



UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
COLLEGE OF LAW, GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES

ETHNO-RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL CONFLICTS: A STUDY OF
NORTH-EASTERN REGION OF NIGERIA (2000-2007).

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Dissertation submitted to the College of Law, Government and International
Studies University Utara Malaysia in Partial Fulfilment of the requirement for
the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

FEBRUARY, 2012

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ABSTRAK

Nigeria mempunyai masyarakat yang terdiri daripada pelbagai ethno agama yang berpotensi untuk maju dari segi sosial dan ekonomi. Walaupun ramai yang melihat perkembangan ini sebagai manfaat demokrasi namun ada juga yang menggunakan demokrasi sebagai satu wadah untuk meluahkan ketidakpuasan hati mereka. Ini menyebabkan berlakunya konflik ethno agama dan politik yang berterusan. Sejak demokrasi diamalkan semula pada Mei 1999, lebih daripada seratus konflik bermotifkan ethno agama dan politik telah berlaku di negara ini. Kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti faktor yang menjadi punca konflik ini dan mengapa konflik ini berterusan berdasarkan insiden konflik ethno agama dan politik yang berlaku di antara tahun 2000-2007 di Nigeria. Selain itu, kajian ini juga mengkaji ancaman konflik ini kepada kerajaan yang dipilih berdasarkan proses demokrasi. Khususnya kajian ini menelusuri sejarah konflik ethno agama dan politik di Nigeria dan menegaskan bahawa konflik ini sebenarnya berakar ubi dari isu kolonialisme/penjajahan yang disokong oleh tentera kuku besi Nigeria. Kontradiksi dalam kerajaan persekutuan Nigeria memburukkan lagi keadaan ini. Data bagi kajian ini dikumpulkan melalui dua instrument: temu bual mendalam separa struktur yang dibentuk berdasarkan kajian literatur dan perbincangan fokus berkumpulan. Temu bual berkenaan melibatkan 90 responden manakala sesi perbincangan fokus berkumpulan dijalankan dengan ahli yang mewakili 6 buah negeri di daerah utara-timur Nigeria. Analisis data pula dijalankan secara kualitatif. Kajian ini juga menghurai latar belakang konflik ethno agama dan politik secara umum, membincangkan punca konflik dan menerangkan konsep penting dengan rujukan khusus kepada konflik berkenaan di daerah utara-timur Nigeria. Dapatan kajian telar menunjukkan bahawa factor ketiadaan toleransi, kemiskinan yang berpunca daripada pengangguran, rasuah, buta huruf, kejahilan, kegetiran ekonomi dan kepimpinan yang lemah merupakan halangan utama kepada proses perdamaian, perpaduan dan kestabilan politik. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa pentadbiran yang baik, akauntabiliti, pengurangan kadar kemiskinan dan pengangguran, reformasi pendidikan serta penstrukturan semula kerajaan persekutuan di Nigeria merupakan isu utama yang mesti ditangani bagi mengawal impak konflik ethno agama dan politik. Kajian ini bermanfaat kepada penyelidik yang berminat untuk mengkaji konseptualisasi dengan lebih mendalam bagi memahami konflik ethno agama dan politik di Nigeria. Dapatan ini juga berguna kepada pembuat polisi, ahli politik, organisasi agama, masyarakat awam dan organisasi bukan kerajaan yang berminat untuk memahami isu yang mendasari konflik sebegini dan pengurusannya.

Kata kunci: Konflik politik, ethno-agama, penstrukturan semula kerajaan persekutuan, governan yang baik.

ABSTRACT

Nigeria is a multi ethno-religious society with a great potential for social and economic development, although this development is seen by many people as an easy way to enjoy the democratic dividends; others see it as a way to express their grievances. Therefore, the result is the persistence occurrence of ethno-religious and political conflicts. Since the return of democracy in May 1999, more than one hundred ethno-religious and politically motivated conflicts have occurred in the country. The purpose of this study therefore is to examine the root cause and the persistent occurrence of ethno-religious and political conflicts from 2000-2007 and the threat they pose to the democratically elected government. The study investigates the history of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria and argues that the foundation of ethno-religious and political conflicts was laid by the issue of colonialism, and which has been supported by the Nigerian military dictatorship, followed by the contradictions compounded in the Nigerian federalism. During the study, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ninety respondents, and a session of focus group discussions with participants from the six states of north-east region. An interview guide based on a conceptual frame work was established based on literature review. These data were then analyzed qualitatively. The study also outlines the general background of ethno-religious and political conflict in Nigeria, with particular reference to north-east region. It also discusses its origin and highlights the key concepts used in the dissertation. The study revealed that ethno-religious intolerance, poverty occasioned by unemployment, corruption, illiteracy and ignorance, economic hardship, and poor leadership are the most significant hindrances to the peace process, unity and political stability in the area. The study concludes that good governance, accountability, alleviation of poverty and unemployment, education reform and the restructuring of federalism in Nigeria are most important issues to be addressed in order to control the impact of ethno-religious and political conflicts.

Key words: Political conflict, ethno-religious, restructuring of federalism, good governance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to Allah (SWA) who gave me Strength to go on up to this level. Many people have provided valuable inputs into this dissertation, the list is obviously endless. However, I would like to note down and thank the following wonderful persons:

To my supervisors Professor Madya Dr. Mohd Foad Sakdan and Professor Madya Dr. Rohana Yusof for their motivation, guidance and useful suggestions throughout the various stages of this research during the course of my study.

To all UUM staff who assisted me during this journey especially PM Dr. Asmah Laili Bt Yeon, PM Dr. Shafee B Saad, PM Dr. Ahmad Martadha, Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani, Yus Asmah, Sobiro Binti Md. Taha, Nor Fatima Binti Hashim, and Idris bin Ismail staff of my college, COLGIS and the staff of Research and Innovation Management Centre (RIMC) College of Law, Government and International Studies.

To my colleagues who provided inputs and share their experience with me by sharing thoughts and comment during the course of the study.

Finally, my greatest gratitude goes to my wife, sons and daughter, and all the members of my family for giving me the opportunity, the time, their support, and most importantly, their unconditional love during this journey without their love, this journey would never have been accomplished: Mac and Ayah-thanks for your greatest love and dua.

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2012

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

The political context called Nigeria was constituted by the British colonial masters in the year 1914. The protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria which comprises up to 371 ethnic nationalities has the majority of mainly the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba while others are lumped together as minorities (Otite 1990; Suberu 1996; Mustapha 1998; IDEA 2000 in Alulo2003). Nigeria is situated in the West African sub-region and lies between 3 and 14 degrees longitude and between 4 and 14 degrees latitude. The land mass is 923,768 sq km, Nigeria shares borders with the Republic of Chad and Niger Republic to the north, the Republic of Benin to the west and the Cameroon Republic to the east. With an estimated population of over 137 million people (Adebisi, 1999), ethno-religious and political conflicts is an endemic feature of most of the world's political systems. This is particularly true of the developing countries, including Nigeria, where ethno-religious and political conflicts become essential characteristics of the political process, especially after the 1960 independence. However, it is rather unfortunate that after independence, Nigeria stumbled from violent conflicts and near disintegration as the country witnessed a marked increase in the bitterness of party, ethno-religious antagonism and intolerance.

Specifically, Nigeria has demonstrated a very high propensity for ethno-religious and political conflicts during the fourth republic (1999-2007); ethnic, religious and regional tension was widespread. Episodes of violence were ethnic or religious on the surface were often caused by political competition and economic influence, in a country where politics is seen as one of the few avenues to a mass wealth. In Nigeria,

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