

Ethno-Religious Conflicts and the Theoretical Foundation for Understanding Nigeria's Economic Growth, 1982-2018

Amiara, Solomon Amiara, Okoro Innocent Agwu and Nwobi, Obiora Isaac

*Department of History and International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki*

**Corresponding Author: Amiara, Solomon Amiara*

ABSTRACT:- Arguments have raged about whether or not ethno-religious conflicts, as constantly witnessed are capable of disrupting Nigeria's economic growth and development. These arguments hinge on the structural defects that placed Nigeria's economy within the contest of nationalists and patriots. Some are on the side of effecting changes to the structure of the system to unbundle latent energy and release development on the Nigerian scene. This is generally known as restructuring Nigeria's political system. The other side of the argument opines that Nigeria is economically developing despite some invidious consequences of ethno-religious crises that criss-cross Nigeria's political system. Some anti nationalist radical cynics insist that effecting changes within the political system cannot lead to economic development and would want Nigeria as it is currently running on ethno-religious lines to continue. This study focuses on the spate of destruction as a result of ethno-religious crises to argue that Nigeria has not grown economically since the history of ethno-religious crises in spite of the purported 2018 announcement that Nigerian economy has grown to become the largest economy in Africa amid the activities of Boko Haram insurgent. It explores history to unearth how ethno-religious conflicts have contributed to the underdevelopment of Nigeria. It adopted capturing theory as a theoretical framework while a thematic, descriptive and analytical methodology of historical research would be adopted hence our sources of data for the study shall be majorly secondary/documented materials.

Key words: Ethno-Religious, Conflicts, Theoretical Foundation, Nigeria's Economy, Underdevelopment

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, currently is operating on zonal system despite its ethnic multiplicity, its political sovereignty is however threatened by religious crises arising from political class trying to hijack the institutions of government for their personal gains. Therefore, this political class often masquerade as nationalists who are committed to project national development for the country while on the contrarily, trying to enforce ethnic division whenever their personal ambitions fail. Indeed, these nationalists represent few individuals or one percent of the country's population drawn from the three major ethnic groups of Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba and sometimes, the Ijaw or Ibibio. Each of these ethnic groups develops strong regional organisation for furthering political and regional interests. Instances of those regional organisations are Arewa Consultative Forum, Ohaneze Ndigbo and Egbe Omo Oduduwa for Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba respectively. These organisations have demonstrated the willingness that often turned conflictive while trying to project ethnic sentiments for consideration for national power.

Indeed, it is imperative to note that the cut-throat politics among the ethnic groups of Nigeria has resulted into several religious crises that are prevalent in the country. Most times, government and politicians often manipulate public sentiments for ethno-religious crisis. For instance, Onaiyekan maintains that some top level politicians, who want to pursue a particular cause, hire people to do the fighting for them under the guise of religious crisis.¹ This explains why in the last 5 decades, power has rotated between the Northern and Western Nigerians as many attempts to reconstitute Nigeria's political structure have often resulted to ethno-religious crises. For instance, the 1966 military coup that toppled the government of Alhaji Tafawa Balewa was dubbed Igbo coup. The consequence of that coup was a counter-coup of July 28, 1966 and the Igbo pogrom in Northern

Nigeria. The coup was seen as a reaction to the killings of Northern politicians and Officers by mostly Igbo soldiers on January 15, 1966 thereby paving way to various ethno-religious crises in Nigeria.

To that extend, John Odey citing instances of religious influences in Nigerian politics maintains that from the onset, we were told that power belongs to the North. On October 1, 1960, after political independence had been granted to Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello declared that the new nation called Nigeria should be an estate from our great-grandfather Othman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent change of power. We must use the minorities of the North as willing tools, and the South as conquered territories and never allow them to have control of their future.² Similarly, in 1987, Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi told Nigerians during an interview with the *Quality* magazine, that Nigeria would rather divide on religious grounds than Muslims allow a non Muslim to be the leader of the country. This is absolutely a path to disintegration when political stakeholders began to incite the citizen on religious grounds. Indeed, the expression of Gumi is no doubt a reflection of the Hausa-Fulani political mantra of “born to rule” which was encapsulated in Sokoto state’s slogan before pressures from other states forced them to change it. It is the extent to which pressures to reconstitute Nigeria’s political system that quota system and federal character principles were introduced in Nigeria’s administrative governance.

A Conception of Ethno-Religious Crisis

The concept of ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria is not a new phenomenon, what is new, is how Nigeria has been surviving from the onslaught of religious bickering despite the continued agitations for dividing the country along religious lines by many Nigerians. In this sense, ethno-religious crises in Nigeria are civil conflicts spurred by negative ethnic and religious prejudices but rooted in greed and deep-seated socio-economic injustice and explanation. It was borne out of Nigerian nationalists who were committed to the liberation and independence of Nigeria without consideration to the diverse complexities of ethnic groups that make up the country. Therefore, ethnicity, or more precisely ethnocentrism according to S. G. Egwu, is nearly always used pejoratively in the literature.³ It is heavily linked with religio-cultural groupings in Nigeria and serves as a fundamental factor to political disunity. By this, A. S. Amiara contends that religions appear to be the fundamental factor determining Nigeria’s national interest.⁴ This is evident from fact that the two most contending religions- Christianity and Islam have held the country and its unity at ransom despite the constitution provision of Section 10 restricting any government or its components from adopting any religion as an official religion. However, the two religions especially their adherents have been groping for how to balance the two religions with each, pledging loyalty to the cities of Jerusalem and Mecca. It is against this background that Amiara, further opines that historically, religion has been the root causes of tragic political upheavals witnessed in many parts of the country.⁵ This is due to the fact that many highly placed Nigerians who have made no secret of their intention on the political future of Nigeria, by which they mean her very existence as a single political entity, depend very much on the way haggling religious problems with their horrifying implications are deposed.⁶

In this context, it means that many Nigerians acknowledge that they are first born into a religious unit thus, pledging half loyalty to the Nigerian project and half to their political, religious or ethnic groups. This implies that every Nigerian was born into a religious and ethnic group before growing up to become a Nigerian. This loyalty constitutes problems to the survival of Nigeria. It is in this regard that, Aggio-Otto opines that over the years, any discourse on Nigeria’s unity or disunity, draws inferences from the teething problems of political manipulation, religious exclusivism and ethnic rivalry which are prevalent in the country.⁷ Ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria is heavily linked with ethnic marginalization, discrimination, nepotism and favouritism. It usually began when a marginalized ethnic group starts to demand for fairness over the distribution of government resources. It can occur at different places at different time. The height of it was the 1983 Maitatsine riots, the 2002/2003 Jos crisis that spawned up to 2004, the outbreak of Boko Haram sect and many others.

Capturing Theory as a Theoretical Foundation of Analysis

There are diverse theories for explaining ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria as they exist various scholars on the subject matter. However, some of the theories have not really explained the impact of ethno-religious crisis and its contributions to the economic growth of Nigeria, especially as the country’s economy falls under the control of the elite class who does not take into consideration the well-being of the populace. In this way, statistics has shown that in an advance economy, economic policies are usually made to reflect the well-being of the people who are seen as the major actors to the national economy. In our analysis, capturing theory has been adopted for this purpose.

Capturing theory is an economic framework for explaining the contention between the few elite class and the peasants in Nigerian society. It was propounded by Nigerian political scientist- Jonah Ounoha in 2007.⁸ Its emphasis is to show how Nigerian economy is heavily tied at the apron-string of the selfish nationalists who are not concerned about the growth and well-being of Nigerians. Similarly, its emphasis lies where there is government failure which occurs when the ruling class decided to act in selfish interest instead of advancing public interest that could lead to the growth of society. By this, Onuoha further contends that Nigeria's economy had fallen into the hands of a few elite classes called the economic nationalist and that this elite class who has continued to hijack the economy, embezzled and steal from the government coffers thereby throwing the entire country's economy into the dudgeon of backwardness, retrogression and neglected the basic needs of the people to the extent that they began to find a way of ameliorating their plight.⁹ This scenario resulted in Kidnapping, robbery, corruption, leadership crisis, inter-tribal crisis, discrimination and marginalization of some of the sections of the country.

II. HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS CRISIS NIGERIA

The origin of religious crisis in Nigeria is as old as the history of Nigeria itself. Religious crisis in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon. It began with the birth of Nigeria as an independent state with all the regions having pretended to come together as an indissoluble and indivisible entity, began to put side by side their socio-cultural values above Nigeria's unity. Since then, each of the regions began to exert supremacy over one another due primarily to the way the society is structured. Most commentators date the history of religious crisis in Nigeria to 1953 and would often refer to Christian-Muslim strife when talking about religious crisis in Nigeria. In 1966, the Igbo massacre and its attendant counter-coup of the same year combined with the pre-existing sectarian tension between the Igbo and the local Muslims in the North formed pact of the Biafran secession that resulted to Nigeria-Biafran war of 1967. Beginning from 80s the religious crisis was taken to a different dimension following the outbreak of Maitatsine crises of 1980-85.

The crisis was seen as the northern Nigeria's first major wave of religiously-inspired violence. Led by Muhammadu Marwa, a Cameroonian living in Kano, the crisis prompted immense ethno-religious discord between Christians and Muslims. Ethno-religious crises in Nigeria have produced dysfunctional effects on social integration and the way Nigerians react to national issues. Religious conflict reinforces division in Nigerian State. It became worst within the period of 1980s, when the erstwhile military head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida decided to enrol Nigeria into the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Many Nigerians, particularly, the Christians condemned the decision, believing it to be a way of Islamizing the country. Since then, religious consideration became a determining factor in Nigeria's politics.

Similarly, there were serious outbreaks between Christians and Muslims in Kafanchan in south Kaduna in a border area between the two religions in 1980s. These religious outbreaks were propagated by extreme leaders who were able to rally young and educated group of individuals who feared that the nation would not be able to protect their religious group.⁹ The leaders were able to polarize their followers through speeches and public demonstrations. In this context, many political analysts observed that the result of incessant conflicts in Kaduna, there have demographic shifts from the so called perceived "unsafe areas" to "safe areas" where boundaries are demarcated along religious lines. The tendency is that religious divide in Nigeria has great and negative repercussion for inter-religious and ethnic relations currently. For instance, after the 2000 Shariah related conflict in Kaduna, Muslim areas became "Mecca" with concentrations in Tudun-Wada, Kawo Dosa, Angwan Sarki, Angwan Muazu, Rigasa and Badrawa. The Christian areas tagged Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv included Sabon Tasha, Angwan Rimi, Nasarawa, Goningora, Narayi, parts of Makera and Kakuri.¹¹ In Jos, the 2001 crisis followed similar dimension with Muslim areas evolved as "Zamafara" and "Bin Ladin's zone" to include Bauchi road, Angwan Rogo, Angwan Rimi and Gangare. The Christian areas tagged "New Jerusalem" include; Jenta Adamu, Gadabiyu, Kabong, Kufang, Giring, Apata, Chorbe, Angwan Rukuba, Angwan Soya and Tudan Wada.¹²

Worst still, the introduction and re-introduction of Shariah legal code as legal system in Northern States such as Kaduna, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Zamafara, Sokoto, Gombe etc led to the intensification of religious divide and heightened animosity in those areas, the peak of which is often religious crisis. Crises in Nigeria are more often fuelled by religious differences where each of the faiths becomes committed to the protection of its religious tenets and doctrines thereby leading to domination, cut-throat and daggers-drawn, Eme quoted Matthew Hassan Kukah as saying that both Islam and Christianity are straddled across the Nigerian polity, each no longer knocking and pleading to be admitted, but seeking to take over the architectural design and construction of the Nigerian polity.¹³ Each of these religious faiths tries to radicalize its each ideology through crisis. In October 1982, there were clashes when Muslim zealots in Kano were able to enforce their power in order to keep the Anglican House Church from expending its seize and power base. They saw it as a threat to the nearby mosque, even though the Anglican House Church had been there forty years prior to the building of the Mosque.¹⁴

In 1991, dozens of people were killed in Kano as a German evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke tried to organize a crusade there. The purported crusade turned to religious riot with Muslim youths carrying street to streets attack on Christians. With the transition to civilian democracy in 1999, Nigeria became polarized with Christians dominating the Federal Government while the Muslims took over all the states in Northern Nigeria and implemented sharia as legal code. Since 2009, the Islamist movement Boko Haram has fought an armed rebellion against the Nigerian military, sacking villages and towns and taking thousands of lives in battles, massacre against Christian, students and other perceived as enemies of Islam. In 2002, Isioma Daniel, a Nigerian journalist wrote an article that the demonstrations and violence that caused the deaths of over 200 in Kaduna.¹⁵ The spate of that violence further caused the 2002 Miss World contest to be moved from Abuja to London.

Causes of Religious Crisis in Nigeria

As stated above, Nigeria is a plural state with ideological differences. These differences complicate their approaches to national issues hence, they place more values to their belief system, regions, traditions and cultures. As multi-lingual and cultural people, they have fought religious wars arising from the following:

Systemic Failure/ Marginalization

Nigeria, right from the time of independence has been operating on “divide and rule” political system. The system was first introduced by the British colonialist through an unholy marriage between the Northern and Southern protectorates and was further promoted by the early nationalists who were only committed to getting independence for Nigerians without recourse to their ethno-religious, cultural and ideological differences. By this, many conceived that the marriage was a time bomb while others view it as a wish-away sovereignty. In this context however, all government policies were formulated to reflect ethno-religious values. For instance, government programmes such as infrastructural development, appointment of political offices, allocation distribution and power sharing are ethno-religiously based. Further, the election of Nigerian President and Vice President is based on religious consideration. Appointment of ministers of agriculture and water resources is also regionalized as no southern man had ever been appointed into these Ministries since the existence of Nigerian state. It was in 2011 that an Igbo man was appointed the Secretary to the Federal Government for 59 years now. Only 6 months had an Igbo been the Nigerian Head of State.

The result of this marginalization caused each region or ethnic group in Nigeria through agitation for resource control, kidnapping, pipe line vandalization and separatist movement to enforce recognition. Hence, the government having failed to ensure equity to the federating regions introduced the principle of “federal character”, “quota and zonal system” as parameters for sharing power and political appointments.

Corruption

Corruption is a controversial concept that is difficult to pin down to a strait jacket definition. Many commentators opine that the concept is a principle of western ideology that is gaining promiscuous verbiage, thereby cutting-across all spheres of government including the economy, politics, religions, social and culture hence, we talk about economic corruption, workplace or bureaucratic (office) corruption, religious corruption and political corruption. Corruption does not only exist among government officials, it also exists among people working in private or corporate agencies. But because our concern is to explore corruption within the political classes, our attention will be restricted to determining how political corruption has contributed to ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria.

For Emordi and Unumen, political corruption takes place at the highest levels of political authority and it affects the manner in which decisions are made. It means illegal brokerage, bribe-taking, tax evasion among other ills.¹⁶ Political corruption grew out of ethnic conflicts in pursuit of politics for appropriating political space and resources among factions of political elites. It was in pursuit of this agenda that the various elections held in Nigeria since the periods of 1963 to 2015 were characterised by allegations of electoral fraud such as rigging and vote stuffing. This has negatively affected our political process so much so that Nigerian elections are usually among the worst elections ever held in this planet. Politicians who are bent in winning elections always bribe the officials of Independent National Electoral Commission.

There were cases of corrupt practices among the officials of electoral umpire. For instance, two INEC officials: Christian Nwosu and Tijani Bashir were sentenced to 7 years imprisonment for receiving N264.8 million gratifications from the erstwhile Petroleum Minister, Diezani Allison-Madueke as build-up to 2015 general election.¹⁷ More so, a non-governmental organisation identified as West African Network of Election Observers made up of retired INEC officials was used to bribe INEC staff to influence the outcome of 2015 general elections. Soriwei opines that about 202 staff that were involved were placed on half salary by the commission.¹⁸ This organisation was made up of Northern politicians who were committed to ensure that power returned to the northern zone following the decision of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to run for 2015

general elections. During the election, many Nigerians lost their lives as the country divided between pro Jonathan and Buhari. Pastors and Imams took the election campaign to their churches and mosques. For instance, Pastor Paul Adefarasin asked his congregation to vote for a Christian president when Jonathan visited his church in Lagos after he had won the presidential ticket for Peoples Democratic Party and amid the controversy that power should return to the North. Ugbudian opines that following Goodluck Jonathan's victory at the PDP primaries, Muslim religious leaders began to send text messages to ask northerners not to vote Jonathan but should vote General Buhari on the basis of ethno-religious consideration.¹⁹

Similarly, as part of the election build up, crisis became eminent that all the Christian pastors began to campaign for Jonathan in their churches whereas the Imams were seeking for support from the Muslims community for Muhammadu Buhari as the All Nigerian Peoples Party flagbearer.²⁰ During the election, Jonathan polled 22.5 million votes to defeat Buhari with just 10 million votes. By this, Falusi attributed Jonathan's landslide victory to the controversial statement of General Muhammadu Buhari when he said in 2003, that Muslims won't vote for Christian candidate.²¹

In relative development, Clark wrote that Abubakar Ahmed Gumi maintains that no Muslim on the ground of faith will join a Christian led party; if the Christian refused to join a party led by a Muslim, however, it would appear to be a two-party system and the two parties would not be South against North but Islam against Christianity.²²

III. POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Another contribution to ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria is the political instability. Political instability is heavily tied to ethno-cultural discontents arising from marginalization, discrimination and favouring of one ethnic group against another. Instability in politics also arises when political parties become enmeshed in political violence. This usually occurred with party candidates manipulating the faith communities to support their political interests thereby, leading to the outbreak of political violence. It is in this context that political violence becomes part of the ethno-religious considerations that are often pursued by political parties to further their party interests hence, Eme contends that religious crises in Nigeria are products of high-level manipulation by the political class/Government.²³ For example, during the processes of 2015 elections, the activities of political class such as the statements from Adamu Ciroma who told Nigerians that Nigeria is sitting at the keg of gun powder should Jonathan win the presidential election was quite inciting. The result of such unbridled statement was that the Northern politicians anticipated a non compliance to the electoral guidelines and unsmooth transition of power should Jonathan be defeated in the general elections. They had wished that Jonathan would not contest the 2015 presidential election and that the northern region should be allowed to complete its two tenures after the death of President Musa Yar'Adua.

This divided Nigerian political loyalty between the Northern and South-South regions with the pro Northern agenda threatening to make the government ungovernable for Jonathan while the South-southern indigenes pitched their tents on Jonathan. In that context, there were reported cases of secret plans to attack Nigeria. For instance, Daily Sun reported that Henry Okah imported ammunitions from South Africa in order to attack Nigeria should Jonathan dare lose the election. Meanwhile, the pro Buhari movement was said to have imported foreigners from the neighbouring Western African countries in order to destabilize Nigeria in case Jonathan refused to hand over peacefully. These foreigners were imported from Yemen, Niger, Sudan and Mali and quartered at Zamfara, Kaduna and Borno states. In fact, it would be right to say that these foreigners are the one masquerading under Miyetti Allah Breeders Association of Nigeria to constitute security threats in north-eastern Nigeria. This is evident with the government inability to arrest and prosecute these criminals but continued to address them as bandits each time they carried their horror attacks. Similarly, in 2019, Gabriel Enogholase quoted Atuku Abubaka as accusing the Buhari-APC led government of a plot to import foreigners.²⁴

Favouritism and Nepotism

Favouritism and nepotism occur where government decides to place one ethnic group ahead of others by giving unfair advantages to such ethnic group. This has manifested in the distribution of government resources and appointments into political offices. The effects of this mindless practice resulted to the agitations for resources control and the demand to break away from the Nigerian sovereignty as evident in the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) among others. Against this odd, the Nigerian government has voted billions of naira through the Ministry of Niger Delta Development Commission to palliate the situation without success. In 2007, the government of Musa Yar'Adua granted amnesty to the people of Niger Delta and the mismanagement of the amnesty resulted to the evolution of Niger Delta Avengers.

In 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari declared and proscribed the IPOB as terrorist group despite their peaceful demand for the independent of Biafran state. The decision further compounded the ill treatment meted out the South-east region in terms of appointment of principal officers and the composition of security chiefs and National Assembly leadership. A consensus among people is that the decision was deliberate hence, Buhari despite the indiscriminate killings of innocent Nigerians by the Boko Haram has not proscribed or declared them terrorists.

The Effects of Ethno-religious Crisis to the Development of Nigeria

Conflict generally is an anathema and as such, it is a vice that retards development and contributes to destroying institutions that could bring about socio-economic development. In fact, religious crisis has been an obstacle to progress, economic prosperity and peaceful co-existence all over Nigeria because of its destructive tendencies. It breeds insecurity, discrimination, mutual distrust and slow down economic development of the country. In recent time, the ethno-religious crises that broke out in Kaduna and Jos resulted to the killing of millions of Nigeria with property worth of billions of naira destroyed. These led to people being internally displaced with very few of the population moved to IDP camps without compensation. Most times, these people die of hunger and malnutrition while other times, some will be forced out of school due to prevailing poverty rate.

Another effect of ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria with instances of Boko Haram sect and Niger Delta militants is the closure of school activities in Northeastern region and attack on government property. The activities of Boko Haram have undue implications on Nigerian Economy. It affects Foreign Direct Investment with foreign investors declining to invest in Nigerian economy for the fear of being killed and their investment destroyed. This is not good for a developing economy like Nigeria who needs the foreign investors in order to attain economic growth. What this implies is that Nigeria needs to drift away from being a consuming economy to producing economy in order to attain economic growth and development.

The Effects of Ethno-Religious Crisis in Nigeria Economy

Nigeria is usually characterised as a deeply divided state with ethno-religious crisis taking the centre stage. The resultant effects of ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria are enormous and as such pervade every aspect of the country's economy. In fact, it is certainly right to understand that crisis anywhere in the world brings insecurity, discrimination, mutual distrust and retard development. This is the case with Nigeria where in addition to gratuitous killings and maiming of thousands of persons, properties worth billions of naira are being destroyed. The implication of this is that, these huge losses have deprived the country of the needed manpower and services for the growth of its economy. In this case, what causes ethno-religious crisis arises from weak political system and government institutional failures. Nigerian political system is usually characterised with violence with each political class applying any means available to win election. Its implication usually resulted to discrimination, marginalization and favouritism of one political group against the others. This further allows all the political classes to resort to election violence using religious organisations, thugs and hate speech as means of electioneering campaign, thereby polarising the country into ethno-religious groups.

Indeed, the dividing line between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria has led to each of the religious faiths apply violence during general elections as a result of wanton favouritism of any group that wins the election. This usually leads to post election violence where actors in elections engage the services of thugs to carry attacks on government properties, market places, mosques and churches. This has affected Nigerian economy negatively with the affected people losing their means of livelihood.

Another adverse effect of ethno-religious crisis on Nigerian economy is that, it presents Nigeria in bad image internationally. Many countries have seen Nigeria as terrorist ridden state where its leaders are weak, naive and self centred. This has drastically affected many Nigerian men and women who often travel out to do business. By this, many of them are seen to be corrupt and drug barons who go out to create problem abroad. Therefore, while ethno-religious crisis affects Nigerians abroad, it also affects foreign investors who would have come in to invest in Nigeria. This is because the economy often grows when there is influx of more foreign investments and earnings attracted by tourism and through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Another effect of ethno-religious crisis is the state of dilapidated educational system. Education is a key to national development. It trains manpower and provides knowledge for developing one's economy. By this, Apuwabi maintains that religious crisis has had devastating effects on Nigerian educational system ranging from incessant closure of schools, destruction of school facilities to abduction and raping of school children which has seriously affected the psychology of the pupils in the country.²⁵ Hence, no nation-state has developed in devoid of standard educational system.

IV. CONCLUSION

In Nigeria, ethno-religious crisis has become part of our national ethos. It has divided Nigeria along religious groups with Christian majority found in the South and Muslims in North. This does not mean that there is no Muslim population leaving in the South and vice versa. What this implies is that, there are about 10 to 15 percent Christians and Muslims population living within the Southern and Northern regions respectively. This make religious crisis in Nigeria very inevitable as each religious group usually takes advantage from the small population of other religious groups in other to carry out religious violence. This has drastically affected Nigerian economy and retarded the prospect of economic growth and development hence, it destroys Nigeria's educational standard, weakens political system, government institutions and drives away foreign investors that could have contributed to growing Nigeria's economy.

In this context, criminals such as political thugs, kidnappers and religious fanatics masquerade under religious organisations in order to carry out religious crisis that goes a long way to affect Nigeria's economy. This is why the spate of religious violence in Nigeria keeps increase with high rate of insecurity, human right violation, poverty and unemployment becoming part of the national characteristics of Nigeria. The worst of it being the bad international image crated on Nigeria.

ENDNOTES

- [1]. J. Onaiyekan, A Forward to M. H. Kukah's Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria, Ibadan, Spectrum Books Limited, 1993, p. Vii.
- [2]. J. Odey, Boko Haram: Nigeria's Path to Disintegration. In S. O. Anyanwu, and I. U Nwanaju,. (Eds.), Boko Haram and Terrorism: Religious Conflicts and Dialogue Initiatives in Nigeria, Religion: To Unit or Disintegrate? Enugu, Snaap Press, Nigeria Limited, 2012, p.57.
- [3]. S. G. Egwu, Ethnic and Religious Violence in Nigeria, Jos: The African Centre fo Demographic Governance (AFRIGOV), 2001.
- [4]. A. S. Amiara, The Religious Question: National Politics/ National Interest in Nigeria, 1983-2007. In . I. U Nwanaju,. (Eds.), Boko Haram and Terrorism: Religious Conflicts and Dialogue Initiatives in Nigeria, Religion: To Unit or Disintegrate? Vol. 4, Abakaliki, Directorate of Communication Citizens' Advocate Press, 2015, p.145.
- [5]. Amiara, The Religious Question: National Politics/ National Interest in Nigeria, 1983-2007, p.156.
- [6]. C. N. Ubah, Religion and Nigeria Unity. A Paper presented at the National Seminar on the National Question in Nigeria: Its Historical Origins and Contemporary Dimension, held at Abuja on 4-9 August, 1986, Unpublished.
- [7]. O. Aggio-Otto, Religious Exclusivism: The Memory of a Fraudulent Unity in Nigeria, in I. U Nwanaju (Eds.), Religious Conflicts and Dialogue Initiatives in Nigeria, Religion: To Unit or Disintegrate? Vol. 4, Abakaliki, Directorate of Communication Citizens' Advocate Press, 2015, p.161.
- [8]. J. Onuoha, Capturing Theory : An Understanding of Nigeria's Economy Policies, Nsukka,
- [9]. Onuoha
- [10]. J. Ibrahim, Politics of Religion in Nigeria: The Parameters of the 1987 Crisis in Kaduna State, Review of African Political Economy, 45, 1989, 65, 82, Pp 65-84 in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4006011>. Accessed on 22/10/2019.
- [11]. G. Y. Kagoro, The Indigenous Gbagyi People and the Context for Kaduna Metropolis, Gbagyi Journal, 2 (1), 2003, 67-70.
- [12]. J. D. Gwamna, Religion and Ethnic Relations in the Middle Belt Area of Nigeria. In O. Akinwunmi, O. Okpeh, and J. D. Gwamna.,(Eds), Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria during the 19th and 20th Centuries, Abuja, Aboki Publisher ND, 2003, p. 597.
- [13]. K. U. Eme, Government as Fuel for Religious Crisis in Nigeria. In S. O. Anyanwu, and I. U. Nwanaju, (Eds.), Boko Haram and Terrorism: Religious Conflicts and Dialogue Initiatives in Nigeria Enugu, 2012, p. 192.
- [14]. Ibrahim, Politics of Religion in Nigeria: The Parameters of the 1987 Crisis in Kaduna State, Review of African Political Economy, 45.
- [15]. See On This Day: 2002 Riots Forced Miss World out of Nigeria, BBC News, Sunday, 24 November 2002, 14:49 GMT.
- [16]. E. C. Emordi, and J. O. Unumen, Political Corruption in Nigeria Under Military Regime. In P. O. Omeje, and U. U. Okonkwo, (Eds), New Perspectives on West African History, Festschrift in Honour of Prof S.C. Ukpabi, Enugu, Madonna University, Press, 2013, P.381.
- [17]. G. Y. Kagoro, The Indigenous Gbagyi People and the Context for Kaduna Metropolis, Gbagyi Journal, 2 (1), 2003, 67-70.
- [18]. F. Soriwei, Our Officials Took N3bn Bribe To Rig 2015 Polls, 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.punchng.com>.

- [19]. Onapajo (2016:120)
- [20]. Ugbudian (2016: 206)
- [21]. Falusi (2012: 23-24)
- [22]. P. H. Clark, Religion and Political Attitude since Independence. In J. K. Olupona, and T. Falola, (Eds.), Historical and Sociological Perspective. Ibadan, Spectrum Books, 1991, p. 229.
- [23]. K. U. Eme, Government as Fuel for Religious Crisis in Nigeria. In S. O. Anyanwu, and I. U. Nwanaju, (Eds.), Boko Haram and Terrorism: Religious Conflicts and Dialogue Initiatives in Nigeria Enugu, 2012, p. 195.
- [24]. G. Enogholase, Plot to Use Foreigners to Rig Elections Real, Atiku, Vanguard Newspapers, in <https://www.vangaurdngr.com/2019/2>. Accessed 29/10/2019.
- [25]. O. O. E. Apuwabi, The Effects of Religious Crisis on Economic Development in Nigeria, International Journal of Academic Research Business and Social Sciences Vol. 8, No. 6. 2018,in <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i6/4206>, p.8.