Peace Studies and Practice
Journal of the Society of Peace Studies and Practice

2024 Edition, Vol. 13, No. 3
Pp 29 - 41

Political Dimensions to the Escalation of Ethnic Conflicts in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

Steven Sunday OGBOBE
Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution
Faculty of Social Sciences
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja
Email: degoldenwine@yahoo.co.uk
Phone No: +234 803 678 5777.

Dr. Adeola Adams
Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution
Faculty of Social Sciences
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja
Email: tjadams20@yahoo.co.uk

Dr. Bayo Asala
Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution
Faculty of Social Sciences
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja
Email: bayoasala@gmail.com

Abstract
Political undertones have major stakes in the emergence and provocation of crises, which are recurring dysfunctional social problems in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. The ethnic tensions in the zone are examined in this paper along with connection to political structures, leadership, and electoral processes. The paper utilized secondary data as its main sources of data collection. Hence, published books, journal articles, newspapers/magazines reports, internet sources, monographs, seminar/conference papers, security briefs and other relevant documents were consulted. The provided historical perspectives to the perennial conflict in Jos, Plateau State and further showed that the political undertones of the Jos crises manifested in the competition for resources, identity politics, electoral processes, political manipulation, discrimination, and limited inclusive governance. It further argued that political activities have aggravated the crises rather providing the much need solution to the cyclical problems in Jos. The upsurges are often witnessed through government policy failures, political campaigns, election seasons and other political. The paper advocated political reforms, community dialogue, and effective conflict resolution strategies as measures to mitigate further political interferences and provocations in Jos.

KEYWORDS: Ethnic Conflict, Plateau State and Political Dynamics

Introduction

As a complex social construct, conflict reflects constant dynamic processes often experienced in interdependent human relationships. It is an inevitable event that is common to functional societies, be it ancient or modern, homogeneous or heterogeneous, rural or urban, developed or undeveloped in the sense of contemporary classification. However, various societies and historical eras experience violent upsurge differently and have developed unique resolution techniques to tackle them. Researchers like Ojo (2014; cited in Uchechukwu, 2022), Aluko (2009 cited in Uchechukwu, 2022), and Ajani (2017; cited in Uchechukwu, 2022) have pointed out a number of factors that make societies, particularly multicultural groups in Nigeria prone conflicts. To them, Nigeria is one of the world's most diverse and heterogeneous countries, home to more than 400 ethnic group representing a wide range of religious sects, denominations, and languages. Nigeria has suffered with ethnic diversity and the ensuing ethno-religious conflicts since gaining independence in 1960. These conflicts frequently result from differences in religious and ethnic identities. Significant human casualties, destruction of properties as well as economic downturn, state collapse, and failure, have resulted from these conflicts. Political power struggles, unequal resource distribution, and citizenship issues, such as indigene/settler conflicts, which are particularly common to Jos and Mambila areas of Plateau, are at the heart of these crises. Regional or state illegitimacy has been a persistent problem in Nigeria, impeding attempts to advance democracy, social and economic change, national cohesion, and stability. As Deng (1997) observed, alliances based on ethnic loyalties are commonly formed, and almost every conflict in Nigeria has an ethno-regional component. Conflict has historically arisen from ethnicity, which political entrepreneurs frequently use to further their pecuniary goals.

Nigeria is a product of European imperialism, just like many other African countries. The country plays host and remains home to several different civilizations before the arrival of European settlers. These civilizations were unique in terms of politics, economy, language, and religion. The British formally merged these areas on January 1, 1914, a move that came to be known as the union of the Northern and Southern protectorates. Through this union, people who were not involved in the founding of the current state of Nigeria were brought together from various empires and kingdoms. Many contend that the nation's persistent crises and developmental challenges stem from this amalgamation (Shehu, 2022; Micheal, 2024). Plateau State is home to more than forty distinct ethnic groups in North-Central Nigeria. The Berom, Afizere, and Anaguta people are the indigenous groups. But because of its multiculturalism, the state also welcomes Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba, and other ethnic groups. Ethnic harmony did exist historically, but tensions have increased due to identity politics, land competition, and political restructuring. Ethnic identities are frequently used by political leaders as a means of gaining support, which has exacerbated divisions and increased violence. Ethnic conflicts are complex and multifaceted issues that have affected many regions around the world, including Nigeria's Plateau State. Over the past few decades, the state has recorded recurring clashes between different ethnic groups, resulting in significant loss of life and property. These conflicts often become aggravated by the political climate in Plateau State, which is defined by a struggle for resources and power. The aim of this research is to examine the extent to which political dynamics, specifically the role of political elites, electoral processes, and governance systems, affect ethnic conflicts in Plateau State.

Conceptual Analyses

Understanding the core concepts used in this paper is crucial to the dynamics of ethnic

conflicts and their ascribed political dimension in Jos, Plateau State. Hence, this section of the paper is devoted to the conceptual analyses of key concepts used in this paper.

Ethnic Conflict

Numerous definitions have been proposed for ethnicity, a concept that is difficult to define in the social sciences due to its dynamic and subjective nature. According Shehu, (2022), ethnicity describes a feeling of shared destiny and identity that is based on kinship, origin, customs, culture, history, and maybe language. According to Nnoli (1978: 5 cited in Michael, 2022). it is a social phenomenon connected to the identities of sizable, rival communal groups that aim to uphold their rights within a given political structure. The use of one's ethnic identity to one's advantage in a cooperative, competitive, or conflictual circumstance is another way to conceptualize ethnicity. Ethnic chauvinism, according to researchers like Ayatse and Akuva, (2013:1 cited in Michael, 2022) has seriously impeded Nigeria's liberal democracy's growth, resulting in inefficiencies and low productivity. Merit is frequently replaced by ethnic sentiment, which causes a mismatch between positions and skills, and further makes it difficult to address national challenges without taking into account the ethnic structure of the nation. Disagreements between groups that are characterized by common ancestry, culture, or language constitute ethnic conflict. Rivalries for limited resources, political dominance, or cultural domination frequently serve as the triggers for these kinds of disputes. Due to the complex ethnic makeup of Plateau State, the main areas of conflict have been between native ethnic groups (Berom, Afizere, Anaguta) and non-native communities (e.g., Hausa-Fulani). Historical grievances, power struggles for political positions, and competition for resources all contribute to these tensions (Egwu, 2004; Higazi, 2011).

Political Dynamics

The delicate romance between political rivalry and governance can affect inter-ethnic relations in order to further discuss complex relationships in the context of ethnic conflicts, especially as they play out Plateau State. Political actors' tactics for preserving or upending preexisting power structures are also referred to as political dynamics, in addition to the distribution and use of power. These strategies, which can heighten tensions and spark conflict, frequently involve patronage, the exploitation of ethnic identities, and strategic alliances. Political actors in Plateau State have occasionally used ethnic identities as a means of gaining support, which has led to discriminatory policies that prioritize some groups over others. An environment where political rivalry is perceived as a zero-sum game is created by this, deepening ethnic divisions. One major contributing factor to ethnic conflicts has also been the divisive nature of electoral politics, where politicians exploit ethnic sentiments to win votes (Suberu, 2001; Krause, 2011). Conflict can be exacerbated by exclusive governance, in which a single ethnic group holds all political power and makes all of the decisions. This can result in marginalization and grievances among other groups (Egwu, 2011). Political dynamics at the local and national levels also impact conflicts in Plateau State. General elections and other national political events may have an impact locally, escalating already-existing tensions and possibly inciting violence. Similar to this, local politicians frequently use changes in national politics to perpetuate their own agendas at the expense of interethnic harmony (Ostien, 2009).

Indigene

The term "indigene" describes the state of having been a native of a specific area. This phrase is important in Nigeria because it frequently indicates a person's right to certain resources like jobs, political office, and access

to education. Sociopolitical dynamics are shaped by a region's perceived "indigeneity," with "non-indigenes" or "settlers" potentially facing exclusion or discrimination and "indigenous" people having preferential access. Indigenous peoples have played a major role in sociopolitical and ethnic conflicts in Plateau State. The debate over indigeneity has strengthened ethnic identities and created a gulf between "settlers" and "indigenous" people. Due to their perceived outsider status, settler communities are frequently denied equal access to opportunities like land, markets, jobs and other economic resources, which often lead to their marginalization. For instance, Danfulani (2006) highlights how this exclusion practices strengthened ethnic ties and led to ongoing conflicts between groups identified as "indigenes" and those classified as "settlers" in Nigeria.

Politics of Identity

The deployment of common identities, such as race, religion, or culture in a situation of scarcity or completion is well known. The use of such identity to achieve political ends can be described as identity politics. It is typified by the forming of political coalitions around these social identities, which frequently causes the political climate to become more polarized. Identity politics has been a significant cause of conflict in Nigeria, where political elites have sometimes used the exploitation of ethnic, religious, or cultural affinities to expand their support bases at the expense of maintaining national cohesion. By appealing to ethnic feelings, identity politics in Plateau State have contributed to the consolidation of the power of political elites. This tactic has frequently resulted in the maintenance of exclusionary practices and the strengthening of ethnic divisions. To win over certain groups, political leaders frequently stress ethnic identity, which exacerbates social divisions. Such practices can lead to the marginalization of groups that do not align with the dominant political or ethnic identity, as noted by scholars such as Horowitz (2000) and Ake (1996). This can further entrench divisions and impede efforts toward ethnic cohesion and harmony.

Theoretical Framework

The study draws on several theoretical perspectives to analyze the impact of political dynamics on ethnic conflicts. A psychological theory called Social Identity Theory (SIT) describes how people's perceptions of themselves are influenced by the social groups they belong to. It was created in the 1970s by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, who emphasized that membership in particular groups gives people a sense of identity and self-worth (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to the theory, people who have a strong in-group identity may favor their group while harboring prejudices against out-groups, especially in situations where they feel threatened or in competition. Social Identity Theory offers a helpful lens through which to view how ethnic identities can be used to create division and conflict in the context of political dynamics and ethnic conflicts in Plateau State. In order to mobilize support, politicians and other powerful people frequently take advantage of ethnic identities, portraying political rivalry as a conflict between "us" (the in-group) and "them" (the out-group). This increases animosity toward the out-group while strengthening the in-group's sense of unity. For example, political actors may use ethnic loyalty as a tool during elections by presenting themselves as the guardians of their ethnic group's interests against perceived threats from competing groups. When the out-group is seen as a barrier to the in-group's access to resources or political power, this tactic can exacerbate ethnic divisions and, in certain cases, spark violent conflict (Krause, 2011; Suberu, 2001).

Furthermore, social identity theory predicts that exclusive governance and the marginalization of particular ethnic groups will reinforce these dynamics. When one ethnic group holds a disproportionate amount of

political power, other marginalized groups may feel alienated and respond by claiming their own identities, which can occasionally spark conflict and mobilization. Driven by a sense of injustice and a desire to improve their group's status, SIT helps explain why these groups may take part in coordinated actions to challenge the dominant group (Tajfel, 1982). Social Identity Theory emphasizes how identity politics shape political alliances, rivalry, and conflict escalation, all of which are goals in line with the goals of comprehending political dynamics in ethnic conflicts. Understanding how political actors exploit ethnic identities to win support helps explain why ethnic conflicts are common in Plateau State. Comprehending these mechanisms of social identity can facilitate the creation of conflict mitigation tactics that tackle fundamental grievances and advance inclusive governance. The interaction of these theories offers a thorough framework for comprehending Plateau State ethnic conflicts. Social Identity The distinction between "settlers" and "indigenes" is explained by theory, which also emphasizes how ethnic identities are maintained and exploited to exclude others. Political actors take advantage of these identities, which results in marginalization of the out group and in-group favoritism (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Higazi, 2011).

Historical Antecedents of Ethnic Conflicts in Jos, Plateau State

The historical, political, and socioeconomic factors that have shaped the ethnic conflicts in Jos, Nigeria, are profound. The literature examines a number of aspects of ethnic conflicts, with particular attention to historical context, political dynamics, socioeconomic variables, and prior empirical research. Ethnic conflicts in Plateau State have a long history tied to the colonial era and post-independence period. The British colonial administration, through indirect rule, reinforced ethnic divisions by privileging certain groups over others. This policy created a system where "indigenous" communities were considered the rightful owners of political power, while "settlers" were excluded (Egwu, 2004). The post-colonial government continued to uphold these distinctions, which have become a significant source of tension. Several scholars argue that these historical grievances paved the way for today's conflicts. According to Higazi (2011), the division of people into "indigenes" and "non-indigenes" has been used as a tactic for exclusion, especially when it comes to obtaining political and land rights. The Hausa-Fulani, who are considered migrants even though they have lived in the region for generations, are frequently referred to as "settlers." Ethnic tensions are heightened by these historical contexts, which feed on identity-based conflicts.

The causes, dynamics, and consequences of ethnic conflicts in Plateau State have been the subject of empirical research. Scholars have utilized diverse approaches, such as questionnaires, interviews, and case analyses, to investigate the elements that propel ethnic violence. Numerous empirical studies have emphasized how identity politics, economic marginalization, and political exclusion play a part in ethnic conflicts. For example, Krause (2011) conducted a survey in Jos, Plateau State, and found that political exclusion was a significant trigger of ethnic violence. According to the study, communities that experienced a sense of exclusion from political processes were more likely to participate in violent conflicts, particularly around election periods. In a similar vein, Higazi (2011) investigated how past grievances fuel present conflicts through qualitative interviews. According to the study, many indigenous communities justify their defensive and frequently aggressive positions by viewing the presence of non-indigenous groups as a continuation of past injustices. Political elites who present conflicts as fights for the preservation of ethnic identity serve to further this perception.

Many studies have been conducted on the dynamics of conflict escalation. Abdurrahman and Tar (2022) analyzed data from local government areas and found that conflicts are more likely to escalate during periods of political transitions, such as elections. This is primarily because political actors use ethnic identities as a means of inciting conflict between groups in order to gain support. Okello (2020) conducted a follow-up study on young people's involvement in conflict. Surveys carried out in a number of Plateau State communities revealed that young people without jobs and without formal education are more likely to be enlisted in the armed forces by political players. This demonstrates how socioeconomic factors fuel ethnic conflicts and raises the possibility that resolving these problems could lessen the likelihood of violence. Ethnic conflicts have had a significant influence on Plateau State's socioeconomic growth. According to empirical data, persistent violence has hampered public services, uprooted communities, and disrupted economic activity. In a study on the economic effects of conflicts, Mustapha (2014) discovered that, as a result of insecurity and displacement, agricultural productivity sharply decreases during times of ethnic violence. In his analysis of the social effects of ethnic conflicts, Danfulani (2006) pointed out that social cohesion has broken down as a result of these conflicts. Previously harmonious communities are now sharply divided, with mistrust influencing every facet of interpersonal communication. Development efforts are hampered by this division because communities are less inclined to work together on initiatives that benefit society as a whole. The literature and empirical reviews underscore that ethnic conflicts in Plateau State are driven by a combination of historical, political, and socio-economic factors. Political exclusion, economic competition, and identity politics have all contributed to the deepening of ethnic divisions, while empirical studies highlight how these dynamics play out in everyday interactions. Addressing these conflicts requires a comprehensive approach that tackles both the political manipulation of ethnic identities and the structural inequalities that fuel grievances.

Political connections and Escalation of Ethnic Conflicts in Jos, Plateau State

One cannot underestimate the critical role of political activities play in the escalation of ethnic conflicts across the country. In Plateau State, elites frequently lash on ethnic sentiments to further their own political agendas. According to Krause (2011), political actors have historically used ethnicity as a tool for mobilization, particularly during election periods. This mobilization is demonstrated by the way political parties and candidates, often appeal to ethnic identities in order to win votes. Marginalization in politics remains a serious issue. According to Suberu (2001), access to state resources and political participation are significantly influenced by one's indigenous status. Non-indigenous communities have been marginalized as a result of indigenous groups using their status to gain control over political positions. Recurrent violence has resulted from this dynamic, particularly when the political environment shifts and non-indigenous communities demand more representation. Another factor is the manipulation of political boundaries. Conflicts over resource distribution and political representation have occasionally resulted from state and local governments restructuring administrative units to favor particular ethnic groups (Danfulani, 2006). Reconciliation and peace are less likely as a result of these actions, which also increase mistrust. In specific terms, the dynamic nature of politics manifests and play out in the following critical areas:

Competition for Resources and Socioeconomic Factors

Economic factors have also played a role in ethnic conflicts, particularly in the competition for resources like land. Farmers and herders

have frequently argued over grazing areas in Plateau State, which is renowned for its fertile land. Mustapha (2014) claims that despite the fact that these disagreements are the result of economic rivalry over limited resources, they are frequently presented as ethnic conflicts. Earlier empirical researches have indicated that economic marginalization has exacerbated ethnic tensions, particularly for non-indigenous groups. Terhemba Nom Ambe-Uva (2008:44) reflected that:

> The 2008 Jos North Local Government Crisis, even though may not reflect a radical shift from the 2001 crisis, still mirrors the extent and level of struggle for control of political and by extension economic resources in a prebendal, decadent and unproductive African state. In this crisis, what began as an electoral dispute quickly snowballed into an ethnic and religious conflagration with grave consequences for life and property

Contemporary events further suggest that unemployed youth and those that have no access to education are more prone to political manipulation (Okello 2020). The economic disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous groups have created a sense of deprivation and exclusion, leading to conflicts that are often violent. Conflicts over land ownership are a common occurrence. In the frank submission of Abdulrahman and Tar (2022), the fight for land rights is a question of identity and survival as much as economics. The land is an essential component of the identity of many indigenous groups, for whom it represents their history and sense of autonomy. As a result, any incursion by non-native populations is viewed as a threat, prompting protective and frequently hostile reactions. This is also associated with environmental problems, which is intrinsically linked to human migration. Migration can serve as a coping mechanism or adaptation to climate change. Human migration is greatly influenced by environmental factors, especially for communities that depend on the weather and natural resources for their livelihoods, like farmers, herders, pastoralists, and fishermen. Pastoralist communities have always been nomadic, moving about in search of water and grazing areas. But because of the detrimental effects of climate change and environmental degradation on this way of life, pastoralists are being forced to migrate in order to survive. Host communities are frequently under pressure from the search for grazing land, which frequently results in resource competition and violent conflicts that cause casualties, instability, economic disruption, and the dissolution of social structures. Conflicts of this nature have frequently resulted from rivalry for resources between Fulani pastoralists who migrate from Nigeria and local farmers. To address the ongoing conflicts between farmers and herders, the federal government proposed the Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) settlement policy in response. The goal of this policy was to end the customary seasonal pastoral migration, but opinions were divided on it. A number of states in Nigeria's north central and southern regions strongly opposed the initiative, despite the acceptance of some northern states.

Identity Politics and Ethic Tension in Plateau State

The way that different ethnic groups interact in Plateau State has been greatly influenced by identity politics. Ethnic identity has been a common tool used by politicians and elites to rally support, especially in times of political unrest. To Horowitz (2000), elites use ethnic identity as a rallying cry for political victories, portraying political conflicts as existential dangers to the survival of their group. Ake (1996) further highlights that identity politics frequently serves as a decoy to draw attention away from more significant socioeconomic problems. This has been demonstrated in Plateau State by the way political actors present

disputes as fights for ethnic preservation, inspiring communities to rally behind these stories. This framing serves to both legitimize exclusionary practices that marginalize particular groups and to deepen ethnic consciousness. The historical context of ethnic violence in Plateau State particularly in Jos aptly captured the extent to which identity politics emerged and continues to precipitate major violence and fiascos in the state. According to Makueke (2019:10):

> Intergroup and intragroup dynamics at the neighborhood level were swayed by the same factors shaping the evolution of group relations in Jos. Relevant milestones include the politicization of ethnic identities in Nigeria during the 1980s, the creation of Jos North local government area (LGA) in 1991, the low-scale violence of 1994, the country's return to democratic government, the embargo on indigene certificates for the Hausa in 1999, and the violence of 2001.

Religious and Ethnic/Cultural Divides in Jos, Plateau

Numerous national and international observers have linked religious and cultural divides, especially between Muslims and Christians, to the violence in Plateau State and, indeed other parts of Nigeria. This impression results from the fact that most "non-indigenes" or "settlers" in Plateau State are Muslims, whereas the majority of "indigenes" are Christians. On closer observation, though, it becomes clear that the use of "indigene" status to restrict access to scarce resources and job opportunities forms the root cause of the conflict. Tensions between groups already competing for limited resources are being made worse by religious differences. Based on the idea that "first in time is first in right," both citizens and officials frequently refer to non-indigenes as "settlers," suggesting that they do not have equal claims to land and other opportunities in comparison to "indigenes." In the case of access to land, this system is especially risky in places where farming is the main source of income and where some "settler" communities have been residing for many generations. The struggle between indigenous people and settlers is not exclusive to Plateau State; it has also stoked hostilities in other parts of Nigeria, especially in neighboring states like Nassarawa and Taraba. For Jared Miller, it is indeed simplistic to tag the crisis in Jos, Plateau as exclusively ethnic or religious in nature. This is because despite political rivalry among the various groups, it never led the extreme violence being witnessed lately. According to Muller (2024):

> Historically, there were disagreements and competition for political power between the groups, these did not lead to violent clashes. In fact, the groups have a longer history of peaceful coexistence than of violent conflict. Identity based grievances were fostered as national, state and local officeholders began to operationalize and exploit indigene-settlers distinctions to maintain political power and serve their own agendas

In other words, it is normal to have political contestation among people of diverse ethno-religious or socio-cultural affiliations; however, political elites are known to take advantage of these divisions among the people by pitching against one another, which more often than not results to fierce fighting and extreme community violence.

Political Marginalization and Ethnic Grievances

According to the finding, ethnic conflicts in Plateau State are significantly fuelled by political marginalization. Among many ethnic groups, the feeling of being marginalized or left out of the political process has been a persistent problem. The existence of other ethnic groups is frequently seen by indigenous communities as a challenge to their hegemony in politics and

economic resources. Because of this view, political elites from indigenous groups adopt a defensive posture and advocate for laws that benefit their community, which results in exclusionary politics. The results demonstrate how political marginalization can take many different forms, including a lack of representation in elected positions, unequal access to public contracts, and biased social program implementation. According to the respondents, political elites of indigenous descent marginalize other ethnic groups while securing benefits for their own. Non-Indigenous communities have taken to complaining about this because they believe they are being treated like second-class citizens. As a result, the animosity between these communities has increased tensions as each group tries to make its rights and presence known in the political sphere.

Violence in Elections and Ethnic Movements

In Plateau State and elsewhere around the country, elections have always been trailed by extreme violence, especially between or among rival ethnic groups. Political leaders often frame elections as a struggle to uphold the interests of their communities, deliberately mobilizing ethnic identities to win support. This is because leaders use hate speech, inflammatory language, and divisive rhetoric during political campaigns. This strategy exacerbates already-existing cleavages. Cases of political campaigns have turned into platforms for promoting ethnic stereotypes, demonizing opponents, and heightening fears of dominance or marginalization. This election-related ethnic mobilization tactic has fuelled a cycle of violence that peaks during election seasons and continues for a considerable amount of time after. In addition to solidifying ethnic identities as a foundation for political engagement, politicians exploit ethnic sentiments to garner support, which exacerbates rifts between groups. As a result, ethnicity increasingly dominates political rivalry, which creates a volatile atmosphere where any election result could lead to conflicts if certain groups feel their interests are being threatened.

Lapses in Governance and Policy Implementation

The paper identifies lapses in governance as a major trigger of ethnic conflicts in Plateau State. Fair resource distribution and the participation of a variety of groups in decision-making processes are necessary for effective governance, but these components are apparently absent in Plateau. Government policies that are considered to favour of one community against the other have the potential to alienate other communities and incite violence. To support this claims, prior to 1999, the problem was traced to military regimes believed to have introduce policies that favour one ethnic group against the other as cited by Terhemba Nom Ambe-Uva (2010:49):

> The conflict in Jos has been created by the military government in their attempt to placate the Hausa/Fulani extraction by making them hegemons in the geo-political milieu at Plateau. The Hausa-Fulani has realised its social status in Jos for some times, without necessary making any claims or struggling to capture state power. However, when the military started orchestrating its plans for the Hausa-Fulani to capture local power, it was inevitable that what will follow would be years of conflict.

Even in the current Fourth Republic, the process of formulating policies rarely align with the 1999 constitution, which by extension is devoid of the principle of inclusive governance. According to Crisis Group (2012:3)

> The 1999 constitution failed to address this problem and remains ambiguous. The indigene principle promoted in Section 147 (3) appears to be in conflict with the citizen-ship

provisions of Section 15 (3) (b), which stipulates that for the purpose of promoting national integration, it shall be the role of the State to secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the Federation

Hence, the government tends to shield away from implementing this constitutional provision. Minority groups' concerns are frequently disregarded because there are no procedures in place for a diverse community to be represented in decision-making. Feelings of disenfranchisement have resulted from this, and marginalized communities now turn to violence to voice their complaints and demand change. Therefore, in order to implement policies effectively, it is necessary to create forums where various groups can interact, communicate, and voice their concerns, in addition to allocating resources fairly.

Security Implications of Political Influences on the Jos Crisis

It is imperative to reflect on the security implications of political undertones that are rife in the ethnic upsurges in Jos, Plateau. In the first instance, the classification of the Jos crisis as ethnic, religious or indigenes-settlers case appears to be a simplistic way to understanding the problem. The political angle to the crisis has further complicated the issues in the sense that key political actors always project agendas that are not necessarily in the collective interest of the people and, by extension the state in general. It also implied that minor crises may likely be heightened or escalated during major political activities such as political campaigns, electioneering, political meetings and other political engagements. On the other flipside, political solution can indeed help to mitigate the perennial crisis in Jos and in Plateau State at large if key political actors demonstrate enough political goodwill and commitment to purposive leadership. Politics is all about providing leadership and deployment of political tactics in the management of crises that may arise at both local and national scale. An inclusive system is critical for re-inventing the democratic infrastructure that will deliver good governance to the people in regions where incessant violence have become persistent.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that political marginalization, electoral violence sparked by ethnic mobilization, and governance shortcomings are the three main causes of ethnic conflicts in Plateau State. A multifaceted strategy that encourages equitable resource distribution, discourages the use of ethnic identities for electoral gain, and supports inclusive political participation is needed to address these issues. The state can only attain lasting peace and harmony through the implementation of such all-encompassing measures. Ethnic conflicts in Plateau State have been greatly impacted by the political dynamics there, where political elites have manipulated ethnic identities in order to hold onto power. The electoral process has also served as a catalyst for violence, especially when issues of representation and fairness are brought into question. Political reform that promotes inclusive governance and disfavors ethnic-based politics is required to lessen these conflicts. Dialogue among different ethnic groups, facilitated by neutral bodies, can help address underlying grievances and promote peaceful coexistence. Community engagement and conflict resolution strategies are further encouraged to deepen the culture of non-violence and constructive political interventions on the part of key political actors.

References

Agbese, P. O., & Keih, G. K., Jr. (Eds.). (2007). Reconstituting the state in Africa. Palgrave Macmillan.

Ake, C. (1996). Democracy and Development in Africa. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Aluko, A.M.O and Ajani, O. "Ethnic Nationalism and the Nigerian Democratic Experience in the Fourth Republic. African Research Review,.3. 1 (2009): 483-499.

Ambe-Uva, T. V., (2010) Identity Politics and Jos Crisis: Evidence, Lessons and Challenges of Good Governance, African Journal of History and Culture, Vol 2 (3), April 2010, pp 42-52

Ayatse, F. H., & Akuva, I. I. (2013). The origin and development of ethnic politics and its impacts on post-colonial governance in Nigeria. European Scientific Journal, 9(17), 178.

Babalola, J.A.O. "Social Injustice and Insecurity in Nigeria: A Discourse (Hab.1:1-4)" Insight: Journal of Religious Studies. 10 (June/December 2014): 85-96.

Brass, P. R. (1991). Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Danfulani, U. H. D. (2006). The Jos Peace Conference and the Indigene/Settler Question in Nigerian Politics. African Affairs, 106(425), 217-240.

Deng, F.M. "Ethnicity (1997) An African Predicament" Brookings,. Available on at https://www.brookings.edu/articless/ethnicity-an-african-predicament/

Egwu, S. (2004). Ethnic and Religious Violence in Nigeria. Journal of Modern African Studies, 32(4), 611-634.

El-Hinnawy, Essam. 1985. Environmental Refugees. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme.

Gurr, T. R. (1970). Why Men Rebel. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Higazi, A. (2011). The Jos Crisis: A Recurrent Nigerian Tragedy. Abuja: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Horowitz, D. L. (2000). Ethnic Groups in Conflict. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Johnson, A. I., & Okunola, B. T. (2017). Pastoralism as a new phase of terrorism in Nigeria. Global Journal of Human-Social Science, 17 (4), 50–54.

John S.O.(2023) Migratory Pastoralism, Herders-Farmers Conflicts, and the Ruga Settlement Policy in North Central Nigeria. African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review, Volume 13, Number 2, Fall, pp. 32-59

IMO-DTM (2024) Rapid Assessment of Bokkos LGA Attacks, Jos, Plateau State, North-Central Nigeria, January 2024

Krause, J. (2011). A Deadly Cycle: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. Geneva: Small Arms Survey.

Madueke, K. L., (2019) The Emergence and Development of Ethnic Strongholds and Frontiers of Collective Violence in Jos, Nigeria African Studies Review, Volume 62, Number 4 (December 2019), pp. 6–30

Mamdani, M. (2001). When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Micheal, G.O. (2024) Unveiling the Roots of Enduring Communal Conflicts in Nigeria: Indigene-Settler Rivalry and the Path Forward

Miller, J.D., (2024) Untangling the Politics of Violence, Identity and Peace in Nigeria. https://worldpeacefoundation.org/blog/untangling-the-politics-of-violence-identity-and-peace-in-nigeria/ Assessed January 2, 2025.

Nnoli, O. (1978). Ethnic politics in Nigeria

(reversed edition 2008). Enugu Fourth Dimension Publishers.

Oloruntoba, S. O. (ed.), The Political Economy of Colonialism and Nation-Building in Nigeria, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-73875-4_14

Shehu, H. (2022), Historical Antecedent of Nationalism in Nigeria: Challenges and Options for Nationhood and Peace Building in Samuel, O.I and Basil, O.I. Peace Building and Nationalism. Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution National. Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Pareto, V. (1935). The Mind and Society. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Shittu, Whanda, Mala Galtima, and Dan Yakubu. 2016. "The Application of Geospatial Analytical Techniques in the Assessment of Land Use Conflicts Among Farmers and Cross-Boundary Nomadic Cattle Herders in the Gombe Region, Nigeria." Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective 10 (2).

Suberu, R. T. (2001). Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.