforce and contributing to national development are being wasted. Instead of taking the sick member to an appropriate medical outfit for treatment, the family may resort to prayers and unconventional therapy. Even when blood transfusion is highly needed, depending on the family or the individual’ belief, it may be rejected. It is highly probable that this attitude of refusal of blood transfusion on religious ground could lead to other health complications or even death. When death occurs, it does not only affect the other family members emotionally or psychologically but affects their activities which adversely affect production and leads to crises. Besides, some couples who are better divorced than living together are forcefully continuing as husband and wife because of their religious vows in marriage.

Their incompatibility breeds acrimony, violence, health challenges or even death. Through this strange and excruciating association, many could not prepare themselves to take up a job.

Some communities especially in Igbo land, organize prayer, exorcism, and what they may call cleansing of ancestral curses. Most often, the cause of poverty, disease and misfortune in a particular community is blamed on escape goats or objects. This belief makes those who believe in it not to reflect on the actual cause of their predicament (following conventional and empirical approaches) not to seek appropriate solution to their problems. In turn, the blame game as well as their problems usually continue. When this happens, some of the persons involved may nurse their conditions and not engage in healthy activities that spur development.

The killings and loss of properties through violent faith-based crises in Nigeria is shocking. Thousands of people, annually have been killed or maimed. It is really pathetic the needless deaths caused through religious influences. Boko Haram, and perhaps others sympathetic to the group have caused great havoc and destructions through series of massacre, abductions and damaging of houses and properties. ( Walker, 2012) The situation is very worrisome.

### **A shift in paradigm towards Curbing/stopping Faith in Nigeria-based crises**

Admittedly, religious crisis is very difficult to manage or stop in Nigeria. Part of the reason is that religious experiences are individualistic in nature and appears real in “religious world”. A person may claim that God spoke to him to be wary of another man who wants to kill him. He got this revelation through dreams. Whether or not he is hallucinating or dealing with some type of psychic issues is not a concern. Rather, this conclusion would be supported by the scriptures, priests, imam and other religious teachings. It will be hard to take the dream otherwise. Therefore, part of the beliefs and practices that translate into crises are supported not only through the scriptures which are thought to be inerrant and inspired by God but by the religious men; clergies, imams, traditional religion’s priests, who are respected and in some cases believed to be demiurge/demigod. It is hard also for a religious fanatic to understand that he or she is a fanatic let alone ascribe his behaviours as heinous. Nonetheless, very few individuals have been able to do so. Among them is an American... who had been indoctrinated and fighting for Al shabab ( Islamic militant group in Somalia) but surrendered and abandoned the group on the basis of his conscience; he was against the extremists’ views and attitudes ( Agbo, 2017)

From the backdrop, it is imperative that “American model of non inclusion of religious education in its elementary and high school/secondary education” may suffice. When some texts or concepts in the scriptures and other religious teachings are interpreted to pupils or students it may deform or negatively affect their worldview and attitude. To this end, it is of essence that the teaching of Christian or Islamic Religious Knowledge, and other concepts on African Religion be expunged in Nigerian Primary and post primary Schools and replaced with the teaching of conventional ethics and morality. The religious ethics and morality as depicted in this work breed crises, acrimony, destruction, unhealthy competition etcetera.

Many ideas in the scriptures of these religions explain ancient man’s worldview including his myths and his own subjective ways of interpreting the origin of things around him. A modern man adopting and invoking those principles are prepared to be in constant clashes with self and others. The reasons for engaging in wars and ascribing them as holy war or Jihad as depicted in those scriptures can be said to be appalling to an average modern man. In another instance, the description in the Old Testament Bible (Leviticus 13 & 14) shows the understanding of these ancient people in the diagnosis and treatment of Sara’at, Hebrew equivalent of Leprosy. Those suspected of contracting the disease (thought to be incurable and a form of punishment from God) were examined by the priests, and if found to be infected were ostracized and their houses demolished. If he survives, he would pass through ritualistic cleansing and accepted in the community. Surprisingly, it was God that sanctioned those “treatments”(Agbo,2012) In the contemporary times, not only that no house of suspected leper is destroyed, he can live a normal life without being ostracized or quarantined in colonies. There are medications that cure the disease especially when it is detected on time (). It is very important that the Nigerian religious communities detect and shun those primordial ways of doing things and accept the contemporary solutions and reasons that rely heavily on science, empiricism and logic.

Immanuel Kant’s theory of categorical imperative ought to be a means to ending some sort of crises caused by religion when harnessed. Kant, a famous German philosopher argued that individuals should be duty bound to do what is right notwithstanding the condition or intention of those performing the act. In his original words, Kant’s first principle in the categorical imperatives states “ act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time will that it should become a universal law”( Ellington, 1993). This explains an unconditional ethical or moral obligation binding in all conditions or circumstances and is of independent of a person’s interest, inclination, and purpose. If this is harnessed and applied in Nigerian situation, a good number of crises associated with religion will be quenched or stopped. The security personnel who violate his professional ethics to side certain group in the time of crises in Nigeria () would have been duty bound to act in a professional way. Also, those who punish or kill others on the basis of religion should ask themselves if such maxim could be taken as universal law. Voting on the sentiment of religion and not on the basis of competence which is common

in Nigeria () and using religious influence in job recruitment and the likes would have stopped if Kant's principles are considered.

Moreover, one of the factors that fuels religious crises and violence in this modern times is lack of openness and inability to accept criticisms. Every religion has means or ways of repelling criticisms. In spite of the fact that some religious leaders exploit and swindle their followers, those victims hardly speak against them-the religious fraudsters. Rather, many of them- the victims believe that in order not to incur the wrath of God or be cursed, those religious leaders even though they are shockingly wanting in their behaviours, should be prayed for and not to be criticized. Furthermore, it seems Muslims repel criticism of their religion in more strict sense. Any disparaging position especially when it concerns Mohammed, Allah or Quran that seems derogatory or blasphemous against the religion is treated with utmost seriousness that can lead to killing and destruction. Many people who were accused of such criticisms have been killed or fatwa-doctrine that support killing of blasphemers will be declared on them. Fatwa was declared on Rushdie Salman who wrote a controversial novel *The Satanic verse* that criticizes the Islamic religion (Hamid, 2017). All around the world (including Nigeria) there have been records of killing, bombing, attempted murder, punishment of individuals who criticize Islamic beliefs and practices. This is similar to the treatment of heretics by Christians during the Inquisition. In all these, every adherents of any religion should know and imbibe the modern approach to solving issues of a perceived assault or attack on one's belief. If it cannot be settled in a conventional court, it is ideal that those criticized through mere writing should attack or respond through the same medium; to advance or write a counter piece or ideology or prove the ideas wrong. Invoking the old and ancient man's approach of treating those who are in the other divide in belief and in association makes crises inevitable.

Pope John Paul's (the leader of catholic church) approach on recognizing the failure and mistake of the church on critics is encouraging and should be imitated. He made.. "sweeping apology for 2,000 years of violence, persecution and blunders...seeking forgiveness for sins committed against the Jews, heretics, women...pleading for a future that would not repeat the mistakes"(Carrol,2016). Even the Galileo' affirmation that the earth revolves around the sun which was against the dogma of the Christians (catholic) at the time was recognized as right (Cowel, 1992). Pope's action will no doubt help in the toleration of dissenting views and criticisms which may bring about positive change. Other leaders in the different churches and religions particularly Islam should cogitate and transcend on the rationality of their actions in relation to their approach to those who have critical views/opinion about their dogma, beliefs, and practices. The benefit of dialogue in dealing with the crises of religion cannot also be overemphasized.( Dretke,1979)

#### Conclusion

No matter how petulant the adherents of different religions may be, it needs to be affirmed that every religion seems to be designed to spur actions that are inimical to peaceful coexistence. In the same vein, some of the actions thought to be ideal and sanctioned by the different religious groups not only limit ones happiness but could cause crises for the generality of the people.

As earlier observed, religious ideas are the impetus agitat to faith-based crises in Nigeria. And to solve and manage the crises caused by religion, a recourse through a systematic orientation especially on the young Nigerians should be imbibed. When young persons of primary and post primary school age are disconnected from the harmful superstitions and ideas from the scriptures and beliefs of the dominant Religions in Nigeria, it will pave way to a slow but a sure end or reduction on the spate of faith-based crises. The concept of infidel, unbeliever and outside is conspicuously and regularly taught by the different religions especially Christianity and Islam() when a person at infancy and at very young age is taught that his/her fellow Nigerian is a perceived enemy or infidel, it will be very difficult for him at a later age to assume otherwise. The best management of a crisis is among other things to nip it from the bud. And when children are protected from such teachings, religious crises could become nonexistent.

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**Inflammatory Language: A Massive Inducement to Ethno-Religious Conflict in Nigeria**

By  
George C. Asadu Ph.D  
Humanities Unit, School of General Studies  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka  
[george.asadu@unn.edu.ng](mailto:george.asadu@unn.edu.ng)  
08104732441

**Abstract**

Religion is a functional uniting factor in places where there is a state religion but is dysfunctional in secular states where there is multiple religious sects. Therefore, in a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria with marked plurality of religious view among the citizens there is the inevitability of clash. Of course, the country has been ravaged by ethno-religious conflict. One major cause of ethno-religious violence which effect has not been satisfactorily examined is the use of inflammatory language. Unfortunately, the use of inflammatory language has become prevalent in Nigeria. The situation provokes concern and interest in public discourse and intellectual circle. This study is an attempt to examine the effect of inflammatory speech on ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. The researcher adopted historical research method. The findings made clear the fact that the ethno-religious conflict which divides Nigeria is mainly induced by unguided utterances. Its therefore, recommended that unless the use of such languages as derogatory, anger and hate languages are avoided, religious related conflicts can never be curtailed in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Inflammatory language, Nigeria, Ethno-religion Violence, Inducement

**Introduction**

Right from the first time the two foreign religions (Christianity and Islam) encountered their host African Traditional Religion (ATR), the religious terrain has become enmeshed in a tangle of enmity and conflict. Hence, the function of religion which among other things is the overall development of man was caught by heavy galloping inflection, occasioned by the use of inflammatory languages otherwise known as hate speeches. In an apparent display of religious prejudice, the expatriate missionary used words like heathenism, and paganism primitivism to describe African Traditional Religion, and their God they referred to as Idol. The Muslim Imams on the other hand used the words such as *Arna* and *Kafri* for the adherents of ATR. It was appalling the way these foreign religious propagandists treated the adherent of ATR. They “have casted aspersions and poured sarcasms on the nature of African Traditional Religion” (Ugwu and Ugwueye 2004: 12). The foreign religions had the same measure of desperation as the foreign invaders to occupy Nigeria space. Hence, they worked in collusion with imperial government to deal with the Traditional religion. While Christian missionaries occupied the South, the Islamic Ummas inhabited the North, from where they began to spread to other parts of the country. In the south where Christianity is the dominant religion there is relatively peace but in the north where Islam is dominant there has been frequency of religious conflicts.

This research paper is an attempt to specifically show that inflammatory language is one of the major causes of the ethno-religious violence occurring in Nigeria. Due to the competitive nature of these foreign religions some of their teachings and preaching embodied hate speech which inflamed passion further. This deepened the division already existing. The havoc of ethno-religious conflicts is manifested in the overall backwardness of Nigeria development, as will be portrayed in this work. Immediately after the introduction, is the elucidation of the concepts used, inflammatory language: Inflammatory language, Ethno-religion Violence, Inducement, recommendation and conclusion.

**Clarification of Key words****Inflammatory language**

Inflammatory language in this context refers to angry words spoken orally or published to cause a person or persons become angry. Unguarded utterances, derogatory words, offensive languages, insulting speech and hate speech are all used interchangeably in this work. Lawrence Mute (2014) took cognizance of the variety of usage of the word, when he averred that, “The concept of hate speech is understood and used variously by different people and in different contexts. Typically, inflammatory language is used to demean persons based on their

identity such as race, religion, gender, sexuality, and predispose them to acts of violence. Essentially such languages are outrageous as it asperses others. However, "The irony is that people who usually complain of being insulted by other ethnic groups often use even more hateful words in describing the groups they feel have insulted them" (Jideofor Adibe). Inflammatory language was first used by the foreigners who came to propagate their religion in Nigeria.

The adherents of these religions being faithful soldiers and servants of their master have followed the way of their mentors, who believed that in a short while Nigeria will become their foot stool. To realise this dream of their expatriate coach, various strategies are being employed including inflammatory speech. Consequently, ethno-religious violent has continued to occur without any being held accountable for it. The use of inflammatory language is not limited to any one group rather; it is used consciously or unconsciously by individuals or groups particularly when such person or group want to be distinguished.

Different Christian denominations that worked in Nigeria also used inflammatory language against themselves. For example the Roman Catholic Missionaries included in their catechism the following: "Will a member of the CMS Church enter the kingdom of God? No but even if he will, it will be like one passing through the furnace of fire". In retaliation the CMS called them heathens, because according to them, the RCM are worshipping images.

Both Islam and Christianity had much influence on people in the area where they operated, who are now their foot soldiers that are making a common cause with the local people to expound the faith. In the cause of time they dominated both the political and economic scene; each desiring to take prime position. Soon both of them unleashed rival version of doctrine. Inflammatory language played its best role in this contest. And in the same way they dealt with ATR, they are now dealing with each other.

### **The Genesis of the Matter**

Africans are very religious people; traditional worship was the only form of religious worship in practice before the advent of Islam and Christianity. Of them Asadu (2015: 50) wrote, "There religion is intertwined with their culture; so serious, so important that it is indispensable in their daily life and every human activity revolves around God". The foreign religions penetrated Nigeria through two points, sub-Sahara desert and Atlantic Ocean and had in the first half of the nineteenth century been firmly established in Nigeria. Being missionary religions they began to spread to different places through organised missionary campaign with western and Arabic educations as the most veritable instrument of evangelism. Mosques and churches became the nucleus of religious activities of these foreign religions, wherein converts were indoctrinated. Unfortunately, the converts become more enthusiastic than their mentors and started slandering their kith and kin that are of other faith; this bred rancour between them.

The competitive nature of these foreign religions coupled with their fruitful years of missionary endeavour has resulted in the plurality of opinion witnessed among ethnic groups in Nigeria. Though both foreign religions "Islam and Christianity" originated from Middle East, there are many variations in the doctrine and tradition of both religions. Both religions are believed to be dispensers of peace but have not lived in peace. Always preaching love but have no love for one another. Each claims to be superior to the other. Thus, their theological standpoints which could have adopted traditional values to blend with the community have remained irreconcilable instead. "There are always the underlying fanatically ambitious aim and the determination to convert or wipe out infidels from Nigeria" (Ody 2000).

### **Southern Experience**

Apart from the use of derogatory words such as have been mentioned earlier, the missionaries' messages typified hate speech. For instance, Asadu (2015: 130) captured one of such messages as was preached in Ibagwa-Aka, one of the towns in Southern Nigeria thus,

The Christian missionaries too taught the converts that the death of a Christian is a thing to be celebrated, because the Christian, having died in the faith, would rest in the bosom of the lord Jesus Christ in God's heavenly kingdom forever. On the other hand, those who died in their unbelief (heathens) will go to hell with the devil and there, they will spend eternity in suffering and gnashing of teeth.

Such message never pleased the adherents of African Traditional Religion, who were referred to as heathens that must go to hell. Inflammatory languages, was responsible for the converts utter disregard for the traditional religion. They were also incited by their leaders to destroy the properties of the ATR; such properties include the shrines, altars and other important artifacts. Any resistance from the traditional religion attracted the colonial administration, which also used force against it and destroyed some of its powerful deities. "This premised the first sectarian crisis between the adherents of the foreign religions and the natives" (Asadu 2015).

Traditional religion would have been annihilated but for its dynamism, has continued to exist. The traditionalists, not willing to desert their gods have also continued to dare Christianity, which they refer to as stranger. In bid to protect their religion, they clashed intermittently with the Christians. All their relations who embraced Christianity were seen as deviant to the traditional culture and norms and this created a scenario of

tension and quarrels. Brothers were separated from brothers and friends severed relations with friends (Asadu 2015). Achebe (1958: 24) captured the event thus, “The white man is very clever; he came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers and our clan can no longer act as one. He has put knife on the thing that held us together and we have fallen apart”.

### Northern Experience

In the North a stringent measure was applied to annihilate traditional religion. The adherents of African Traditional Religion were stereotyped *Arna* meaning unbeliever or infidel and *Kafri* meaning worthless or foolishness. Thus, the Fulani Muslims propagandists presented a prejudiced view, of the Hausa ethnic traditional worshippers, and in the course of time their relationship were torn asunder. In 1804, the Fulani ethnic group using religion as basis for their actions, unleash severe attack on the harmonious Hausa ethnic group and eventually subdued them. Commenting on the incident Abiala (1974: 35) quipped, “Unfortunately, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, these fourteen (Hausa) states were forced to quit the political theatre of the West Africa...as a result of the jihad declared and fought by a tribe called the Fulani against the Hausas”

By that incident Fulani and Hausa fused together and became a large political group with Hausa and Islam as their official language and religion respectively. Hence, Buah (1977: 113) stated that “The effect of Jihad in the North West was the subjugation of Hausa tribal groups which transformed into Fulani Empire and a caliphate, with its headquarters at Sokoto”. Thenceforth, the Fulani-Hausa ethnic group carved a niche for themselves as royal princes of the North. From the time the jihadist declared holy war against the *infidel* there has been intermittent ethno-religious violence in the North between the Muslim majority group and the other minority groups in the North. It is not exaggeration to say that they have regarded the other ethnic minority with disdain. The only crime of these minorities that prompted attack on them was that, “their ways of life were not in line with the principles of the religion of Islam” (Usman Doan Fodio cited in Abiola 1974: 36).

The spread of Christianity to the North increased the religious tension as the jihadists now have more than one religion to contend with. Besides, Christianity like Islam is missionary in nature and so it has a similar method of evangelism with Islam. Both religions use teaching and preaching to make converts. There is no gainsaying that some of their teachings and preaching embodied hate speech which inflamed passion further. This deepened the division already existing. Even in one state the distinction between a Muslim ethnic group and a Christian ethnic group is glaringly obvious as they live separately. For example after the Kaduna Shari riot, the Chairman of Kachia local government council Mr. Joseph Kato in an interview with The News Magazine (15/5/2000 p. 29) explained,

Religion is also responsible for the segregated living pattern between Christians and Muslims in Kaduna metropolis. While the Muslim zone is made up of Tudun Wada, Rigasa, Ungwan Mu’azu, Angwan Dasa and Ungwan Sanusi, the Christians dominate areas such as Television, Naranyi, Romi, Angwan Yelwa, Angwan Sunday and Sabon Tasha. And this fractionalisation seriously threatens the fragile peace process as there have been accusations of arms build-up by the various groups.

In his lamentation over the ethno-religious conflict that erupted in his state, the then Kaduna State Governor, Ahmed Makarfi said, “I have come to realise that politics is being mixed with religion, ethnicity with politics and religion, and this has got to stop, otherwise we will all be hijacked to a point that is not the point we had intended to go” (Makarfi in The News Magazine 2000). This division was caused by the colonial master who introduced dichotomy among Nigerian religions and peoples. The colonial master created *sabon-garis* for the Christians (Asadu 2017). Madiebo (1980) has blamed the problem on the divide and rule system of governance introduced by the Britain, which did not allow for integration. Hence he inferred:

Under the normal circumstances, the amalgamation ought to have brought the various people together and provided a firm basis for the arduous task of establishing closer cultural, social religious and linguistic ties among the people which are vital for truly unity. The prevailing circumstances were far from normal for the colonial master, such a union, if allowed to develop, would have amounted to a major threat to the very economic interests he was striving to protect. It was to remove the unwelcome threat that Britain introduced the ‘divide and rule system of governance for the country (p. 3).

Sequel to the completion of Lugard’s first tenure of office in 1906, he left Nigeria for Britain. He was succeeded by Sir Percy Girouard whose government introduced dichotomy among Nigerian religions and peoples. He ordered the separation of the Northern Muslims and the Southern Christians. This led to the creation of *sabon-garis* meaning strangers’ domain (Asadu 2017). From then on, the Southern and indeed Christians were regarded as strangers in the North within the Emirate see. Thus, “from 1911 Christian traders, artisans, mercantile clerks and government staff were allowed into the *Sabon-garis* of the Muslim cities of the North (Ozigbo1990:78)”.

This single act of segregation laid the foundation of religious intolerance in Nigeria. It simply means that two persons of different religious affinity cannot live together in a giving environment. And today, “Nigeria has been severally divided along ethnic and religious lines with each group in biased version for the others. The lack

of acceptance of others makes the unity and strength motto of Nigeria nationality a mere hypocrisy” (Ezeanya 2012 p. 103). Thus, the North became divided along ethnic and religious line.

Meanwhile, the centre of the nation (Middle Belt Region) happened to be last place of missionary campaign. As Christianity was spreading upward from the South, Islamic jihadist from the core north moved downward and both jammed into Middle Belt Region. In their effort to win converts they started clashing seriously. According to Adamu, “The Fulani jihad of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought a new religion, Islam, and a new wave of Hausa/Fulani migrants into the zone. Thus, the Hausa/Fulani ruling dynasties are firmly established in Keffi and Nasarawa in Nasarawa State” (Abdullahi Adamu). Since then, Islam and Christianity have intensified effort to occupy the region, each struggle to outwit the other, thereby making the Middle Belt region a war front. None is ready to soft pedal. Hence, Ene (2014: 49) averred that “Both the Christian and Muslim jihads of the sword negated the biblical and Koranic injunction “Do not kill” and “love for all” (Sura 4. 30 & 4. 36). The Christian slogan of “love to all and malice to no one” echoed by Abraham Lincoln, fell on the deaf ears”. Since then it has been from one problem of ethno-religious conflict to the other. Speaking on this same issue, the former Governor of Nasarawa State, Abdullahi Adamu (2000) quipped,

The bloody clashes in Benue and Taraba states were inter-state and inter-ethnic; those in Plateau (Jos), Nasarawa (southern senatorial zone of the state) and Kaduna states were/are intra-state and inter-ethnic. The crisis in Bauchi was both inter-ethnic and inter-state. There is thus a common characteristic of inter-ethnicity in all these clashes. There is a religious coloration to the clashes in Kaduna and Jos. The religious coloration seeks to mask the underlying fundamental cause or causes of these crises.

While delivering his address at the maiden convocation ceremony of Taraba State University on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2018, former Defence Minister, Gen. T.Y Danjuma, lamented the killings in Taraba and other States in Nigeria particularly in Middle Belt region. He urged indigenes of the affected areas to stop believing that the security forces will protect them but to defend themselves. Such public outcry of ethnic cleansing by former Gen. Danjuma, suffices it that there is a crisis of confidence among Nigerians.

### Regional Hegemony

With the emergence of Fulani and Hausa ethnic groups as one large organised nation in the North, things changed as they dominated the polity for over a century and have treated the minorities indifferently. The fact remains that it was through the influence of the Islamic religion, that the Fulani-Hausa ethnic group established regional hegemony in the North. Gradually, they established political dominance over other ethnic groups particularly with the aids of the Colonial Master. According to Idowu (1973), “One or two things have happened to man’s religion in any given situation: modification with adaptation or extinction”. This is very true of the influences of these imported religions on any culture it interacts with. The arrival of these religions had some disruptive connotations. Agreeing with the above statement Eze (2012: 85) quipped:

Ethnocentric definition of religion has resulted in situations where it is made a handmaiden of political hegemony. To subject a people politically and or economically such a people are first of all intimidated culturally to hate or abandon their religion for that of the rival culture. Once an extraneous power can control another human group religiously they can control such a people in every other sphere of their life’ religion, cultural hegemony and post-colonial social order in Africa.

Islam thrived during the colonial era because the introduction of indirect rule empowered the Emirs to rule the North on behalf of the colonial masters. An opportunity the Emirs maximized for the enlargement their empire. That really gave them the advantage to acquire some degree of consent from the subordinate. “The introduction of indirect rule institutionalised the inferiority status for the non-Muslim peoples of the Middle Belt” (Yusufu Turaki cited in Kuka p. 3). The International Crisis Group Report (2012: 6) captures the vent thus:

British rule empowered the Hausa/Fulani community to subjugate the indigenes, and, by so doing, established the hegemony of the north over the country – which jihad could not have achieve because Islimisation of the Middle Belt had failed. Marginalization and oppression had driven those minorities to embrace Christianity as a tool for political emancipation. Middle Belt Muslims have also complained of treatment as second class citizens by Hausa-Fulani Muslims.

Thus, there have been cases of persecutions, marginalisation and frequent skirmish between the Muslim Fulani-Hausa ethnic group and the Christian ethnic minority groups who the former has stereotyped as *Kabilu* (meaning minority groups or those who have no right). This facts was buttressed by the Vice President of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Rev. Yusufu Turaki (1992) thus,

The Christian in the Northern State, whenever and wherever he is designated as a minority or “*Kabilu*” loses all constitutional rights, whether they are political, social, cultural or religious. The draconian Islamic laws, governmental practices and attitude are being systematically applied to Christians, hence, the loss of their human and religious right.

The effort to abolish any form of colonialism and enthrone nationalism and the struggle to remain status quo is reason for the ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria. The problem Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna, Peter Jataru,

identified the problem of the Middle Belt and by extension the North to include religion, politics and ethnicity. While responding to interview question with Challenge Magazine he said,

As far as I know the remote cause of the crisis is first of all political, secondly religious and thirdly ethnic, although there are attempt to overplay the ethnic factor. It is political because for a long time, the various tribes in Southern Kaduna have been demanding self determination and chiefdoms. A few like Kgoro, Jaba, Maro have succeeded but a great majority are still subjugated to emirs and all attempts to secure their freedom have been resisted even with imprisonment. In Nigeria we condemn apartheid, colonialism and neo-colonialism but why should we practice similar things among ourselves? This is double standard and the attitude of the Emirs and Kaduna State Government is against the principle of justice and fairly. I don't think the crisis will end as long as only cosmetic measures are applied.

As the beneficiaries of the indirect rule, the Emirs desired to remain permanently in control of power; hence they keep the country divided permanently. For a typical Fulani/Hausa indigene Nigeria is divided into two, by two natural occurrences 1, the Rivers Niger/Benue and 2, the religion. The north begins from the confluence upward to the border, with Islam as its Identity. While South began from the confluence down to the sea and is identified with Christianity. It is therefore, not surprise that in 1953, when Nigerians were given opportunity to decide on their future, Northern delegates lead by the Sardauna expressed their opposition to self government. The northern oligarchy has resistance to adhering to the modern system of government. Even in 1956 when the third region (Middle-West) was created in the south, the northern oligarchy refused to create Middle-Belt Region. From that that on there has been rancour.

### **Ethnic Politics and Rancour**

The struggle for the liberation of the Middle Belt from the Fulani-Hausa hegemony is the major reason for the rancour in the North. It is amazing how the two foreign religions are clashing with each other in this region and each of the ethnic group in the North also struggle to establish their independence firmly by claiming authority over their father land and by outright promotion of their unique cultural heritage as a mark of their autonomy from any foreign influence. It is no longer a fight against African Traditional Religion but a show of shame between Christianity and Islam. The matter is exacerbated by the exit of the colonial master who was the final arbiter in the dispute over ethnic and religious divergences.

Sometimes during the Babangida's regime the MAMSER arranged for a meeting for both Christian and Muslim leaders in Kaduna. As lofty as the decisions taken were, it was surprise that government did not care to implement any of them. According to Archbishop Jatau, "This issue of self determination was one of the points raised and we agreed that various peoples should be granted their demand for chiefdoms. Incidentally the president has not called us formally to present the report". The decision would have been implemented if not for the religious connotation. The Archbishop argued that

The crisis is religious for the following reasons, churches were burnt or damaged. If it were not religious why would they go for churches? Secondly, it would also seem that certain religious leaders were targeted and at least three pastors and CAN Secretary was killed. Thirdly if it were not religious why were imams used to call out the faithful for war at awkward time? It is known that some imams called out prayers for war at 11 pm, 3 am, etc. Furthermore some people were stopped and asked what religion they belong to. Even those who claimed Islam had to be able to recite portions of the Quran or they were killed or maimed (Jatau in Challenge Magazine 1992: 14).

The Archbishop concluded by saying, "The crisis is ethnic but this minor and only to the extent that it is linked to minority Hausa elements lording it over the majority indigenes" (p. 15). Thus, ethnic groups that accepted Christianity are perceived as odd one out irrespective of the group's political affiliations. It is clear that such actions are irreligious, uncivilized and devastating, although the perpetrators might have acted in ignorance. The continuous use of derogatory words about other religions in this 21<sup>st</sup> century AD is inhuman; particularly as Nigeria state permits freedom of religion choice.

### **Inflammatory Speeches a Tool for Destabilization**

Inflammatory speech has assumed a greater proportion as each of the religions tries with vigour to outwit the other. Besides, the North is worst hit of the crisis because there is the competition for regional hegemony there. Ironically the oneness which the North pretentiously boasted of is fast being eroded by ethno-religious conflicts. Discrepancies between the two groups are now more pronounced than ever. The effort of the so called majority Muslim group to keep the North one and the struggle of the ethnic minorities to disentangle from the neo-colonization breeds tensions and divisions in the North. Lamenting on the divisiveness of the North Gen. Jerry Useni said:

In the past, Northerners were ahead of the South in terms of governance and administration, but today, the North has been relegated to the background, no one is talking about a unified North anymore, just a community divided along ethnic and religious loyalties. The Southerners also have differences of religion and ethnicity, but it is not a source of conflict there. How did the North get here? Even you journalists know the kind of cordial

relationship that existed in the past. Truth is both sides are at fault. We Northerners have our own fault, and those opposing the North also have their own fault. Did the Southerners plunge us into the crisis we are witnessing today?" many innocent people have been killed today, to the extent that there was an attempt to kill the Emir of Kano, just due to lack of security. Not to talk of the Plateau. One cannot say these crises are as a result of religious differences because it appears to surpass that.

On the contrary to the Northern perception about the oneness of their region, the South from the time of amalgamation never claimed to be one people. The understanding about their ethno-cultural differences informed them that unity can only be achieved in diversity. Hence, every tribe not only had independent leadership but preserved their autonomy from the wider circle; none colonised the other. Though there was cry for marginalization by the ethnic minorities during the colonial rule it was easily resolved. The claim by Northern leaders that the North is all in one in spite of the ethnic and cultural disparity was pretentious. Although its inhabitants adopted Hausa language and bore Islamic name as their identity irrespective of ethnic/religious affiliation, which distinguished them from their southern counterparts; their discrepancies are so glaring. With that sharp distinction the north and the south became deeply suspicious of one another.

Unfortunately, a matter that was originally between North and Southern was recently exacerbated by the sudden rise of deep suspicion in the North among the so called 'majority Muslim groups' and the 'minority Christian groups'. Ironically the oneness which the North pretentiously boasted of is fast being eroded by ethno-religious conflicts. Discrepancies between the two groups are now more pronounced than ever. The effort of the so called majority Muslim group to keep the North one and the struggle of the minorities to disentangle from the neo-colonization breeds tensions and divisions in the North. Gen. Jerry Useni corroborated this fact when he said: Everything now is based on religious on ethnic affiliations. Why won't we continue to suffer? If we had not united ourselves as northerners in the past when some southerners killed our leaders, we wouldn't have overcome. But today, this one say I am a Muslim, the other one will say, I am a Christian. How can we make progress? We cannot progress by calling each other despicable names. Our leaders in the past did not do that".

The calling of despicable names as Useni said could refer to the use of inflammatory language on other groups. This was further elucidated by Yusufu Turaki (1992: 6) thus,

The primary reason why there are frequent religious riots in these Northern States is that some State Governments have refused to implement and protect consistently and faithfully the constitutional rights of every Nigeria citizen under their domain. Rather, these Governments have sided with the strong and powerful sub-national and parochial interests that are increasingly becoming dogmatic and fanatical in denying both religious and cultural rights to those designated as minorities or "Kabilu" within their States.

"Kabilu" is a derogatory term for the minority group in the North. The minority are not happy the way they are treated therefore, each ethnic group in the North is struggling to establish their independence firmly by claiming authority over their father land and by outright promotion of their unique cultural heritage as a mark of their autonomy from Fulani-Hausa dominance.

In the current dispensation media has been awash with public statements from ethnic champions and religious extremist attacking their opponents in the full glare of the nation. Some of the attacks were broadcast live on national television thereby expanding their reach. The 2015 general election saw ethno-religious expression reaching unprecedented levels in the country's recent past. According to Yakassai who was responding to interview on Sunday vanguard 22/4/2018,

Most of the Mosques in the North dedicated their sermons on the Friday before the election, to the way people should vote. They did not mention anybody's name but they told the congregation to vote for people who would protect their religion and culture. When a Muslim and a Christian are contesting and in election, if the people in the mosque are told to vote for those who will protect their religion, will they vote for a Christian?

On the other hand Bishop Isa El bubal of the...while delivering his sermon enjoined Christians to go and get their PVC to vote out Buhari from office. His reason is not farfetched from the fact that this present administration is killing Christians and the government is doing not about it.

Earlier on in 1942, the northern Emirs while responding to UK base West African Student Union who solicited for their support against colonial rule in Nigeria said, "Holding this country together is not possible except by means of the religion of the Prophet. If they want political unity, let them follow our religion" (cited in Awolowo 1947: 51). The fact that since the amalgamation in 1914 till 1947 all Nigerians has not become Muslims made Tafawa Belewa to express his disbelief in Nigerian unity thus, "Since the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Provinces in 1914, Nigeria has existed as one country only on paper.... It is still far from being united; Nigeria's unity is only a British intention for the country" (Belewa 1947 cited in The Guardian 15 August 2017). When eventually self rule was achieved the Saduana of Sokoto Ahmed Bello delivered an inflammatory speech in Parrot Newspaper October 12, 1960 thus,

The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the North as willing tools and the South as a conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and never allow them to have control over their future'.

**Implications**

The cause of ethno-religious violence is traceable to the excesses of both religious and political actors whose manner of behaviour is very raw and uncouth. The menace of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria is fast eroding the core socio-cultural and religious value which forbids murder, covetousness, falsehood etc. It has hampered the economic growth of this country to such a great extent that poverty has engulfed the majority of the citizen. Worst still the mayhems have produced many disabled persons, orphans and widows, it has robbed many, of their comfortable homes, jobs and careers; it has left the citizens with enduring sorrow very hard to contend with (Asadu 2018). Therefore, it is the recommendation of this paper that,

Although every person has freedom of speech, each person should ensure that his freedom does not encroach on another's freedom. False information against any group or any person violates the principle of freedom of speech and when it happens, it should properly redress.

Religious leaders should avoid the use of inflammatory language in their mission campaign for converts. They should equally educate their followers on sermon delivery. This will help reduce the ethno-religious violence in the nation.

To curtail the incessant ethnic and religious violent in the North, the various ethnic minorities who are agitating for self determination should be allowed to have their chiefdoms.

Government should honestly and diligently protect the lives and properties of every Nigerian citizen. Compensations should be paid to the victims of ethno-religious violence while the perpetrators should be punished according to law.

**Conclusion**

While it is not surprise that in multi ethnic and multi- religious nation like Nigeria there could be cultural competitions, religious rivalry and political intrigue, it is quite amazing the heightened tensions caused by the unguarded utterances which certainly inflames the passion on rival group beyond acceptable ethnic and religious contests. This anomaly finds its footing in ethnocentrism and religious bigotry which begets nepotism and internalizes discord. Obviously inflammatory language that intends to degrade, intimidate or incite violence against someone based on political affiliation, religious inclination, race and ethnicity is harmful. The heated contestations are part of the body politic, and the level of damages that has resulted from such competitions is awful. There is no gainsaying the fact that hateful words can all too easily lead to physical attacks on citizens and set off a cycle of violence which level of damages are imaging than experience.



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**Religious Differences and Conflicts In 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

By

**Ehi Eze Augustine Ph.D.**  
**Institute of Foundation Studies**  
**Federal University, Otuoke,**  
**Bayelsa State, Nigeria.**

**Abstract:**

Religion have plays a major role in society worldwide as the history teaches us. Religious different have led to war, violence groups fear, and hostility because there are many similarities exist within different religions and the root of all these conflicts may not be religious whatsoever. However, many religions conflict are caused by religiously illiterate people. Our common future is at stake, if Christian and Muslims are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace. With the terrible weaponry of the modern world, Christian and Muslims intertwined everywhere as never before, and no side can unilaterally win a conflict between more than half of the world inhabitants.

**Keywords: Religions, Differences and Conflicts****Introduction**

It is generally believed that religion has a role to play in bring about peace in conflicts situations and the generality of people are also convened that religion is a factor in conflict generation. Despite the ambiguity with regards to different opinions about religion; the changing situation on both international and local scenes with regards to commitment to the restoration of peace in conflict situation has contributed to enhancing positive attitude with regards to religion as essential fact in building up of the human society. At the dawn of the twenty first century, casual glance at world affairs would suggest that religion is at the core of much of the strife or violence disagreement around the globe often, religion is a contentions issue, where eternal salvation is at stake, compromise can be difficult as or even sinful, religion is also essential because, as a central part of many individuals identity any threat to one's belief is a threat to one's very being.

However, the relationship between religion and conflict is, in fact, a complex one religiously motivated peace builders have played essential roles in addressing many conflicts around the globe. This aspect of religion and conflict may be discussed in the paralleled issue on religion and peace. This issue considers some of the means through which religion can be a source of conflict. Meanwhile, all religion have their accepted dogma, or articles of belief, that followers must accept without question. This can lead to inflexibility and intolerance in the face of other beliefs. Scripture and dogma are often vague and open to interpretation, therefore, conflict can arise over whose interpretation is the correct once, a conflict that ultimately cannot be solved because. There is not arbiter. The winner generally is the interpretation that attracts the most followers and those followers must also be motivated to action. Invariably, the majority of any faith fold moderate views, they are often more complacent, whereas extremists are motivated to bring their interpretation of God's will to fruition.

Religious extremist can contribute to conflict escalation. They see radical measures as necessary to fulfilling Gods wishes fundamentalists of any religion tend to take a Manichean view of the world, if the world is a struggle between good and evil, it is hard to justify compromising with the devil. Any sign of moderation can be decried as selling out more essentially abandoning God's will. However, some groups, such an America New Christian Right and Jama'at-i-Islami of Patristan, have operated largely through constitutional means through still pursue intolerant ends. In circumstances where moderate way are not perceived to have produced results, whether social, political or economic, the populace may turn to extreme interpretations for solutions. Without legitimate mechanisms for religious groups to express their views, they may be more likely to resort to violence. Hizobullah in Lebanon and Human in Palestine have engaged in violence, but they also gained supports through social service work when the government is perceived as doing little for the population Radical Jewish cells in Israel and Hindu nationalists and sikh extremists in India are other example of fundamentalist movements driven by perceived threat to the faith Religious revivalism is powerful in that it can provide a sense of pride and purpose, but in places such as Srilanka and Sudan it has produced a strong form of liberal nationalism that has periodically lid to intolerance and discrimination. Some religions groups, such as the Kach and Kahane Chai

Parties in Israel or Egypt's Islamic Jihad, consider violence to be a duty. Those who call for violence see themselves as divinely directed and therefore obstacle must be eliminated.

Many religions also have significant strain of evangelism, which can be conflictual. Believers are called upon to spread the word of God and increase the numbers of the flock. For instance, the effort to impose Christianity on subject people was an essential part of the conflict surrounding European colonization. Similarly, a group may seek to deny other religions the opportunity to practice their faith. In part, this is out of a desire to minimize belief the dominant group feels to be interior or dangerous. Suppression of Christianity in China and the Sudan are but two contemporary examples. In the case of China, it is not a conflict between religions but rather the government views religion as a dangerous rival for citizens loyalties. All of these instances derive from a lack of respect for other faith.

Religious fundamentalist are primarily driven by displeasure with modernity. Motivated by the marginalization of religion in modern society, they act to restore faith to a central place. There is need for purification of religions in the eyes of fundamentalists. Recently cultural globalization has in part become shorthand for this trend. The spread of Western materialism is often blamed for increases in gambling, alcoholism, and loose morals in general. Al-Qaeda, for instance claims it is motivated by this neo-imperialism as well as the presence of foreign military forces in the Muslim holy lands.

The liberal underpinning of Western Culture is also threatening to tradition in prioritizing the individual over the group, and by questioning the appropriate role for women in society. However, the growth of the New Christian Right in the United State indicate that Westerners too feed that modern society is missing something conflict over abortion and the teaching of evolution in school are but two examples of issues where some groups feel religious tradition has been abandoned.

Religious nationalists trend to view their religious tradition as so closely led to their nation or their land that any threat to one of these is a threat to one's existence. Therefore, religious nationalists response to threats to the religion by seeking a political entity in which their faith is privileged at the expense others. In these conflicts, it is likely that religious symbols will come to be used to forward ethnic or nationalist causes. This has been the case for Catholics in Northern Ireland, the Serbian Orthodox church in Milosevic's Yugoslavia and Hindu nationalists in India. The global media has paid significant attention to religion and conflict, but not the ways in which religion has been played a powerful peacemaking role.

This excessive emphasis on the negative side of religion and the action of religious extremists generates interfaith fear and hostility. What is more, media portrayals of religion conflict have tended to do so in such a way so as to confuse rather than inform. It does so by misunderstanding goals and alliance between groups thereby exacerbating polarization. The tendency to carelessly throw around the terms fundamentalist and extremists masks significant different in beliefs, goals and tactics.

#### **Statement of Problem**

1. Creating a positive out of religious differences is one of the most essential things couples from different religious backgrounds need to learn is how to deal with their issues of religious differences. If not properly managed, religious differences can become a source of conflicts and tension within the relationship. But if properly managed, religious difference can be a catalyst for growth.
2. The potential benefits of having religious differences makes couples often found that the experience strengthened their own spirituality a genuine exploration of each others faith can lead individual to examine their own beliefs more closely. After admitting that trend to prove his partner or wife's beliefs were wrong but Joseph reflected, "not only did I learn that I do not have all the answer, but I leaned to start to find out what I really believed. There was a tendency to just assume that I knew what I believe. But when you have not somebody on the other side saying 'why do you believe that? No one's ever asked you that question before. It kind of forces one to go back and starting asking, why do we all believe that<sup>2</sup>', so I think one need to grow in faith when you are challenged like that. I also think that my faith is deeper than others because I was forced to look at what I believed.
3. The society should learns about the similarities and differences of all religious starting at a young age, it could decrease the amount of conflict worldwide. People from different religious backgrounds all the world can come together to support this movements let's not limit our children to lean about religious through what is taught in the home. Not all religious are the same, however, they all attempt

to answer similar questions about how to live life communicate with the divine or sacred and behave in harmony with nature and others.

4. To promote a heightened awareness of the positive peace building and reconciliatory role has played in many conflict situations.

### Objective

- ❖ The main purpose of religious differences and conflict in 21<sup>st</sup> Twenty-First Century is peace building and mediation is premised on the homogenous nature of traditional society therefore, our discussion is base on what used to be the birth of contemporary society.
- ❖ The sources of conflict in our traditional societies especially in African is economy, Economically, African societies have. Their means of survival because they embark on farming and trading. They own also economic trees and rear domestic animals. Therefore, any attempt by individual or community to encroach on then land could lead to serious conflict learn may also lead to conflict, and also territory or treble imbalance, non-payment of loan may also lead to conflict do to our style for instance conflict between hard men and farmers has become a prevalent situation in Nigeria.
- ❖ The breakdown of diplomatic relations can also lead to inter-communal conflict due to the issues based on leadership tussle and economic relationships.
- ❖ Chieftaincy tussles is common among African societies struggle over the mantle of leadership. The tussle for throne could lead to a serious conflict because major causes of chieftaincy affair are traced from tussle to the throne, misapplication of customs and tradition. Conflict can also ignited from impeachment of chief or dethronement.
- ❖ In African traditional societies, religion is one of the centre because the respect for the supernatural beings may not be taken for granted because any breach of sacred sanction could led to conflict. There are taboos in our community which we have committed by individual and relate the issues to cause conflict. Assault on personality can go to extreme to project his ego because such personality might extend his family relations conflict.
- ❖ The breach of culture in some community can cause conflict especially during of the period of festival, which depends on some communities.

### Methodology

The method we are using is empirical because we need to use different approaches. Variations may occur in conflict involving property, land, family, marriage as well as communities. The method of performing conflict resolution in the traditional African societies are as follows:

Mediation is a method of conflict resolution that has been so critical to traditional society because it involves moncoercive intervention of the mediators called third party their roles is to ensure that peace reigned among the conflict parties, and the entire society. The elders mostly play the role of the mediators since they are considered to have wisdom, knowledge and experience. They are truth worthy and their roles including pressurizing making recommendations, giving assessments, conveying suggestion on behalf of the parties, emphasizing relevant norms and rules, envisaging the situation if agreement is not reached or repeating of the agreement always reached. Secondly, there is what is called adjudication which involves bringing all the conflicting parties together for dialogue. This is held at family head, palace court, village square or an often place or hut. Where boundary dispute between individuals family, clans or villages is the issues, the boundary in contention could be the venue of the meeting. Those that have religious and spiritual dimensions, and may require ancestral shrine. Thirdly reconciliation is the end product of adjudication which the conflicting parties are encouraged to settle their difference and peace will reign among them. To seal the reconciliation among the conflicting parties, there will be a feast to ensure that they reach a conclusive end. Fourthly, there will be a negotiation in a sacred place to harmonize the interest of the parties concerned. This approach lays emphasis on the recuperation and reinsertion of errant member back into its place in society, finally, we have arbitration which is the least used of resolution method in African traditional societies the reconciliation functions is practiced by an authority figure that mediates between conflicting parties but in empowered to make binding judgments. The purpose is not to render a judgment in law but to reconcile the conflicting parties and its norms. The relationship between the authority and the community is cushioned by community representation who advice the authorities.

### Recommendation

- ❖ The professionals in conflict resolution should embark on empirical research to ascertain the differential method that can be used to resolve conflict and to ascertain the extent of success and failure of their difference.
- ❖ There is need to source for data to document the conflict to enhance a free societies of our. This will help to provide avenue to understand and interpret the nature of the conflicts and management strategies in resolving the future generation.
- ❖ There is also to take into consideration the social, political religion, economic and ideological issues in finding out the right channel or approach to apply for resolving religious differences and conflict in our societies.
- ❖ There should be an urgent need to revivify the fundamental aspect of our societal cultural situation, in a bird to identify those that can be sustained for enhancing conflicts resolution in our societies.

### Conclusion

However, the survival of the world is at stake of Muslims and Christian cannot make peace with each other, like as Islamic scholars have told the pope. Other Christian leaders and prominent Muslims scholars from every sect of Islam urged Christian leaders to come together with us on the common essentials of our two religions spelling out their similarities between the Bible and the Quar'an. As Muslims, said to Christian that we are not against them and that Islam is not against them, so long as they so not wage war against Muslims on the account of their religion, oppress them and drive them out of their home.

Therefore, the call should no be taken place by Christian and Muslim at all level and in all countries so that both side shall endeavour to do their part in working for the righteousness which the letter proclaims as our common goal.

A common word conceded with end of Ramadam, the Muslim, holy month of fasting and came days after the vaticans official Eid message which urged the Muslims to respect people of all faiths and not excluded their on the ground of religious race or any other personal characteristic. Meanwhile, without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world, the future of the world depend son peace between Christians and muslims. Therefore the Unity of God, is the necessity of love for Him and the common ground between Islam and Christianity.

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**Understanding the concept of Law in Matthew 5:17-20 and Its Implication to Nigerian Christians**

By  
Prof E.A Ituma  
&  
Obetta Hyacinth Chikelu

**INTRODUCTION**

The virtue of righteousness is preached by every religion of the world. Christianity, one of the major religion in Nigeria is not an exception. It is expected of every active citizen of any nation to be righteous in their endeavours to ensure a better living. It is obvious that if someone abides or acts in line with the norms of a given society; the person is righteous in this context. As Christians, the rules and regulations for a better living is enshrined in the Holy Bible. However, righteousness for Christians is guaranteed through the constant effort towards obedience to the dictates of the Bible. Thus, Wescott & Hort (2015,p.17) explained righteousness as being “just; accordant to the divine law. Applied to persons, it denotes one who is holy in heart, and observant of the divine commands in practice; as a righteous man. Applied to things, it denotes consonance to the divine will or to justice; as a righteous act”. It can be inferred from this that human beings can attain righteousness by adhering and obeying the code of conduct in faithfulness which can be specified strictly by different religions. So Christian’s own code of conduct which is embedded in the Holy Bible was laid under the covenantal agreement by God. In other words, righteousness is a right attitude of being faithful to a contractual agreement.

The Greek word δικαιοσυνη translated in English as Righteousness is a very important concept in the Gospel of Matthew. Among the Gospel writers, Matthew alone shows a greater interest in the concept of righteousness. However, this does not imply that the Greek word δικαιος which literally means “upright, righteous, just, good or proper” is not found in the Gospels (Onwu, 2006). Though a derivative of δικαιος, the meaning of δικαιοσυνη and δικαιος are not always the same. The context in which these two Greek words (δικαιος and δικαιοσυνη) appear gives definition to their meanings. An important Matthean text which captured the interest is Mtt 5:20. This is because Mtt5:20 deals with righteousness. Righteousness (δικαιοσυνη), though in its simplest definition carries the idea of being in accordance with what God requires, is used in Mtt 5:20 in a comprehensive sense which denotes what Christian behaviours that are in accordance with God’s standard. Aspects of these behaviours include mercy, non-retaliation, forgiveness, justice, love, charity etc. The above understanding rightly applied, shows that righteousness in Mtt5:20 deals with Christian morality. In other words, Ziesler, (2009,p.18) opines that “righteousness in Mtt 5:20 is understood to “refer to high moral conducts expected of Jesus’ disciples (Christians)”

Nigeria as a nation has suffered so much from pandemic state of imbalance when her Christian morality is weighed in the light of numerous Christian denominations and activities over the fifty year of her existence as a nation. The quest for morality from scriptural perspective became imperative in view of the moral afflatus and potency inherent in it. The periscope of Matthew Gospel, Chapter 5 verse 20 fits appropriately into the Nigerian situation as it beams out the light of the Lord Jesus’ teaching on righteousness (Pentecost,2008)

This research work employs a historical critical method of biblical studies with emphasis on redaction criticism as modern method of biblical scholarship in the research. This piece of work has exegetically x-rayed on the text and tends to apply its lessons to Nigerian Christians which in the long run would to a great extent curb the high level of corruption as well as low morality in Nigeria.

**THE SETTING OF MATTHEW 5:20.**

Mtt.5:20 belongs to a section of Matthew’s Gospel called the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is a part of Matthew’s first major discourse. The Sermon on the Mount is the longest piece of Jesus’ teaching in the New Testament. It occupies chapters 5, 6 and 7 of Matthew’s Gospel. To a lot of scholars, the Sermon on the Mount contains the central tenets of Christian discipleship. Equally, some scholars consider the Sermon on the Mount a replica of the Sinai Law in the Pentateuch ( Ngele and Uwaegbute, 2012).

This view may have stemmed from a radical re-interpretation of the Old Testament law in light of a higher righteousness in the Sermon on the Mount. In relation to the above, the *sitz im leben* of Mtt 5:20 should be understood from the historical perspective of the definition and practice of righteousness in the rabbinic (Scribal Law). The rabbinic definition of righteousness was already an accepted standard for the practices of righteousness in Jesus’ time. But the rabbinic definition and practice of righteousness is outward (Mtt 23:5-7), hypocritical(Mtt 23:1-4) and, neglects the weightier matters of the law (Mtt 23:23-24). It is therefore superficial, external and inadequate. It is against the inadequacies of such definition and practice of the Scribes and Pharisees that Jesus spoke in Mt 5:20. As seen Mtt.5:1-2, the setting of the sermon was on a mount

(Bruce,2003). The audience of Jesus was his disciples. The sermon was directed to the disciples because they are an integral part of Jesus' ministry and therefore, should know the true demands of Kingdom and Christian discipleship. The above is certainly why the Sermon on the Mount contains three important texts. In these texts, Jesus showed an irrevocable relationship between δικαιοσύνη and the kingdom of God. In the light of the above points, it could be deduced that there is a decline in Christian morality in Nigeria.

### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Righteousness is a comprehensive term which refers to morality (behaviours) expected from Jesus' disciples (All Christians). It is a demand and not a plea from God. In Mtt 5:20, though the scribes and Pharisees have high rate of morality in accordance to the obedience to the mosaic laws, the nature of righteousness demanded by Jesus from his disciples (Christians) and the type practiced by the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' contemporaries are not identical. The righteousness demanded by Jesus from the disciples (Christians) as a requirement of inheriting the kingdom of Heaven is both qualitative and quantitative; inward and outward exhibition of righteousness through total obedience to the Word of God. This is why such righteousness must exceed, must be more in abundance and must excel more than that practiced by the scribes and Pharisees of our time. It is only on the basis of such a qualitative and quantitative righteousness are Jesus' disciples (Christians) accepted in the Kingdom of heaven (God).

Immorality is deeply rooted in Nigerian citizens. What is seen in adult is also seen in both youth and children. Secession and disintegration of various kind are seen among families, groups, institutions and organization as a result of the unforgiving nature or attitude of some human beings. There is a decline in Christian morality in contemporary Nigerian Christianity. Sexual immorality, fraud and criminality, injustice, poor Christian giving (charity), unforgiving spirit and low regard for Christian love are becoming worrisome in the church in Nigeria. Little wonder the fact that churches increase while morality declines in Nigeria in all ramification. Righteousness is an injunction to all Christians, which Nigerian Christians are not excluded, but the fact remains that not only that Nigerian Christians no longer exhibit righteous attitudes in line with this injunction but they have gone to the extent of discouraging the little who wish to live accordingly through so many ill practices.

### TEXTUAL EXEGESIS AND CRITICAL COMMENTARY OF MTTHEW 5:20,

Mtt 5:20 in original Greek Text: λεγω γαρ υμιν οτι εαν μη περισσευση υμων η δικαιοσυνη πλειον των γραμματεων και φαρισαιων ου μη εισελθητε εις βασιλειαν των ουρανων (Kurt Alland et al. (1993),.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION:** For I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds more of that of the scribes and Pharisees you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Typical of Jesus authoritative teaching, his emphatic λεγω γαρ υμιν: (for I say to you) here, shows authority in his words. Kurt Alland et al. (1993), has rightly pointed out that the phrase (for I say to you) shows Jesus' personal authority to interpret the law. Λεγω is a Greek verb which is used in the first person indicative active singular sense here. It means "I say". υμιν (to you) is in the infinitive active sense of the Greek Personal pronoun υμεις (humeis). υμιν as used here refers to the disciples of Jesus οτι εαν μη περισσευση : (Hoti ean mē perisseuse) οτι 'that' is a Greek conjunction and it performs the function of a conjunction here. εαν is equally a Greek conjunction meaning "unless".

Περισσευση is in the third person oarist sense of the Greek verb περισσεω.περισσεω as Kurt Alland et al say means "to suprerabound, to exceed, to overflow, to be better off, to be in excess or to excel". Understood from the above sense,περισσευση here carries the idea of exceeding the requirement, of overflowing, of excelling, of abundance and, of being in excess. It therefore denotes the act of exceeding a certain number of measure or above a certain number of measures (Dietrich, 2015).

υμων η δικαιοσυνη πλειον:( Humōn hē dikaiosune pleion) υμων 'your' is in the genitivesense of the Greek personal pronoun υμεις (you). υμων, used in this context, denotes the fact that the dikaiosunē of Matt 5:20 is a "demand and a requirement" expected of Jesus disciples and Christians as well. This, to a very large extent punctures any contrary view which understands dikaiosunē here as a gift from God to man rather than a demand upon man.

In the above regards, Benno Przyblyski has rightly noted that Matt 5:20 points to the fact that "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees is not sufficient enough to enter the kingdom of heaven" This therefore cast a doubt on any view that their (scribes and Pharisee) righteousness is a gift from God. Przyblyski's view makes a lot of sense. This is because in Mtt 5:20 Jesus drew a comparison between two kinds of δικαιοσυνη; the δικαιοσυνη of the scribes and Pharisees and that expected of Jesus' disciples. Consequently, if δικαιοσυνη is to be understood as a gift from God then, this meaning must apply both to the two kinds of δικαιοσυνη Jesus referred to in Mtt 5:20. But this view is not right. Jesus contrasted two kinds of δικαιοσυνη here in terms of demand placed



on the disciples who its definition is different from that practiced by the scribes and Pharisees. Δικαιοσύνη itself is a feminine Greek noun used here in the nominative sense. Alland et al say δικαιοσύνη denotes “What is right; righteousness; uprightness; justice;righting wrong; religious duties; acts of charity and love”. With particular reference to Matthew’s understanding of δικαιοσύνη, E.N. Onwu further identifies other aspects of it which include “non-retaliation, faithfulness, mercy, forgiveness, purity of heart and motive ...”. The totality of the above identified aspects of δικαιοσύνη, which E.N Onwu calls “ the whole gamut of Christian behaviours” is summed up in δικαιοσύνη of Matt5:20 This means that the δικαιοσύνη of Matt5:20 is used in a comprehensive sense which denotes what Christian morality entails. That δικαιοσύνη in Mtt5:20 refers to the totality of Christian morality is corroborated by Fredrick Craddock who wrote “that the δικαιοσύνη of Mtt5:20 deals with high moral conducts expected of Christians” Equally, Ziesler (1963) states clearly that:“δικαιοσύνη of Mtt 5:20deals exclusively with Christian morality”. These scholarly views support the fact that the δικαιοσύνη of Mtt 5:20 deals with Christian morality, that is, what behaviours that are expected of Christians as followers of Jesus. The above pointed out is further given support by the fact that most of the meanings of δικαιοσύνη as shown by Kurt Alland et al and (Onwu,2006) was defined by Jesus in the antitheses(Mtt5:21-48). These include murder/anger, adultery/lust, swearing/vows, charity (Christian giving),revenge/retaliation, love (for enemies) and religious activities for show. (Ngele and Uwaegbute2012).

These all border on right Christian morality (behaviours) that God demands from Christians. Therefore, as already pointed out above, δικαιοσύνη of Matt5:20 denotes the totality of what Christian morality which denotes what Christian morality entails. The Greek adjective πλεον is in neuter accusative singular case. It means “more”. It is used in comparative sense as it appears in its context here. πλεον taken together with υμων which is in genitive sense and περισσευση, indicate that dikaiosunē of Mtt 5:20 should be understood both in a qualitative and quantitative sense. Lexically, understanding the δικαιοσύνη of Mtt 5:20 in the above sense cannot be overlooked. As Mtt 5:20 shows, Jesus demands a δικαιοσύνη that is better off in quality. Hence why the disciples’ δικαιοσύνη must exceed the requirement, must be better off, must super abound or be in excess, if they ever hope of entering the kingdom of heaven (God). Likewise, such a δικαιοσύνη must equally be more in quantity.

#### **WHAT JESUS MEANT BY THE INJECTION IN MATTHEW 5:20**

To be righteous, in biblical language, is to be right or pleasing to God. Pleasing God involves keeping His Laws. Many Christians today insist that the righteousness which this verse refers to is the righteousness of Christ which clothes every believer by imputation. These will frequently also insist that since Christ has fulfilled or kept the Law on their behalf, there is no more need to keep the Law. It is true that because Christians are imputed with the righteousness of Christ, they are seen by God as having a complete cum required righteousness thus far which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. However, it is hardly possible that this is what Christ is referring to (Gundry, 2011). The context of His statement suggests that He is referring to actual keeping of the commandments of God. He says, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, no little shall in no way pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Mt 5:17-18). Two different Greek words are translated “fulfill” in these two verses. The first “fulfill” translates the Greek plēroō, which means “to make full” or “to complete.” Christ fulfilled the Law in the sense that He gave it its full meaning. In so far as the ceremonial laws, He is the substance or anti-type of what they are, as shadows and types, pointed to. In so far as the moral laws, Christ came to obey them perfectly. The second “fulfill” (fulfilled) translates the Greek ginomai which means “bring to pass” or “accomplished.” In other words, Christ was saying that, no part of the Law will be abolished until the purpose of their existence is accomplished or fulfilled. In so far as the ceremonial laws, we may say that their purpose has been fulfilled, but this is not so in the case of the moral laws. The purpose of the moral law, to reflect the character of God and to reveal God’s will for man, still stands. This is why the Lord says “He did not come to destroy the Law”. This is why He adds, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:19). The word “break” translates the Greek luō, which may also be rendered “loosen” or “relaxes.” In other words, the demands of the Law remain unchanged. Christ is especially referring to the Moral Commandments. He makes it clear by proceeding to expound the commandments (vv. 21-48).

#### **CHRISTIAN MORALITY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY**

Christian morality deals with what right behaviours are expected of Christians as defined by biblical teachings. This means that the morality of Christians comes, necessarily, from the Bible. It declares what is right and wrong for Christians in the sight of God.

Righteousness in Mtt 5:20, defines how Christians are to behave. Evidently, Christianity has grown and is still growing in Nigeria. The people who make up the members of the church in Nigeria are Christians. As early as

1975, O. U. Kalu had pointed out the high growth of Christianity in Nigeria. According to him, “every nook and cranny of Nigeria is endowed with a couple or more churches, poised like pubs on London Streets”

However, despite the high growth of Christianity in Nigeria, the problems of sexual immorality, corruption of all kinds, revengeful acts, injustice, religious activities for show, low regard for Christian love, poor Christian giving (charity), litigation etc. have all become worrisome in contemporary Nigerian Christianity. These behaviours are not only at variance with the righteousness of Mtt.5:20 but, is an indication that Christian morality is on decline in contemporary Nigerian Christianity. The aim of this seminar paper is to use the biblical lens of Mtt 5:20, through exegetical method, to understand the meaning of righteousness. This understanding will be helpful in discussing what implication righteousness (in Mtt 5:20) has for Christian morality in Nigeria.

### **RIGHTEOUS LIVING IS A COMMAND NOT A PLEA TO CHRISTIANS.**

So then, it is clear that Christ is not speaking about imputed righteousness in verse 20. Rather, He is teaching that if Believers are to enter the kingdom of God, they must obey the Word of God more than the scribes and Pharisees. Two questions immediately come to mind. Firstly, is Jesus then teaching salvation by keeping the Law? Secondly, how is this possible? Were not the Pharisees and scribes scrupulous in keeping the Law? To the first question, we must answer with an emphatic “no.” Christ teaches clearly that salvation is by grace through faith (e.g., Jn 3:16, 36; 6:37, 44; etc.). To the second question, one must note that there are such things as weightier and minor aspects of keeping the Law. The scribes and Pharisees were scrupulous in tithing, for example, and the Lord commended them for doing so. But at the same time, He charged them for ignoring the weightier matters of the Law: judgment, mercy, faith, and love of God (Mt 23:23; Lk 11:42). In other words, telling the disciples that their righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, the Lord is enjoining them to keep the Commandments of God, not only in the letter or externally, which the Pharisees and scribes were adept at, but also in the spirit or internally. Paul is referring to the internal, spiritual demands of the Law when he says “We know that the law is spiritual” (Rom 7:14). An unregenerate, unjustified person may keep the letter of the law, but only a born-again and justified person has the disposition to keep not only the letter of the law but the spirit of the law. In a sense, Christ was pointing out one of the marks of genuine believer, namely, that he will keep the Law of God with an attitude of love and gratitude rather than with a hypocritical attitude of showmanship.

### **MATTHEW 5:20 AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ANTITHESES (MTT 5:21-48)**

Some scholars argue that Mtt 5:20 should be regarded as a heading for Matt 5:21-48. These scholars argue strongly that since the examples of higher righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) are given by Jesus in Mtt 5:21-48, Mtt 5:20 is definitely a heading for Mtt 5:21-48. Mtt 5:21-48 is better referred to as the “antitheses” of Matthew’s Gospel. These texts (5:21-48) are called the antitheses because of the way Jesus contrasted some demands of the Old Testament law and that of higher righteousness (δικαιοσύνη). There is no unanimous agreement by scholars on if the antitheses represent a new law or, are-interpretation of the Old Testament law. Scholars like G.Barth, D.W. Davies, E.N. Onwu, H.L. Ellision, B. Przybylski, J.D. Pentecost, and F.B. Craddock strongly argue that the antitheses represent a re-interpretation of the old law. Scholars like Bornkamm, Strecker, Windisch, and Bonheffer, (R.H.Gundry, 2011) understand the antitheses as a new law. The question of whether the antitheses represent either a new law or a re-interpretation of the old law must be answered in line with how Matthew understood them. It seems Matthew understood the antitheses as a re-interpretation of the old law. Although a number of points in Matt 5:17-19 present a lot of difficulties to understand, but Matthew presents Jesus as saying here that “he did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it”.

The above text shows that Jesus did not intend to discard the old law and establish a new law but to give it a better interpretation. Seen in the above light, it can be understood why the lexical structure of the antitheses always begin with a particular Jesus phrase: “You heard it was said of the old (law)”. This phrase is also contrasted by Jesus with another saying: “But I say to you” which is a way of reinterpreting the old law. In addition to the above point, Benno Przybylski has pointed out that Matthew applied the rabbinic principle of making a fence around the torah in Matt 5:21-48 in order to prevent it (Torah) from being broken. Przybylski cites Moore who explains this principle as “ahumeinitic principle used to protect the law by surrounding it with precaution rules ...”

In the above regards, Przybylski believes that Matthew’s Jesus applied this principle to protect the old law by giving it a more perfect interpretation. This does not only prevent a person from breaking the law but, is a more perfect fulfillment of the law. Thus, though Matthew’s Jesus applied this rabbinic principle, Jesus’ reinterpretation emphasized the positive requirement of the law (Josephus, 2004).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Church in Nigeria should take a huge interest in assisting her poor members; rather than the contemporary situation where Christian leaders and aristocratic privileged members heap up wealth for either themselves or

their families. The researcher share in the view that the current trend in Nigeria where General Overseers of Churches spend the funds contributed by poor peasant farmers/traders in their denominations for the purchase of private jets should be shelved as it amount to abating corruption. Since Christian love is a huge aspect of δικαιοσύνη of Mtt 5:20, it is recommended here that Christians in Nigeria should make Christian love reign in the church in Nigeria. Injustice should be discouraged in the church in Nigeria. Nigerian Christians should always be forgiving, merciful, non retaliatory and charitable. All these are huge aspects of δικαιοσύνη. Immoral behaviors as well as corruption of all kinds in high and low places should be shunned by Nigerian Christians. As shown in the exegesis of Mtt 5:20, a Christian's entry into the kingdom of heaven (God) is highly dependent on his/her relationship with Christ and fellow Christians as well as his/her Christian morality.

## CONCLUSION

This research work focused on understanding δικαιοσύνη of Mtt 5:20. It is found in the course of exegesis of the periscope of Mtt 5:20 that, aspects of δικαιοσύνη here include, uprightness, forgiveness, justice, righting wrongs and among others. Hence, God demands that Christians live good Christian moral lives. In contrast to the above, it was pointed out in this paper that there is a decline in Christian morality in contemporary Nigerian Christian. Sexual immorality, fraud and criminality, injustice, poor Christian giving (charity), unforgiving spirit and low regard for Christian love are becoming worrisome in the church in Nigeria. Little wonder the fact that churches increase while morality declines in Nigeria in all ramifications. On the basis of the above, the implication of the

δικαιοσύνη of Mtt 5:20 cannot be overlooked, it challenges Nigerian Christians to fulfill God's demand in order to live good moral lives. This is because, on the basis of high Christian morality of Nigerian Christians, will they be accepted into the kingdom of heaven.

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**Business Mandate In The Parable Of The Minas (Luke 19:11-27) And The Response Of The Church In Nigeria**

By

**Ituma, Ezichi Anya Phd**

Associate Professor

Department of Religion &amp; Cultural Studies

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

[ezichi.ituma@unn.edu.ng](mailto:ezichi.ituma@unn.edu.ng)

+234 (0)806 3465010

&amp;

**Ogidi, Chiemezie N.**

Department of Religion &amp; Cultural Studies

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

[chiemezieogidi@gmail.com](mailto:chiemezieogidi@gmail.com)

+234 (0)703 914 7698

**Abstract**

Business mandate is a concept that emerged in the parable of the minas, a story Jesus narrated on his final journey to Jerusalem. As Jesus was approaching Jerusalem in what would be his last Passover, the expectations of his disciples were raised because they thought the kingdom of God would immediately appear, having concluded that Jerusalem must be the seat of his kingdom. Immediately, Jesus told the parable of the minas in order to checkmate and rectify their mistaken notion. Jesus implied that the kingdom would not come until a future time. Until then, the servants must prove themselves faithful to the task their master had assigned to them hence, *pragmateusasthē* (do business until I come). Today, the Church as an agent of the kingdom of God on earth has lost touch with this divine business assignment. The many backward trends that hamper genuine development in Nigeria form a strong testament that the Church is no longer a role player or at best, has lost concentration in contributing to decent societal formation. There is therefore an urgent need to refocus the Church in Nigeria to engage those tasks that will deliver the dividends of the kingdom of God to mankind. This could be achieved by appropriate understanding and application of the biblical business concept. Being a biblical research, this work employed critical exegetical disciplines such as form criticism and philological criticism. This work identified the gospel and the Holy Spirit as the peculiar minas received by every Christian faithful at the point of conversion. If both are engaged in daily social interactions, the result will be evangelism and social actions that are capable of bringing sanity and sound development in the polity.

**Introduction**

The parable of the minas recorded in the gospel of Luke was told by Jesus as he was making his final journey to Jerusalem with his disciples for the feast of Passover. According to Wiersbe (1989), "Passover season was always an emotionally charged time for the Jews, because it reminded them of their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt." He further pointed out that "this annual celebration aggravated the misery of their bondage to Rome and made them yearn all the more for a deliverer." They earnestly desired that God would fulfil the Old Testament prophecies and send them their promised King.

As Jesus was approaching Jerusalem in what would be his last Passover, the expectations of his disciples were raised because they thought the kingdom of God would immediately appear. According to Henry (2012), they concluded that "Jerusalem must be the seat of his kingdom, and therefore, now he is going directly there, they doubt not but in a little time to see him upon the throne there." He added that even the Pharisees expected the appearance of the kingdom of God about the same period. Unfortunately, both had an erroneous notion of it which made Jesus to set out the parable of the minas in order to checkmate and rectify their mistaken opinion.

In the parable, each of the ten servants received a mina (an amount of money equal to three months' wages for a labourer) from their noble master and were instructed to "do business" or "trade with it" (*pragmateusasthē*) until the master returns. Hornby (2005, 2017) had defined business in this sense as "something that concerns a particular person or organization" or "important matters that need to be dealt with or discussed." Particularly, it

is “the principal activity in your life that you do to earn money.” Therefore, business is that result-oriented activity that assumes prominence over and above other matters in a given entity.

Upon the nobleman’s return, the servants were rewarded in proportion to their individual profits. Jesus explained that the kingdom would not come until a future time. Until then, the servants must prove themselves faithful to the task their master had assigned to them. Actually, he designed them to be men of business, faithfully earning profits for their master and his kingdom.

A principal feature of the parable of the minas was the command to do business with the money given to the servants by the master. Being a figurative story, some scholars are of the opinion that the parable is about Christ and his disciples, ascension, Parousia, etc. They believed that Jesus told the parable to convey a divine truth to his disciples on what should be their preoccupation in his absence. For instance, Finley (seekersofchrist.org) had argued that “the journey of the nobleman into a far country to receive a kingdom for himself and to return (Lk. 19:12,15) speaks of Christ’s going away to heaven at his ascension and his return at the time when he comes again. He further argued that:

The nobleman’s entrustment of his possessions to his servants while he is away on his journey represents Christ’s gifts given to the believers in his Church in anticipation of them producing a spiritual ‘profit’ for him in the kingdom of God. While he is away, he expects his believers to “do business with this until I come back” (Lk. 19:13).

Also, Calvin (2005) believed that in this parable, Christ expressed nothing more than his long absence, the on-going interval between his ascension and the Parousia. He warned that it would be highly improper for the servants to sit down in idleness and do no good; “for each has a mina, a certain office entrusted to him, in which he ought to be employed, and, therefore, they ought to be diligent in trading, that they may be profitable in their Lord’s business.”

The nobleman in the parable gave each of his servants a mina and ordered them to do business with it which demands they engage themselves in those activities that will yield the required result. Although the business was not specified, it was clear that the mina must be put to work and profit must be earned. The Church has the mandate to propagate kingdom values and cultures because, according to Ladd (1964), the kingdom of God and the Church are inseparably related. He explained that the kingdom creates the Church and the Church bears witness to the kingdom. Ituma (2009) buttressed the argument when he stated that “it was not a mistake that Jesus preached the kingdom and the Church emerged. The Church emerged to emerge the kingdom of God” with a business mandate to fulfil. In conformity with these assertions, Ibeneme (2012) noted that “Christianity is the greatest single force that influences the minds of men for creative, productive, individual and positive accomplishment.” Today, these accomplishments seem to be fading away since materialism and commercialization has become the order of the Church. It appears that the modern pastor interprets *pragmateusathe* as money-making. The contemporary Church no longer thinks of what it should give to the society but what the society should give to it. In other words, the Church is fast becoming a “receiving Church” rather than being a “giving Church.” These days, Churches no longer build hospitals. A few that try to build schools charge very high fees that only the children of very rich parents can afford. It therefore became the burden of this research to discover from the biblical text the principal business activity of the Church vis-à-vis the significance of the mina to the Christian. Apart from the need to identify the component of the Church’s business mandate, the problem of distraction caused by endless predictions of the Parousia was also highlighted. Form critical method, being a sub-discipline of historical criticism was used to penetrate beyond the gospel tradition in order to determine the previous historical conditions surrounding the text pericope so as to further determine its *sitz im leben*. It sought to discover the origins and history of the material, in this case, the parable, and to explain how the original narrative assumed its present form in the gospel. Also, philological critical method was used to analyze the key Greek words (*pragmateusathe* and *mina*) that formed the backbone of the thesis.

### **Exegetical Study of the Text**

Exegesis is a critical explanation or interpretation of a text, particularly a religious text. According to Reid, Linder, Shelley and Stout (1990), it is “the practice of discovering the meaning of a text in its original cultural, historical, literary and theological contexts.” Traditionally, the term was used primarily for biblical works. However, in modern usage, biblical exegesis is specifically used to distinguish it from any other critical text explanation. Encyclopaedia Britannica therefore defined biblical exegesis as “the actual interpretation of the sacred book, the bringing out of its meaning.” It is closely tied with hermeneutics, which is the study and establishment of the principles by which it is to be interpreted.

Erickson (2005) stated that the task of exegesis is “to project us back into that ancient world). He firmly argued that “without exegesis, we can easily ‘hear’ something completely different from the message first delivered.” This position was also corroborated by Reid, Linder, Shelley and Stout (1990) who observed that “Christian exegetes through the centuries have agreed that their proper goal is restating the meaning of a text for their contemporary situation.”

Erickson (2005) had rightly argued that “sound, backward-projecting exegesis begins with the languages.” In other words, sound biblical exegesis cannot reach its full potential without appeal to the original languages. Hence, the Nestle-Aland Greek version of the text (Luke 19:11-27) is under-produced here, accompanied side-by-side with the researcher’s English translation.

<b>11</b> VAkouo,ntwn de. auvtw/n tau/ta prosqei.j ei=pen parabolh.n dia. to. evggu.j ei=nai Vlerousalh.m auvto.n kai. dokei/n auvtou.j o[ti paracr/h/ma me,llei h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/ avnafai,nesqaiÅ	<b>11</b> While they were hearing these things, again, he spoke a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and they were thinking that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately.
<b>12</b> ei=pen ou=n\ a;nqrwpo,j tij euvgenh.j evporeu,qh eivj cw,ran makra.n labeli/n e`autw/  basilei,an kai. u`postre,yaiÅ	<b>12</b> Therefore he said, A certain man of noble birth travelled to a distant country, to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.
<b>13</b> kale,saj de. de,ka dou,louj e`autou/ e;dwken auvtou/j de,ka mna/j kai. ei=pen pro.j auvtou,j pragmateu,sasqe evn w-  e;rcomaiaÅ	<b>13</b> And having called his ten servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, Do business until I come.
<b>14</b> oi` de. poli/tai auvtou/ evmi,soun auvto.n kai. avpe,steilan presbei,an ovpi,sw auvtou/ le,gontej\ ouv qe,lomen tou/ton basileu/sai evfV h`ma/jÅ	<b>14</b> But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, We are not willing for this man to rule over us.
<b>15</b> kai. evge,neto evn tw/  evpanelqei/n auvto.n labo,nta th.n basilei,an kai. ei=pen fwnhqh/nai auvtw/  tou.j dou,louj tou,touj oi-j dedw,kei to. avrgu,rion( i[na gnoi/ ti, diepragmateu,santoÅ	<b>15</b> And it came to pass on his return, having received the kingdom, he directed that these servants to whom he had given the money be called, in order that he might know what each had gained by trading.
<b>16</b> parege,neto de. o` prw/toj le,gwn\ ku,rie( h` mna/ sou de,ka proshrga,sato mna/jÅ	<b>16</b> And the first came up, saying, lord, your mina has produced ten minas.
<b>17</b> kai. ei=pen auvtw/  eu=ge( avgaqe. dou/le( o[ti evn evlaci,stw  pisto.j evge,nou( i;sqi evxousi,an e;cwn evpa,nw de,ka po,lewnÅ	<b>17</b> And he said to him, Well done, good servant! Because you were faithful in very little, Have authority over ten cities.
<b>18</b> kai. h=lqen o` deu,teroj le,gwn\ h` mna/ sou( ku,rie( evpoi,hsen pe,nte mna/jÅ	<b>18</b> And the second came, saying, Your mina, lord, has made five minas.
<b>19</b> ei=pen de. kai. tou,tw\ kai. su. evpa,nw gi,nou pe,nte po,lewnÅ	<b>19</b> And he said to this one also, And you are to be over five cities.
<b>20</b> kai. o` e[teroj h=lqen le,gwn\ ku,rie( ivdou. h` mna/ sou h]n ei=con avpokeime,nhn evn soudari,w\	<b>20</b> And another came, saying, lord, behold your mina, which I kept reserved in a handkerchief.
<b>21</b> evfobou,mhn ga,r se( o[ti a;nqrwpoj auvsthro.j ei=( ai;reij o] ouv k e;qhkaj kai. qeri,zeij o] ouv k e;speirajÅ	<b>21</b> For I feared you, because you are a harsh man; you take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.
<b>22</b> le,gei auvtw/  evk tou/ sto,mato,j sou krinw/ se( ponhre. dou/leÅ h; deij o[ti evgw. a;nqrwpoj auvsthro,j eivmi( ai;rwn o] ouv k e;qhka kai. qeri,zwn o] ouv k e;speiraE	<b>22</b> He said to him, Out of your mouth I will judge you, evil servant; you knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow?
<b>23</b> kai. dia. ti, ouv k e;dwka,j mou to. avrgu,rion evpi. tra,pezanE kavgw. evlqw.n su.n to,kw  a`n auvto. e;praxaÅ	<b>23</b> Therefore why then did you not give my money to a bank, so that when I come I might have collected it with interest?
<b>24</b> kai. toi/j parestw/sin ei=pen\ a;rate avpV auvtou/ th.n mna/n kai. do,te tw/  ta,j de,ka mna/j e;conti&	<b>24</b> And to those standing by he said, Take the mina from him and give to the one that has ten.
<b>25</b> kai. ei=pan auvtw/  ku,rie( e;cei de,ka mna/j&	<b>25</b> And they said to him, lord, he has ten minas.
<b>26</b> le,gw u`mi/n o[ti panti. tw/  e;conti doqh,setai( avpo. de. tou/ mh. e;contoj kai. o] e;cei avrqh,setaiÅ	<b>26</b> I say to you that to everyone who has will be given; and from the one who has not even that which he has will be taken.

<p>27 plh.n tou.j evcqrou.j mou tou,touj tou.j mh. qelh,santa,j me basileu/sai evpV aurtou.j avga,gete w-de kai. katasfa,xate aurtou.j e;mprosqe,n mou.Ä</p>	<p>27 Moreover these my enemies who did not want me to rule over them, bring and slaughter them in my presence.</p>

### Textual Commentary

There are two textual problems that occurred in verses 15 and 25. The reading  $\tau\iota$ , diepragmateu,santo in verse 15 which is supported by A K Θ Π 063 f<sup>1</sup> f<sup>13</sup> and most minuscules seems to be the result of scribal efforts to make the narrative more precise. The reading of W and Δ involving the simple form of the verb (επραγματευσατο) comes from verse 13. The Committee designated the in-text variant {B} which indicates that there is some degree of doubt (Metzger, 2002).

On the other textual problem, there is a contention whether verse 25 is included in the original text or not. It could be argued that the statement was a marginal comment subsequently inserted by copyists into the text. However, if that was the case, the subject of εἴπαν, Metzger argued, would probably not have been left ambiguous – (are they the bystanders of verse 24, or those to whom Jesus was telling the parable?). Majority of the Committee considered it to be more probable that the words were omitted in several Western witnesses (D W 565 it<sup>b,d,e,f2</sup> syr<sup>c,s</sup> cop<sup>bo</sup>) either (a) by assimilation to the Matthean parallel (25:28-29) or (b) for stylistic reasons, thereby providing a closer connection between verses 24 and 26. A majority of the Committee considered that, on balance, both external attestation and transcriptional probabilities favour the retention of the words in the text (Metzger, 2002).

### Form Critical Inquiry

Form critics believed that the gospel writers were not authors, but collectors and editors of tradition at their disposal. They conclude that the teachings of Jesus existed in forms, units or periscopes during the formative period. These forms gradually assumed a fixed structure while they still circulated as oral tradition (Ituma, 2016). The various forms that the gospel narratives take are: (1) miracle stories (2) pronouncement stories (3) stories about Jesus (4) sayings of Jesus and (5) passion narratives. The study text falls under “sayings of Jesus.” Rudolf Bultmann in Ituma (2016) categorized the sayings of Jesus under five groups, namely: (a) wisdom utterances (b) prophetic sayings (c) legal pronouncements (d) “I” sayings and (e) parables. Our study text itself being a parable falls under this final group.

### The Text Form-- Parable

The study text, Luke 19:11-27 is classified as a parable. Onwu (2002, p.41) had defined parable as “a brief story that demonstrates a common human experience from which it draws its comparison or analogy.” Boa (2010) stated that “parables are extended figures of comparison that often use short stories to teach a truth or answer a question.” While some suggest that parables are essentially extended allegories, others emphatically argue the opposite (Kulikovsky, 1997). However, Boa had further explained that while the story in a parable is not historical, it is true to life, not a fairy tale. As a form of oral literature, the parable exploits realistic situations but makes effective use of the imagination.

The entire story in a parable is directed to a single, central point. When the message is grasped, the parable is said to have accomplished its didactic purpose and the rest of the detail is secondary in importance. The purpose of the parable of the minas in Luke 19:11-27 was clearly stated. According to Spence and Exell (1985), Jesus told the story because the people with him thought the kingdom of God would appear or reinstated immediately. Calvin (2005) equally believed that it was the premature expectation of the audience that compelled Jesus to narrate the parable. Wilson (2018) posited that the parable was to explain that the coming of the kingdom will be delayed.

### The Sitz-im Leben

The cast involved a nobleman and his ten servants. The nobleman decided to travel to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself and to return. Before venturing into this journey, he summoned his ten servants and delivered ten minas to them, one mina for each (equivalent of three month’s wage). He left them with a charge to “do business” until he returns. However, the citizens of this nobleman hated him and resolved to revolt against him. Nevertheless, his servants endeavoured to execute his commandment. On his glorious, heroic return, he called his servants to render account of their stewardship. In the story, only three servants’ report was recorded, representing the rest. The first returned ten minas and was rewarded with ten cities. The second gained five minas and was rewarded with five cities. The third servant quite differently did not produce any returns. His disposition had resemblance with that of the rebellious citizens who would not submit to the nobleman’s rule.



His unused mina was taken away from him and given to his colleague with ten minas, while the rebellious citizens were condemned to death.

This parable has assumed a conventional/eschatological interpretation in Christendom: the nobleman interpreted as Jesus Christ; the servants as Christians or believers or the Church; while the rebellious citizens represent the unbelievers (originally referring to the Jews). The nobleman's travel into a far country alludes to Jesus' ascension into heaven; whereas his royal return depicts the Parousia. This traditional understanding is supported by Hultgren (2002), Urban (2004), Calvin (2005), Peake (2006), Kercheville (2012), etc.

The major lesson Luke wanted to convey with this parable was to demonstrate that the extension of the interval between the earthly ministry of Jesus and his second coming provides the Church with more time to work and witness in the world and win it over to the Lord. Christians must do the work of the kingdom of God on earth while waiting for the glorious return of their Lord. Secondary lessons of the story may include commensurate divine reward for faithful service and more gifts of grace to the fruitful servant.

### Historical Value of the Text

This story, however, is not without precedence. Recall that the objective of form criticism is to investigate beyond the gospels to obtain a more authentic historical condition of a fixed material or narrative. Wilson (2018), Amsterdam (2014), Kercheville (2012) and a host of other authors believed that the parable would have sounded familiar to the original audience, who would easily connect the storyline to an event in Jewish history. Herod the Great (40<sub>BC</sub>) and his son Archelaus (4<sub>BC</sub>) both ventured to Rome to receive the right to rule Judea and faced fierce opposition from the Jews. When Herod the Great died in 4<sub>BC</sub>, he left Judea to his son Archelaus, who had to go to Rome to have the inheritance approved (v.12). What verse 14 describes happened to Archelaus, who was resisted by the people. Not wanting Archelaus as their ruler, a Jewish embassy of fifty representatives argued their case before Augustus Caesar who later ratified the inheritance without giving Archelaus the title of "king." Similarly, his father Herod the Great had to fight till 37<sub>BC</sub> before his kingdom (already officially granted him by the Romans) was secured under his control. The nobleman's execution of his enemies in verse 27 concurs with the manner with which Eastern kings coming to power often disposed their opponents. Herod the Great had taken some ruthless measures to extinguish opposition and enforce peace in his domain. Likewise his son Archelaus brutally retaliated against those who had opposed him by exterminating three thousand souls.

### Historical/Eschatological Effect of the *Sitz-im-Leben*

Interestingly, delayed Parousia tensions have had a very long history till date. Beginning as early as 4<sup>th</sup> century, a lot of predictions have been made over the second coming of Christ, all of which turned out to be false alarm. Some historical instances are given below.

Hilary of Poitiers, the early French Bishop announced the end of the world would happen in 365 (Boyett, 2005). Another French Bishop, Martin of Tours stated that the world would end before 400. (Abanes, 1998; Lazarus & Sullivan, 2008). The year 1000 was regarded as the end of the Christian millennium and millennium apocalypse was very much expected. Various Christian clerics predicted the end of the world on this date, January 1, 1000, including Pope Sylvester II. Riots occurred in Europe and pilgrims headed east to Jerusalem. Following the failure of the January 1, 1000 prediction, some theorists came up with 1033, proposing that the end would occur one thousand years after Jesus' death instead of his birth (Strandberg & James, 2003; Boyett, 2005). Pope Innocent III predicted that the world would end in 1284, 666 years after the rise of Islam (Lazarus & Sullivan, 2008). Martin Luther predicted that the end of the world would occur not later than 1600 (Weber, 1999). John Napier, a mathematician calculated the end of the world would take place in 1688 based on calculations from the Book of Revelation. After his 1688 prediction failed to come true, Napier revised his end of the world prediction to 1700 (Weber, 1999). During and before 1999, there were widespread predictions of a Y2K computer bug that would crash many computers on midnight of December 31, 1999 and cause malfunctions leading to major catastrophes worldwide, and that society would cease to function, thereby marking the end of the world (Strauss, 2009). Isaac Newton predicted that Christ's millennium would begin in the year 2000 in his book "Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John" (Schwartz, 1995). Harold Camping (1992) predicted that rapture would occur on September 6, 1994. When it failed to occur he revised the date to September 29 and then to October 2 (Abanes, 1998). March 31, 1995 was his last prediction until 2011. Camping predicted that the rapture and devastating earthquakes would occur on May 21, 2011 and God would take approximately 3% of the world population into heaven and that the end of the world would occur five months later, on October 21.

Jesus knew there would be unnecessary human efforts in dating the commencement of his messianic reign. The conviction that he is coming again to bear rule is more important than when he is coming again. He wanted the Church to be busy with the business of the kingdom of God while he tarries, rather than being overly obsessed or distracted with exactitude of the Parousia events with respect to date; hence, the nobleman's charge: "Do business till I come" – *Pragmateusas the en hō erchomai*.

### Philological Critical Inquiry

Philological criticism as defined by Encyclopaedia Britannica is the study of the biblical languages in respect to grammar, vocabulary and style, to ensure that they may be translated as faithfully as possible. The key Greek words examined here are *pragmateusasthe* and *mina*.

The word *pragmateusasthe* is an Aorist Imperative Middle of *pragmateuomai* which means to “busy oneself with,” “to trade,” “to occupy.” It is derived from the noun *pragma* – deed, business, work (Strong, 2006). Kittel (1999) explained the word as “to pursue with vigour,” “to be concerned about,” “to be occupied with.” The term offers three main lines of meaning. First, to render political service (Daniel 8:27) or charged with the affairs of the state. Second, of intellectual pursuits – to compose or write, especially used of historians. The term is employed to depict historical events. Third, of business affairs – to do business in trade and money lending. The only New Testament instance of the term (Luke 19:13) demands the third line of meaning – “to do business,” “make a profit.” Thayer’s lexicon describes *pragmateusasthe* as “to carry on the business of a banker or trader.” Specifically, Louw and Nida (1988) defined the word as “to be engaged in some kind of business, generally buying and selling; to be involved in a business. Hence, the servants in the parable were charged to “do business” until the master returns.

On the other hand, *mina* is a Semitic loanword for a Greek unit of weight. One *mina* was equivalent to about one hundred drachmas or denarius. One drachma was equal to one denarius -- a day’s wage for a labourer (Balz and Schneider, 1990). Hence, a *mina* was worth a three months’ wage.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the parable of the minas was meant to be instructional, serious and business-minded. Given that the issuance of the *mina* necessitated the demand for business, it would be logical and apposite to first determine the implication of the *mina* to the Church before discussing *pragmateusasthe*. Understanding the *mina* is key to understanding the nature of business the Church should engage in.

It should be observed that each of the nobleman’s servants received the same amount of *mina* (no more, no less). Therefore, what the *mina* should mean for the Church is the “divine currency” every believer has in common, which, if put to work, are profitable in expanding the kingdom of God on earth. This work identified two denominations of this currency. At conversion, every Christian received the gospel (Lk. 8:15) and the Holy Spirit (Lk. 3:16). These two spiritual gifts are instrumental in facilitating Christian conviction and conversion.

### The Gospel as Mina

“Gospel” is an Anglo-Saxon translation of the Greek word *euangelion* which means “good news or good story. The gospel as a good story could either refer to some New Testament documents or the entire message of the New Testament. As a document, the gospel represents the first four books of the New Testament namely Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These books contain the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Ituma, 2016, p.71).

Luke expressed a special interest in Jesus’ ministry of gospel proclamation. It is only in Luke that Jesus was anointed to preach (*euangelisasthai*) and to proclaim (*keryxai*) the gospel. *Euangelisasthai* is the aorist infinitive middle of *euangelizō*, which means “to announce good news” (evangelize) especially the gospel (Strong, 2006). *Euangelizō* appears 54 times in the New Testament. Almost half of the occurrences are in the Luke-Acts; 10 in Luke and 15 in Acts (Balz and Schneider, 1990). *Keryxai*, a corresponding expression, is the aorist infinitive active of *keryssō*, which means “to herald (as a public crier), especially a divine truth” (such as the gospel) (Strong, 2006). *Keryssō* appears 9 times in Luke (and 8 times in Acts). *Keryssō* and *kerygma* were relevant in the beginnings of the Christian mission in connection with terms like *euangelizō* and *euangelion*. The term was developed in the wider early Christian tradition and closely associated with the preachings of Jesus, especially in Luke. Luke emphasized *keryssō* in Jesus’ inaugural sermon (4:16-30); and the expression “kingdom of God” is consistently connected with an expression of “proclaiming” in Luke alone. For Luke, the proclamation event is of great significance. It proceeds from Jerusalem as a missionary mandate and is anchored in God’s plan of salvation, initiated by the resurrected Christ himself (24:47) (Balz and Schneider, 1990). A Christian is birthed into God’s kingdom through the gospel. Likewise, he is expected to use the instrumentality of the same in converting others.

Luke presented a Jesus that prioritized preaching during his earthly mission. When the residents of Capernaum requested Jesus not to leave their territory because of his miraculous exploits, Jesus insisted that he must preach the kingdom of God to other cities, saying, “for therefore am I sent” (4:42-44). Luke 8:1 recorded that Jesus went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. He likewise commissioned his disciples to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick everywhere (9:2,6). He ordered the applicant disciple to go and preach the kingdom of God at the expense of his unburied father (9:60). To crown it all, shortly before his ascension, he gave his disciples charge to preach repentance and remission of sins “in his name,” beginning from Jerusalem (24:47). Putting all these together strongly demonstrates Jesus’ deliberate prioritization of proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. The preaching rhetoric continued

through Acts of the Apostles also attributed to Luke and designed to supplement his gospel narrative. Multitude of people were added to the early Church on account of the apostolic *kerygma* (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7; 11:21; 16:5). Preaching the glad tidings of salvation proved to be an effective asset of the early Church in expanding the Kingdom of God.

### **Holy Spirit as Mina**

The gospel of Luke designated special emphasis on the activity of the Holy Spirit. The nativity and infancy narratives which precede Jesus' public ministry contain numerous references to the Holy Spirit (1:15; 1:41; 1:67; 2:25-27). At the beginning of his public ministry, Luke recorded that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus just after his baptism (3:21-22); and empowered him (4:1); and the same Spirit led him into the wilderness to be tempted (4:1-13) and caused him to return to Galilee to begin his public ministry (4:14-15). In his inaugural speech at the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus categorically noted that he is anointed with the Spirit of the Lord, as described by Isaiah 61:1-2 (cf. Lk. 4:18-19), Luke envisioned Jesus as anointed with the Holy Spirit in a special way. It was by means of the Holy Spirit that Jesus taught and did miraculous works. The early disciples and later Christians were able to bear witness about Jesus and undertook missionary works effectively as a result of the empowering activity of the Holy Spirit (Onwu, 2002).

Luke's book of Acts is dotted with such empowering of the Holy Spirit upon the early Church. Through the enablement of the Holy Spirit, they spoke with other tongues (2:4); they preached the word of God with boldness (4:31); they solved internal problems (6:3; 15:28); they were multiplied (9:31; 11:24); they embarked on foreign missions (13:2-4) and they worked many miracles (5:12).

The Holy Spirit played a more important role in Luke-Acts than in the other gospels. Powell (1989) observed that while some scholars have argued that the Spirit's involvement in the career of Jesus is paradigmatic of the universal Christian experience, others believed that Luke's intention was to stress Jesus' uniqueness as the Prophet of the final age. Powell believed that Luke understood the enabling power of the Spirit, expressed through non-discriminately fellowship (Acts 2:44) to be the basis of the Christian community. This community can also be understood as the kingdom of God, although the kingdom's final consummation will not be seen till the Son of Man appears "on a cloud" at the end (Holladay, 2011).

In the parable of the minas, the nobleman (a prototype of Christ) gave each of his servants (Christians/the Church) a mina. Mina was a legal tender for doing business. Christians are mandated by their Lord to do business (*pragmateusasthe*) and he gave them mina to ensure profitable returns. The business is to preach and spread the good news of the kingdom of God; the profited mina is the souls won for the Lord and the capital mina is the Holy Spirit who is given to every believer (Acts 2:32) to enable them fulfil the divine mandate. It is important to note the connection between the Holy Spirit and power in the gospel of Luke. Jesus himself remained connected with the Holy Spirit to produce much power manifestations in his ministry. The Church today should likewise recognize and acknowledge the importance and indispensability of the Holy Spirit in her missionary enterprise and consciously engage him continuously for productive evangelism.

What type of business should be engaged with the gospel and the Holy Spirit as minas? The answer could be found in Jesus' ministry: he preached everywhere with the gospel and performed good works with the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, Luke was the only gospel writer that linked Isaiah's (61:1-3) messianic mandate to Jesus (Lk. 4:18-19). The passage reads:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. [Luke 4:18-19, KJV].

Out of the six-point agenda listed in the passage, Jesus mentioned preaching three times: preach the gospel to the poor, preach deliverance to the captives, and preach the acceptable year of the Lord. The other three messianic assignments include: healing the broken-hearted, recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised. In fact, preaching is implied in the "recovering of sight to the blind" because it immediately follows preaching deliverance to the captives without repeating the command. It becomes clear and persuasive from this passage that Jesus was pre-occupied with the business of preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. Jesus was anointed and sent to preach (*euangelisasthai*) and to proclaim (*keryxai*) the gospel. Furthermore, in Acts 10:38, Luke recorded a concise description of Jesus' ministry as preached by Peter in the house of Cornelius. It states "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" [KJV]. This is what *pragmateusasthe* (doing business) should mean to the Church in Nigeria: robust and result-oriented evangelism as well as social actions that benefit the populace.

### **The Church in Nigeria and the Burden of Evangelism**

Christian evangelism made massive inroads in Nigeria in the last two centuries, especially in the Southern parts. The period witnessed great influx of Christian missionaries of various denominations who went about establishing Churches, schools, health facilities and other enlightenment projects and campaigns. There is no gainsaying the fact that Christian evangelism contributed immensely to rapid civilization in Nigeria. Ejizu

(1988) rightly believed that the highest credit for the achievements of Christianity seems to lie with the effective combination of various evangelical strategies and methods evolved by the different missionary groups. Today, the Nigerian Church is faced with problematic factors that are adversely affecting its overall growth. Some of them include nominal membership and shallowness of faith among numerous Nigerian Christians; the issue of effectiveness of evangelical methods and strategies of different missionary groups; quest for materialism, bitter rivalry among various Christian bodies which has continued to make ecumenism a far-cry for the Nigerian Christendom.

Churches today are much less evangelistic than they were in the recent past. They measure membership by the number of people persuaded by our members to our Church and celebrate them as converts, without minding if they are members of other churches. Rainer (2014) had identified lack of priority of evangelism and excuse mentality as impediments to business mandate execution.

Excuses and other impediments to evangelism will be eliminated if the Church understands the nonnegotiable necessity of preaching the gospel. Jesus plainly revealed that God's greatest desire is to see souls won over to his kingdom. Luke buttressed this point by preserving a good number of parables about the kingdom of heaven – parable of the lost sheep (15:1-7); parable of the lost coin (15:8-10) and parable of the lost son (15:11-32). Jesus used these parables to firmly illustrate that there is always great joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (15:7,10). Recall that the premise of these parables arises from Jesus' reception of tax collectors and sinners who came to hear from him (15:1). It is the prior mandate of the Church to reach-out to God's lost world with the word of reconciliation, reconnecting the world back to God, made possible by the salvific work of Christ on the cross. The charge to do business in the parable of the minas illustrates pragmatic evangelism on the part of the Church, thereby ensuring consistent in-flow of converts (gained minas) to the body of Christ.

#### **The Church and Social Protection in Nigeria**

Social protection, as defined by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, is concerned with "preventing, managing, and overcoming situations that adversely affect people's well being" (UNRISD, 2010). Social protection consists of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to manage economic and social risks, such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability and old age (World Bank, 2001).

Preaching was not the only thing Jesus did during his earthly mission. He healed the broken-hearted, gave liberty to the captives and to the oppressed, restored the sight of the blind, fed the hungry, healed the sick, raised the dead and put smiles on the faces of the people, thereby giving hope to the hopeless (Lk. 4:18; 7:11-17, 21-22; 9:12-17). Indeed, he went about "doing good" (Acts 10:38). The church in Nigeria should adequately engage this aspect of Kingdom stewardship in her quest to fulfil the business mandate. Nigeria as a nation is faced with many challenges that adversely affect the well-being of its teeming population and the Church is duty-bound to provide solution to the ones they could. Efforts in education and health sectors are well-acknowledged. However, poverty, unemployment, cancer epidemic maternal mortality and other killer diseases are some of the areas the Church still needs to pay robust attention to. She should adopt social protection as a tool of evangelism.

The Church should construct an unambiguous and sustainable social action against poverty and unemployment through economic empowerment programmes. She should pay robust attention to curbing these two economic menaces among her teeming population and the general society. Skill acquisition training workshops should be handled with every sense of seriousness and professionalism in order to produce the desired result that will benefit the polity. Awarding of loans and grants, providing mentorship and other post-training services should also be taken into account. If these and other relative actions are put to work, the Church would have been fulfilling the business mandate of Christ.

Another area of social protection interest to this research is on the issue of cancer treatment. According to World Health Organization (WHO) statistics, over one hundred thousand Nigerians are diagnosed with cancer annually, and about eighty thousand die from the disease, averaging 240 Nigerians every day or ten Nigerians every hour dying from cancer. The Nigerian cancer death ratio of 4 in 5 is one of the worst in the whole world (Ogundipe, 2017). Moreover, available data also shows that cervical cancer which is virtually 100 percent preventable kills one Nigerian woman every hour, breast cancer kills 60 Nigerians daily while prostate cancer kills 26 Nigerian men daily. These three common cases alone kill 90 Nigerians daily (Ogundipe, 2017). It calls for deep concern and sober action.

The Church should develop a workable strategy to curtail the epidemic. This should include improving public awareness on different cancer symptoms and encourage people to seek care when these arise; holistic support to health facilities for conduct of accurate and timely diagnostics; and ensuring that people living with cancer can access safe and effective treatment without incurring prohibitive financial hardship. The Church should prioritize basic, high-impact and low cost cancer diagnosis and treatment services. This is important because the cost of treating cancer prevents many from seeking help in the first place. The Church should work hard to formulate a comprehensive cancer control method which will comprise of prevention, early diagnosis and

screening, treatment, palliative care and survivorship care. All should be part of a strong cancer control strategy.

Maternal and Infant Mortality forms another disturbing health challenge in Nigeria that urgently needs social protection. Maternal mortality or maternal death is defined by the WHO as:

The death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes.

A joint report by the World Health Organization, WHO, United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF and World Bank had said that Nigeria recorded 58,000 maternal mortality in 2015. Currently, Nigeria has the second highest burden of maternal mortality in the world, and contributes about 15 percent of the annual total global deaths which represent two percent of the global population (Premium Times, 2017).

On the other hand, Infant Mortality as defined by UNICEF refers to "deaths of young children, typically those less than one year of age. It is measured by the infant mortality rate (IMR), which is the number of deaths of children under one year of age per 1000 live births." According to Premium Times (2017), a recent report by the UNICEF has revealed that nearly ten percent of new born deaths in the world in 2016 occurred in Nigeria.

The above statistics have shown that Nigeria's health sector is in a state of emergency. There is urgent necessity for the intervention of the Church towards arresting these ugly trends through public education and awareness, providing support and assistance to patients, donating medical materials to hospitals and health centres, working partnerships with health agencies, etc. Jesus cared so much for the sick and the weak; the business mandate given to the Church demands no less.

### Conclusion

A key idea that came up in the course of the research was the need to understand the place of the mina vis-à-vis the injunction to do business. Since each of the ten servants of the nobleman received the same amount of mina, it then followed that the business the Church would execute should be related to a divine instrument or currency that is gifted to every Christian. This work identified the gospel and the Holy Spirit as the supernatural instruments received by every Christian believer at the point of conversion. When both are engaged, the result will be proclaiming the good news (evangelism) and doing works of love and compassion (social protection and pragmatism). Therefore, the major demands of the business mandate are evangelism and social protection actions. Both approaches typically exemplified the earthly ministry of Jesus. The Church in Nigeria should get vigorously involved in doing them in order to adequately occupy her given environment for Christ.

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**Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: A Threat to the Quest for National Integration**

By

**Idongesit David Udom, Ph.D****Department of Vocational and Technical Education****University of Benin, Benin City**[idongesitudom@uniben.edu](mailto:idongesitudom@uniben.edu)**070342987751**

&amp;

**Ugo Chuks Okolie****Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria****Edo State Study Centre, Benin City**[ugookolie3@gmail.com](mailto:ugookolie3@gmail.com)**08063499170****Abstract**

Nigeria as an independent nation cannot discuss her history without recounting her sad experience of one conflict or the other. Notable among these conflicts are those of communal, political and ethno-religious conflicts which often result in destructive violence. Out of all these, ethno-religious conflicts appear to have more implications to national development, security and integration in Nigeria. This paper is an empirical survey of existing literature through secondary investigations. The paper posits that colonialism and its capitalist ideological underpinnings and the transplanting of the same character traits to Nigeria bourgeoisie elements largely accounts for the ethnic divide pervading the Nigerian system. Over and above this argument is the malicious ethnic structures initially created by colonialism which has brought about continuous and contending ethnic strife in the Nigerian state to date. The position of this paper is also that the new trend of criminality and the gory tradition of terrorism and security lapses ravaging the country in most states of the North during the Jonathan's administration and most states of the North-Central during the Buhari's administration is akin to ethnic and sectional sentiments as well as ethnic bias. In view of this, the paper therefore attempts to draw explanations on why ethno-religious conflicts have become a permanent feature of Nigeria and its implications to national integration. This paper further takes a peep into the effects of ethno-religious conflicts on economic development in Nigeria. The paper sums up with policy recommendations and conclusion for peaceful co-existence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Religion, National Integration, Nigeria.

**INTRODUCTION**

Ethno-religious conflicts in Nigerian state are the main challenge to the achievement of national integration. It is a commonplace fact that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation state with socio-cultural differences between its component ethnic groups all of which have resulted into cultural dissimilarity. This cultural dissimilarity has been manifested by, for instance, the differences in language, diet, dress and types of social system (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Today, rather than integrating into a cohesive community with a common sense of identity and destiny, citizens of Nigeria are returning more and more to primordial affiliations for identity, loyalty and security. Instead of forging a united front and presenting a concerted effort to face the challenges of development in an increasing competitive and globalized world, Nigerians are busy waging ethnic and religious wars, struggling for control over mineral resources, resisting marginalization by dominant ethnic groups, and contending with diverse problems of basic survival (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2006).

Historically, ethno-religious conflicts that Nigerian state had witness since independence owing their origin to the expression of socio-economic and political deprivation of the affected ethnic and religious groups. According to Usman (2003), the Zango-katataf riot of April 11, 1992 was about the relocation of market, was viewed as the katataf resentment of Hausa-Fulani domination of cultural, political and economic life in Zango-katataf. Also, Fwa (2003) pointed out that the Hausa-Fulani Community who are settlers controlled the market

and the Kataf Community who see themselves as the real indigenes became angry which resulted to riot that leaving over 27 lives loss. Also, the Jos crises of September 13, 2001 and November 8, 2008 are a result of struggle between indigenes and settlers to have access to decision-making, political representation and economic control. In the course of this, ethnicity and religion become a vital tools to be used in the achievement of political power and economic control.

Predictably, the mixtures of ethnicity and religion faith have taken the strife to unimaginable, deadly heights. Many villages in Nigeria have been leveled, neighbours who had lived in harmony for decades have turned on one another with murderous fervour, thousands of lives have been loss, numerous buildings and other valuables have been razed, the cities and indeed states that used to hold a lot of attraction for tourists, especially Jos now find it hard to sustain even the love of the indigenes and fear has become a common denominator in Nigeria. Therefore, a discussion of the effects of ethno-religious conflicts on national development, security and integration in Nigeria is or seems to be highly desirable. It even becomes necessary given the cry of political marginalization coming from various ethnic groups in the new democracy. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to look at the challenges posed by ethno- religious conflicts on Nigeria's march towards national integration.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

#### ***Ethnicism***

Like any other terminology employed by social scientists, the concept of ethnicism is a term that does not lend itself to easy definition. To fully understand this, some related concepts like 'ethnic group' and 'ethnicity' need to be defined. According to Cohen (1974) ethnic group is an informal interest group whose members are distinct from the members of other ethnic groups within the larger society because they share kinship, religious and linguistic ties. This means that ethnic groups are social formations, which are distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries (Nnoli, 1978). In an explanation of the idea above, Nnoli, emphasized that the most important or crucial variable in ethnic identity is language. This then means that an ethnic group consists of those who are themselves alike by virtue of their common ancestry, language and culture, and who are so regarded by others (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Ethnicity on the other hand means the interaction among members of many diverse groups (Nnoli, 1978). Also, Osaghae (1992) defined ethnicity as a social formation resting upon culturally specific practices and a unique set of symbols and cosmology. Therefore, ethnicity is a phenomenon, which involves interaction among various ethnic groups and which by itself does not pose any serious threat to either development or democracy, national security, and national integration. On the contrary, it is the phenomenon of negative ethnoism (a hangover of ethnicity), which is the rejective attitude towards those regarded as outsiders that threatens development, national security and national integration (Salawu & Hassan, 2011; Edewor, Aluko & Folarin, 2014; Koku, 2015).

In the context of this paper, the term 'ethnicism' denotes ethnic loyalty. This is the feeling of attachment to one's ethnic group (Pepple, 1985). A survey of political scenario in Nigeria since independence will show the extent to which ethnic loyalty has affected the nation's dream to have democratic governance (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2017). Ethnic loyalty has had a lot of negative consequences for the nation's movement towards democratization and national integration to extent that it remains an enduring threat to institutionalization of democracy in Nigeria. Among its resultant negative consequences as observed by Babangida (2002) and Adagbabiri & Okolie (2017), are wastage of enormous human and material resources in ethnically inspired violence, encounters, clashes and even battles, heightening of fragility of the economy and political process, threat to security of life and properties and disinvestments of local and foreign components with continuous capital flight and lost of confidence in the economy, and increasing gaps in social relations among ethnic nationalities including structural suspicions and hate for one another. Currently, Nigeria lacks the necessary democratic values, social security and distributive justice and hence, the rampant social unrest in the polity.

A conclusion that can be drawn from our discussion so far is that it has led us to belief that ethnicism leads to primordial sentiments in multi-ethnic society. The ideology of ethnicity therefore finds expression in sectionalism, prebendalism and it is in itself a manifestation of outward show of support or lack of support for persons occupying places of authorities in a nation's psyche (Ogundiya, 2010). Incidentally, however, ethnicity breeds hate, suspicion, lack of support for perceived 'foreigner' in the helm of affairs of governance, insecurity and strange group agitations, tension and socio-political instability and hence, calls for a swift change of government. Whichever angle one looks at ethnicity, it is clear that the political trajectory in Nigeria since independence in 1960 has been those of very serious ethnic arithmetics either in terms of struggle and competition for space, mobilization of support for those in government, creation and making of artificial violence in Nigeria; and, even war of words (Esidene, 2012). All of these have propelled the Nigerian state into peaceful oblivion and things are really falling apart on daily basis which the government seems not to be strong enough to forestall emerging trends of insecurity in the country. These happenings is a pointer to the politics of self, egotism and sectionalism which has been part of the Nigerian project since the colonial masters left the shores of Nigeria to date.



**Religion**

Religion as the oldest discipline in human society is the most difficult concept to define. This is based on the fact that many people have different perspectives according to their disciplines and also because religion has several segments from which people approach it. Religion therefore, is an elusive and imprecise concept. It is difficult to define with precision and objectivity because it is emotion laden (Ngele, 2008; Egwu, 2011). Religion has been variously defined as a belief pattern of an individual making him or her to commune with a superior but unseen power. It is rather a function of morality, spiritually which creates a balance, maintenance of order, and harmony in the human society. It therefore, has the capability of producing good citizens in our society (Akinlaye, 2003). According to Ayinla (2003) and Danjibo (2012), religion is defined as a particular system or set of systems in which doctrines, myths, rituals, sentiments, and other similar elements are interrelated. More comprehensive definition of religion was offered by Ekwunife (1992:1) as "man's awareness and recognition of his dependent relationship on a transient Being- the Wholly Order, expressible in human society through beliefs, worship and ethical or moral behaviour". Here, the Clergy recognized or appreciated man's knowledge of a higher Being more than him which is the origin of faith in religion. Ngele (2008) observe that every religion in relation to policies functions as a catalyst to man's ultimate problems. Alao (2015) also view religion as man's interaction to that which he regards as Holy regardless of whether the Holy Being is supernatural or even personal to the individual. It is a known fact that religion controls man, his value and environment. It is also a known fact that some individuals will die for it (Odeh, 2010).

*Nigeria is pluralistic in terms of religious beliefs.* It is a secular state and there are three major religious beliefs; the Islamic faith, Christian faith, and African Traditional faith; all of which play significant role in our national life. However, the most popular and dominant religious in present day Nigeria are Islam and Christianity. Nigerians are regarded as committed religious people even if the practice has not translated to peaceful co-existence, harmony, and progressive socio-economic development (Alao, 2015). Religion is said to be a pivotal factor of conflicts in multi-ethnic and religious societies such as Sudan and Nigeria. Observations show that violence is intricately linked with religion in Sudan and other countries in Africa where a strong religious ring is associated with ethnicity and nationalism (Danjibo, 2012). In Nigeria, indigenous Muslims are in large numbers in North - East states and are in small minority in the south-south while practitioners of African traditional religion can be found all over the country. Some are syncretistic, combining Islam or Christianity with traditional religion (Yakubu & Rothfuss, 2012). In the South-East, Christianity dominates. Therefore, one would think that the presence of these religions would foster peace-coexistence and unity in a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic society like Nigeria but multi-religiosity has tended to impact negatively on the nation creating tension and social unrest. This made Dukor (1988) to affirm that religion is not a concept which is intrinsically bad, it is rather an integrating force. Religion as a disintegrating force is attributable to the organizers, the organization, the preachers, the preaching, the propagators, and the propagation of religions.

According to Salawu (2010), in the last two decades, religion has been at the heart of most violent conflicts in the world. This may be the reason why religion has been referred to as one of the key security challenges facing humanity since after the end of the Cold War (Nwankwo, 2015). Religion that supported or promoted peace and salvation has been used to mar rather than make our nation Nigeria. This was possible because of the powerful controlling influence the religions has in human existence. With this, religion is used as a veritable tool for political mobilization, fulfillment of parochial and selfish interest, and ethno-sectional aspiration (Odeh, 2010). Also, Jega (2002:22) observed that "socio-ethnic conflicts are deflected and fought under inter-religious banner. This is because there is a strong overlap between ethnic and religious boundary in Nigeria's plural setting". Lending credence to the above, Adejo (2002:248) asserted that "each conflict does not just happen..., they are rooted in some basic dissatisfaction or grievances which await detonation at the slightest opportunity". From the foregoing, therefore, religious values are now manipulated by political anarchists to perpetuate violence and terror by making it as an avenue for expressing socio-economic and political grievances. Koku (2015) also pointed out that the question of personal gain, political, selfish ends, egocentrism, question for power to dominate, made the agitators to use religion as a cover. This has led to suspicion and unhealthy rivalry among the diverse ethnic groups including adherents of Islam and Christianity.

In Nigeria, the clash of religion is usually between Islam and Christianity. Muslims and Christians allow religious identity to generate avoidable conflicts which tolerance could have contained. This made Danjibo (2012) to affirm that modernization theory has not succeeded in sending religion to the grave. Judging by incidence of religious conflict, the Northern region has become the hotbed of religious extremism (Yakubu & Rothfuss, 2012) making people scamper for safety and turning many into refugees in their own country. The recent upsurge of Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalism, which detests western education and Christianity, has exacerbated the conflicts already in existence. Thus, the religious-political history of Nigeria is characterized by unprecedented upsurge in ethnic and religious conflicts leading to loss of lives and looting or destruction of valuable properties worth billions of Naira.

### ***Conflict***

Conflict has been defined by scholars in different ways, but it's origin comes from the Latin word 'Configere' which means to strike together, but on technical level it is defined as opposition among social entities directed against one another (Wright, 1990 cited in (Koku, 2015). This means that people in the society are either in cooperation or in opposition. Similarly, Aboki (2004) viewed conflict as a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources. Schmid (2000) asserted that conflict is about incompatibility among values, where the achievement of one value can be realized only at the expense of some other values. He posits for that conflict is serious competition between two or more groups, each of which aim at gains advantage of power, resource interests, values, and needs over the others. There is a general agreement among scholars that conflict is a normal character in the interaction between human beings, whether in their individual's capacities or in groups and the aims of the opponent or group is mainly to neutralize, injure or eliminate the rivals (Bercoritch & Zartman, 2009). Therefore, conflict is the manifestation of dissatisfaction among individuals or groups. It can also manifest as a result of the struggle for power and material gain by leaders and followers alike.

To have a thorough grasp of conflict, therefore, one must cautiously examine the various actors and their interrelationship in each conflict situation (Wolff, 2006). Also, material value or economic viability of the territory is vital in conflict dynamics. For instance, if the territory is rich in natural resources such as oil, gold, diamond, timber or if there are cultural attachments to the territory, there would be more stakes in it. Similarly, Otite (1990) argued that most conflicts in Nigeria are premised on land space and resource competitions; disputed jurisdiction of traditional rulers; creation and location of local government council headquarters; scarce political and economic resources; micro and macro social structures of Nigeria; population growth; and disregard for cultural symbols. Conflict may either be violence or non-violence. Notably, what constitutes violence and non-violence conflicts varies depending on the context or perception of the legitimate in the rule over men of authority (Wolff, 2006). Violence in this context can be categorized to be physical and psychological. Physical violence is an act that palpably involves physical means such as bombardment, whipping, stabbing to death, overpowering, poisoning, forceful intrusion, malevolent intrusion among others. Its destructive effects are swift and direct. On the other hand, psychological violence is an act that involves brainwashing, indoctrination, and threat. Its destructive effects are gradual and cumulative (Turpin & Kurtz, 1999).

### ***National Integration***

The concept of integration has been variously defined by historians, political scientists, and social anthropologists. The consensus in these definitions is that, it is the cord that binds or holds a society (geopolitical climate) together for their mutual benefits. According to Ojo (2005), integration is the process of unifying a society which tends to make it a harmonious city, based upon an order its members regarded as equitably harmonious. Ogunojemite (2000) sees integration as a political phenomenon which covers a range of human relationships and attitudes. That is, the integration of diverse and discrete cultural loyalties and the development of a sense of nationality; the integration of the rulers and the ruled, and the integration of the citizens into a common political process. Applied this way, integration is meant to create homogeneity out of heterogeneity, and reduce or eliminate parochial attachment to cultural and regional political identities. Integration comes in five different ways: territorial integration; value integration; elite-mass integration; integrative behaviour; and national integration. However, our focus will be on national integration. According to Oni and Ogundiwin (2009), national integration refers to the building of a national state but of disparate social, economic, religious, ethnic, and geographical elements which entails the translation of diffused and unorganized sentiments of nationalism into a spirit of citizenship through the creation of state institution that can translate into policies, programmes, and aspirations of the citizenry. For Jega (2002), national integration is a situation in which citizens of a country increasingly see themselves as one people, bound by shared historical experiences and common values, and imbued by the spirit of patriotism and unity, which transcends traditional and primordial diverse tendencies. In post-colonial societies, such as Nigeria, in particular, it embodies a strategy of forging unity in diversity, and connotes a striving to be a unified people in a modern, colonially created, nation-state. National integration has become a major post-independence project, which was perceived to be necessary and critical to national progress and development. It sought to create patriotic citizens out of disparate, often antagonistic groups (Edewor *et al.*, 2014).

Indeed, while at the level of rhetoric, national leaders espoused beliefs in, and commitments to, national integration. At the level of real politics, they simultaneously pursued ethno-religious, regional and other divisive agendas, whipping primordial sentiments and generating conflicts which further disunite rather than integrate the people. This tendency reached its peak under prolonged military rule. Clearly, there is a connection and relationship between the failure of purported efforts at national integration, as evidenced by increased violent political and communal conflicts, and socio-economic instability, which in no small measure, is a constraint to progress and development. In fact, the democratization process of the last couple of years has been exploited to pursue division and potentially disintegrating agendas by reckless members of the political class. Ethno-

religious jingoists and warlords have used the relatively expanded political spaces created by democratization to push extremist notions of self-determination, resource control, and political restructuring in Nigeria (Edewor et al., 2014).

From the foregoing, ethno-religious conflict can be described as those ethnic conflicts that assume to be religious conflicts. This transformation of ethnic conflicts to religious is a result of ethnic groups identification with a particular religion (Koku, 2015). Ethno-religious conflict is the clash, contention, confrontation, battle, rivalry, controversy or quarrel among ethno-religious groups. Ethno-religious conflict stem from an irreconcilable posture with regards to symbolic values to the groups concerned. These symbolic values which cannot be compromised, are religion and language (Uhunmwuangho & Epelle, 2011). In all political activities in Nigeria, the factor of ethnicity is reflected. It is particularly obvious in areas like voting, distribution of political offices, employment and government general patronage of the citizens. Ordinarily, it is difficult, although not possible, in a pluralistic society to promote a strong bond of citizenship while at the same time accommodating socio-cultural diversity (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000). What role the elite play is largely responsible for success or failure in this endeavour. In the case of Nigeria, complicating factors such as the convergence of religious value-orientations with ethnic differences have combined with the greedy disposition of the elite, as well as their deliberate and willful manipulations, to make things much more difficult to manage and/or contain; indeed to heighten mutual fears and suspicions of the 'other', to reinforce perceptions of domination and marginalization by the 'other', and to erect rigid barriers to cordial and peaceful inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and inter-communal relationships (Idike & Okechukwu, 2015). Therefore, Nigerians who are in the privilege positions in order to perpetuate themselves in those positions, they used ethnic and religious as cover. Obasanjo (2000) remarked that the elite in the country are most times the brain behind ethno-religious conflicts.

### ***Causes of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria***

Nigeria at the age 58 is still searching for a new political order. The full realization of this objective has been made impossible because of the dominance of the factors of ethnicism and religion, the factors which has affected the survival of democratic rule and national integration in Nigeria. The frequency occurrence of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria over the years was as a result of the return of democratic rule in which Nigerians exercised their freedom of expression and power. It is obvious that in the last few years, Nigeria witness series of conflicts. Among of the prominent ones are: Zangon kataf in Kaduna State; Tiv- Jukun in Wukari, Taraba State; Ogoni-Adoni in Rivers State; Ijaw/Urhobo in Delta State; Ife-modakeke in Osun State; Aguleri- Umuleri in Anambra State; Yoruba-Hausa community in Shagamu, Ogun State; Ijaw-Ileja in Ondo State; Hausa/Fulani in Jos and Fulani/Irigwe and Yelwa Shedam, both in Plateau State; the intermittent clashes in kano State; Hausa/Fulani Sawanya in Bauchi State; Hausa/Yoruba clashes in Idi-Araba in lagos State; Boko Haram-Christians in North-East and the Fulani/Herdsmen in Benue State. Many factors can be held responsible for the rampant cases of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria as shown below:

#### ***1. Ethnic-Regional Identity***

Ethnic-regional identities are major factors responsible for ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria because they have been associated with perceptions of discrimination and inability of some groups to exercise certain rights and civil liberties. The main issues have been the control of political power in general, and specifically, control of the armed forces, the judiciary and the bureaucracy. There is also the question of the control of economic power and resources (Ibrahim & Ibrahim, 2003). These issues are compounded by the lack of trust among various ethnic groups as a result of deep rooted misconception, lack of religious tolerance, poverty and fear of economic and political domination.

#### ***2. Legacy of Colonialism***

The origin of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria is traceable to the nation's colonial experience, particularly the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914. According to Osadolor (1998), the act of amalgamation was not a federal idea. Lugard had neither a unitary nor a federal or confederal agenda for the country. Rather, the two regions were brought together for administrative convenience and reduction in administrative cost. This explains why the successive constitutions developed for governing the country between 1914 and 1951 can hardly be categorized either as unitary, federal or confederal (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). The political restructuring produced the 1954 constitution that established a federal frame work for Nigeria. The federal framework notwithstanding, the seed of mutual suspicion and fear of domination has germinated and was fast growing among the major ethnic groups in the country such that the workings of the new constitution became difficult. The point being made here is that federalism in Nigeria was not a deliberate design of the founding fathers but an accidental adoption, having found themselves in a tight situation with no better alternative available. It is obvious that colonialism left behind for Nigeria a non-hegemonic state that further aggravated the crisis of ethnicism in the country (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Also, Aluko (2003) identifies the legacy of colonialism and monopoly of power by the major ethnic groups and their consequent

marginalization of the minority groups as major factors promoting ethnic nationalism in Nigeria. Uchendu (2010) observed that the growth of ethno-religious intolerance in the country has its foundation on the activities of the colonial masters that brought Christianity with them and antagonized African Traditional Religion as idolatry.

### **3. Political Leadership**

One of the major causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria can be traceable to the over bearing character of the post-colonial Nigeria state, greed, selfishness, parochialism, pettiness, and irresponsible conduct by those who are supposed to be leaders. Nigerian leaders pursue self-serving objectives in the power game and in the process of accumulation of wealth and tend to aggregate these with and project them as a part of an ethno-religious group agenda. The leadership in Nigeria has failed to provide the basic needs of the people. This has contributed to the emergence of large number of frustrate population who are ready made tools in the hands of extremist (Egbefo, 2015).

### **4. Religious Intolerance**

Religious intolerance in this context is the failure to recognize and accommodate views and opinions of others is one of the major sources of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. Also, Nigeria religious adherents, especially the Muslim and the Christians have demonstrated intolerance attitudes which have resulted to violence outburst that spill over the political and economic lives of the citizens (Alananmu, 2005 cited in Koku, 2015). Also, Christian fundamentalists and activities are concerned mainly with what they regard as the threat of Islamization of the country, imposition of the sharia on non-Muslims and the use of state resources to subsidize Muslim activities. In fact, to entrench the sharia Court in the constitution is to legalize the inferiority of non-Muslims and the superiority of Muslims...The claim therefore, the courts cannot be used as instruments of evangelism is totally false. The sharia is Islam and Islam in Sharia. Sharia is a total way of life; it is evangelism (Sabiya, 1979).

### **5. Poverty and Unemployment**

Poverty and unemployment also account for the bulk of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria due to such problems like inadequate housing, physical and social infrastructures. The present unequal distribution of scarce resources in Nigeria Societies has created the problem of poverty which is partly responsible for the creation of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria (Obateru, 1994). Leading credence to the above, Salawu and Hassan (2011) stated that mass poverty and unemployment created alienation and insecurity, which in turn encourage Nigerians to experience and prefer accommodation within the social insurance system of ethnic nationalities or identities which is the major source of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria.

### **6. Attitudes of the Media/Press**

In recent times, attitudes of the press in reporting conflicts are another source of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. The main objectives of the mass media are to inform, entertain, and educate the society. In Nigeria, experience has shown that the media reports, news analysis and features are capable of a positive or negative role in the interaction between ethnic and religious groups depending on the journalist concerned. The actions or reactions of Muslims to Christians or Christians to Muslims are determine by the mass media reports (Alananmu, 2005). In Nigeria, in many occasions, the embers of ethnic and religious conflicts are fanned by such negative and sectional press reports and news analysis. For instance, the April 1991 religious riot in Katsina was caused by an article titled 'Would you marry a known prostitute turned born again,' written by Orland Emmanuel Giwa (Giwa, 1991). Also, te role played by mass media in reporting the 1987 kafachan riot was negative. Members of the society were grossly misinformed by the press with bias reports, which created another crisis between Muslims and Christians (Bidmos, 1993). Even as at today, the unbridled actions of Nigerian media houses towards ethno-religious conflicts are capable of causing violence that may results in the loss of lives and destruction of valuable properties.

### **7. The Lack of Genuine Desire to Understand each Other's Belief and Culture**

It is true that institutions of higher learning here and there offer some courses under various names but a careful study of such programmes has shown that they were not intended to foster understanding and respect. Instead they are used as a means of black mailing and incitement, under the cover of academic freedom.

### **8. Campaigns of Hatred and Black Mail**

Both Christians and Muslim are actively involved in campaigns of hatred against each other. It has manifested in various forms including: distortion of fact about each other, incitement, blocking each other's chances as demonstrated in the issues of Shariah and organization of Islamic conference.

### **9. The Inadequate Recognition of One Another**

Muslims in particular, believed that Christianity does not recognize Islam as a religion that is entitled to exist and consequently, it does not recognize their (Muslims) other rights. They believe and maintain that if there is any recognition of Islam by the Christians in Nigeria, it is simply because the Muslims have refused to be ignored.

#### **10. Extremism**

Extremism from both the Christians and Muslims is another important reason behind religious crisis in Nigeria. In most cases this extremism is based on poor knowledge of the teaching of the religion being defended by the group in both sides.

#### ***Theoretical Underpinnings***

For the purpose of analysis in this paper, the classical model theory and the frustration-aggression theory are considered appropriate in explaining the causes of ethno-religious conflicts and its implications on national integration in Nigeria. The theory that best captures and explain ethnicity and identity crisis is the classical model theory by Clifford Geertz. The classical model theory which is titled "integrating revolution" offers an explanation for the difficulties in nation-building in the new states and on the other hand, how the problem can be overcome. Following Geertz distinguishes between "primordial" ties which are affinities based on the "given" of life which seem to flow more than natural than rational choice (blood and kinship ties, tribe, region, religion) and "civil" ties which are affinities based on socio-economic grouping (class, status, part, professional group). Primordial ties by their very nature, (and especially because being territorial defined, they can be based for asserting the right to national self-determination) tend to be highly resistant to civil order. Civil ties, on the other hand, are usually cross-cutting cleavages with crisis-crossing memberships and are therefore, more amenable to civil order. If the "nation-state" is to survive which presupposes the resolution or a process by which primordial ties will be supplanted by civil ties and ultimately subjected to civil order. Applied to Nigeria, the crisis of national identity and ethnicity is explained by the prevalence of primordial sentiments. Contrary to the expectations of adherents of the detribalization thesis, increasing modernization has heightened the importance of these sentiments. This is the paradox of African development which exacerbates the crisis of national identity. In the words of Crawford Young, "in dialectic symbiosis with the apparent triumph of the nation-state model has been the emergence, reinforcement or diversification of social and political expressions of cultural pluralism (group identities founded upon affinities of ethnicity, religion, language, race, region)(Crawford Young, 1979 ).

Studies have also shown that violence has been perceived as an instrument of survival under difficult circumstance. In this perspective, the frustration-aggression theory is the most explored. The exponents of the theory identified major conditions in which the individual or group deploy violence. To them, the obstruction or blockade of efforts by the individual intended to achieve desired ends such as power, wealth, social status, security, equality and freedom leads to frustration that breeds violence. Also, a causal link has been drawn between unfulfilled rising expectation and violence. In this perspective, it is contended that tension or violence arises from unfulfilled expectation to people who had experienced hardship or enslavement but suddenly promised improved material condition or freedom. Furthermore, a relationship has been drawn between relative deprivation and violence. In this sense, the objective material condition is believed not to nurture violence but rather the sense of deprivation in relation to others around them, or their own past condition is believed to be responsible for violence with the intent to redress the situation (Dowse and Hughes, 1982). The greed and grievance analytical framework ascribes violent conflicts to grievances arising from limited economic opportunities, poverty and inequalities. There are two strands of contentions in this analytical framework. The first perceive violent conflicts as under-girded by irrationality originating essentially from hatred. In the second perspective, violent conflict is hinged on a number of grievances such as systematic discrimination and gross human rights violation, inequality in economic and political power, or dearth of resources especially in multiethnic state. In this regard, violence is perceived as instrumental like any means for seeking redress. Violent conflict has also been explained from the industry perspective. It is believed that the dominant propellant of violence is economic benefits and commercial interest rather than grievance. This presupposes that the preoccupation of the belligerents and insurgents is the economic spoils and booty that they appropriate from the protracted violence. Another theoretical explanation for the etiology of violent conflicts is systemic pathologies arising from the dialectical changes in the structures and processes of society. According to Potholm (1979:149 cited in Deeka 2003) when a system does not deliver what its leaders had promised and the political elites continue to ask the masses to make sacrifices that the elites themselves are unwilling to make much of the aura of legitimacy gained during the decolonization period will be dissipated.

In another theoretical prism, eruption of violent conflicts is linked with group pluralism and interactions to achieve their diverse objectives (Deeka 2002). In seeking relevance or retention of political power, the elites manipulate and massage religious and ethnic sentiments. Many of the ethnic clashes and sectarian conflagrations are rooted in the context of the group conflict theoretical assumption (Jega 2002). Violence has also been

perceived as structural and institutional (Coady 1999). Structural violence is the form of violence rationalized on the basis of a great range of social injustice and inequalities prevailing in a state. In this perspective, reformers, leftists and even terrorists rationalize their violence and opposition against the state on the basis of seeking to correct the prevailing social injustice and inequalities in the state. The form of violence in this context often involves a direct physical attack in response to and defence against acts perceived as unjust and inequitable in the society. On the other hand, institutional violence is a quiet violence that arises due to systematic deprivation in the way of transactions within a state (Abah, 2009). Several other factors such as over population, impotence, loss of power, displacement, the quest for social values, as well as natural phenomena such as natural disasters, earthquake, environmental scarcities, disease outbreak, drought, and famine can be identified as contributory to violence.

### ***The Effects of Ethno-Religious Conflicts on Economic Development***

The resultant effects of religious crisis in Nigeria are enormous. It pervades all the sector of the economy. Generally, crisis breeds insecurity, discrimination, mutual distrust and slow economic development. This is the case in Nigeria where in addition to gratuitous killings and maiming of thousands of persons properties worth billions of naira have been destroyed. Certainly, these huge losses have deprived the nation of needed manpower and services for the growth of it are wobbling economy. Another major consequence of religious conflicts on the economic development of Nigeria is on the reputation of Nigeria in the international community. Many countries have started seeing Nigeria as a terrorist country which affects our business men and women that travel round the world to do business. Religious conflicts portray Nigeria in a very bad light internationally. It depicts our leaders, at all levels and in different facets of life as weak, naïve, selfish and self centered. In an environment of strong dedicated and selfless leadership, the diversity and complexity of the Nigerian society would have been harnessed and channeled into national development efforts. In an atmosphere of peace, the economy tends to grow more as more foreign investment and earnings are attracted via FDI and tourism. Nigeria would have been a tourist heaven, but the frequent occurrence of ethno-religious conflicts in different parts of the country at different points in time will International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences definitely discourage foreign tourists (Onwumah, 2014). The effect of it is that, foreign exchange needed to drive development that could have been brought in by foreigners is lost.

Though Nigeria is richly endowed in terms of tourism and resources, it is said that, by African standards, her performance is an abysmal failure. Places like Kenya, Ghana, Egypt and others have more people coming into their countries than Nigeria. The reason for this is not farfetched. Nigeria is perceived as unsafe and indeed not conducive in terms of security caused mainly by communal and religious crisis. Religious crisis has had devastating effect on Nigerian educational standards ranging from incessant closure of schools, destruction of school facilities to abduction and raping of schools children which has serious effect on the psychologies of school children in the nation. This assertion was supported by Adebayo (2010) who posits that education is very vital in any sustainable developmental program. The nation is striving to put in place amenities for the purpose of elevating the education standard of the country. This is, however, hampered by incessant closure of schools and institutions in places where religious crisis are being witnessed. Many schools had been burnt down while many were forced to close down for months. The education of innocent youths was equally disrupted under tumultuous situations created by religious and ethnicity crises, as many were forced to emigrate from crisis area. One of the major implications of persistent conflicts is the insecurity of lives and properties which tends to hinders foreign economic relations to jumpstart the economy. Top in the list of social crises in Nigeria is the problem of corruption, which has negative impact on the economy. The widespread of corruption in the investment budget will not only reduce the rate of return on new investment in the country, but will also affect the rate of returns coming into the government purse from its existing infrastructure. For example, due to the high level of corruption, returns from toll collections on major roads in Nigeria were nothing to write home about, not because of few road users, but the diversion of revenue to private pockets, which impeded the availability of funds for the maintenance of these roads. This forms part of the reasons why the toll gates were dismantled by Obasanjo's administration. Corruption which manifests in form of bribery, big bureaucratic red tape, poor tax, and custom administration reduce not only domestic investment, but also foreign direct investment, which is very crucial in Nigeria's economic development. Corruption often leads to capital flight, whereby money that could have been used for developmental purposes in the country are illegally transferred into foreign accounts. For instance, capital accumulated by corrupt leaders in Swiss banks and other foreign banks all over the world is a net loss to the country. Other forms of social crises, like vandalization of infrastructure also negatively impact the economy, leading to great loses by the country. For instance, as a result of oil and gas pipeline vandalization, illegal bunkering and smuggling, the country lost about 397,000 metric tonnes or N10.102 billion worth of petroleum products in 2000, while in 2005, a total of 647,632 metric tonnes or N42,102 billion worth of petroleum products were lost. Between 1999 and 2009, the country has lost over USD10 billion due to pipeline vandalization (Bakindo, 2010). The advent of illegal bunkering, pipeline vandalization and product theft has also massively impacted on the capacity of Nigeria's oil and gas sector to

function optimally. For instance, as a result of incessant attack on the pipelines belonging to the Royal Dutch Shell between 2005 and 2006, the company was forced to shut down for several months, an estimate of 455,000 bpd of its oil production (Energy Information Administration, 2007). In 2002, the NNPC shut its crude pipeline from Escravous terminal to Warri (120,000 bpd) and Kaduna (110,000 bpd). The vandalization of Shell's pipeline in Andoni local government area of Rivers state also forced the company to slash its production by 170,000 bpd in 2006, while another attack on its Bonga deepwater oil field in 2008 also led to the stoppage of output from 200,000 bpd facilities (Shosanya, 2009). In the same vein, the victims of ethno-religion conflicts are forced to abandon their economic activities to take refuge in refugees camp for a long period before they could find a new conclusive place to settle. Moreover, during this period, most of them were denied the opportunity to engage in creative activities or to be optimally engaged in their normal economic activities. Underutilization of facilities or under capacity production resulting from economic sabotage has forced the government to resort to importation of fuel to meet its energy need. Consequently, in 2001, the NNPC was said to have expended the sum of N91.6 billion on the importation of fuel. By implication, the foreign exchange that could have been used for the purchase of capital goods (equipments or machineries) that are needed for the development of other sectors of the economy are used for petroleum product imports. Like the case of pipeline vandalization, public and private facilities are usually destroyed during conflicts. The cost of repair of destroyed facilities tends to reduce the amount of funds available to the government for other development purposes. For example, vandalization of pipelines tends to worsen the problem of environment degradation and the pollution of waterways. Environmental problems are not confined to their sources. Water and air pollution, for instance, travels far and wide to impact on more than one region. Hence oil spillages into waterways not only destroy the marine and aquatic lives of the immediate environment, but other regions too. More so, fire disaster caused by vandalization of pipelines, apart from the destruction of forest and farmlands, increases carbondioxide accumulation in the atmosphere, which could intensify the level of global warming. One of the keys to economic development of a nation is the quality of human resources. It represents the subject, the object and the process, in building a nation socially, politically and economically. Nigeria is blessed, not only in terms of natural resources, but also human resources. However, crises in Nigeria not only result in material loses, but also human loses. For example, between 1999 and 2009, more than 2,550 people have reportedly died as a result of explosion from oil and gas pipeline vandalization (Shosanya, 2009), while more than 10,000 people have been killed in sectarian and communal attack in Nigeria. As human resources is the engine of economic development, so also is the growth and development of educational sector crucial to human resources training and development, hence every nation is striving to provide the necessary amenities to enhance the standard of education of its citizens. However, the attainment of this vital objective could be hampered by incessant closure of schools and high institutions in conflict prone areas. Overall, consequences of social crises, especially ethnically and religiously inspired violent clashes are threat to security of life and properties, domestic and foreign investments with continuous capital flight, and loss of confidence in the economy (Babangida, 2002). Eventually, this may lead to increase in the level of poverty in the country.

### ***Ethno-Religious Conflicts: A Threat to National Integration***

Nigeria as one of the largest countries in Africa is made up of many ethnic groups with diverse cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. These ethnic groups have different political, social religious and economic interests to protect and they do this by using any machinery at their disposal even if it is at the detriment of the country. Ethnic and religious issues form part of the most recurring phenomena in Nigeria's politics. The issue has permeated the nation's political and economic landscape in the last few years, and there seems to be no solutions to it. In Nigeria, ethnicity plays a major role in almost everything, whatever is done or anticipated to be done in Nigeria particularly in government quarters has ethnic and religious undertone. From employment, admission into schools, distribution of social amenities and even in social relationships, ethnic and religious affiliation and attachment are consciously manifest. Attachment of the average Nigerian first to his ethnic and religious groups before the national is the best of Nigeria national integration (Egbefo, 2015).

Between 1990 and 2018, so many crises stimulated by ethno-religious reasons have engulfed Nigeria. Ethnic and religious bigotry has become a serious issue undermining the very foundation of Nigeria's unity. Mutual fear and suspicion, absence of cordial relations, ethnic alignment and re-alignment, ethnic affiliation and attachment have being very strong features of Nigeria since 1960. Nigeria has become a theatre of war characterized by an increasing number of ethnic and religious conflicts. Religion in Nigeria function as a means for the perpetration of violence, fuelling ethnic consciousness, and solidarity, acquisition of political power and socio-economic gains, massive killings and the wanton destruction of lives and vandalizing of property of those considered infidels or who pay allegiance to their religions. This is traced to the acrimony between the two dominant religions-Islam and Christianity which had often resulted in the struggle for power and supremacy, bitter fued and wanton destruction of lives and properties. This religion madness had like a cataclysmic vortex devastated the ground for sustainable socio-economic development of Nigeria (Ngele, 2008).

National integration, otherwise termed nation-building, national unity, national cohesion, national loyalty, or the national question involves consensus on the limits of the political community and on the nature of the political regime (Liddle, 1970 cited in Enaruna, 2014). In Nigeria, the existence of multiple nationalities within the same nation state tends to create problems for the stability of the state. The persistence of the ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria which the resultant effects within the nation is disagreement, disunity, and distrust, collapse of economics and political systems, threat to health conditions, displacement of people, environment degradation, destruction of land and agricultural produce and other natural resource (Adesanya, 2005) were strong testimonies of the lack of the broad national consensus and nationalist identities that could form the constituent elements of an all-Nigerian culture (Onyeoziri, 2002). It is because of this critical lack of national integration that the erstwhile Biafran leader, author, and polemic, Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, declared sadly that: "the true problem with Nigeria is that she is fully embroiled in an identity crisis. The Nigerian of today is a sociopath in search of a national programme. We live in a country in search of a common character" (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 1989:1). What then are the factors which discourage national integration in Nigeria? According to Ojo (2009) and Nwankwo (2015), the most obvious of these factors includes ethnic cleavages, religious extremist, economic underdevelopment or dependence, and a weak sense of nationhood arising from a short period of independent statehood.

In addition, the antagonistic centrifugal forces heralded and entrenched musters that have always consumed Nigerians and their collective desires for unity and development as manifested in the form of tribalism, politics of prebendalism, elitism, greed, antagonism, civil strifes, occupation, etc., were strong testimonies of bad leadership. Okene (2005) observed that the greatest cause of ethno-religious and indeed other identity based conflicts in our country is the enthronement of bad leadership. National integration cannot take place in a country in which her leadership is characterized by sycophancy, greed, dishonesty, endemic corruption, fuelled by personal aggrandizement, political authoritarianism, budgetary abuse, political patronage, etc. therefore, the effects of ethno-religious conflicts and leadership failure to integrate the divergent and multi-nationalities in Nigeria are the greatest impediment to the achievement of national integration.

#### ***Managing Ethnic and Religious Diversity for National Integration***

The following three assertions can be made about Nigeria: First, there is significant inequality within regions as well as nationally. Second, state policies are likely to be highly regressive, with an extraordinary share of state expenditures captured by national and regional elites. And, third, ordinary as well as elite Nigerians tend to view their society in ethnic or religious terms. Therefore, the questions for us here are: (i) to what extent are the ethnic (or religious) patterns in Nigerian politics the product of a primordial cultural diversity? (ii) To what extent are they the product of a struggle for spoils in a specific institutional context? (iii) To what extent are they the cause and the consequence of political conflict? (iv) What constitutionally backed institutions can be developed to manage these ethnic/cultural diversity and conflicts? (v) How do we achieve national integration in Nigeria?

Years before the attainment of independence, Nigeria's constitutional development experiences were concerned with the principal goal of managing ethnicity which had shown clear signs of subverting the nationbuilding project. Federalism, the creation of regions and states and local governments, the shift from parliamentarism to presidentialism, the institutionalization of quota systems, the prohibition of ethnic political parties, consociational politicking, and the adoption of the federal character principle are some of the approaches that Nigeria has taken to manage ethnic diversity (Ukiwo, 2005). These mechanisms have enjoyed the intellectual backing of institutionalism who posit that there is a connection between ethnic conflict or peace and the nature of political institutions (Horowitz, 1985). Several works on ethnicity in Nigeria have been committed to examining the impact of these approaches to the management of ethnicity (Ekeh and Osaghae, 1989; Adamolekun, 1991; Ekekwe, 1986; Horowitz, 1985; Mustapha, 1986; Nnoli, 1995; Osaghae, 1998; Suberu, 2001, Edewor, & Aluko, 2007).

The verdict of such scholars who have examined the issues from different theoretical standpoints is that while these initiatives have solved some old problems, they have generated many unintended consequences that have exacerbated ethnicity. What is more, they have been destabilizing for the Nigerian state system. As Suberu (2001) has noted with respect to revenue allocation and states creation: The establishment of nine separate commissions on revenue allocation since 1946 has led to neither development of an acceptable or stable sharing formula nor the elaboration of an appropriate framework of values and rules within which a formula can be devised and incrementally adjusted to cope with changing circumstances. Given the share multiplicity of fluidity of the territorial and cultural cleavages that can be used to justify the demands for new states and the federal resources they bring with them, there is no certainty that the states-creation process will ever be concluded in Nigeria. Analysts have attributed the limitations of the ethnic management policies to improper implementation, distortion of visions and lack of political will. Some, however, doubt the possibility of a state that generates fissiparous tendencies (Ibrahim, 2000) and a predatory class that is endlessly looking for formulas to divide the Nigerian peoples (Mustapha, 1986) implementing policies that promote ethnic peace and harmony. Also, the



viability of these new states created is unclear, with the exception of the oil-producing states in the south. Some of these states have recently become conduits for the personal enrichment of the elites at the expense of alleviating poverty and creating job opportunities for the rest of the population. There have been reports of disparities in the distribution of oil resources in Nigeria for many years. This contentious issue has fuelled most of the recent ethnic conflicts in the country. Some ethnic groups, especially those in the oil producing areas argue that they are not receiving enough funds for their own development (Irobi, 2005). These are the dynamics behind the Ogoni crisis and the recent sporadic ethnic violence in the oil producing Niger Delta states. We would argue that unless this issue is resolved, the economic base of the country will be jeopardized. The undemocratic 1999 federal constitution lacks the support of the citizens. The constitution was drafted by military dictators and handed over to the people. It has not gone far enough to resolve the problems of ethnicity that the country has faced since independence. National integration in the Nigerian context has been an attempt to forge “unity in diversity” and aggressive attempts to ignore, if not dissolve, historic differences. Successive military rules sought to wish away socio-cultural differences and impose uniformity in spite of complex cultural diversity.

Unfortunately, the more such projects were pursued, the more acute the contradictions become, the more conflicts erupted; and the more problems were created, which posed obstacles to unity, peaceful coexistence, progress and stable development. National integration in a multi-cultural state like Nigeria is unattainable without an entrenched public culture because this comprises the values shared by all groups and constitutes the common grounds on which the diverse groups conceptualize and appreciate the state. In Nigeria, groups strive to impose their particularistic definition of public culture on the entire polity. The area of society-wide agreement which constitutes public culture is still too narrow (Ikpe, 1991). People, therefore, struggle to overthrow existing public culture rather than identify with it due to its parochialism. National integration and its attached benefits, like democracy and political stability can be realized only with the development and entrenchment of a supportive public culture. What is to be done? Perhaps, the best way to begin to address these threats to “national integration” is to recognize that unity does not mean uniformity, and that understanding, respecting and tolerating differences occasioned by socio-cultural diversity, is by far better than strenuously striving to wish them away. A complex, plural colonially created “nation state” such as Nigeria can only survive and flourish in the 21st century on the basis of tolerance and accommodation of socio-cultural differences, rather than on a narrow-minded pursuit of an exclusivist and parochial self-interest (Jega, 2002). Also, since the rules for sharing federal revenues clearly provide incentives for regionalist politics, Suberu (2001) recommends a further decentralization of funds through further revision of vertical division of revenues, together with a revised horizontal division with increased rewards for local revenue generation. In general, however, federalism is a bad way of getting public resources to the poor, and it is unclear how far reforms can overcome this.

### **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper recommends that the actualization of a last social peace, sustainable development, and national integration in Nigeria is contingent on the following:

1. Nigeria should see their pluralism in terms of diverse religion, political and ethnic affinities as a blessing that would make her a multi-coloured nation with diverse potentialities to give leadership to Africa, the third world and the globe at large.
2. There is the need to transform ethnic politics into mutually beneficial relationships. To do this, Nigeria must withdraw from its old and ineffective approaches and develop new institutions and mechanisms that can address poverty, revenue allocation, and other national issues peacefully.
3. Government at all levels must ensure the democratization of the national economy to accommodate all categories of cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups of various constituencies.
4. The media houses and the press should always be fair in their reports, especially when it involves crisis of ethnic and religious in nature.
5. There is need to address the leadership crisis. Attempt should be made to discourage the idea of choosing a leader because of his/her ethnic group, religion, and political affinity. Whoever would serve to the best interest and *Sonum Bonum* (general good) of Nigerians should be given opportunity to serve Nigeria especially at the presidential level.
6. There should be a deliberate programme of political and social reorientation of the entire citizenry. Such reorientation will go a long way in changing the negative stereotypes and values that have characterized the Nigerian citizenry.
7. The role of good political leadership cannot be overemphasized. Nigeria has been less fortunate in its leadership. Ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have continued because political leaders are corrupt and split along lines of religion and ethnicity. This has resulted in ethnic rivalry, suspicions and hostility

among leaders. Therefore, without a bold and articulate leadership, conflict management, prevention and national integration will always be a mirage.

8. Religious leaders should give proper orientation to their followers and should emphasize that religion pursues peace and not violence.
9. Nigeria government needs to undertake steps that would provide lasting solution to socio-economic problems like unemployment, power imbalance, inequitable distribution of resources, poverty, and the Niger delta quest for justice in her God-given mineral resources.
10. Government should empower the religious and traditional leaders to improve inter-ethnic and religious communication, peace and harmony among their subjects. The use of civil society organizations and NGOs could be another effective tool or key to peaceful ethno-religious co-habitation and national prosperity.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the foregoing, the quest for national integration is an important, serious and demanding task. A more deliberate effort must be made to develop a feeling of oneness among Nigeria. The process of national integration in Nigeria has faced challenges from ethnicity, religion, and politics. These social dynamics have weakened and hampered the development of institutions necessary for building a nation. The problem posed by ethnic and religious conflicts is a threat to Nigerian's corporate existence and its desire to engender national integration. This paper has attempted to demonstrate that ethno-religious conflicts retard national integration in Nigeria and that ethno-religious conflicts arise as a result of socio-economic and political deprivation. However, if the above recommendations are strictly adhered to, then the incidence of ethno-religious conflicts currently threatening the country's national integration can be reduced, given way to lasting peace and harmonious living in Nigeria.

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**Hate Speech and Ethno-Religious Violence in Nigeria**

By

**Moses M. Adagbabiri, Ph.D**  
Department of Political Science  
Delta State University, Abraka  
[adagbabirimoses@gmail.com](mailto:adagbabirimoses@gmail.com)  
08033929964

&amp;

**Ugo C. Okolie, M.Sc, ACIPM**  
Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria  
Edo State Study Centre, Benin City  
[ugookolie3@gamil.com](mailto:ugookolie3@gamil.com)  
07052744891

**Abstract**

Hate speech is the precursor to ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. In recent times, no issue has generated widespread public comment in Nigeria more than the issues of hate speech and ethno-religious violence rocking the country and its sad consequences on national integration. Though, on the issue of hate speech, the provisions of Nigeria constitution and Nigeria Electoral Act are clear but the question is where to draw the line between political statements and hate speech. Therefore, this study explored the effect of hate speech on ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. A descriptive method was adopted and data was collected via a survey of 600 respondents comprises of Traditional Leaders, Christian leaders, Muslim leaders, Leaders of civil society groups and Youth leaders in South-South, South-West, South-East, North-West, North-central and North-East geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The study submits that, hate speeches in Nigeria are mostly credited to political leaders and their ethnic, religious or regional supporters. The study found that there is significant relationship between hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. Requisite recommendations and conclusion were provided in the light of empirical and theoretical findings.

**Keywords:** Hate Speech, Ethno-Religious Violence, National Integration, Nigeria

**INTRODUCTION**

Every nation on earth desires national integration. National integration remains one of the cardinal objectives of every multi-ethnic nation (Egbefo, 2015). Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country that provides a perfect country-case study for ethno-religious violence (Olojo, 2014). Nigeria remains the most populous nation in Africa endowed with rich natural resources. Despite this, Nigeria is faced with many problems and challenges among which hate speech and ethno-religious violence seems to top the list. Hate speech and ethno-religious violence have created instability and remained a constant threat to peaceful co-existence in the Nigeria society (Onah, Diara & Uroko, 2017).

Observably, hate speech and ethno-religious violence has eaten deep into the bone marrows of Nigerians and it has continued unabated. The hatred between the ethnic groups that make up Nigeria has intensified as the use of hate speech continues unregulated. Since 1960 when the country attained independence, ethno-religious violence has left the country comatose. Inter-ethnic rivalry, mutual distrust, bigotry, ethnic cynicism and religious intolerance have invariably and seriously undermined Nigeria's quest for national integration due to its leadership pattern and quality (Egbefo, 2015). Political leaders in Nigeria use hate speech to divide and rule the people already divided along ethnic and religious lines. Put simply, political leaders in Nigeria employed hate speeches in politicking and this incites coexisting ethnic and religious groups, thereby generating all forms of violence especially election related ones (Idike & Okechukwu, 2015).

Nigeria's multi-ethnic and multi-religious diversities coincide with the North and South divide, with Muslims and Christians dominating each part respectively. These have created geo-religious identities; a situation where religion and its concomitant tension generation enthroned a threat to security of the country (Ukandu, 2011). Historically, religious extremists have tried to legalize violence behaviour and bloodshed in the name of God. This is apparent in the violence terrorist attacks that are justified by people who believe that they are involved in a form of holy warfare. In this context, Juergensmeyer's concept of 'cosmic war' (Juergensmeyer, 2000) provides a useful theoretical structure for investigating the violence that religious extremists indulge in today. This framework refers to the encounter between the forces of evil and good that highlights religious humility, yet induces violence (Nwankwo, 2015). Killing in the name of God is therefore one of the major motors of religious violence today (Juergensmeyer, 2000).

In addition, under the current democratic transition, competitive partisan political activities are being used as avenue through which groups are mobilized, identities rigidly reinforced, often infused with excessive religiosity, violent youth gangs and militants are formed and armed, and ethnic tensions and conflicts thereby facilitated. As the elite pursue zero-sum political engagements, all means, including violent ones, are used to achieve selfishly and narrowly defined ends (Idike & Okechukwu, 2015). Therefore, the character of the Nigerian state is responsible for the country's deepening ethno-religious violence that are presently threatening the fabric of the country, and which has become a clog in Nigeria's attempt to develop her economy (Mohammed, 2013). Hate speech and ethno-religious violence are rising and the country is daily challenged by these forces. This study therefore seeks to look at the challenges posed by hate speech and ethno-religious violence on Nigeria's march towards national integration. Examined the relationship between hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria and highlight what is required to be done, policy-wise as well as practically, by both the government and all the other stakeholders, so as to find a way out of the heavy cost of potentially violent ethno-religious and communal crisis, which characterize present day Nigeria.

### **Statement of Problem**

In developing countries, the phenomenon of ethnic, religious and political related violence seems to be recurrent. As such, numerous studies have been conducted about the pre, during and post-election violence but little has been devoted in recent time at analyzing the principal cause of this violence in relation to hate speech. According to Adibe (2017), hate speech employs discriminatory epithets to insult and stigmatize others on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other forms of group membership. Segun (2015) added that hate speech is often the gateway to discrimination, harassment and violence as well as a precursor to serious harmful criminal acts. This supports the assertion of Ezeibe (2015) who posits that hate speech is any speech, gesture, conduct, writing or display which could incite people to violence or prejudicial action. Essentially, such speeches rob others of their dignity. In Nigeria, the quest for power and control, and the desire of politicians to win elections at all cost has engendered political and ethno-religious violence. The problem this paper intends to study therefore includes the challenges posed by hate speech and ethno-religious violence on Nigeria's march towards national integration and to examine the relationship between hate speech and ethno-religious violence in present day Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

This study attempts to find answer to the following specific questions:

- i. What are the factors that motivate hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the consequences of hate speech and ethno-religious violence on national integration?
- iii. Is there any significant relationship between hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria?

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study specifically identified the following objectives:

- i. To examine the factors that motivates hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the consequences of hate speech and ethno-religious violence on national integration.
- iii. To examine the relationship between hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis was formulated to guide the researchers in finding answer to the third research questions.

Ho: There is no relationship between hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Hate Speech**

Hate speech is a form of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance including, intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin (Joel, 2012). Hate speech involves attacks on a person or group on the basis of attributes such as gender, ethnic origin, religion, race, disability, or sexual orientation. In law, hate speech is speech, gesture, or conduct, writing, or display which is forbidden because it may incite violence or prejudicial action against or by a protected individual or group, or because it disparages or intimidates a protected individual or group (Fasakin, Oyero, Oyesomi & Okorie, 2017a).

According to Mrabure (2016), hate speech is commonly used to describe any message that disparages a specific person or a group of people. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2016) highlighted that hate speech includes: (a) all dissemination of ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred, by whatever means; (b) incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against members of a group or groups of their race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin; (c) threats or incitement to violence against persons or groups on the ground in (b) above; (d) expression of insults, ridicule or slander of persons or groups or justification of hatred, contempt or discrimination on the grounds in (b) above, when it clearly amounts to incitement to hatred or discrimination; (e) participation in organizations and activities which promote and incite racial discrimination. Furthermore, Malik (2015) conceived hate speeches as wars wages on others by means of word. In general, description of hate speech tend to be wide, sometimes even extending to embody words that are insulting of those in power or minority groups, or demeaning of individuals who are particularly visible in the society. At critical times such as during election campaigns, hate speech may be prone to manipulation, accusations of promoting hate speech may be traded among political opponents or used by those in power to curb dissent and criticism (Alakali, Faga & Mbursa, 2017).

Consequently, hate speech exemplified rhetorical strategies which drive some people to a level of hostility in which they openly wish physical harm on others or political leaders, contravening vital norms that enable democratic government to function (Chaiken & Eagly, 1978). According to Kiai (2007), hate speech leads to short-and long-term consequences which are similar in nature to the effects of other types of traumatic experiences. Rasaan, Udende, Ibrahim and Oba (2017) posit

that. That hates speech lead to lower personal self-esteem and a diminished sense of security. Leets (2002) concludes that hate speech violates the individual's dignity, resulting in humiliation, distress and psychological or emotional pain. Similarly nemes (2002) holds that hate speech can provoke pain distress, fear, embarrassment and isolation to individuals. While hate speech towards groups of people can bring inequalities problems and isolation, it creates the feeling of fear and discourages them from participating in the community and expressing their options (Alakali et al,2017). Adding to the argument, Nicelsen (2002) affirms that the degradation and humiliation brought by hate speech can silence the victims and therefore reinforce existing hierarchies in society. Nigeria civil society (2015) adds that hate speech can lead victims to become aggressive and dangerous; Kalejaiye and Alliyu(2013)also observed that hate speech incite ethno-religious violence.

As regards motivation of hate speech Alkali *et al.*(2017) pointed out several factors, such as lack of tolerance, political clashes, discrimination, enmity and the openness of social media as motivating hate speech online. For a nation with widespread ethnic and religious intolerance, it is very easy for hate speech to go unreported, unrestrained and unchallenged. On the bases of this, politically motivated hate speech is generally an antecedent to election related provocation and violence in Nigeria. Essentially, such speeches rob others of their dignity. In Nigeria, sections 95 and 96 of the 2010 Electoral Act prohibited the use of any language in campaigns that will hurt tribal, religious and/or sectional feelings. Other legal frameworks that abhor the use of derogatory language in Nigeria are the political party code of conduct (2013) and the Abuja Accord (2015). Despite these legal frameworks, there has been notable growth in hate speech before, during and after the 2011 and fact, instances of hate speech have been published in print and electronic media, social or digital media and preached in podiums of both churches and mosques. Hate speech as well as provocative comments have negate the fundamental principles of democracy in Nigeria.

### ***Ethno-Religious Violence***

Ethno-Religious Violence according to Uhunmwuango and Epelle (2011:113), refers to “clash, contention, confrontation, battle, rivalry, controversy or quarrel among ethno-religious groups. It stem from an irreconcilable posture with regards to symbolic values to the group concerned. These symbolic values, which cannot be compromised, are religious and language.” Egbefo (2015) sees ethno-religious violence as the extreme manifestation of conflict in the crisis of identify. In so many parts of Nigeria, Nigerians are finding it difficult and/or impossible to coexist with them. Ethnic and religious sentiments are rising and the country is daily challenged by these forces. Violence here denotes employment of illegal methods of physical coercion for personal or group ends. Generally, violence can be viewed from two perspectives, the micro and macro levels. The micro level attributes violence to hostility between neighbours of different ethnic group while macro level see violence as a result of adjustment to the ethnic map (Ikong, Adebusolu & Adihikon, 2016).

The religious-political history of Nigeria is characterized by unprecedented upsurge of ethnic and religious conflicts leading to loss of lives and destruction of properties worth trillions of naira. For us to adequately conceptualize the subject matter, we must separate them. Thus, ethnicity involves first of all a type of social relations in which members of different ethnic groups seek advantage by appealing to their various group, ethnic identities or share characteristics. These ethnic identities or characteristics include points of personal reference such as perceptions of common descent, history, fate, and culture, which usually indicates some mix of language, physical appearance, and the ritual regulation of life, especially religion (hale, 2004). According to Otite (1990), ethnic groups are categories of people characterized by cultural criteria of symbols including language, value system, and normative behaviour and whose members are allocated in a particular part of a new state territory. Historically, ethnicity is as old as the Nigerian state which gained independence in 1960.

As a social construct, ethnicity can be regarded as the employment of the ethnic identity and differences to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict and cooperation (Osaghae, 1995; Fawole & Bello, 2011). Historically, issues of ethnicity in Nigeria can be traced back to be colonial mistakes that forced the different ethnic groups of Northern and Southern provinces into becoming an entity called Nigeria in 1914 (Salawu, 2010). However, ethnicity hardly exists in pure forms. It is a consequence of ethnic group identity mobilization and politicization especially in a competitive ethnically plural environment or context (Nnoli, 1978; Nwankwo, 2015). Also, Wolff (2006) and Adebayo (2010) affirm that ethnicity on its own does not cause conflict as several factors are always at play in each conflict situation, arguing that identity is a fact of human existence, and that it is what people make of it or to what use they deploy it that makes the difference between ethnic cohesion, harmony or violence.

Furthermore, the tradition of maintaining the notion of referring to some members of the communities as settlers or aliens and others as natives, more often than not, triggers intra-ethnic violence. The so-called settlers, notwithstanding how long they have been in a community, are continually treated as strangers. For example, they do not possess the complete ownership of land, social position or have a say in society unlike the natives of the community. This often leads to the feeling of domination and marginalization within the community (Albert, 1993). Also, the aliens are not only discriminated against in terms of land ownership but are also mandated to pay extra taxes and are not allowed to settle in particular areas of the community (Salawu, 2010).

Religion on the other hand means different things to different people. There is no consenting of opinion on its meaning that is why Egwu (2011) argued that religion is a difficult subject of inquiry including attempts at its definition and conceptualization. Therefore, religion is defines in many ways and the definitions usually vary among scholars. According to Bella (1970), religion is a set of symbolic forms and actions that relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence. Similarly, Ejizu (1993) sees religion as man's intuition of the sacred and ultimate reality and his expression of that awareness in concrete life. Agarwal (1994) defined religion as attitude towards super human powers. To Adeniyi (1993) and Erukora (2005), religion is a body of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendent being. This implies that religion deals with norms and rules that emanated from God and which must be followed by the believers. Ayinla (2003) viewed religion as a particular system or set of systems in which doctrines, myths, rituals, sentiments and other similar elements are interrelated.

According to Salawu (2010), in the last two decades, religion has been at the heart of most violent conflicts in the world. This may be the reason why religion has been referred to as one of the key security challenges facing humanity since after

the end of the Cold War (Horton, 1960). The Christian and Islamic religions, which were never an indigenous part of African heritage, are by contrast the heritage of North African Arabic and European invasions of the rest of the continent. While Muslims dominate the North (Hausas), Christians dominate the Southeast (Igbos). However, the Western part of Nigeria that is characterized by the Yoruba ethnic nationality is not dominated by anyone particular religion (Olojo, 2014). Thus, Nigeria is divided along religious lines with each group hanging on tenaciously to their own faith or belief (Dike, 2003). The major violence in Nigeria is based on either ethnic or religious cleavages. Nigeria is undoubtedly one very tense country, in so far as ethno-religious relationships are concerned. A combination of interrelated crises has stretched the bonds of unity, the fabrics of nationhood, as well as the ingredients of citizenship identity, very thin, to a potentially snapping point. Although the incredible resiliency demonstrated by Nigerians has somehow prevented the dismemberment of the country, the tension hangs in the air like thick clouds, such that, for example, a mere argument between two traders of different ethnic backgrounds in a market in Kano has been known to ignite widespread violent conflict. This tense context of national development is undoubtedly one of the major problems that have to be concretely solved in order for Nigeria to forge ahead and develop, both economically and politically in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Idike & Okechukwu, (2015). In Nigeria, it is interesting to note that ethnicity and religious bigotry has become a fulcrum of various forms of language, cultural autonomy and self-determination. Therefore, in a multi-ethnic and religiously diverse society like Nigeria with some form of contextual discrimination, relationships between people may be characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear as it is the case among ethnic and religious in Nigeria (Fawole & Bello, 2011).

In fact, this mutual suspicion and lack of cordiality among various ethnic components explains why ethno-religious' violence have become a permanent feature of Nigeria as a nation as far back as 1980 to date. Since the attainment of independence in 1960, many parts of Nigeria have become theatres of war, characterized by an increasing number of ethnic and religious violence. Ethno-religious violence has become problematic and unsolvable, this because various measures have been proved to be inadequate and ineffective. The measures have been characterized by lack of sincerity and political will and have become even monotonous. Also, the panels of inquiry that have been variously set up to investigate ethno-religious violence have been plays by government to buy time and a psychological trick in order to allow people to pour out their anger and frustrations. In order words, such inquires have only cathartic effects without true commitment to implement recommendations that arise there from.

### ***The Causes of Ethno Religious Violence***

Ethno-religious violence have made Nigeria a turbulent enclave. Violent ethno-religious conflicts have been on the increase and the conflicts in Nigeria raging from maitatsine riot to Boko haram insurgency. This study summarizes some of the ethno-religious violence that has taken place from 1980 to 2018.

#### ***1. Activities of the Colonial Masters***

The British colonial masters have been blamed for the ethnic and religious conflicts in Nigeria. for instance, Uchendu (2010) affirms that the growth of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria has its foundation on the activities of the colonial masters that brought Christianity with them and antagonized African Traditional Religion as idolatry. Christianity was first introduced at Benin in the fifteenth century by Portuguese traders and officials to the West African coast. But no significant success was made. However, significant missionary activity was renewed only in the 1840s (Yusuf & Osaba, 2010).

Tracing the history of the background of ethno-religious crises in Nigeria, Uka (2008) holds that Nigeria, before it was colonized by the British, had a multi-cultural/multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and even multi-political culture and was extremely heterogeneous and complex. In related analysis Onah *et al.* (2017) remarks that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic plural society with the Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba comprises of the three largest groups. Each of these ethnic groups, prior to colonial invasion had existed independently on its own and had its own socio-cultural, political and economic systems by which the entire life of its members was organized. These systems varied quite markedly among these ethnic groups so much so that in some cases, they were mutually antithetical and contradictory. It was rather these disparate ethnic groups that the colonial overlords forcefully hammered into one geo-political amalgam as Nigeria. It is worthy of mention that before the amalgamation, Nigeria was divided to the Southern and Northern protectorates for easy administration. Then in 1914 the two protectorates were amalgamated to form the country known as Nigeria under Lord Fredrick Lugard. According to Uka (2008:3), "Since this geographical expression known as Nigeria was forcefully put together by a foreign power its disparate units...live in mutual suspicion".

#### ***2. Political Leadership***

As observed by Alfa (2012), the major causes of ethno-religious in Nigeria can be attributed to the over bearing character of the post-colonial Nigeria state, greed, selfishness, parochialism, pettiness, and irresponsible conduct by those who are supposed to be leaders. Nigerian leaders pursue self-serving objectives in the power game and in the process of accumulation of wealth and tend to aggregate these with and project them as a part of an ethno-religious group agenda. Moreover, the leadership has largely failed to provide the needs of the people. An average Nigerian lacks access to all the basic things for a healthy, satisfying and productive life. This has contributed to the emergence of large number of frustrated population who are ready made tools in the hands of extremist. Also, it is worthy of mention that identities consciousness in itself, and its varied forms, are not major problems in plural societies. However, they become a problem when they are mobilized negatively and used as platforms on which political action is organized, as well as when they become, or are perceived as, objectives around which discriminatory practices and unjustified use of violence are organized (Ibrahim & Ibrahim, 2003).

#### ***3. Hate Speech***

The nature and characteristics of hate speech is still very much uncertain in the literature. Hate speech is a speech that ridicules or attacks an individual or a group of people, which could incite people to violence or prejudicial action. Hate



speech is the precursor to ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. Idike and Okechukwu (2015) observed that political leaders make unguarded, if not irresponsible utterances, which deepen existing ethno-religious divides. The types they make are popularized by the mass media they control, which further engender fears and suspicions. Their lack of transparency and bad governance reinforces both the reality and perceptions of discrimination and marginalizing of one group by another. Hate speeches sustain the culture of intolerance, political clashes, discrimination, and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria (Nwolise, 2007). It is worthy of note that hate speech and foul language in Nigeria are mostly inclined to religion, ethnic or politics.

#### **4. Weak National Security System**

The weak national security system is also one of the factors responsible for ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria. This problem of weak national security system is compounded by illegal cross border migration and arms trafficking across the nation's border. The porosity of Nigeria's land borders especially in the Northern part has seriously undermined the nation's security as this give rise to the influx of foreign national whose activities are inimical to the security interest of the country (Egbefo, 2015). In addition, the lack of clear cut document on national security policy has remained a problem confronting the country since independence. The lack of security policy to a reasonable extent has undermined the capacity of the country to confront ethno-religious crisis whenever they arise (Ebukelo, 2010).

#### **5. Poverty and Joblessness**

The incidence and magnitude of poverty has increased dramatically in Nigeria since the 1980s, with the result that 67% of Nigerians are decisively entrapped in conditions of acute poverty. Thus, poverty has ravaged communities and families, it has torn the moral fabric of society, and it is now threatening the country with violent eruptions. Most of the recent violent ethno-religious and communal conflicts can also be explained by poverty, joblessness and competition over scarce resources and services both in the rural and urban contexts. The mass of unemployed youths in both the rural and urban areas of Nigeria need little motivation or mobilization to partake in riots and 'reprisal attacks', given the inducement or 'opportunity' for looting that often accompanied these. Thus, poverty and joblessness, especially amongst the youth, are important causal and facilitating factors in violent crisis. Such objective economic conditions nurture the subjective conditions of frustration and aggression, which create conducive atmosphere for violent conflicts to erupt (Jega, 2002). Mass poverty made Nigerians susceptible to elite manipulation and mobilization of negative identities. As the state became unable to satisfy basic needs of the people, they in turn withdrew from the sphere of the state, into ethno-religious and communal cocoons, with heightened sensitivity to the roles of the 'others' in their marginalization (Jega, 2002; Egbefo, 2015; Nwankwo, 2015).

#### **6. Religious Factors**

The religious factors cannot be left out of the causes of the crisis in Nigeria. In Nigeria today, two religions predominate; Christianity and Islam and these two religions have different conceptualization. For instance, according to Abdulfadi (1992), the Christians want man to give unto caesar what is caesar and unto God what is God in an apparent segregation between the worldly and the spiritual. Islam on the other hand, addresses the Here-and-Now in the perspective of the hereafter. Just like ethnicity, religious identity is a critical issue in Nigeria because it is more often than not used in creating sense of order, meaning, and hope especially in an environment of both physical and political insecurity like Nigeria (Okene, 2005). Also, Christian fundamentalists and activists are concerned mainly with what they regard as the threat of Islamization of the country, imposition of sharia on non-Muslims and the use of state resources to subsidize Muslim activities. Infact, to entrench the Sharia Court in the constitution is to legalize the inferiority of non-Muslims and the superiority of Muslims... The claim therefore, the courts cannot be used as instruments of evangelism is totally false. The Sharia is Islam and Islam is Sharia. Sharia is a total way of life; it is evangelism (Sabiya, 1979). Therefore, the battle seemed to centre on perceptions of the imposition of identity on the other or at least maintaining one's ground. This hegemonic contest also involves an interpretation and reinterpretation of events and history in Nigeria (Ibrahim & Ibrahim, 2003).

#### **7. Ethno-Religious Identities**

In Nigeria today, ethno-religious identities have equality become a serious problem because they have been associated with perceptions of discrimination and inability of some groups to exercise certain rights and civil liberties. The main issues have been the control of political power in general, and specifically, control of the armed forces, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy. There is also the question of the control of economic power and resources (Kirk-Green, 1975; Komolafe, 2012). Thus, the relationship among ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear of domination and a tendency towards violent confrontation.

#### ***Hate Speech and Ethno-Religious Violence in Nigeria: A Challenge to National Integration***

Hate speeches has weakened patriotism, commitment to national deals and true nationhood, giving rise to parochialism, ethnicity and other cleavages which ethno-religious Jingoists exploit for their interests and advantage (Obsanjo, 2004). In addition, hate speech and incapable leadership is the problem of the country's diversity which manifests very often in ethno-religious crisis, ethnic squabbles, and ethnic identities among others. Leadership in the context of Nigeria is characterized by sycophancy, greed, dishonesty, endemic corruption, fuelled by personal aggrandizement, political authoritarianism, budgetary abuse, political patronage and hate speech (Egbefo, 2015; Idike & Okechukwu, 2015). In the view of Okene (2005), the greatest causes of ethno-religious and indeed other identity based conflicts in our period is the enthronement of bad leadership and hate speeches. Ethno-religious activism in Nigeria is not likely to be transitory; rather it is likely to be an enduring phenomenon. Eskor Toyo might, thus, be right in affirming that Nigerian nation exists. What is lacking at the moment is a really patriotic, broadminded, principled, enlightened, humane and honest leadership (Ibrahim & Ibrahim, 2003). Therefore, no national integration or nation building can take place in any country in which her leadership is characterized by the vices listed above.

The effects of political activities in developing countries and particularly Nigeria have shown that hate speech has become more vivid in the successive democratic dispensation than the previous ones thereby keeping the citizens more divided (Rasaq *et al.*, 2017). As noticed in many countries and Nigeria as a typical example, most of the candidates for election usually deviate from presenting their manifestoes to the people to delivering hate speeches against their opponents-personality, political parties, ethnic backgrounds and religious. These hate speeches have been pointed out as one of the causes of election violence in the country (Fasakin, Oyero, Oyesomi & Okorie, 2017b). Notably, the Nigerian political history has been very unstable. Electoral violence in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial era, through the first, second, and third Republics to the Fourth Republic in 1999. In fact, violence has become a regular character of election such that the democratic process, values and institutions are prevented from developing because power is gained and retained through violence. Like the proliferation of small arms, peddling of hate speeches sustains the culture of intolerance and electoral violence in Nigeria (Kalejaiye & Alliyu, 2013).

Violence has reached unprecedented levels and thousands have been killed with much more wounded or displaced from their homes on account of their ethnic or religious identification. Schooling for children has been disrupted and interrupted; businesses lost. Billions of Naira and property worth much more destroyed. We observed that electoral and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria manifests in forms of killings, bombings; looting, destruction and damage of properties; assault and death threats; forceful dispersion of political rallies; fighting among political parties; abduction; violent street protests and hooliganism; destruction of campaign billboards; arbitrary detentions and arrests without warrant. These manifestations threaten democratization and national integration in Nigeria.

### ***The Evidence and Analysis of Hate Speech and Ethno-Religious Violence in Nigeria***

The use of hate speech in Nigeria dates back to the pre independence era but the colonial administration used the big whip to manage its negative manifestation. After Nigeria's independence, the First Republic politicians employed hate speeches fiercely. This tendency helped in heating –up the polity for electoral violence, sectarian killings, military coups and civil war. Some of the earliest notable hate speeches credited to the First Republic politicians in Nigeria include the following: (1) The Igbo are too dominating, if you employ an Igbo man as a labourer, he will like to take over as foreman within a short while - Late Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, (2) The God of Africa has created the Igbo nation to lead the children of Africa from bondage of ages – The first President of Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (3). Nnamdi Azikiwe's policy was to corrode the self respect of the Yoruba people as a group to build up the Igbos as a master race- Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Seng, & Hunt, 1986).

Our interviews revealed that these hate speeches in Nigeria laid the foundation for the first military coup and counter coup; 1964/1965 electoral violence especially in the Western Nigeria; pogroms and civil war (1967-1970). The hate speeches identified above painted the Igbos as a dominant race, superior race and threat to Yorubas nation. No wonder, the Igbos were the major victims of the pogroms and the civil war in Nigeria. Although successive military governments in Nigeria suppressed hate speeches and its negative manifestations during 1979, 1993 and 1999 elections, we observed that the use of hate speeches has been reawakened since May 2010 after the death of President Musa Yaradua and the abandonment of PDP's arrangement of zoning public offices between the north and south. Notably, the chronicling of these hate speeches in Nigeria was exclusive but not exhaustive.

**Table 1 Identities of Speakers and Specific Hate Speech**

S/N	Year	Position of speakers/ who do they speak for?	Hate speech/Who do they address?	Source/publication
1	2010	National coordinator of the coalition of northern politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed	It must be a Northerner or no Nigeria. If Goodluck Jonathna wins the PDP's endorsement to contest the 2011 presidential election, there would be violence.	Interview with guardian r, 2 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2010 neutral
2	2011	Presidential candidate of congress for progressive change, General Muhammadu Buhari	God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood	Reported by Lika Binniyat in Vanguard May 15, 2012/PDP
3	2012	National coordinator of the coalition of Northern politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed	Unless efforts are made to ensure that the 2015 general election are free and fair, it may turn out to be the last election in the history of the nation	Leadership March 29, 2012/APC
4	2013	National coordinator of the coalition of Northern politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed	There will be bloodshed. Those who feel short- changed may take the war path and the country may not be the same again	Reported by Kemy Oguns in Osun Defender, 2 <sup>nd</sup> December, 2013/APC
5	2013	Abu King Shuluwa	Nigeria will disintegrate if Jonathan contests in 2015.	Daily independent Friday, march 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2013/PDP
6	2013	Former chairman of PDP, Colonel	The Yorubas are ungrateful kind of	Daily Sun, March 16,

		Ahmadu Ali (rtd)	people, who do not appreciate what others have done for them	2013? PDP
7	2014	Publicity secretary of All progressive congress, Alhaji Lai Mohammed	If the 2015 elections are rigged, the party will not recognize the outcome and will go ahead and form a parallel government	Leadership 21 <sup>st</sup> November, 2014;/ APC
8	2014	Governor Shema Ibrahim of Katsina State	You should not be bordered (sic) with cockroaches of politics. Cockroaches are only found in the toilet even at homes, if you see cockroach in your house, Crush them	Reported by Premium Times on 19 <sup>th</sup> November, 2014/APC
9	2014	Northern Elders forum	Those who vote for Jonathan and the PDP in 2015 will be considered an enemy of the north	Vanguard, 15 October 2014/PDP
10	2013	The leader of the Niger Delta peoples salvation force (NDPSF), Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari	There will be no peace, not only in the Niger Delta, but everywhere if Goodluck Jonathan is not president by 2015, except God takes his life, which we do not pray for	Vanguard Newspapers, May 5, 2013/PDP
11	2013	Chief Arthur Eze PDP Chieftain	That short man calld Ngige, we gave him power and he joined the Awolowo people; the people that killed Igbos	Premium Time/November 13, 2013/APC
12	2014	Asiwaju Bola Tinubu	It is going to be rig and roast, we are prepared not to go to court but drive them out	Tell, 7 July 2014/Neutral
13	2014	Former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Godswill Akpabio	Those who want to take power through the back door will die they will die	Punch, 17 <sup>th</sup> July, 2014 Neutral
14	2014	South East Self Determination Coalition (SESDC?)	We assure those cold blooded murderers that this time, their blood thirsty campaign will not go-replied	Reported by Clifford Ndujihe in vanguard, 5 <sup>th</sup> December, 2012/PDP
15	2014	Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi	The challenge of the Nigerian military is not funding but corruption	This day and the Nation, Tuesday/PDP
16	2015	Patience Jonathan	Please don't vote for prison, A vote for Buari is a vote to send people to prison	Vanguard news March 25, 2015.

From the discourse so far, it is clear that hate speech was the focal point and became an instrument of campaign in the 2015 general election. Therefore, the presentation of various hate speech in several newspapers showed that media have been used to stoke hatred and stimulate violence among ethnic and political groups during the electioneering periods as well as in the daily life. Similarly, though prominence is a determinant of news worthiness however, when public figures try to outdo each other through the use of hate speeches, media have to make sure they do not draw undue attention. More so that politicians and other influential people who mostly perpetuate hate speeches do it for selfish interest, it is necessary for journalists to examine speakers and evaluate their words, scrutinize their facts and claims, and judge carefully the intention and likely impact on the society (Cowan & Mettrick, 2002). According to the Ethical Journalism Network (2016), though it is not the job of journalists to adopt counter positions, claims and facts should be tested irrespective of whoever is speaking.

**Table 2: Ethno-Religious Violence**

Date	Place	Element	Cause	Effect
1963-1964	Kano	The Elites	Secession from the elites against traditional rules/kings	Bloody death of both the elites traditional rulers/kings
1966-1970	Nigeria civil war	Igbo and Hausa	Biafra demanding self-determination in a state which could protect the lives and properties of its citizens. The secession of the former eastern region of Nigeria as a sovereign state, Biafra	Military casualties estimated over 100,000; Death as a result of starvation from half a million to 2 million, (John P. Mackintosh et al. 1966;498-501, John de St. Jorre 1972)
1992 &	Ketu & Mile	Yoruba's Hausa's	Traditional Market Union leadership tussle,	Mayhem lives and

1999	12		(Sillo, 1999:1)	many properties lost.
June 1999	Bodija Market in Ibadan	Hausa's & Yoruba	Hausa man who was a cattle rarer and a Yoruba man who was allegedly knocked down by Hausa man's cattle became an intense quarrel between Hausa-Fulani cattle rarer & the Yoruba's traders.	Eye witness stated: casualties of 10 people lost their live; 24 vehicles burnt & 130 shops were burnt.
July 1999	Shagamu Lagos	Yoruba & Hausas	Long standing political rivalry; land ownership & observance of the rituals of a traditional Oro festival of Yoruba people	
1999	Kano	Hausa -Fulani	Planned revenge for the losses incurred at the sagamu violence. One Kano ethnic indigenes, Alhaji Dangote, a prominent Lagos business who brought the Sagamu survivors in trailers back to kano, on getting to Kano, the returnees reportedly recounted a glory picture of their kiths and kin. This was said to have caused anger and bitterness to the people of Kano who descended in the Yoruba's who dwell in Kano	Lives and countless of properties were destroyed
2002-2003	Kano & Kaduna	Muslim & Christian	Ethnic tension, etc. over the introduction of the sharia law which provides for corporal punishment, amputation of limbs, and decapitation	In 1999 to 2004, a total estimation of over 50000 people s killed in violence, while a total of 800,00 other displaced.

Sources: (a) Globe and Mail, 23 February 2000, BBC News, October 7, 2004); (b) Amnesty International, 23 November 2004, October 11th, 2000.

The table only shows the major conflicts. However, the spate of bomb blasts, kidnapping, pipeline vandalization and other forms of criminalities in recent times in various parts of the country are emerging trends of terrorism, which many analysts have variously attributed to the disturbing trend of political dissatisfaction, ethnic and religious differences, perceived societal neglect and pervasive poverty among the people. For example, while youth restiveness in the Niger Delta area and parts of the South East, occasioned kidnapping and disruption of oil installations, activities of members of the Odua's People's Congress (OPC) in the South West and that of Herdsmen & Boko Haram Saga in the Northern States; have also been worrisome since 1999 ( Abimbola and Adesote, 2012). Nevertheless, while the activities of the Niger Delta militants and OPC are trivial now, the activities of the Boko Haram are very worrisome to peaceful loving Nigerians and Lovers of Nigeria across the world. It is abundantly clear from the available evidence that the Boko Haram ( Islamic Sect) is against anything that has to do with western values in the country in general and Northern part in particular ( Abimbola and Adesote, 2012). This could be seen in a large number of attacks being unleashed on the Nigerian State with a view to achieving their objectives. It is pertinent to have a glimpse of the attacks.

**Table 3: Casualties of Hate Speech and Ethno – Religious Violence**

Date	Casualties
March 5, 1987	The kafanchan tumult which started in College of Education over a crusade been organized by Christian students spread to Funtua, Kaduna and zaria killing 25 people, 61 injured and properties valued at N75 million damaged.
April 6, 1980	The maitatsine riot in Kano metropolis claimed 4, 177 lives
October 26-29, 1982	The maitatsine uprising of Bnullum-kuttu in Bornu state claimed 400 lives with properties with over N3 million naira destroyed or looted
February 26-march 5, 1984	The Jimeta maitatsine crisis killed 1,004 and 5,913 families were displaced
April 26-28, 1985	The Gombe maitatsine uproar claimed over 100 lives
October 11-14, 1990	The Muslims opposition of the invitation of Reinhard Bonnke to Kano leaving over 500 lives loss and properties worth over N7 million naira destroyed.
April 11, 1992	The zangon-kataf riot leaving over 27 lives loss.
August 18, 1993	The Futua riot leaving over a lives loss and properties destroyed.
April 3, 1994	Jos crisis leaving over 300 lives loss
December 8,1994	Another kano riot triggered by the beheading of an Igbo Christian known as Gideon Akaluka leaving over 3, 427 loss and destruction of properties worth over 30 billion
February 28, 2000	Kaduna riot over the attempt to implement sharia law led to the killing of over 600 people
September 13, 2001	The Job crisis left over 1,000 people dead and 500,000 people were displaced
November 26, 2002	Kaduna protest the considered blasphemous of the Holy prophet Mohammed claimed over 200 lives and consumed countless properties.
September 30, 2005	Maiduguri, Potiskun and Katsina States protests over the publication of some cartoons of prophet Mohammed by Jyllands-Posten, a Danish newspaper, over 3,000 christians were killed while their churches and properties were razed.
March 21-23, 2006	Moslem fanatics in neighboring states of Yobe, Bauchi and Gombe states attacked the fleeing traders in transit leading to the killing of over 50 christians
July 26, 2009	Boko haram launches mass uprising with attack on a policy station in Bauchi, starting five-day uprising that spread to Maiduguri and elsewhere over 800 persons were killed
September 7, 2010	Boko Haram attacked a prison in Bauchi, killed about five guards and freed over 700 inmates, including former sect members.
October 11, 2010	Bumblng/gun attack on a police station in Maiduguri destroys the station and injuries three by the group.
December 28, 2010	Boko Haram claim responsibility for the Christmas Eve bombing in Jos that killed 38 people.
December 31, 2011	The group attack a mammy market at army Mogadishu Barracks, Abuja, 11 people died.
April 1, 2011	The group attacked a police station in Bauchi Killing 3 people
April 9, 2011	The group attacked a polling center in Maiduguri and bombed it.
April 20, 2011	A bomb in Amiduguri kills a policeman
April 22, 2011	The group attacked a period in Yola and freed 14 prisoners
April 24, 2011	Four bombs explode in Maiduguri, killed at least three
May 29, 2011	Bombings of an army barracks in Bauchi city and maidduguri and led to death of 15 people
May 31, 2011	Gunmen assassinate Abba Anas Ibn Umar Garbai, brother of the Shehu of Borno, in maduguri
June 1, 2011	The group killed Sheu of Bornp's brother, Abba El-Kanemi
June 7, 2011	A team of gunmen launch parallel attacks with guns and bombs on a church and police stations in Maiduguri, killing 5 people.
June 16, 2011	Bombing of police headquarters in Abuja, claimed by Boko Haram. Causality reports vary.
June 26, 2011	Gunmen shoot and bomb a bar in maiduguri killing about 25 people
August 16, 2011	The bombing of United Nations office in Abuja, killing over 38 people by the group
December 25, 2011	Bombing of St Theresa's catholic Church, Madalla, killing over 46 people
January 6, 2012	The sect attacked some southerners in Mubi killing about 13 Igbo
January 21, 2012	Multiple bomb blast rocked Kano city, claiming over 185 people
January 29, 2012	Bombing of Kano police station at Naibawa area of Yakatobo
February 8, 2012	Bomb blast rocked army headquarters in Kaduna
February 15, 2012	Koton Karife prison, Kogi state was attacked by the sect and about 119 prisoners were released and a warden was killed.
February 19, 2012	Bomb blast rocked Suleja Niger State near Christ Embassy church, Leaving 5 people seriously injured
February 26, 2012	Bombing of church of Christ in Nigeria, Jos leading to the death of about 2 worshippers and about 38 people sustained serious injuries
March 8, 2012	An Itallian, Franco Lamolinara and a Briton, Christopher McManus, who were expatriate staff of Stabilim Visioni construction firm were abdicated in 2011 by a splinter group of Boko Haram and were later killed
March 1, 2012	Bombing of St. Finabarrs catholic church, Rayfied, Jos resulting in the killing of 11 people and several others wounded
April 26, 2012	Bombing of three media houses (thisday newspaper in Abuja killing 3 & 2 security officers and

	injured 13 people; Thisday, the sun & the moments newspapers in Kaduna killing 3 persons and injured many others.
April 26, 2012	Attack on Bayero University, Kano, killing 13 christian worshippers, a senior non-academic staff & professors
April 30, 2012	Bomb explosion in Jalingo, claiming 11 persons and several others wounded
August 16, 2013	The Christian women were abducted and repeatedly raped by insurgent who claimed this as sexual 'jizya' a tax paid by Christians under Islamic law.
April 14, 2014	The abduction of over 200 girls from Government Girls secondary school in chibok, Bornu State by Book haram.
July 9, 2016	A female preacher Mrs. Enuice Elisha, the wife of a redeemed pastor was hacked to death in Abuja by suspected Muslim fanatics
December 3, 2016	The Fulani herds' men in southern Kaduna killed 808 people and properties worth billions of Naira were destroyed.
February 9, 2017	The conflicts of Fulani herds' men continued leading to the killing of many people.
April 27, 2018	Herdsmen attacks church, killed two priests and 14 worshippers in Benue Suspected herdsmen attack yelewata
May 2 & 17, 2018	Community in Guma LGA of Bunue state killing 6 people and burning down houses.
April 13, 2018	Suspected herdsmen, bandits in Taraba, Zamfara and Benue states killed 66 persons
April 24, 2018	Herdsmen strike again in Benue State, killed Rev. Fathers and 17 others.
June 4, 2018	Makurdi-herdsmen invaded Tseadough village in kwande LGA of Benue State killing 7 persons including women and children.
July 8, 2017	Bandits attack villages in Sokoto State, killing an unspecified number of people.
July 17, 2018	Bandits killed 40 people in sokoto

**Sources:** *Punch* 17, June, 2011; *Punch* 16 & 27, February, 2012; *Punch* 23, February, 2012; *Guardian* 20, February, 2012; *Guardian* 12, March, 2012; *Nigerian Tribune* 30, January, 2012; *Abimbola and Adesote* (2012); *Daily Post* 24 April, 2018; *Vanguard* 13 April, 2018; *Vanguard* 4 June, 2018; *Vanguard* 12, July 2018; *Sahara Reporters* 17 May, 2018 etc.

The table above only show the major attacks since 1987 to May 17, 2018. The above-mentioned analysis of the activities/attacks of the dreaded Islamic sect, Boko Haram has revealed that not less than 10,000 persons, including the civilians, security personnel have been killed since its emergence up to May, 2018 (*Sahara Reporters* May 17, 2018). Also, significant in the analysis is that, activities of the sect over the years have taken different trends and dimensions.

The sect has graduated from cruel drive by attacks on beer parlours to bombing of security buildings, public buildings and Christian Institutions (*Abimbola and Adesote, 2012*).

#### **Theoretical Framework**

In this study, conflict trap theory and the theory of the post-colonial state suffixes shall be adopted as the framework of analysis. The exponents of conflict trap theory are Paul Collier, V.L. Elliott, Havard Hegre, Ankle Hoeffler, Marta Reynal-Querol and Nicholas Sambanis. To them, conflict trap denotes that once a conflict has erupted, it tends to develop a momentum of its own. Peace seemingly becomes elusive and hard to restore. Even when peace is restored it often does not endure (*Collier et al., 2003*). The exponents of conflict trap ascribed the lengthy pattern of a typical conflict to a number of interlocking factors. Conflicts in multiethnic societies are enduring possibly on account of their ready vulnerability to the rallying, massaging and mobilization of ethnic sentiments for both the warring groups and the government. In addition, in a plural society, particularly where the population has significant grievances, conflict usually becomes an effective political strategy for pursuit of their interests and goals. Also, even if the custodians of power and authority in the society are willing to concede to the demands of the groups, they are usually neither trusted nor believed to have credible means of committing the warring factions to agreement. The warring groups might be afraid that once they hold the olive branch the custodians of power and authority would renege on any agreement (*Collier et al., 2003*). Furthermore, it is also contended that it is even difficult for the custodians of power and authority to concede to demands of the warring groups because such could encourage the flowering, proliferation, mushrooming and radicalization of other groups, which often have opposing objectives. Also, a significant pattern to lengthy conflict is the extremely unequally distributed income and a very low average income, possibly on account of the cost of sustaining conflict is low if there is an expansive layer of economic destitute and possibly significantly weak institutions such as the security agencies, which are unable to deter and apprehend violators of the laws. More so, sustaining conflict has become easier because the warring groups have easy access to armaments for prosecuting conflict (*Collier et al., 2003*).

Yet, very important to the lengthy pattern of conflict is that once a conflict has occurred a template is raised. It becomes difficult to return to status quo. Presumably, conflict reinforces hatred, and may shift the balance of influential interests in favour of continued conflict. Also, the criminal entrepreneurs that profit from the conflict would do anything including sabotaging peace process for it to continue. According to Paul Collier *et al.* (2003:12): violence entrepreneurs, whether primarily political or primarily commercial, may gain from conflict to such an extent that they cannot credibly be compensated sufficiently to accept peace. Those who

see themselves as political leaders benefit from war because they can run their organizations in Hierarchical, military style with power concentrated in their own hands, something much more difficult to justify in peacetime. Those who see themselves as extortionists benefit from the absence of the rule of law in the areas they control. However, leaders see themselves as if they will have invested in expensive military equipment that will become redundant once they agree to peace. Asking a rebel leader to accept peace may be a little asking a champion swimmer to empty pool. Following from the above assumptions, the conflict trap theory is apt and relevant for the

appreciation of the challenges of ethno-religious conflict management in Nigeria. It offers deep insights to the interlocking factors that sustain conflict. It presupposes that once conflict has occurred it lengthens and becomes challenging to restore peace on account of a number of factors such as ethnic pluralism, proliferation of arms, existence of income disparities, existence of expansive republic of hoodlums and the activities of criminal entrepreneurs. The conceptual and theoretical excursion reveals various perspectives for the appreciation of violence. Notably, each of the perspectives may be perfunctory, deficient, incomplete and restrictive but in sum they are illuminating and complementary.

The theory of the post-colonial state suffices. At the point of decolonization, the predatory character of the Nigerian state had taken shape and the emerging elites conceived the nationalist struggle merely in terms of getting rid of alien rule and occupying the exalted positions of the Europeans in the civil-service and other vocations (Ikejiani-Clark, 1996). The nationalists who inherited political power from Britain did not have control of the economy and implicitly, there was no ruling class except political elites, who had attained political positions because they had championed the struggle for self-determination (Fadakinte, 2013). Consequently, Nigeria becomes a neo-patrimonial state where party politics and weak democratic institutions persist (Adesote & Abimbola, 2014). Importantly, this character of the state accounted for the collapse of the First, Second and the defunct Third Republics. Despite that the nationalists were conscious of the necessity to fuse political power and economic power, the indigenous dominant class who had ethnic and religious cleavages could not agree among themselves on the *modus operandi* for the socio-economic and political processes in Nigeria. Ethnicity becomes the ideology for economy survival in the mist of scarce resources (Ake, 1981). The control of the state power by a particular ethnic group also means more wealth, more employment, more government establishments and more government appointments for members of that ethnic group at the expense of the others. Politics assumes a zero-sum nature, whereby gains and losses are fixed and absolute. The winner takes all at the expense of the complete loss of other actors and vice-versa (von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944). Jega (2012) corroborated the above position and argued that elections in Nigeria have zero-sum character. This zero – sum character of elections leads to negative mobilization of communal (ethnic) feeling by politicians. This negative mobilization of the populace by political parties and politicians is based on the message that if the elections are free and fair then „our party“ should win. The converse then is that if „our party“ fails to win the election, then the elections were not free and fair. It is this negative mobilization and the hateful language with which it is done that leads to electoral violence in Nigeria. Collier (2010) rightly observed that anything that affects the prospects of power in Nigeria is contested bitterly, lawlessly and violently. Thus, the Nigerian political history between 1999 and 2015 becomes the history of electoral crises; after all, control of political power is the easiest avenue to wealth accumulation.

Hence, strong individuals (ethnic nationalists and political leaders) and organizations (political party) block weak institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from implementing extant electoral laws including the laws that abhors the use of hate speech. Although the legal frameworks guiding electoral campaigns and public speeches have outlawed hate speech, individuals and organizations that breached such laws are rarely prosecuted and punished. This is because the institutions of the state lack the capacity to check reckless/injurious utterances in Nigeria

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This study assessed the impact of hate speech on ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. The descriptive approach was adopted and data was collected via a survey of 600 respondents comprises of Traditional leaders, Christian Leaders, Muslim leaders, Leaders of Civil Society groups and Youth leaders randomly selected in each geopolitical zones as shown below.

**Table 4: Population of the Study**

Geopolitical Zones	Traditional Leaders	Christian Leaders	Muslim Leaders	Civil Society	Youth Leaders	Total
South-South	Delta (20)	Bayelsa(20)	Edo (20)	River (20)	Akwa-Ibom (20)	100
South-West	Lagos (20)	Osun (20)	Oyo (20)	Ekiti (20)	Ogun (20)	100
South-East	Anambra (20)	Enugu (20)	Imo (20)	Abia (20)	Ebonyi (20)	100
North-West	Kaduna (20)	Kano (20)	Sokoto (20)	Zamfara (20)	Kebbi (20)	100
North-Central	Kwara (20)	Kigo (20)	Plateau (20)	FCT (20)	Niger (20)	100
North-East	Taraba (20)	Bauchi (20)	Borno (20)	Adamawa (20)	Yobe (20)	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>600</b>

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork (2018)

#### **Sampling Technique**

The purposive, non-probabilistic method was adopted to target respondents with knowledge about the specific issues capture in the study. Sample was drawn from the six geopolitical zones to elicit views on the relationship between hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria.

#### **Reliability and Validity of the Instrument**

Structure questionnaire were designed to elicit needed information. The reliability was established through a trial test conducted on 100 respondents in South-South who also took part in the study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument as shown in the table below.

**Table 5: Reliability Statistics of Variable**

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Hate speech	12	0.817
Ethno-religious violence	15	0.792

The results yielded a coefficient of 0.817 and 0.792, which satisfied the general recommended level of 0.70 for the research indicators (Cronbach, 1951). Experts also judged the face and content validity of the questionnaire as adequate. Hence, researchers satisfied both reliability and validity of the scale.

#### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

##### Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate

This study examined the relationship between hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. To achieve this, six hundred (600) questionnaires were administered across the six (6) geopolitical zones. Of the six hundred questionnaires distributed out of which three hundred and ninety eight (398) questionnaires representing 66.3% were retrieved as shown in the table below.

**Table 6: Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate**

S/N	Geopolitical Zone	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage %
1	South-South	100	83	13.8
2	South-West	100	71	11.8
3	South-East	100	78	13.0
4	North-West	100	46	7.7
5	North-Central	100	51	8.5
6	North-East	100	69	11.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>66.3</b>

Source: Researchers' fieldwork (2018)

**Table 7: Respondents Responses on Whether Hate Speech is the Precursor to Ethno-Religious Violence in Nigeria**

Category	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	57.5
Agreed	33.8
Neither agreed nor disagree	8.7

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The table 7 above shows that hate speech is the precursor to ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. Out of the total respondents, it was observed that 57.5% strongly agreed and 33.8% agreed while only 8.7% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

**Table 8: Correlation Matrix**

Variables		Hate Speech	Ethno-Religious Violence
Hate Speech	Pearson Correlation	1	.865**
Ethno-Religious Violence	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	398	398
Hate Speech	Pearson Correlation	.865**	1
Ethno-Religious Violence	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	398	398

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 Level (2-tailed). Source Field survey (2018)

Source: Field Survey(2018)

Table 8 above shows the correlation between hate speech and ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. There exists a significant positive high correlation between hate speech and ethno-religious violence ( $r = .865$ ,  $n=398$ ,  $p, <0.01$ ). This implies that hate speech has a strong and positive relationship with ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. This is widely supported by the previous findings of Okafor (2007); Adebayo (2010); Yakubu and Rothfus (2012); Nwankwo (2015); Fasakin *et al.* (2017); and Rasaan *et al.* (2017).

#### Regression Analysis

Table 9: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjust R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.0813 <sup>a</sup>	.782	.710	.374

a. Predictors: (Constant), hate speech

b. Dependent variable: ethno religious violence

Source: Field survey (2018)

**Table 10: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of square	Df	Mean	F	Sig
1	Regression	3.745	1	3.823	23.533	.000
	Residual	4.671	183	0.38		
	Total	8.362	184			

a. Dependent variable: ethno-religious violence

b. Predictors: (constant) hate speech

Source: Field survey (2018)

The simple linear regression shows ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.782 which reveals that hate speech independently accounts for 78.2% of the variation in ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. The F. statistics of 23.533 reveals that the model is statistically significant at 0.05 significant levels. To this end, the study concludes that ethno-religious violence in Nigeria is a function of hate speeches.



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the empirical and theoretical findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Political actors that engage in the use of hate speeches during electioneering should be punished according to the electoral laws of the country. Stringent punitive measures should be meted to media outlets, especially the native language radio stations who use hate speech to fan the ember of ethnic division or outlets that publish or broadcast hate speeches as a form of deterrent for the growth of democracy in Nigeria.
2. Religion should be used to promote peace not abused. Adherents of different religions should imbibe the moral teachings of religions such as love for one another, honesty, tolerance, unity, justice, and sanctity of human life. This will foster peaceful coexistence.
3. The media as the watchdog of society should take up the responsibility by bringing to the forefront the fiercely devastating effect of hate speech. Also, political actors should be told in clear and unambiguous terms that hate speech does not win election; good governance and good manifesto do.
4. Convocation of regular national dialogue is recommended here because this will facilitate the mobilization of those who are divided along ethnic, cultural, economic, and religious lines in the task of national unity and nation building.
5. Corruption in all forms must be eradicated and the imposition of political leaders by political godfathers must be discouraged. This will help to entrench leadership integrity, values, tolerance, selflessness, and accountability. Once the leadership is a reflection of the wishes of the people, then the dream of national integration and nation building is largely achieved.
6. The use of traditional institutions and religious leaders as peace-makers with the adoption of a strategy of openness and sincerity is the key to peaceful ethno-religious, co-habitation and national prosperity.
7. The provision of employment for the country's teeming youths is highly recommended. This is because, if these youths are gainfully employed it becomes difficult for anybody to recruit them and use them to cause ethno-religious problems and other disintegrative activities.
8. The issue of Christian-Muslim dialogue should be taken seriously by parties involved. During such dialogue, the issue of freedom of worship as stipulated in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should be emphasized. This will bring a lasting peace in the country.
9. The National Orientation Agency, in collaboration, with civil society groups, political parties and traditional or community leaders should embark on a campaign against the use of hate speech in Nigeria.
10. Political leaders should aim at operating a true federalism, cultivate a suitable political culture, out-grow ethnic rancor and stop blaming ethnicity for any social policy that affect any group unintentionally.
11. There is a need for governments, ethno-regional, and religious groups to adopt preventive diplomacy and early weaning system as mechanisms for attaining peace. To attain this objective, courses pertaining to conflict, and conflict management should be included in the curriculum of all tiers of education where Nigeria diversities should be emphasized.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the empirical and theoretical findings of this study, we conclude that hate speech is the precursor of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria and that the problem posed by ethnic and religious violence is a threat to Nigerians corporate existence and its desire to engender national integration. The effects of political activities in Nigeria have shown that hate speech has become more vivid in the successive democratic dispensation that the previous ones thereby keeping the citizens more divided. Nigeria's background of intolerance provides ample grounds for the use of hate speech. Directly, it was hate speech and indirectly it was ethnic and religious intolerance that led to the surge in electoral violence in Nigeria from 2011 to 2015. Many lives have been loss and properties worth billions destroyed leaving people destitute and homeless. This has affected sustainable human development and national integration. The use of ethnicity, religious and politics should rather unite us as Nigerians in order to promote peace, harmonious peaceful coexistence and unity.

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**Effect of Role Play Method on Students' Academic Achievement and Interest in Some Selected Topics in Government in Afikpo Education Zone of Ebonyi State, Nigeria**

**By**

**Ezegbe, Bernedeth N. (Ph.D)**

Department of Social Science Education,  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka  
Bernedeth.ezegbe@unn.edu.ng  
2348035847979

**&**

**Okeke, Jonas N.**

Department of Social Science Education  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka  
jonas.okeke@unn.edu.ng  
+2348062284803

**&**

**Okocha, Kelechi Unya**

Department of Social Science Education  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka  
+2348135776409

**&**

**Ome, Samuel Okechukwu**

Department of Social Science Education  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka  
Samuel.ome@unn.edu.ng  
+234835078357

**&**

**Ejah Adole**

Department of Social Science Education  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka  
+234868375715

**Abstract**

This study determined the effect of role play method on secondary school students' academic achievement and interest in some selected topics in government in Afikpo Education zone of Ebonyi State. The study adopted a pre-test post-test non-equivalent group quasi-experimental design. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw the one hundred and sixty seven (167) SSII government students used for the study. The GAT and the GII were the major instruments used for data collection. The reliability of the GAT and the GII was established using Kuder-Richardson (K-R20) and Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability indices of **0.99** and **0.62** respectively. Mean, Standard Deviation and ANCOVA were used for the data analysis. The findings of the study revealed among others that students taught using role play method had higher achievement and interest scores than those taught using lecture method in some selected topics in government. The study concluded that role play method when employed in teaching and learning enhances students' achievement and interest in government. Based on the findings, the study recommended among other things, that teachers should employ role play method in teaching selected topics in government.

**Key Words: Role play, method, achievement, interest and government**

## Introduction

Government has different interpretations to different individuals and in different contexts. Government could be seen as an agency that governs, an art of governing or the study of governance. Hence government can be seen as an institution, a process or an academic field of study (Dibie, 2008). In the view of Troolin (2016), government as an institution, is the authority that sets rules for a society, helps its members relate to one another and to others, and keeps it running smoothly, securely, and peacefully. This implies that government is an institution entrusted with making and enforcing the rules of a society as well as with regulating relations with other societies. Here, in order to be seen as a government the people concerned must recognize a ruling body in order to keep order.

As a process, government could be seen as the procedure(s) involved in governance. Accordingly, Mba & Odo (2003) noted that government is concerned with the day to day running of the business of governance in a country. Government as a process is the daily administration and management of a country by its political institutions/agencies. Thus, it is the actual carrying out of government functions. These functions include among others legislation, implementation of policies and enforcement of law and order.

The thrust of this study is on government as an academic field of study. Government as a field of study is studied in senior secondary schools and as political science in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. As an academic field of study, West African Examination Council (WAEC, 2013) defined government as the study of political institutions, processes and theories taught in schools, colleges and higher institution of learning. To Dibie (2008), government is an academic field of study that seeks to study political institution in the state, ideas, value and doctrine about politics and the view of political thinkers on what constitutes the welfare of the people. This implies that government is seen as the study of issues relating to governance and its attendant arms – legislature, judiciary and executive. Government in this study is therefore defined as a secondary school subject that studies political institutions, processes and systems existing in a state as outlined in secondary school government curriculum.

In this study, Government curriculum is viewed as document which shows the comprehensive list of topics, performance objectives, content, teachers and student activities, learning materials and evaluation guide which learners are expected to cover before enrolling in the senior secondary school certificate examination (SSCE). The present Government curriculum is arranged into seven themes for senior secondary school 2 (SSS 11) which includes; political parties, pressure groups, elections, public administration and pre-colonial and colonial administration. As documented by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), (2008) the focus of the government curriculum is to help students understand the institutions of the state (country) and the process of governance which encourages students as citizens to actively participate in the process of national development.

There has been constant review of Government curriculum to ensure that its objectives are maximally achieved. Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007) maintained that the constant review and amendment of government curriculum is to ensure that the study of political organization and policy making of the country enables students to understand the public policy system of Nigeria. The rationale for studying Government is to prepare students to be functional citizen in such a way that they would comprehend and have broad mind towards conflict resolution, promotion of the spirit of nationalism and decision-making. The objectives of government curriculum according to FME, (2008) include enabling students to:

Understand the concept, principals, institutions and process of government; Recognize their roles and contributions as informed citizens towards the achievement of national development; Become active participants in the democratic process of the nation and their local environments; Appreciate the role of Nigeria as a member of the international community; Appreciate the challenges and dynamics of past and present government in Nigeria and the world, and Recognize the role of ICT in e-government and in fostering the process of governments in the world

The importance of government to the nation building and governance cannot be overemphasized. Every individual, irrespective of his/her status, requires the knowledge of governance. Knowledge of Government as a subject plays a significant role in fostering social development and stability within the society. Government as a course of study is imperative to be taught in order to develop the skill, knowledge and inculcate the spirit of national interest through persuasion, manipulation, maneuver, discussion, dialogue and negotiation. Knowledge of government is also germane for economic, social, political, technological, physical and institutional development of every society. According to Dibie (2008), government is a pivot for students as it prepares them for responsible citizenship. The teaching of Government provides students the opportunity for leadership training, political education, study the type of government system obtainable in Nigeria and other parts of the world in order to avoid the mistakes of the leaders and to acquire wider knowledge.

Given the laudable objectives and huge importance of government in the country, it becomes very imperative that students' interest and achievement in the subject is high. Interest is a vital variable in

learning process. Interest is a driving force that makes a learner to go extra mile in his or her learning exercise. It can be expressed using a statement made by an individual about like and dislike. Obodo (2002) described interest as the attraction, which forces or compel a child to respond to a particular stimulus. By implication a child develops interest if a particular stimulus is attractive. In other words, the child is bound to pay attention as a lesson goes on if his interest is captured. This shows that interest comes as a result of eagerness to learn and eagerness in learning inevitably will give birth to better achievement.

Achievement on the other hand has to do with attainment of set of objectives of instruction. It is designed to determine the extent students have mastered what they have been taught. It has to do with students' cognitive scores or learning outcomes in a subject (Shaibu & Usman, 2002). Despite the importance of Government in personal and national development, students' achievement and interest seem to be low. There appears to be public outcry on the rate of students' academic achievement in the subject in senior secondary school external examinations. Accordingly, the West Africa Examination Council Chief Examiner (2014) lamented in WAEC's annual report (2014) that students' achievement in government in West Africa School Certification Examination (WAEC) was below average and reported in 2015 that students' achievement, though above average was below expectation as many candidates failed to perform excellently. Students seem to perceive schooling as boring or a mere grade game in which they try to get by with as little effort as possible (Burkett, 2002; Pope, 2002). When students are not interested and not encouraged to become active participants in teaching-learning process, they appear to be totally disengaged and alienated from school work leading to poor grades. This being the case, the school system seems to be then characterized by massive students' underachievement and the aim(s) of education highly thwarted. Various reasons have been given for this poor achievement of students. Prominent among them are teaching methods and interest (Olatoye & Adekoye, 2010; Berhanu, 2011 & Emaikwu, 2012).

Teaching method as noted by Agwu (2005) refers to the overall plan for the orderly presentation of content of learning materials. Usually a method is driven by a philosophy or an assumption about how students learn in school. Teaching method is therefore, a general process the teacher adopts in presenting his lesson to the students, such that students perform assigned roles in the classroom. The important index in the teaching and learning process is that the students learn at the end of teaching (Aguokogbuo, 2005). Hence, the use of good teaching method or functional approach in teaching of Government plays an important role in harmonizing classroom instruction. Therefore, meaningful Government teaching is student activity loaded such that students are given wide democratic latitude to learn by doing it themselves. Through active participation, students' intellectual integrity and capacity for independent judgment can be guaranteed.

Nevertheless, it has been noted with dismay that even a subject as important as Government is taught using the traditional lecture method (talk and chalk) (Asogwa & Echemazu, 2011). This old method, conventional as it is, appears to have reduced students' interest. For instance, Abdulhamid (2010) found that lecture method used by teachers have made many students lost interest in the classroom and consequently may reduce students enrollment in some subject areas. The author added that the use of lecture method sets the teacher as the only active participant in the class while the students are complete observers or admirers through the lesson. This encourages rote memorization of concepts which bring about memory failure that affect students' academic achievement (Ugwuda & Agwagah, 2009). Asogwa and Echemazu (2011) opined that most teachers rely on lecture method because of their experiences as most of them still regarded the way they were taught in their own days as the best way to teach in this modern time. Seeing this development, Ideye (2010) revealed that the effective teaching of Government involve not merely coverage of the subject curriculum content but the effective use of the instructional strategies which will help the students to have in-depth understanding of the difficult concepts and topics and above all stimulate them to learn. Quite notably, the challenges that Government teachers are facing in 21st century are so diverse that using participatory and/ or innovative teaching methods is more crucial than ever. At this juncture, Israel (2011) stressed on the fact that mastering of Government difficult concepts cannot be fully achieved without the effective use of participatory and innovative instructional strategies such as discussion method, inquiry, demonstration, use of ICT, problem solving and dramatization among others. From the foregoing discussion, the study focuses on finding the effect of role-play method of teaching (a participatory method) on students' academic achievement in Government.

Role play method refers to as a participatory method in which students have to take on different characters to simulate an authentic or artificial event. Accordingly, Dorathy and Mahalakshimi, (2011) defined role play as a teaching method in which students are presented with a real or artificial environment and they are exposed to some kinds of case or situations in which they need to exhibit the same in form of roles. Role-play method is an innovative teaching method that is dramatic in nature. In this study role play method is seen as a method in which students are staged in classroom or within the school environment to act out functions or roles that are inherent in real life situations which are related to their schools' works in order to achieve instructional objectives. It is referred

to as activities engaged by teachers and students in the classroom in order to enhance desirable change in behaviour of the learner and maximize their interest and academic achievement in Government in secondary schools.

Role play method is explained by Brunner's discovery learning theory. This theory purports that construction of knowledge in learning is as a result of the effort by the learner in discovering something himself rather than being told. In role play students are to discover knowledge themselves through the various roles they take up. For instance, when students perform roles as party members, electorates and pressure group members, they discover more facts of the issues in question through their active involvement in the teaching learning process.

The importance of role play in students' academic life cannot be overemphasized. It makes students active participants in teaching and learning process as they take responsibility in their learning. According to Oberle (2004) role-playing activities introduce students to "real world" situations. Role-play is a teaching method that allows students to explore realistic situations by interacting with other people in a controlled way in order to develop experience (Glover, 2014). Role-play is an effective technique to animate the teaching and learning atmosphere as it allows students to be creative and put themselves in another person's place for a while (Dorathy & Mahalakshimi, 2011). It helps students to develop both cognitive and affective components of perception and helps in knowing how people behave and why people behave in different ways (Charturvedi, 2009). Role-play method in the classroom can generally foster the interaction between the learner and other learners and between the learner and the content of instruction. The use of role play in teaching goes beyond simple knowledge dispensation but encourages students' involvement in the teaching and learning process.

In role playing, the teacher first of all gives students roles to play in a classroom and directs them on what to do. At the end of students' participation, the teacher summarizes the activities in order for students to understand it clearly. Dorathy and Mahalakshimi, (2011) outlined a detailed guide on how to use role play to teach. This guide is as follows:

- The teacher should prepare the students by asking questions before performing a role play.
- The questions should incorporate the major parts of the role play and the vocabulary/idioms involved. After the question and answer session, the students should be comfortable with what they need to do.
- Allow the students a few minutes to study the role cards and work out some key sentences. The teacher can help the students where ever needed.
- Each role play should be performed at least twice with the students changing roles.
- In group situations the stronger students can act out the role play to the whole class.
- The teacher can take one of the roles if needed.
- Avoid making corrections until the role play is finished.

Various researches have been carried out to ascertain the efficacy of role play method. For instance, Morris (2003) reported that the role-playing helped the students engage in activities at multiple times and places which help them to retain information always. In another study by Hassanzadeh, Vasili and Zare (2010), the results of student t-test showed that the increase after educational course was significantly higher in role playing method group compared to the speech method group. Dorathy & Mahalakshimi (2011) observed that role play is an effective technique to arouse students' interest in second language acquisition.

Ezegbe and Okeke (2013) reported that simulation enhanced students' achievement in government. The findings from Yousefzadeh and Hoshmandi (2014)'s work showed that role- playing method increased student's educational skills in history. In a study by Alabi (2016), the result revealed that the mean score of students taught vocabulary with role play method was significantly higher than that of their counterparts taught with traditional method. Findings from these studies showed the effectiveness of role play method in enhancing students' academics in different areas. However, most works on role play are mainly on vocabulary and other subjects which are outside the scope of this study which is in senior secondary school government in Afikpo Education zone, hence the need for the current study. From the foregoing exposition, this study therefore sought to investigate the effect of role play method on secondary school students' academic achievement and interest in some selected topics in government in Afikpo Education zone of Ebonyi State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Government is a very important subject that equips students with the rudiments of good citizenship and national consciousness leading to national development. Despite the importance of Government in personal and national developments, students' interest and achievement in the subject seems so demoralizing. This is evidenced in 2014 and 2015 WAEC results as the West Africa Examination Council Chief Examiner (2014) lamented in WAEC's annual report 2014 that students' achievement in government in West Africa School Certification Examination (WAEC) was below average and reported in 2015 that students' achievement, though above average was below expectation as many candidates failed to perform excellently. This ugly trend of poor achievement in government

has been attributed to the use of non participatory teaching methods that lead to boredom, mere memorization and rote learning employed by government teachers. Hence, the need to explore the effect of a participatory method, like role play method on students' achievement and interest in government as a subject. Thus, the problem of this put in question form is, 'What is the effect of role play method on secondary school students' academic achievement and interest in some selected topics in government in Afikpo Education zone of Ebonyi State?

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the mean achievement scores of students taught government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method?
2. What are the mean interest scores of students taught government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of students taught government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method.
- HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean interest scores of students taught government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method



## Methodology

The design for the study is quasi experimental. Specifically the study employed pre-test and post-test non equivalent control group design. This study was carried out in Afikpo Education zone of Ebonyi State. Ebonyi State is one of the five States in the South-Eastern Nigeria. The capital city of the State is Abakaliki. Ebonyi State is known for commercial and academic activities. The state is one of the educationally disadvantaged out of the thirty-six (36) states of the federation. The population of the study comprises three thousand two hundred and sixty nine (3,269) students in all the 48 public co educational secondary schools in Afikpo Education Zone that offer Government, (Ebonyi State Secondary Education Board, 2014). The sample size for the study is one hundred and sixty seven (167) senior secondary school students two (SS2) from four intact classes in two (2) public schools sampled for the study. The two schools were drawn each from the two sampled local government areas using simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for data collection were Government Achievement Test (GAT) and Government Interest Inventory (GII). The instruments used in this study - Government Achievement Test (GAT), Government Interest Inventory (GII) and the lesson plans were face validated by one expert from Science Education Department (Measurement and Evaluation unit) and two experts from Social Science Education Department both in University of Nigeria Nsukka. They validated the instruments with particular reference to the suitability, relevance, clarity and organization of the instruments. Their modifications and corrections were duly effected in the final draft of the instruments. The content validity of GAT was ensured with a Table of specification developed by the researchers. To determine the reliability of the research instruments, both GAT and GII were administered to 30 respondents from a different school outside the study area, Kuder - Richardson (K-R20) Reliability Estimate was adopted for GAT since the instrument is dichotomously scored. The K-R20 version of Kuder - Richardson Reliability Estimate was used since the items are not of the same difficulty level. A reliability index of 0.92 was obtained for the GAT. On the other hand, Cronbach Alpha method was adopted to determine the reliability of the GII which yielded a reliability index of 0.94. As a result of the high reliability indices, the instruments were considered suitable for the study. Data for the study were collected through pretest and post-test using the Government Achievement Test (GAT) and Government Interest Inventory (GII). The pre-tests were administered to the research subjects before the commencement of treatment to measure the students' initial level achievement and interest. After the treatment, post-tests were administered to the students using reshuffled version of GAT and GII. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at an alpha level of 0.05. ANCOVA was used because the research subjects the study are not equivalent. It reduced the initial group differences. With the use of ANCOVA, the pretest served as covariate of the post-test scores.

## Results

The results of the study are presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

**Research question 1:** What are the mean achievement scores of students taught Government in senior secondary schools using role play method and those taught using lecture method?

**Table1: Mean and Standard Deviation achievement scores of students taught Government using role play method and those taught using lecture method**

Group	Teaching Method	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Gain Score
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Experiment	Role play method	82	32.46	9.43	70.28	14.47	37.82
Control	Lecture method	85	31.98	11.48	47.01	8.68	15.03

Table 1 above shows that pretest mean and standard deviation achievement scores of experimental group are 32.46 and 9.43, while that of control group are 31.98 and 11.48. It could be observed that the two groups are almost at the same achievement baseline prior to instructional treatment. However, the posttest mean and standard scores of experimental group are 70.28 and 14.47, while that of control group are 47.01 and 8.68. The experimental group had a mean gain of 37.82 while control had 15.03. This shows that experimental group achieved higher than that of the control group after instructional treatment.

**Hypothesis one(HO<sub>1</sub>):** There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method.

**Table2: Analysis of Covariance of the mean achievement scores of students taught Government using role-play method and those taught using lecture method**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	22648.561	2	11324.280	79.932	.000
Intercept	51625.153	1	51625.153	364.394	.000
PreAchievement	51.008	1	51.008	.360	.549
<b>Method</b>	<b>22535.400</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22535.400</b>	<b>159.065</b>	<b>.000</b>
Error	23234.529	164	141.674		
Total	616171.000	167			
Corrected Total	45883.090	166			

Significant ( $p < 0.05$ )

Table 2 above reveals that F value (159.07) is significant at 0.00 level of significance. Since this significant level of 0.00 is less than 0.05 significant level at which the hypothesis is tested, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method.

**Research question 2:** What are the mean interest scores of students taught Government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation interest scores of students taught Government using role-play method and those taught using lecture method**

Group	Teaching Method	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Gain Score
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Experiment	Role play method	82	2.52	0.95	3.94	0.13	1.42
Control	Lecture method	85	2.53	0.89	2.55	1.01	0.02

Table 3 above indicates that pre-interest mean and standard deviation scores of experimental group are 2.52 and 0.95, while that of control group are 2.53 and 0.89. It could be observed that the two groups are almost in the same interest baseline prior to instructional treatment. However, the post-interest mean and standard deviation scores of experimental group are 3.94 and 0.13, while that of control group are 2.55 and 1.01. The experimental group had a mean gain of 1.42 while control had 0.02. This shows that experimental group interest was higher than that of the control group after instructional treatment.

**Hypothesis two(HO<sub>2</sub>):** There is no significant difference in the mean interest scores of students taught Government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method.

**Table 4: Analysis of Covariance of the mean interest scores of students taught Government using role-play method and those taught using lecture method**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	81.676	2	40.838	77.171	.000
Intercept	190.324	1	190.324	359.654	.000
PreInterest	.300	1	.300	.568	.452
<b>Method</b>	<b>81.446</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>81.446</b>	<b>153.909</b>	<b>.000</b>
Error	86.786	164	.529		
Total	1912.889	167			
Corrected Total	168.462	166			

Significant ( $p < 0.05$ )

Table 4 above reveals that F value (153.91) is significant at 0.00 level of significance. Since this significant level of 0.00 is less than 0.05 significant level at which the hypothesis is tested, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the mean interest scores of students taught Government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method.

### Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study revealed that students taught Government using role play method outperformed those taught using lecture method. This finding was further confirmed by the result of null hypothesis 1 which revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Government in senior secondary schools using role-play method and those taught using lecture method in favour of group taught Government using role-play method. This indicates that the method for presenting Government contents to be learnt has a lot to do with students' achievement in Government in secondary schools. This is in line with the view of Otagburuagu (2002) who opined that boosting students' achievement involves making learning an active process, where the learner is totally immersed in learning activities which interests and appeals to him/her. This was the situation under role play method in which students were engaged with different roles and activities during the lessons. This finding is also consistent with the findings of Umoh (2000) and Ajibade and Ndububa (2008) whose separate studies found that methods of teaching that involve activities improve students' achievement in various subjects in secondary schools. The findings also support the findings of Egbe, Mba and Nebechukwu (2010), Abonyi (2013) and Alabsi (2016) that role play and experiential learning strategy enhanced students' achievement in drama, Biology and vocabulary respectively.

The finding under research question 2 revealed that role play method enhanced students' interest in government more than lecture method. This was further confirmed by the finding of hypothesis 2 which revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean interest scores of students taught government using role-play method and lecture methods. This observed difference in the mean interest scores of the two groups in favour of the role play group could be explained by the fact that role play method gave students the opportunity to fully participate in the teaching-learning process thereby boosting their interest. This point is buttressed by Ugbo (2003) who stated that students develop interest in learning a particular subject due to the effectiveness of teaching method adopted by the teachers in teaching. The author added that those who develop interest in school work achieve higher than those that do not develop interest in school work. This means that for students to develop interest in Government, teachers should use role-play method in the teaching and learning process. This finding is in line with the findings of Hussain and Ali (2012), Igboanugo (2013) and Torty and Offorma (2013) who found that students' interest was promoted using CAI, peer teaching and collaborative learning respectively.

### Conclusion

Role-play method was found to be more effective than lecture method on students' achievement and interest in Government in senior secondary schools. The mean achievement scores of students taught with role-play method was found to be significantly higher than those taught with the lecture method of teaching Government. Furthermore, the students taught with role-play method were found to be more interested in Government than students taught with the lecture method. Teaching method has a significant effect on students' achievement and interest in Government. This study therefore, concludes that students' academic achievement and interest in Government can be enhanced by incorporating role-play method into teaching and learning of Government in senior secondary schools in Afikpo Education Zone of Ebonyi State.

### Recommendations

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since the use of role-play method in teaching Government has been found to be effective in promoting achievement and interest of students in Government. Government teachers should therefore adopt role play method in teaching students in order to promote their achievement and interest.
2. Government agencies and professional bodies responsible for curriculum planning should incorporate and emphasize the use of role-play method in teaching of Government in secondary schools.
3. Text book writers should include in their texts, role play activities that would promote students' participation in the pedagogy. This when done would make students' understanding of what they read sharper, thereby promoting students' achievement and interest.

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## Principals' Leadership Role In The Achievement Of Excellence And Quality Assurance In The Administration Of Secondary School

By

**Ikati Lawrence**

Dept: Vocational/Technology Education, Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Amassoma, Bayelsa State. E-Mail: [juwar1970@gmail.com](mailto:juwar1970@gmail.com). Tel: 08035427842

### Abstract

*The study focused on principal's leadership role in the achievement of excellence and quality assurance in the administration of secondary school. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Four research questions were formulated and four null hypotheses to guide the study. The population of the study is 580 secondary school principals in Yenagoa local government area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria while a sample size of 270 principals was drawn. A 23 items questionnaire instrument titled "principal's leadership role in the achievement of excellence and quality assurance in the administration of secondary school questionnaire (PRIERACAASES) was developed for the purpose of obtaining data. To ensure reliability purpose, a pilot test of the instrument was done with the use of Cronbach Alpha reliability test and a reliability coefficient of 0.07 was obtained. Administrative challenges identified in the paper include; lack of adequate teaching manpower, insufficient provision of fund, inadequate infrastructural and instructional facilities among others. The paper concluded by analysing the need to address the observed challenges and recommended that there should be public private partnership in the management of secondary schools for excellence and quality assurance.*

**Keywords:** Quality Assurance, School Administration, school productivity

### Introduction

The continues debate on academic standards has no boundaries and on the lips of every parent expressing serious concern on what went wrong and solutions to solve the problem. We each wish the best quality of education for our children for a better society that we can attain. Each one desire the opportunity for an education that will optimize our chances to achieve set goals and objectives. The rhetoric on falling academic standards in Nigeria educational system, specially the secondary school level has been heated, and numerous opposing concepts of how secondary school education can reach the expected standard have been presented by scholars of education and other individuals for consideration. Some of the challenges are attributed to student, teachers and competency question of school administrators. This blame game will further worsen the already existing problem but solutions.

There have been a lot of reforms in the past decades to address these all import problem which this paper will ignore but to mention the current reform. The 6.3.3.4 system of education was introduced to give a balance as well as equal opportunities for all level of students to acquire educational opportunity at least at that level of educational

attainment. The reform centred on different categories of student, where student with low academic performance will be provided with an alternative education to acquire skill in vocational training. This reform was intended to give bite to encourage qualitative growth in the conduct of secondary school education.

Educational reforms consist of demands for standardized testing of students and teaching profession, efforts to recruit qualified teaching staff, provision and distribution of educational facilities and equipment, legalized actions to empower the school administrator to function effectively and laws to enable greater participation of parents to the improvement of school standards. The essential purposes of schooling, which will require defining what it means to be a literate person, need to consider what it means by the “quality” of education and to reassess the essential purposes of schooling.

### **Conceptualizing Quality and Excellence in Secondary School Education**

These terms encompass aesthetic and effective as well as cognitive processes. Young people cannot achieve the full range of intellectual capacity to solve problems on their own simply by being obedient and by memorizing chapters of books. How students encounter their teachers in classrooms and how teachers interact with their students are concerns that encompass both aesthetic and cognitive dimensions.

There is a real need to enforce intellectual standards and another need to provide the needed facilities and equipment for proper teaching and learning to take place. The school environment contributes largely to students' cognitive learning skills and makes schools more creative. Policy development for schooling needs to be tempered by even more “bottom-up” grassroots efforts to improve the quality of schools.

Excellence is the goal: the means to achieve it is what is in dispute.

### **What are the Parameters to Say a School is doing well?**

The formulation of standards and the measurement of performance are intended to tidy up a messy system and to make teachers and school administrators truly accountable. The aim is to systematize and standardize so that the public will know which schools are performing well and which are not. To ensure these facts, there must be payments and penalties for performance as a form of motivation as well as punishment.

The Nigerian educational system has been bastardized for sometimes; therefore, there must be a holistic approach. Since it poses as a national problem, it needs a rational procedure to arrive at a solution. Rationalization as a concept has several facets;

- It depends on a clear specification of intended outcomes
- What standards and rubrics are supposed to do: which is to exemplify those outcomes
- It uses measurement as a means through which the quality of a product or performance is assessed and presented.
- It is predicted on the ability to control and predict
- It downplays interaction: conditions that are to be introduced in the classrooms or schools but also the kinds of personal qualities, expectations, orientations, ideas.
- It promotes comparison: looking at the achievements of other schools in terms of performance, without taking into account their inferences
- It relies upon extrinsic incentives to motivate action

American entrepreneur and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Apple Inc once opined that Striving for excellence is an important part of professionalism in any job. It involves trying to put quality into everything you do, and this attitude tends to separate the achievers, who make rapid strides in their career from others. According to him, excellence is about stepping outside the comfort zone, training with a spirit of endeavour, and accepting the inevitability of trials and tribulations. Progress is built, in effect, upon the foundations of necessary failure. The real parameter test to prove a school as a good school is what students do what they learn when they can do what they want to do that is the real measure of educational achievement.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education planners in Nigeria have been expanding the quality of education to enhance excellence. The importance of this preoccupation of education policy makers is deliberate to measure with global standards and best educational practices. But the question is; how much of the efforts through which policies have been effectively implemented to drive the process of excellence and quality assurance? What are the challenges confronting secondary school administrators in achieving excellence and quality assurance?

### **Research Questions:**

1. What is the significant relationship between quality assurance and provision of school facilities?
2. What is the significant difference between excellence and availability of quality teaching staff?
3. What is the significant difference between excellence, quality assurance and administrative competence?
4. What is the significant difference between principals leadership style and quality assurance?

### **Hypotheses:**

1. There is no significant relationship between quality assurance and provision of school facilities
2. There is no significant difference between excellence and availability of quality teaching staff
3. There is no significant difference between excellence, quality assurance and administrative competence
4. There is no significant difference between principals leadership style and quality assurance

### **Methodology**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design which is appropriate for the study because it was aimed at ascertain information concerning the population. The population comprises of 580 secondary school principals in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. A sample size of 270 principals was drawn using random sampling technique were principals were randomly selected without bias. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire which has two sections. Section 'A' was for



personal information and section 'B' was structured to solicit information bothering on the research raised. The instrument was validated by professors in the Department of Educational Foundation, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State where input was made. Reliability of 0.07 was realised. Data was analysed using mean, standard deviation and two hypotheses were tested using chi-square

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the significant difference between principal's leadership role and quality assurance?

**Table 1:** Mean rating of the responses on quality assurance and provision of school facilities

S/N	ITEM	x	std dev	RM
1	An intellectual principalship is related to achieving students excellent Performance	2.75	0.72	agree
2	Principal's application of motional models can ensure quality and excellence	2.91	0.68	agree
3	A listening principal can guarantee quality assurance	3.10	0.64	agree
4	Visionary principal can achieve quality result	2.60	0.81	agree
5	Creating good relationship with staff and student is the bedrock of school Excellent performance	3.26	0.61	agree

**Research Question 2:** There is no significant difference between excellence and availability of quality teaching staff?

**Table 2:** Mean rating of respondents on availability of quality teaching staff and quality assurance

S/N	ITEM	x	std dev	RM
1.	There is a relationship between qualified teaching staff and quality assurance	2.70	0.76	agree
2.	Most schools lack qualified teachers	2.87	0.61	agree
3.	Some subject area suffer from lack of qualified teachers	2.51	0.80	agree
4.	There no teachers training programme to prepare teachers	2.65	0.72	agree
5.	Funds are not available to execute training programmes for teachers	2.92	0.65	agree

**Research Question 3:** There is no significant difference between excellence, quality assurance and administrative competence

**Table 3:** Mean rating of respondents on excellence, quality assurance and administrative competence

S/N	ITEM	x	std dev	RM
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1. Some school administrators lack the requisite knowledge to give leadership	3.10	0.66	agree
2. Communication gap between school administrators and teachers could hamper school excellence and quality assurance	3.47	0.61	agree
3. Lack of teachers/students motivation is dangerous to School excellence and quality assurance	2.98	0.73	agree
4. Seminars and workshops can enhance principals Administrative skill for excellence and quality assurance	2.83	0.78	agree
5. Diligent administrative functions of principals is key to School excellence and quality assurance	2.77	0.82	agree

**Research Question 4:** What is the significant difference between principals leadership style and quality assurance?

**Table 4:** Mean rating of respondents on principal's leadership style and quality assurance? competence

S/N	ITEM	x	std dev	RM
1.	Principal's leadership style is related to quality assurance	3.10	0.66	agree
2.	School without good leadership is bound to fail	2.77	0.82	agree

**Hypotheses 1:** There is no significant relationship between quality assurance and provision of school facilities

**Table 5:**  $\chi^2$  chi-square test for the relationship between leadership role and quality assurance

DF	$\chi^2$ cal	$\chi^2$ tab	Decision
8	33.1	15.507	Reject Ho

The table above shows the  $\chi^2$  Chi-Square test for the relationship between provision of school facilities and quality assurance. The result indicate that 8 degrees of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated value of 33.1 is greater than the tabulated/critical  $\chi^2$  value of 15.507 leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It is therefore, correct to state that there is significant relationship between leadership and quality assurance.

**Hypotheses 2:** There is no significant difference between excellence and availability of quality teaching staff

**Table 6:** Summary of the  $\chi^2$  Chi-Square test for the relationship between excellence and availability of quality teaching staff

DF	$\chi^2$ cal	$\chi^2$ tab	Decision
8	23.07	15.507	Reject Ho

Table above indicates the  $\chi^2$  Chi-Square test for the relationship between excellence and availability of quality teaching staff. The result shows that with 8 degrees of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated  $\chi^2$  value of 23.07 is greater than the tabulated/critical  $\chi^2$  value of 15.507, which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and therefore, concludes that there exist a relationship excellence and availability of quality teaching staff.

## Discussion

Data gathered from responses and results shown in the tables as illustrated indicates that the mean rating were all above the ground mean of 2.5. It shows that the respondents are in total agreement of the questions raised and significantly to address the research questions. The findings further revealed that for secondary schools to achieve excellence and quality assurance, the leadership role of the principal must be straight with vision and mission to drive the process of achieving quality. Assurance for quality education is a total holistic process concerned with ensuring integrity of outcomes. Thus, the responsibility for quality assurance rests with the schools' managers and this is expressed through its relationship with other stakeholders in the school system. Lastly, quality assurance recognizes the autonomy of educational institutions and seeks to enhance their capacity to operate in a responsive way. Ogunsaju (2006) argues that, a school manager may manage with good or bad judgment, with great or little experience, with exemplary or undesirable character traits, that educational management functions for quality assurance in our education systems may be practiced in similar terms by all kinds of people, in all kind of schools by educational managers.

## Conclusion

Adedoja (2010) explained that quality assurance have increasingly and significantly become the strongest parameters for determining the relevance and a functionality of education, especially in developing countries where reform regimes in the sector have become imperative for meeting the Education For All and Millennium Development Goals targets. But, inspite of the importance of quality in education, it continues to pose serious challenge to education sector, which is strategic for national and regional development. Quality assurance in education, according to Adedoja (2010), refers to the modalities for evolving, monitoring and re-appraising indices, benchmarks and good practices within an education system. Ukeje (2003) explain that quality assurance in a school setting is made possible through proper planning by the management which involves all the staff in the functions of planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation using set standards and objectives. There is need to uphold quality assurance in secondary schools to ensure a successful school administration.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Secondary school principals should adopt leadership principles that will ensure school growth, development, excellence and quality assurance.
- The state government should appoint capable and qualified principals in public school devoid of sentiments and political inclination
- Secondary school principals should be transferred to other schools periodically as well as sack erring principals
- Government should ensure that principals are provided with the right skill to deliver on the job demand.

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## Ethno-Religious Hate Speech And Political Violence In Nigeria's Fourth Republic

**Ugo Chuks Okolie**

Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria  
Edo State Study Centre, Benin City  
08098771200; [ugookolie3@gmail.com](mailto:ugookolie3@gmail.com)

&

**Eseohé Glory Okoedion**

Department of Foreign Language and Literary Studies  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka  
08166402653; [glory.okodion@unn.edu.ng](mailto:glory.okodion@unn.edu.ng)

### Abstract

*Ethno-religious hate speech is the precursor to political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. While it is true that one of the greatest benefits of democratic societies is freedom of speech, still no one should be allowed under the disguise of exercising the right to free speech to offend, humiliate and demean another human being. In Nigeria, hate speech has been elevated to the status of political campaign strategy and it accounts for the escalation of political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. Therefore, this study explored the impact of ethno-religious hate speech on political violence in Nigeria's fourth public. A descriptive method was adopted and data was collected via a survey of 600 electorates in South-South zone of Nigeria. The study found that there is a positive and significant relationship between Ethno-religious hate speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. This paper recommends among others that political campaign in Nigeria should focus on the implementation of the critical national issues such as economic, political, social, cultural, educational, and healthcare services rather than attack on political opponents or mobilization of ethnic, religious, and regional sentiments.*

**Keywords:** Hate Speech, Political Violence, Political Campaign, Ethno-Religious Groups, Nigeria.

### Introduction

Ethno-religious hate speech in Nigeria's fourth republic has been characterized by violent outbursts by public officials, academia, and is demonstrated in several exchanges on the streets, online forums, and in sectarian print media in different parts of the country. Nigeria is a very diverse country in terms of ethnic orientations, cultural practices, religious beliefs, and linguistics. These differences have been a source of tension beginning from the colonial era under British rule (Joel, 2013). However, its current manifestations are rapidly dividing the country into pockets of religious and ethnic cleavages. One of the main caveats of modern

democratic societies everywhere in the world is the right to free speech. This means that people are inherently entitled to expressing their opinions regarding all aspects of life. However, as the waves of hateful, demeaning, and dehumanizing messages against particular individuals, or groups of individuals on the grounds of their political affiliation, religious conviction, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, etc., intensity and expand in proportion to the human race, it becomes highly debatable whether hate speech should be considered simply as freedom of speech.

In Nigeria particularly, the effects of political activities which show hate speech have become more vivid in the successive democratic dispensation than the previous years. The deeds of politicians have amplified the situation negatively and keeping the citizens more divided now than ever before signals a great source of anxiety to Nigerians at home and in the Diaspora. Political leader in Nigeria use hate speech to divide and rule the people already divided along ethnic and religious lines and this incites co-existing ethnic and religious groups, thereby generating all forms of violence especially political related ones. Though, the challenges of hate speech cut across all countries. For instance, the 2016 presidential election in the United States was a fertile ground for hate speech and up till this day, long after the election was won and lost, the American society remains divided on account of the unparalleled hate speech that attended the election. Specifically in Nigeria, hate speech is thick in the air (Rasaq, Udende, Ibrahim & Oba, 2017; Ugbechie, 2017).

Political violence has been part of human history, present in the history of all humanity for ages. It is an endemic feature of most of the developing world political systems. Particularly in developing countries, like Nigeria, where politics has become an essential feature of the people means of achieving economic wealth (Tamuno,1972; Aver, Nnorom &Targba, 2013). It was Nigeria's pride that she achieved her independence with minimum disturbance, but is rather unfortunate that after independence, Nigeria has been gravitating in a spiral of political violence. The continued eruptions of political violence have implications for national peace and security, and thereby threaten the dissolution of the country Nigeria (Onwubike, 2013). Therefore, political violence negates peaceful co-existence, law and order. In addition to security concerns, political violence militates against the consolidation of democracy and social co-existence. This in turn impact on the social and economic well-being of the nation and creates imbalances in social relations (Howell, 224; Bello, 2013).

Ethno-religious hate speech and political violence are rising and the country is daily challenged by these forces. Ethno-religious hate speeches define the people's daily lives. Yoruba, Igbo, Huasa, Kanuri, Ijaw, Efik, Ibibio and the over 250 ethnic nationalities that make up the entity called Nigeria all have hate tags for one another. In spite of this, there has been no official response or policy to ban hate speech in Nigeria, although there are laws against slander and perjury (Joel, 2013). Although extant literature agrees that political violence are caused by many factors which include lack of internal democratic structures and processes within the individual political parties-leading to imposition of candidates on party members; weak democratic institutions and culture; the prevailing political mind-set of do-or die and winner takes-all; the lack of prompt judicial response to cases of electoral offence; and the general socio economic downturn that has rather remained unaddressed over the years, they have not satisfactorily examined the impact of ethno-religious hate speech on political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. This study therefore, seeks to examine the relationship between ethno-religious hate speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic and provide requisite recommendations and conclusion in the light of empirical and theoretical findings.

### ***Statement of problem***

Historically, Nigeria has organized five general elections and many state or local government elections between 1999 and 2015. A review of these elections revealed that Nigeria has witnessed both election and political violence. Political class continues to arm the youths, employ and deploy them to commit heinous crimes, shed blood at every critical point in our political life especially during election era; water the streets with blood of the youths themselves, innocent by-stands passersby. The politicians themselves are assassinated in broad day and in cold blood; and wantonly destroyed in the Manichean quest for political power. The society and the political system are caught in a spider web or maelstrom of violence and death. Political violence in Nigeria manifest in acrimony, assault, assignation, intimidation, harassment, maiming and killing. Consequently, these affect the existing social relationship in the society. Politicians in Nigeria usually deviate from presenting their manifestoes to the people to delivering hate speeches against their opponent-personality, political parties, ethnic backgrounds and religious. These hate speeches have been pointed out as one of the major causes of political violence in the country. The role of hate speech in political violence has been established in Arica. Most notable examples are the 2007 post electoral violence in Kenya, and the 2003, 2007 and 2011 post electoral violence in Nigeria (Orji & Uzodi, 2012; Ezeibe, 2015). Therefore, the seed of ethno-religious hate speech/campaign has matured in Africa but the phenomenon is largely understudied and underreported. Although these independents but related studies were apt and scientific, none of them examined the effect of ethno-religious hate speech on political violence in Nigeria from 2003-2018. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap as it takes a critical look at the relationship between ethno-religious hate speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

This study specifically identified the following objectives:

- i. To examined the nature of ethno-religious hate speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic.
- ii. To examined the relationship between ethno-religious speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic.

### ***Research Hypothesis***

The null hypothesis was formulated for testing:

Ho: there is no significant relationship between ethno-religious hate speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic.

### ***Literature Review***

#### ***Ethno – Religious Hate Speech***

The idea of 'hate speech' in Nigeria is still new and is yet to acquire wide spread acceptance or recognition. It is usually subsumed under discourse on ethno-centrism and religious intolerance. For a nation with widespread ethnic and religious intolerance; it is very easy for hate speech to go unreported, unrestrained, and unchallenged. Ethno-religious hate speech refers to ethnic slur towards members of an out-group (Mossoro 1991). Also, Leader, Mullen and Rice (1996) view ethno-religious hate speech as hostility and hatred towards members of an out-group. It is this sense of differentiated identity between ethnic groups that lie at the core of this form of hate speech in Nigeria. This hostility is expressed in name-calling of a virulent and base nature. It is common to hear Hausa's being referred to as 'Malo', a derogative term that can be loosely

translated as ‘mentally unstable’. Intense hostility is reflected in the interlocation of name-calling (Joel, 2013). Therefore, ethnic labels promote hostility and rejective behaviours, which becomes fodder for ethnic rivalry and violence.

Hate speech is any speech that attacks a person or group on the basis of attributes such as gender, ethnic, origin, religion, race, disability, or sexual orientation (Fasakin, Oyero, Oyesomi & Okorie, 2017). In the view of Bagdikian (1997), hate speech is a communication that employs intolerant appellations to insult and denounce others either on the basis of their race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or other forms of group membership. Hate speech is considered as any speech, gesture, conduct, writing or display, which could incite people to violence or prejudicial action. Evidently, hate speech is bound to appear whenever someone feels the urge to demean and demonize those holding opposing views, as well as when one wishes to persuade or rather manipulate other people into accepting and endorsing a particular ideology in order to achieve certain political and social goals (Neshkovska & Trajkova, 2017).

The nature and characteristics of ethno-religious hate speech in Nigeria makes the use of legal regulations unsuitable. Moreover, due to the endemic nature of the act both in offline spaces and online forums such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc., a regulation restricting internet access or proscribing hate speech online will be difficult to implement in a politically fractured nation as Nigeria. Indeed, phenomenon of hate speech has taken as extensive dimension in Africa due to poor regulations. In Nigeria, it has become an important aspect of electioneering campaign today that numerous election related conflict are credited to hate speech. Observably, hate speech has eaten deep into the bone marrows of Nigerians and it has continued unabated (Ezeibe, 2015). The hatred between the ethnic groups that make up Nigeria has intensified as the use of hate speech continues unregulated. This hatred manifests mostly between the dominant ethnic groups (Igbos, Yorubas & Hausas). Hence, there is an urgent need for broad-based co-operation between government agencies, media houses, and civil society to challenge ethno-religious hate speech in Nigeria.

Consequently, ethno-religious hate speech exemplified rhetorical strategies which drive some people to a level of hostility in which they openly wish physical harm on others or political leaders, contravening vital norms that enable democratic government to function (Chaiken & Eagly, 1978). Consequences of ethno-religious hate speech in Nigeria are widely obvious, from diatribes on social media to ethnic violence in the Jos, Plateau State and other regions in Northern Nigeria. Rasaan *et al.* (2017) posit that hate speech lead to lower personal self-esteem and a diminished sense of security. Leets (2002) concludes that hate speech violates the individual’s dignity, resulting in humiliation, distress and psychological or emotional pain. Similarly, Judge and Nel (2018) affirm that hate speech can provoke pain, distress fear, embarrassment and isolation to individuals. While hate speech towards group of people can bring inequalities, problems and isolation, it creates the feeling of fear and discourages them from participating in the community and expressing their opinions (Keane, 2006). Adding to the argument, Bell (2009) holds that hate speech is worse than discriminatory speech. It use traditional epithets or symbols of derision to vilify on the basis of group membership expresses contempt for its targets and seems more likely to cause emotional distress and to provoke visceral, rather than articulate response. Therefore, ethno-religious hate speech incite hatred, terrorism, and genocide.

As regards motivation of ethno-religious hate speech, Alakali, Faga and Mbursa (2017) pointed out several factors such as lack of tolerance, political clashes, discrimination, enmity, and the openness of social media as motivating hate speech online. It is clear that there are many old

underlying issues that exploded in the post-election violence in Nigeria that long been neglected by the political leaders; which confuses calm for peace, inactivity for stability. Some of these issues include long held ethnic tensions that have roots in political, economic and social dialectics; impurity for massive human rights violations; corruption; and security forces that are corrupt, oppressive and used for partisan political purposes rather than for maintaining security and combating crime.

### ***Political Violence***

Political violence is a determinant of armed conflict, complex interplay of ideology, quest for power by competing groups, specific in the country and international conditions. It is -an extreme or repressive measure that has threatened the rule of law, personal freedoms and human rights. The economic determinants of violence, in turn, are often related to poverty, inequality, and social exclusion (Aver *et al.*, 2013). According to Wolff (2006:3), violence is defines as ‘the illegitimate and unauthorized use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of the other people in the society’. In the view of Uhumwuangho and Epelle (2011), violence denotes employment of illegal methods or physical coercion for personal or group ends. Violence is also view as the means through which thugs achieve their aims. Therefore, violence is ascribed to outlaws and thugs who unleash terror on the law-abiding citizens and cause social and political instability in the society.

According to Gurr (1970), political violence refers to all collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors including competing political groups as well as incumbents or its policies. Alemika (2011) posits that violence, particularly political violence, represents a disturbance movement to the political equilibrium and peaceful coexistence of the system. The Nigerian political scene is bedeviled by violence. This can be attributed to the culture of political activity during the pre-independence period and the early stage of political independence in 1996. Therefore, political violence as a means to propagate and maintain the status quo in Nigeria is historical and structural in nature. It has been with us since the early independence years and was deployed by the existing political parties then. In addition, the 2011 general election marked another ugly milestone of political violence in the political history and culture in Nigeria. Comparatively, it is rather difficult to determine which of the most violence afflicted general elections were since the return to civil rule in mid-1999. The 1999 general election was violent prone; so also was the 2013, 2007, and 2011 general election. The number of deaths recorded increases after each general election since 1999 (Bello, 2013). The continually deteriorating economic conditions continue to throw up new dynamics and nuances which alter the pattern of political violence in Nigeria. For instance, bombing was non-existent in 1999, 2003 and 2007 general elections. Thus, the specificity of terrorism is new phenomenon of political violence in Nigeria.

Scholars such as Joel (2013); Ezeibe (2015); Fasakin *et al.* (2017); Resaq *et al.* (2017) have argued that the immediate causes of political violence in Nigeria in both the current as well as past political dispensation include hate speech and foul language, lack of internal democratic structures and processes within the individual political parties, youth’s unemployment, prevailing political mind-set of do or die and winner takes-all, misinterpretation of religious tenets, weak democratic institutions and culture, lack of prompt judicial response to cases of electoral offences, imposition of candidates on party members, the weakness and alleged partisanship of the law enforcement agencies during election times, ethnic and religious intolerance, the general socio-economic downturn that has rather remained unaddressed over the years, bad governance,



and fanaticism/bigotry. All these have posed a number of threats to the legitimacy of the national government and its ability to offer leadership appropriate to the demand of nation-building.

### ***Ethno-Religious Hate Speech and Political Violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic***

Nigeria is one of the nations in the world whose political landscape has been inundated, suffused with and deeply enmeshed in spectrum of recurring complex conflicts ranging from resource, communal, to ethno-religious and political conflicts. In Nigeria, political and ethno-religious conflagrations has become highly disruptive to social life, thereby causing divisions in families and communities as well as causing antagonisms among and within social groups. Nigerians have witnessed several cases of political violence in the form of assassinations, bomb-blasts, intimidation, murders, and destruction of properties in time past and now on the increase. The political activities in Nigeria since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999 till the present-day, have witnessed tremendous degrees of power struggle and political violence whereby the number of politically motivated murders is said to be equal to the number of people killed during the Nigerian Civil War in 1967 to 1970 (Aver *et al.*, 2013; Fasakin *et al.*, 2017).

Nigeria's history, its diversity and political landscape makes it susceptible to ethnic and religious intolerance, which feeds into hate speech. An interesting fact about hate speech in Nigeria is the absence of a set of aggressor and victims. In different frontiers, these roles shift depending on the part of the country an individual hail from and reside in. While the Northern manifestations of intolerance and hate speech are often accompanied by violent acts, in the south, it is more subtle. Here, hate speech are often manifested more in stereotyping and abusive denotation of mannerisms of other ethnic groups, particularly Northerners. While it can be argued that there exist stereotypes about every ethnic group, the vitriol and violence that pervades its manifestations between Northern and southern Nigeria is unequalled. Also, ethnic intolerance plays out in relationships between Northern Muslims and Muslims in Southern Nigeria. For instance, in Lagos, Akure, Ibadan, Ijebu-ode etc., Muslims are quite liberal and it is not uncommon to find coupled practicing different religious. Almost every family has members practicing either of the two religious. This has been widely criticized by the Northern Muslims who are not as liberal not as Southern. It has been reported that Southern Muslims are not real Muslims (Maginnis, 2012). Moreover, ethno-religious intolerance and hate speech is so pervasive in Nigeria that is sometimes difficult to identify or classify, especially when it is delivered as a form of comedy routine, in book publications, and social media (Joel, 2013).

Political violence geared towards winning political competition or power through violence, subverting the ends of the electoral and democratic process is very pervasive in Nigeria. Mrabure (2016) noted that politically motivated hate speech is generally an antecedent to election related provocation and violence in Nigeria. Essentially, such speeches rob others of their dignity. In spite of the Nigeria Electoral Act 2010 which spells out detailed provisions specifically barring politically inspired hateful speech, still cases of offensive images of major aspirants, in an effort to create a strong picture of a bad person flourish and have been described by Nigerians as 'one step too far' (Rasaq *et al.*, 2017). The 2015 general elections in Nigeria, like other elections, have come and gone but the different events and issues surrounding the elections cannot be ignored by analysts, observers and scholars. The campaign period of the elections saw many hate speeches being used by politicians in the country. Most of these derogatory speeches and advertorials were used by the members of the two leading political parties in the country the

People Democratic Party (PDP) and All People's Congress (APC). Ethno-religious hate speech and political violence have severally drawn the country to the precipice of disaster. It has engendered huge human carnage, internal displacements and refugee crises, loss of investments, strained inter-communal or inter-ethnic relations, threatened internal security and public order. There is the high level of inter-ethnic and inter-religious vendetta in the country, to the point that it seems that Nigeria is now exhibiting the symptom of a collapsing state, whose members are perpetually at war with one another (Imobighe, 2003).

There are several cases of ethno-religious hate speech in Nigeria. A classic case will be that of General Muhammadu Buhari, a former presidential candidate of Congress for Progressive Change who threatened president Goodluck Jonathan to avoid using his power of incumbency to rig the 2015 presidential election or something will happen (apparently, a repeat of 2011 post – election violence). Again, the utterance of Shema Ibrahim of Kastina State (An APC Chieftain) which referred members of the opposition political party (PDP, Labor Party and others) as cockroaches was one of the deadliest hate speeches in Nigeria. He encouraged members of his party to crush (kill) members of the opposition if they enter their territory. Observably, the multiplicities of hate speeches were credited to the former first lady, Patience Jonathan are behind the electoral violence in Rivers State. Put specifically, the hate speeches made it impossible for the APC to campaign in Okrika. Some of the these attacks include the bombing of the APC secretariat in Okrika on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015; and the disruption of APC rally in Okrika with explosions and sporadic gunfire on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2015. Ezeibe (2015) observed that 100 percent of hate speeches credited to Northerners were aimed principally at restoring the position of the president of Nigeria to the North while 56.25 percent of hate speeches credited to southerners aimed at retaining the position in the south. Irrespective of the aim of hate speech, Adibe (2015) correctly noted that it is a catalyst for political violence and other sectarian Killings in Nigeria. These hamper's social activities and limits bilateral and diplomatic relationship among Nigerians.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The theoretical bedrock of this study is the social Identity Theory. The social Identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1985) was developed to explain the psychological basis of inter-group discrimination. It proposes that membership of social groups forms an important part of an individual's identity. They argued that people tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories; this takes the form of ethnicity, religious, affiliation, gender, and age cohort. Turner (1982) observed that different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel and act on the basis of his personal, family or national level of self. An individual had a number of social identities and any attempt to destroy them could result in social conflict and anti-government activities. Accordingly, members of a group create a sense of in-group feeling. For that reason, they will support their own group at the outlay of other groups.

The rationality or centrality of social identity theory as an underpinning presupposes the desire of groups or persons to compete with other groups or persons for space and the acquisition of available scarce resources (if only the so-called resources are scarce at all). Nnoli (1978) agree that individual values, culture, norms and the entire psychological gamut differ. In the light of this, several interests are brought to play out. The differences in value system therefore constitutes a major force in the determination of power play, resource control and ultimately the determination of which group or persons gets what, when and how. The antithesis arising from this level of agitation breeds emerging contradictions and the plausible ways of making it thrive

is to garnish the same with ethnic coloration (Oyaode, 1994). Ethnicity therefore is used as a tool for the determination of power shifts, public official responsibility, agitations and counter agitations, blackmail, executive propaganda, terrorism, religious uprising, resource allocation, award of contracts, appointment of persons into political offices (whether one is qualified for the job or not). These, among others, are variables that have shaped the direction and locus of the Nigerian politics to date. Ethnicity is nonetheless modeled along the lines of elite competition, and hence, a veritable factor that engenders ethno-religious hate speech and political violence. This scenario is a creation of the elites, who draw upon, distort and sometimes fabricate materials from cultures of the group they wish to represent in order to protect their well-being or existence in order to gain political and economic advantage for their groups as well as for themselves (Erunke, 2011). Thus, Apam (2011) argued that the process invariably involves competition and conflict for power, economic benefit and social status between the political elite, class and leadership group within and among different ethnic categories.

In the final analysis, the relevance of the social identity theory is based on its ability to justify how elite greed, abuse of political power, alienation, marginalization and exclusion has engendered ethno-religious hate speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic.

### ***Methodology***

This study examined the relationship between ethno-religious hate speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. A descriptive survey design was adopted and data was collected via a survey of 600 electorates in south-south zone of Nigeria comprises of Traditional Leaders, Christian, Muslims, Youths and members of Civil Society groups. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson product Moment correlation and Regression Analysis.

### ***Reliability and Validity of the Instrument***

The questionnaire was validated by experts in political science. A pilot study to determine the level of reliability was carried out on 50 electorates in Delta and Edo state who were part of the study within a time interval of two weeks. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument as shown in the table below.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics of Variable**

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Ethno-religious hate speech	15	0.813
Political violence	18	0.798

The results yielded a coefficient of 0.813 and 0.798, which satisfied the general recommended level of 0.70 for the research indicators (cronbach, 1951). Hence, researchers satisfied both reliability and validity of the scale.

### ***Results and Discussion***

This study examined the relationship between ethno-religious hate speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. To achieve this, six hundred (600) questionnaires were administered across the south-south geopolitical zone. Out of the 600 questionnaires distributed, 472 questionnaires representing 78.7% were retrieved as shows in the table below.

**Table 2: Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate**

S/N	South-South State	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Retrieved	Percentage%
1	Akwa Ibom	100	63	10.5
2	Bayelsa	100	86	14.3
3	Cross Rivers	100	79	13.2
4	Delta	100	88	14.7
5	Rivers	100	77	12.8
6	Edo	100	79	13.2
	Total	600	472	78.7

Source: Researchers' fieldwork (2018)

**Table 3: Electorates Responses on Whether Ethno-Religious Hate Speech is the Precursor of Political Violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

Category	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	63.7
Agreed	32.4
Neither agreed or Disagreed	3.9

Source: field survey (2018)

Table 3 shows that ethno-religious hate speech is the precursor to political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. Out of the total respondents, it was observed that 63.7% strongly agreed and 32.4% agreed while only 3.9% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

**Table 4: Correlation Matrix**

Variables		Ethno-Religious Hate speech	Political violence
Ethno-Religious Hate speech	Pearson Correlation	1	0.877**
Political Violence	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	472	472
Political Violence	Pearson Correlation	0.877**	1
Ethno-Religious Hate Speech	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	472	472

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed)

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 4 shows the correlation between ethno-religious hate speech and political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. There exists a significant positive high correlation between ethno-religious hate speech and political violence ( $r=.877$ ,  $n=472$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This implies that ethno-religious hate speech has a strong and positive relationship with political

violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. This is widely supported by the previous findings of Joel (2013); Bello (2013); Fasakin *et al.* (2017); Rasaan *et al.* (2017).

### Simple Regression Analysis

**Table 5: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Of the Estimate
1	.535 <sup>a</sup>	.713	.539	19.726

a. Dependent variable: political violence

b. Predictors: (constant), ethno-religious hate speech

Source: Authors' computation (2018)

**Table 6: ANOVA<sup>A</sup>**

Model		Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	231-257	1		138.528	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	683-312	524	231.		
	Total	914-569	525	257 1.736		

a. Dependent variable: political violence

b. Predictors: (constant), Ethno-religious hate speech

Source: Another's computation

The simple linear regression shows ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.713 which reveals that ethno-religious hate speech independently accounts for 71.3% of the variability in political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. The F. statistics of 138.528 reveals that the model is statistically significant at 0.05 significant level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can thus be concluded that there is a significant effect of ethno-religious hate speech on political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic.

### Policy Recommendations

Based on the empirical and theoretical findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The culture of impurity that encourages political violence should be shunned by scrupulous enforcement of laws prohibiting political violence and illegal arms trade, possession and use.
2. INEC should rise up to their constitutional responsibility of monitoring activities of political parties so as to enthrone internal democracy in the political parties with strict adherence to their respective constitutions.
3. The civil society organizations should intensify their efforts in the area of civil education so that the citizens can understand the essence of politics, the values of democratic governance and practices, and to eschew ethnic and religious sentiments in political participation.
4. The media organizations and journalists who are morally inclined to ethical journalism should mobilize and conscientize the public through citizenship education

- to discouraged and confront hate speech and foul Lange online as part of their civic responsibility.
5. Political parties and their agents should shun all forms of electoral and political violence and should embrace peace, order, and discipline as a means of improving democratic institution and deepening democracy.
  6. The newspaper organizations should refrain from publishing abusive comments that denigrate individuals or groups on account of race, ethnicity, disability, religion or gender.
  7. The politician should conduct their campaign on the basis of political issues such as economic, political, socio-cultural, educational, and healthcare services rather than attack on political opponents or mobilization of ethnic, religious, and regional sentiments. Also there is need to stop overzealous ambition, lust for power, selfishness, voluptuousness, pride, anger, and revenge in Nigeria politics.
  8. The winner takes it all syndrome that is the zero sum game is not ideal in our democratic project because it is willful, violent breeding, parochial, discriminatory, elite based, and unethical.
  9. The Nigeria government should be more proactive in ensuring that the ant-corruption agencies are more effective and efficient and not mere appendage of the presidency for witch-hunting perceived political opponents.
  10. The National Orientation Agency should be made more active in political times, civic and voters' education more important. This as a matter of fact will change Nigerians pessimistic attitude towards politics and governance.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, it is clear from the above exposition that ethno-religious hate speech is the precursor to political violence. Nigeria's history, its diversity and political lands cape makes it susceptible to ethnic and religious intolerance, which feeds into hate speech. Hate speech directed at gaining political power lead to political violence in Nigeria's fourth republic. The political violence manifest in assault, assassination, acrimony, intimidation, harassment, maiming and killing and consequently these affect the existing social relationship in the society. Therefore, it is the position of this study that creative strategies to confront ethno-religious hate speech will require the cooperation of government, medial and civil society organizations. Also, the National Orientation Agency, which is the foremost agency of government for enlightenment, orientation, political education and mobilization should challenge and re-orient the citizenry on the dangers of ethno-religious hate speech for the survival of the Nigerian nation. This study further conclude that the civil society organizations should be more vigilant and proactive in challenging the obnoxious policies of government to avoid undermining the human right and civil liberties on which democracy stands.

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