



## Implications of Indigene–Settler Conflicts on Socio-Economic Activities in Plateau State, 2000–2010

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### **Abstract**

*The issue of indigene-settler rivalry was a major source of intractable violent conflict in Plateau State. The conflict pitched the indigenous ethnic groups against the Hausa/Fulani settlers, resulting in wanton destruction of lives and properties and the displacement of residents. While the crisis took on an ethno-religious pattern centred around identity, it resulted in the distortion of educational, religious, and social arrangements in Jos and other parts of the state, leading to a bifurcation along religious lines. This paper examines the implication of indigene/settler conflicts on the socio-economic activities in Plateau State. The paper argues that the effect of the sudden arrangements was as a result of the crisis which led to the forced relocation of residents to safe environments, the loss of properties in the affected areas, the distortion of the original master plan of Jos, and the development of slums in parts of the state. The paper blames this development on the indigene-settler dichotomy in Plateau State, which heightened the tempo of conflict rather than mitigating it.*

**Keywords:** Implication, Indigene-Settler, Conflict, Socio-Economic, Peaceful Co-Existence

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## Introduction

Prior to the September 2001 conflict, Plateau State was widely regarded as one of the most peaceful states in Nigeria, characterised by relatively harmonious inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. This perception, however, changed dramatically as a series of violent ethno-religious conflicts erupted between 2001 and 2012, resulting in the deaths of over 7,000 people, widespread destruction of property, loss of livelihoods, disruption of essential services, and the displacement of thousands.

Scholars and peace practitioners have offered different explanations for the persistence of these conflicts. Some have linked them to entrepreneurship, elite competition, and the struggle for indigeneship, while others emphasise the role of non-state actors, competition over resources, particularly land, and the politics of identity. Central to these debates is the indigene–settler dichotomy, a deeply contentious issue that has not only threatened national unity but has also undermined the operation of federalism and the pursuit of cohesion in Nigeria’s multi-ethnic state.

The indigene–settler dichotomy reflects contradictions arising from the incompatibilities in relations between the two groups. Indigenes often deploy the notion of ‘indigeneship’ as a tool for accessing opportunities within their locality, while settlers insist that citizenship should form the basis for rights and privileges anywhere in the country. The roots of this dichotomy can be traced to colonial policies. As Nnoli (1980) observes, colonial administrators categorised African linguistic groups as “tribes”, attributing to them cultural and territorial distinctions based on artificial boundaries. Since then, the relationship between “indigenes” (or “hosts”) and “settlers” in Nigeria has remained historically complex, contentious, and fraught with tension.<sup>1</sup>

The 1999 Constitution failed to provide clarity on the indigene–settler question and has remained ambiguous in this regard. Section 147(3), which promotes the indigene principle, appears to conflict with 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.*”<sup>2</sup> The Nigerian Government did not ensure the implementation of this provision.

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<sup>1</sup> Okudiba Nnoli. *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, (Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980). p.3

<sup>2</sup> Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as Amended), Section 147(3). (1999), p. 85.

As new states and local government areas were created, the indigene–settler dichotomy acquired new dimensions and connotations. In Jos, Plateau State, for instance, the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere have historically resisted politico-cultural and religious domination by the Hausa–Fulani, a struggle that continues to the present. Similar patterns are evident in other parts of Nigeria, where indigenes exert control over local resources and political structures, often to the detriment of settlers.

Federal government interventions, such as the 2004 Plateau Peace Conference, proved ineffective in resolving these conflicts, largely because the indigene–settler problem is “more of a national than a state issue.”<sup>3</sup> Sustainable resolution requires constitutional clarity and a deliberate effort to guarantee that Nigerian citizens enjoy equal rights and privileges wherever they reside.

## **The Origin of Indigene-Settler Conflicts in Plateau State**

### **Colonial Policy**

As noted earlier, the origins of the indigene–settler conflict in Nigeria can be traced to British colonial policies, particularly in Northern Nigeria. During the 1940s and 1950s, the colonial administration introduced a policy of strict residential segregation between “natives” and “settlers,” despite the fact that prior to this period, diverse groups had coexisted peacefully within shared communities.

According to Nnoli, colonial authorities categorised African groups as distinct “tribes” based on linguistic and cultural differences, thereby reinforcing divisions that had previously been fluid. This policy produced separate residential quarters in cities such as Kano, with *Sabon Gari* designated for settlers and other areas reserved for indigenes. Osadolor similarly observed that colonialism fundamentally reshaped patterns of intergroup relations, not only in Nigeria but across Africa, disrupting the cultural integration and affinities that had characterised the pre-colonial era. By privileging an ethnic conception of citizenship, colonial policies laid the foundation for the indigene–

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<sup>3</sup> Umar Danfulami. “The Jos Peace Conference and the Indigene/Settler Question in Nigerian Politics”, Unpublished Paper, (2006). Available at [www.fil2.ch>c6-Jos-deadly](http://www.fil2.ch>c6-Jos-deadly). Accessed 11/05/2021. p.15.

settler divide. Successive post-colonial governments, however, did little to redress this structural legacy, allowing the divisions to persist and deepen over time.<sup>4</sup>

### **Migration**

Migration was always seen as another major cause of the indigene/settler feud in Plateau State. The quest for better means of livelihood and lack of skilled manpower in Northern Nigeria made semi-skilled/skilled labour from Southern Nigeria man key positions in the civil service and industries during the colonial period in the North. This trend led to clashes between the Hausa/Fulani and Igbo, Yoruba and Plateau indigenes in Jos in 1932 and in 1945, which resulted in the loss of lives and property.<sup>5</sup>

### **Lack of Integration by the Hausa/Fulani**

The refusal of the Hausa/Fulani to integrate with the indigenes or their host communities in Plateau State heightened the indigene-settler conflicts in the state. Despite their many years in the state, they refused to assimilate through marriages with their daughters and the indigenous Christians. They preferred marrying the indigenous Christian ladies and converting them to Muslim.<sup>6</sup> For example, the 2001 Jos and Yelwa/Shendam crisis of 2002-2004 was partly caused by the refusal of the Hausa/Fulani to allow Christian men to integrate and marry their ladies, but preferring to marry the Christian ladies into their religion.

### **Provocation**

Another cause of the indigene-settler feud was the fact that the Hausa/Fulani were very intemperate in language and stereotype in using words such as Arua (infidels), Sarkin Arua (the chief of infidels, Kafirari (unbeliever) to describe the indigenous populations. To the indigenes, this was sheer arrogance, open contempt and lack of respect on the part of the Hausa/Fulani for exhibiting total disregard for their culture,

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<sup>4</sup> Nnoli, Ethnic Politics in Nigeria, p. 3; Oserhieme Benson Osadolor, "The Development of the Federal Ideas and the Federal Framework", 1914-1960", in K. Amuwo, T. Suberu, R. Aghaje and G. Herault, H. (eds), *Federalism and Political Restructuring in Nigeria*, (Ibadan, Spectrum Books, 2003). p. 3

<sup>5</sup> J. Isawa Elaigwu and R.A. Akindele. "Foundation of Nigeria Federalism: 1960 -1995", eds, Abuja: Foundation of Nigerian Federalism Series, Vol. 3. (1996). *National Council on Inter-Governmental Relations Nigeria*.

<sup>6</sup>B. A. Oyeniyi. "Political Narratives as Historical Realities: Is Jos Conflict an Ethno-Religious Conflict?", In Isaac. Olawole. Albert, ed. *History of Social Conflict and Conflict Management in Nigeria: A Festschrift for Professor Biodun Adediran*, (Ibadan, John Archers Publisher, 2012). pp. 200-209.

religion and traditional institutions. This made the indigenes to harbour deep-rooted bitterness and resentment against the Hausa/Fulani settlers in the area.

### **Land**

Land administration included land control, distribution and access to it by various groups and this served as a core factor in the underlying conflicts in the state. The multi-dimensional land tenure system in Plateau State and Nigeria at large caused conflict and war between pastoralists and farmers, leading to killings in communities over water for grazing and land for farming.<sup>7</sup> According to Chogi,

The local chiefs betrayed the trust the people had on them by selling off the lands that was entrusted in their care by the communities to the settlers after the civil war. This has made land to become a scarce commodity in Jos metropolis presently. With the strict policy of land tenure system and administration by the government, the available lands in the city are strictly controlled by the ministry of land and housing. Don't forget that there is also a shortage of land in Jos and its environs due to the tin ore mining business during the colonial period and in the early 1980s. This development has led to farmers and pastoralists moving to the neighbouring local government areas like Bassa, Barkin Ladi, Riyoms and Jos East for farming and grazing. The scrambling for land in these localities is one of the causes of farmer/herder clashes in these communities.<sup>8</sup>

### **Militancy**

The indigene-settler relation in Plateau State was not like this after the end of colonialism. According to Imo, the indigenes and settlers on the Plateau, especially the Muslims and Christians, were living peacefully together in Jos without any acrimony. It was in 1980s that the relationship changed, following the killing of the leader of the Maitatsine Group in Kano. From that moment onward, suspicion started in Jos following the escape and taking of refuge of some members of the religious sect in Jos among the Hausa/Fulani community. The suspicion created tension between Christians and Muslims in Jos, leading to violent conflict between the indigenes and Hausa/Fulani

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<sup>7</sup>O. Wafula and A. Botha. "Domestic Terrorism in Africa: Defining, Addressing and Understanding its Impact on Human Security", Pretoria, South Africa *Institute for Security Studies*, (2009).

<sup>8</sup> Tott Chogi, 47 years, Oral Interview, Senior Town Planning Officer, Plateau State Ministry of Land, Survey and Town Planning, Jos, Jos North LGA. Plateau State, Nigeria. 22/07/2021.

in the early 1990s following the creation of Jos North Local Government Area and the appointment of Hausa/Fulani as the inaugural chairman.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Fear of Islamization**

The perception among the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere - the indigenous ethnic groups in Jos, Plateau State and other Middle Belt States was that the Hausa/Fulani were fighting on two fronts:

- i. to access power and resources and
- ii. to enforce Islam everywhere in the Northern Nigeria.

This pitched the indigenes against the settlers, especially the Hausa/Fulani. It generated Muslim/Christian, majority/minority and the indigene/settler question in the state. This perception actually played out in all the crises in the state. The Yelwa-Shendam crisis in 2002-2004 and the Wase crisis of the same period was as a result of attempts by the Hausa/Fulani who were scattered everywhere on the Plateau to stake their claim in political, social, traditional and economic opportunities in Plateau State.<sup>10</sup>

### **Methodology**

The paper adopts the descriptive and analytical historical research methodology in discussing the effects of indigene/settler conflicts on the socio-economic activities in Plateau State. The paper critically analysed how the segregated educational institutions, residential settlements and social engagements in Jos turned the city into a contested city. It highlights how these contestations impacted negatively on the peace and development of the city of Jos and Plateau State in general. Using relevant books, journal articles, reports and content analysis, the paper sourced opinions from respondents on the effects of the implication and solution in order to fast-track the development of the state.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To analyse the implications of indigene–settler conflicts on socio-economic activities in Plateau State, this study adopts the ethnic competition theory. This theory explains

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<sup>9</sup> C. O. Imo. “Christian-Muslims Relation in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria” in D. G. Nengel. Mandyeng; *Journal of Central Nigeria Studies –Early Rain*, Department of History (University of Jos 2001). pp. 103 -107

<sup>10</sup> Ogah Steve Abah and Jenken Zakari Okwori. “Agenda in Encountering Citizens in the Nigeria Context”, *IDS Bulletin*, Vol.33, No. 2. (2002). pp. 24-30

indigene–settler feuds as arising from group struggles over scarce resources within a specific environment. When social dichotomies are constructed, they shape identities that, in turn, mobilise intergroup competition for resources, often leading to conflict.<sup>11</sup> The theory also underscores the role of religious identities, rooted in historical, social, and even psychological foundations, by noting that many ethnic ties are sustained by subjective forces that influence both individual and collective needs.

Within this framework, the recurrent crises in Plateau State can be understood as products of ethnic constructions designed to secure access to livelihoods, resources, and political dominance. When these strategies favour one group over another, conflict is likely to emerge; where compromise fails, violent confrontation ensues. Over the years, Plateau State has witnessed numerous clashes linked to frictions in the indigene–settler relationship, particularly regarding land ownership, political representation, and claims to indigeneship. In Jos, for instance, political contests between indigenous Christians and migrant Hausa–Fulani communities frequently escalated into violence, resulting in killings, maiming, destruction of property, and mass displacement.

Human Rights Watch estimates that more than 13,500 people have been killed in indigene–settler violence across Nigeria since the return to democracy in 1999.<sup>12</sup> The Middle Belt region, where Plateau State is located, has been particularly affected. The 2001 Jos crisis alone claimed at least 1,000 lives, while subsequent outbreaks of violence in various towns and villages across the state culminated in the 2004 Yelwa massacre in Shendam Local Government Area, where over 700 people were killed. The scale of the violence prompted the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency in Plateau State that same year. Between 2001 and 2010, more than 500,000 people were displaced, thousands of homes and properties were destroyed, and communities became increasingly segregated along religious and ethnic lines.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Susan Olzak. *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1992). p. 271.

<sup>12</sup> Human Right Watch. “Nigeria: Use Restraint in Curbing Jos Violence”, (19 January, 2010): Available at [www.hrw.org/en/news](http://www.hrw.org/en/news) accessed 18/05/2021.

<sup>13</sup> Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Lindsay Whitfield. IRIN. “Nigeria: Plateau State IDP’s Face Daunting Obstacles to Return to Home of Peace and Tourism”, (21st February, 2005). Available at [www.irinnews.org/report](http://www.irinnews.org/report). Accessed 18/05/2021.

From the perspective of identity as a political economy of conflict, migrants are seen as importing their cultural and religious practices into host communities, often provoking resistance. For example, road closures during Muslim prayers in Jos and the restriction of passage for non-Muslims were deeply resented by indigenous communities. The 2001 crisis was reportedly triggered when a Christian woman attempted to cross such a roadblock during Friday prayers, an incident that escalated into large-scale violence. As Nnoli observes, such tensions frequently arise when settler or migrant groups resist full integration into host communities, thereby exacerbating fault lines in already fragile intergroup relations.<sup>14</sup>

The classification of Nigerians into indigenes and settlers highlights who was an indigene in a particular locality and who was not. It created problems since this classification was the basis for citizenship rights entitlement and access to opportunities – in employment, admission into schools, scholarships, appointments, etc. In Plateau State, this principle was watered down as the Muslims in the state were favoured in some Local Government Areas. Despite the fact that the indigenous ethnic groups in the state were predominantly Christians, some Local Government Areas in the state were under the control of the Hausa/Fulani settlers or migrants. For example, Jos North was dominated by the Hausa/Fulani settlers in the 1990s, from where they issued ‘indigene certificates’ to their people, and Wase Local Government Area has consistently been under the control of the Muslims.

### **Indigene-Settler Conflicts: A Critical Analysis**

Indigene-settler feuds were a common phenomenon in Africa. The case of the British/Dutch in South Africa, the white supremacists in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Kenya, etc., and the case of the Native Americans in the United States who were dominated by the European settlers were examples. The settlers were all products of migration, and migration occurred when there was a need to explore other opportunities for a better livelihood outside their present domain. As man moved from one location to another, he related with people in the new environment. Therefore, conflict generally was a reality in social relations. Conflict at any level arose from divergence of interest,

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<sup>14</sup> Okudiba Nnoli. *Ethnic Violence in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective*, (Lagos, Spectrum Books, 2003).

desires, goals and value aspirations in the competition for resources to meet imposing demands on social life in a defined socio-physical environment.<sup>15</sup>

In the case of Plateau State, migration brought positive things to Jos and the state despite the conflicts between the indigenes and the Hausa/Fulani, and some of these were commerce, industry and investments in other sectors of the economy, and they contributed immensely to the development of the state. There was also cultural exchange among the ethnic groups in marriages, business partnerships, etc. The inability of the indigenes and Hausa/Fulani migrants to manage diversity and tolerate and accommodate one another was the cause of the lingering feud between them in the state.

Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, instability arising from ethno-religious, inter and intra-communal conflicts of varying degrees and dimensions has been recorded in different parts of Nigeria. The implications of this crisis to our national security, development and democratic consolidation were of serious concern to Nigerians. The humanitarian catastrophes that accompanied ethno-religious violence were disastrous. Research over the years revealed that the indigene-settler dichotomy and the issues of citizenship that were rooted in the nebulous Nigerian constitutional misconstruction and discriminatory policies were the reinforcing factors for the ethno-communal violence in Plateau State.<sup>16</sup> The political use and misuse of citizenship and indigeneship promoted double conceptual explanations and applications of the notion 'indigeneship'. As a result of this, Nigerians were denied opportunities in parts of the country due to their parental genealogy.

The implication of this was that Nigerians who were born and raised in a particular place, but whose parents were not from there, were regarded as "settlers". This discrimination across the country was the cause of conflicts in Plateau State. Discrimination on the basis of indigeneship or citizenship was quite problematic because it was tied to having access to societal resources, including political opportunities. Today, the popular use of the term 'indigene/settler' to discriminate

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<sup>15</sup> O. Otite and Isaac Olawale Albert. *Communal Conflicts in Nigeria*, (Ibadan, Spectrum Books, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> C. C. Ojukwu and C.A. Onifade. "Social Capital, Indigeneity and Identity Politics: The Jos Crisis in Perspectives" *African Journal of Political Science and International*, Vol. 4(5), (2010), pp. 173-180; Moses T. Aluaigba. "The Tiv-Jukun Ethnic Conflict and the Citizenship Question in Nigeria", *Centre for Democratic Resource and Training*, (Kano: Bayero University, 2008). pp. 5-15

against other ethnic groups or discriminating against them has become an important factor in the socio-political life of Nigerians.<sup>17</sup> Commenting on this, Aduba opined: The problem of indigeneship and citizenship is that while the Constitution says that Nigerians have the right to settle and own properties anywhere in the country if they desire, in practice the indigenes think they have rights over the settlers. This should not be because they are under the law; when you sell land, it is in perpetuity. The law grants equality to all citizens, ... and the land buyer is expected to enjoy what is called in law 'quiet possession'. The problem is that Nigerian law has colonial content in it. Before the creation of states in Nigeria, anybody could move to any part of Nigeria, settle there and work, but with the creation of states, discrimination started. It happened because the British wanted divide and rule for easy administration of Nigeria. This is why it has been difficult to build a strong, united Nigeria.<sup>18</sup>

In the same vein, Ishaq averred:

The Nigerian Constitution allows every Nigerian to reside anywhere in the country. The Hausa are saying, 'Allow us to join politics because we have ... development of Jos. Give us our rights.' We are not interested in your chiefdom, but they are saying the Hausa/Fulani are trying to bring back the Uthman Dan Fodio Jihad and install an Emir in Jos. This is why the conflict persists. As a human rights lawyer, I have handled cases like this in the past. The Institute of Human Rights and Development in Africa, Banjul, Gambia, and HRW from the Netherlands all visited Nigeria after the crisis, and after their investigation, they abhor discrimination anywhere in the world, especially in Africa. I was part of the human rights lawyers who filed cases in Kaduna, Jos and Kano, where Christians were discriminated against or were banned from building houses and churches; we put together those cases and sued those state governments. The Nigerian Constitution mentioned indigeneship only once but emphasised citizenship more.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> J. Ibrahim. "Expanding the Human Rights Regime in Africa: Citizens, Indigenes and Exclusion in Nigeria", In L. Wohlgemath and E. Sall, eds, *Human, Regionalism and the Dilemma of Democracy in Africa*, Dakar, CODESRIA, (2006).

<sup>18</sup> Nnamdi Aduba, 68 years, Oral Interview, University of Jos, Jos North LGA, Plateau State. Nigeria. 22/06/2023.

<sup>19</sup> Mohammad Lawal Ishaq, 57 Years, Oral Interview, 85 Yaudoka Street, Jos, Jos North LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria. 06/07/2023.

Following from above, the 1999 Constitution recognised that there were indigenes and citizens in Nigeria. The same constitution complicated the issue by narrowing the definition of citizenship and indigeneship and specifying three ways one can become a citizen. Whereas citizenship by birth came through genealogy, citizenship by registration and naturalisation was obtained through marriages in the country, though this was strictly for foreign nationals. How could one then become an indigene of a community?

### **The Implications**

An empirical survey revealed settlement patterns along religious and ethnic formations in cities such as Kano, Kaduna, Jos and Bauchi in Northern Nigeria. This pattern of segregated social and residential settlements was originally a colonial contraption in Kano in 1948. The case of Jos in Plateau State was a recent phenomenon, as ethnic groups in the city (Christians and Muslims) lived together in all parts of the city before the outbreak of violence in 2001. Historically, it was observed that people in some societies with common culture, race, nationality, language, religion, occupation, and income level, and maybe due to other interests, tended to live together.

Meanwhile, the term “segregation” is seen as the “physical separation of two groups of people in terms of residence, workplace and social functions”.<sup>20</sup> There are two forms of segregation:

- i. De-jure segregation which refers to separation by law that enforces rigorous separation of persons or social groups; and
- ii. De-facto segregation that occurs when individuals prefer because of pressure to separate.

Historically, de-jure segregation was enforced in the early 1500s to the late 1800s in Europe. An example was the segregation of the Jews who were forced to live in ghettos in the 1930s when the Nazis adopted racial laws which segregated the Jews and other groups in Germany and the segregation of the whites and blacks through apartheid in South Africa. In today’s world, de-jure segregation is an obsolete practice, as such laws were totally abrogated due to human rights laws.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Richard T. Schaefer and Robert P. Lamm. *Sociology*, (New York, McGraw Hills Inc., 1995). p. 284.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

### Visible Effects

i. The first noticeable effects of the ethno-religious conflict in Plateau State were social segregation in Jos metropolis and in towns such as Gashish in Barkin Ladi, Miango in Bassa, Yelwa/Shendam and Wase in Shendam and Wase Local Government Areas, respectively. In Jos, people did not take accommodation in any part of the town they fancied; they had to do extensive research to find out if the area was safe. Residential houses in the predominantly Christian area in Jos South were considered as having no value to the Muslims no matter how magnificent and splendid the accommodations were. The same thing was also applicable to the areas that were occupied by the Muslims.

In Jos, there were areas occupied by Christians and there were areas occupied by Muslims. In Jos, people were very careful about places they visited. It was not safe for a Christian to visit a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood alone or late at night. Even boarding a taxi and tricycle, people were very careful due to security concerns. Thus, places in Jos such as Rikkos, Ungwar Rogo, Ungwar Shanu, Bauchi Road, Gangare Ali Kazaure, etc., and parts of Nasarawa Gwon were dominated by Muslims. Similarly, Tudun Wada, Ungwar Rukuba, Jenta Adamu, Kabong, Tina Junction, etc., were inhabited by Christian faithfully.<sup>22</sup> Findings showed that;

Before 2001, Jos and its neighbouring Local Government Areas were the preferred destinations for other Nigerians who were fleeing from Sharia law attacks in states like Kano, Kaduna and Bauchi. Such migrants rented houses in any part of Jos and lived with their families while they returned to work in those crisis-prone states. Some bought lands and built houses for themselves because of the peace and security on the Plateau. Personally, I have sold a lot of land to these people, but the crisis in the city has destroyed the peace in Jos and other parts of Plateau State. Today, you can't live anywhere in Jos. Like in this Abattoir, it is only Christians that live here, but before it was mixed with Muslims.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Obadiah Samuel, Chris Kwaja and Angela Olofu-Adeoye. "The Challenges of Post-Conflict Partitioning of Contested Cities in Northern Nigeria", in Shedrack Best, ed, *Religion and Post Conflict Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria*, (Ibadan, John Archers Books, 2011) pp 48-49.

<sup>23</sup>Rebecca Musa, 56 years, Oral Interview, a Property Owner in Abattoir, Jos, Jos South LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria. 20/05/2021.

Another informant stated after the 2004 Jos crisis:

Christians hardly patronise Muslim food vendors in the city. Even ‘Suya’ meat sold by the Hausa/Fulani, Christians stopped patronising it for fear of being poisoned. The Christian community and churches made emergency arrangements for a cow to be slaughtered in their neighbourhood and in church premises and sold for Christians. Between 2001 and 2012, in areas such as Tudun Wada, Rikkos, Abattoir, etc., all the houses owned by Muslims were razed down, and the owners who could not escape were killed. We had to move to where the Muslims are predominantly occupying.<sup>24</sup>

i. Accompanying the segregated residential relocation were the educational and health sectors, as thousands of qualified professionals in these fields fled the areas, fearing lack of safety. Students and pupils who, at the early stages of their education, attended schools in their neighbourhood and mixed without minding ethnic and religious inclination became segregated into Christian and Muslim schools, and some exclusively.

An analysis of the pattern of student enrolment and staff distributions in some government schools (primary and secondary) in the Jos North Local Government Area showed progressive evolution of schools from a mixture of Christians and Muslims to that of exclusively Christian or Muslim-dominated schools, which depicted ethnic and regional cleavages, with the Muslims being mainly Hausa/Fulani from the far North and the Christians being the indigenous people from the state and those from the Southern part of the country.

In *Table 1* below, Gangare was a predominantly Muslim settlement in the city of Jos. Before the 2001 crisis, 53 of the 561 students in the government secondary school, Gangare, which represented 10.27% percent, were Christians. In the 2001/2002 academic session, following the outbreak of violence, the percentage of enrolment by Christians dropped by 2%, and this continued till 2006/2007. However, following the 2008 violent conflict, enrolment plummeted to below 26 from 43 in the previous session. The trend continued in the 2009/2010 session, in which there were only six

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<sup>24</sup>Mr. Abdulahi Rogo, 51 years, Oral Interview, a Displaced Property Owner, Tudun-Wada, Jos, Jos North, Plateau state. Nigeria. 15/05/021.

enrolments of Christian students in the school. The 2010 violence brought the Christian students' enrolment in the school to 0% in the 2010/2011 session.<sup>25</sup>

The staff distributions also experienced a sharp drop from the Christian perspectives, as it dropped from 18 Christian teachers in the 2000/2001 session to 11 teachers in the 2009/2010 session, and by 2011 all the Christian teachers, including the principal of the school, abandoned their duty for fear of their safety. Even the Muslim students' enrolment also dropped from 508 in the 2000/2001 session to an all-time low of 28% in the 2010/2011 session.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 1:** Pattern of Students Enrollment and Staff Distribution for GSS Gangare.

Session	Muslims	Students Christian	Total	Muslims	Staff Christians	Total
2000/2001	50	53	561	4	18	22
2002/2003	580	51	631	3	18	21
2004/2005	400	37	437	4	17	21
2008/2009	173	26	188	8	13	21
2009/2010	125	6	131	9	11	20
2010/2011	78	0	78	9	11	20

*Source:* Government Secondary School, Gangare.

In Government Secondary School, Tudun Wada, which was located in the Christian-dominated population, the movement of Muslims from the settlement was also reflected in students' school enrolment and the numbers of staff. In *Tables 2 and 3* below, while 188 of the 1028 students in the 2000/2001 session were Muslims, with the staff distributions of 2 Muslims and 38 Christians, by 2007, it dropped by about 50%. By the 2010/2011 session, there were neither Muslim students nor staff in the school. According to Pwol, the drop or withdrawal was due to the fact that some residents relocated from their former residences due to the crisis in the area.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Dinshiak Luka Dajahar, "Social Segregation and the Emergence of Exclusive Educational Institution in Jos: Implication for Peace", In Audu Nanven Gambo, eds, *Architecture of Peace in Jos City, Nigeria*, (University of Jos Press, 2013). p. 51

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 51

<sup>27</sup> See the Interview with Mr. A. V. Pwol, Deputy Director, Management and Planning, Plateau State Ministry of Education on 01/07/2011. cited in Dinshiak Luka Dajahar, "Social Segregation and the Emergence of Exclusive Educational Institution in Jos: Implication for Peace", In Audu Nanven Gambo, eds, *Architecture of Peace in Jos City, Nigeria*, (University of Jos Press, 2013) pp. 50-52.

**Table 2:** Pattern of Students Enrolment and Staff Distribution for GJSS Tudun Wada.

Session	Muslims	Students Christian	Total	Muslims	Staff Christians	Total
2000/2001	188	840	1028	2	38	40
2002/2003	177	1107	1284	1	34	35
2004/2005	87	1183	1200	1	30	31
2008/2009	29	551	580	-	21	21
2009/2010	8	469	477	-	21	21
2010/2011	-	294	294	-	21	21

*Source:* Government Secondary School, Tudun Wada.

**Table 3:** Pattern of Student's Enrolment and Staff Distribution for GSSS Tudun Wada

Session	Muslims	Students Christian	Total	Muslims	Staff Christians	Total
2000/2001	175	545	720	3	29	32
2002/2003	41	612	622	2	27	29
2004/2005	48	600	648	2	30	32
2008/2009	11	354	365	2	28	29
2009/2010	5	258	353	-	27	27
2010/2011	1	263	264	-	23	23

*Source:* Government Secondary School, Tudun Wada

The same observation is seen of G.S.S. Ungwar Rogo, Plateau Commercial Technical Institute, Bauchi Road, and Alfa Private School, all in Muslim segregated areas. In these schools, student enrolments and staff strength continued to drop during the period of the conflict till presently. Also in the Government Junior Secondary School, Naraguta; Government Science Secondary School; Anglo, Jos; Maygo High School; and Rock Heaven, Zaria Road, which were in Christian-dominated areas, the Muslim students' enrolment dropped considerably, as did staff distribution, to as low as 0% in some schools. Even in Anglo-Jos, which was a mixed community of Christians and Muslims, the Muslim enrolment and staff strength gradually plummeted because of a slight advantage in the Christian population.

Meanwhile, it was discovered from research that segregation that leads to exclusive education and residence causes mistrust among children even till adulthood. They lived segregated lives as adults. It made integration difficult because of stereotypes. It was discovered that when people from different cultures stay apart from each other, prejudice and negative stereotypes are established because there is no avenue for them to confirm or reject themselves.

i. As part of the implication of the violent conflict in Plateau State, there was the segregated religious settlement in the city of Jos. The 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2010 crises in the Jos metropolis led to the dislocation and displacement of many inhabitants in the city. Religious gatherings for worship in the city took a new format. This was as a result of fear and mistrust even in segregated neighbourhoods. As an ethnic marker, religion became a tool in decision-making in Nigeria and was a determining factor in the perpetuation of segregation in Jos and Plateau State.

### **Contested City**

Another implication of the ethno-religious conflicts in Jos and its environs was the challenges in partitioning the post-conflict contested city, especially the Jos metropolis. It was very common during violent conflict for rival groups to want to eliminate or outdo each other. These groups were either ethnic or religious in order to gain superiority in numerical strength to establish exclusive settlement as mentioned earlier. This was as a result of fear of repeated attacks, as this made them think that the best option was to group themselves together for quicker and more decisive responses in case of further attack by the rival groups. The arrangement led to homogenous settlement, which was defined as “a settlement that had the capacity to draw strength and support from within the community by virtue of their group identity that they collectively shared as a basis for solidarity and security”.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, a contested city was defined as a city where two groups competed over ownership and political control of the city. There were conflicts in contested cities that centred around class, race and ethnicity, and there were some where the state’s role in addressing the causes of the conflict abated or exacerbated the conflict. In the case of Jos, religion was used as an identity marker to manipulate and perpetuate conflict in the city. Kano and Kaduna exemplified some contested cities in Nigeria. This was

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<sup>28</sup>Nankin Bagudu, *Recrudescence Civil Disturbances and Human Rights: The Jos and State-Wide Crisis*. (Jos, League of Human Rights, 2004). pp. 82-90.

because residential settlements in these cities were patterned along ethno-religious lines. Some contested cities in the world included Jerusalem, Belfast, Iraq, Chicago, Beirut and New Delhi.<sup>29</sup>

The partitioning of contested cities such as Jos that had segregated patterns of settlement was very challenging. This was because groups who dominated territories felt they were fully in charge of the area and therefore determined what happened there for their safety. This measure determined who came into the area. Post-conflict partitioning of Jos led to the emergence of unplanned settlement, *i.e.*, settlement that fell outside the proposed Jos master plan. The development led to an increase in the number of slums in various parts of the city, a phenomenon which increased the crime rate, diseases and insecurity in the state. Contested cities should not be confused with divided cities, as it was erroneously done by some people. When a city was divided between two or more ethnic or religious groups, there was competition over resources, and it generated hostility between the groups.

### **Upsurge of Religious Fundamentalism**

The return to democratic rule in 1999 witnessed unprecedented religious intolerance and fundamentalism not only in Plateau State but in the whole of Northern Nigeria. Although it was improbable to attribute these cause(s) to a single intervening factor, the roles of religious agencies, security personnel, targeted individuals, non-state actors and conflict entrepreneurs were linked to factors such as the failure of governance, compounded by intense economic and political corruption.<sup>30</sup>

As a rapidly developing city in Northern Nigeria, Jos emerged as a major centre of religious convergence for both Christianity and Islam. It hosted the national headquarters of several Christian agencies, including the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), and the Evangelical Church of Winning All (ECWA)—as well as Islamic organisations such as Izalatul Bid'a Wa'iqamatus Sunnah and Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI). For decades, these religious groups coexisted peacefully in Jos without significant suspicion or hostility.

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<sup>29</sup>A. C. Hepburn. *Contested Cities in the Modern World*, (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> Gideon Pwakim, *The Persistence of Religious Violence in the Northern Nigeria and the Search for Peaceful Co-existence: A Theoretical Perspective*, (Black Tower Publisher, 2020). pp. 54-55.

However, this equilibrium began to shift in the 1980s following the killing of the Maitatsine sect leader in Kano. The incident reverberated across Northern Nigeria, fuelling suspicion among religious communities. Some members of the outlawed sect fled and sought refuge in Jos, particularly within Hausa–Fulani communities. By 1994, when the first major crisis erupted in Jos, the conditions for recurrent violent clashes were firmly in place. By the time Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999, Jos had become a “time bomb”, with religious fundamentalists (previously suppressed under military rule) re-emerging to unleash violence in Jos and across Plateau North.<sup>31</sup>

The surge in religious fundamentalism in Plateau North was exacerbated by Nigeria’s weak security architecture, especially in the North, where “fault-line” conflicts were on the rise. Contributing factors included the proliferation of small arms, the inability to manage ethno-religious diversity, and growing intolerance. Groups such as Boko Haram penetrated communities across Northern Nigeria, and their organisational structures and activities bore striking similarities to the Maitatsine sect of the 1980s. For many Muslims in Plateau North, these groups provided a source of religious identity and strengthened intra-community cohesion in opposition to Christians.<sup>32</sup>

The government’s failure to guarantee security enabled the spread of these groups, which carried out violent attacks in solidarity with local Muslim communities. For instance, the 2010 Christmas Eve bombings in Jos, attributed to Boko Haram, were framed as retaliation for earlier killings of Muslims in the city. Moreover, the use of mercenaries during violent clashes in Jos, Bassa, Barkin Ladi, and other parts of Plateau State reflected the deepening implications of ethno-religious conflict. The influx of religious fundamentalists and mercenaries into Plateau North heightened criminality, political violence, and ethno-religious hostilities, thereby contributing to the proliferation of militant groups across Northern Nigeria<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusion

Arguably, the majority of violent conflicts in Plateau State have been ethno-religious in nature. Since Nigeria’s return to democracy in 1999, primordial identities rooted in

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<sup>31</sup>Imo. “Christian-Muslims Relation in Jos Plateau, Nigeria”, pp. 103-107

<sup>32</sup>Samuel Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (London, Simon and Schuster Books, 1996). pp. 208-211

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*

the indigene–settler divide have gained renewed prominence and political significance, particularly in the contestation over the indigeneship of Jos and other parts of the state. One of the major implications of these conflicts has been social segregation, which has manifested in residential patterns and educational institutions.

As violence escalated, schools, churches, and mosques were relocated to segregated areas, where community members sought protection during school hours and worship services to minimise vulnerability to attacks from rival groups. The recurring clashes, structured largely along ethnic and religious lines, also drew external support from religious fundamentalists and mercenaries beyond the state’s borders, further fuelling the cycles of violence. These developments underscore the urgent need for Nigeria to adopt more effective mechanisms for managing diversity. Without deliberate efforts to promote tolerance and inclusive citizenship, peaceful coexistence between indigenes and settlers in Plateau State, and indeed across Nigeria, will remain elusive.

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