



GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis

Volume 7, Issue 1, Jan - June, 2024

ISSN (Online): 2714-2485

The Political Economy of Conflict in Plateau State, 1994-2012

Anthony Imeh UMOH

General Studies Department,
Federal College of Medical Laboratory Technology,
Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

Email: umohanthony6@gmail.com

Barinaadaa NWINKOL

Department Of History and International Diplomacy,
Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Email: barinaadaa.nwinkol@ust.edu.ng

(**Received:** Jan-2024; **Accepted:** June-2024; Available **Online:** June-2024)



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ABSTRACT

Conflict anywhere in the world operates through a distinct modus operandi, with its patterns shaping the political economy. The political, economic, social, and environmental forces unique to the region deeply influence the dynamics of conflicts in the Jos Plateau and its surrounding areas. Due to its strategic position as the capital of Nigeria's North Central region, rich deposits of tin ore, and temperate climate, Jos has historically attracted a diverse influx of migrants from various parts of the country, both during the colonial era and in contemporary times. This paper critically analyses the political economy of conflict in Jos and other parts of Plateau State using philosophical, critical, and textual analysis methods. It examines the intricate interplay between state and federal governments, conflict patrons, and non-state actors. Through a rigorous examination of the underlying texts and contexts, the study reveals that while the economy itself did not directly cause the conflict, the mechanisms of conflict—centred on arms proliferation, violence, and crime—are intricately linked to communal and ethnic tensions. The paper highlights how the manipulation of ethno-regional and ethno-religious dynamics in political and economic activities serves to perpetuate, rather than mitigate, conflict in the state. The study employs critical analysis to dissect how these dynamics weave into conflict, highlighting their role in intensifying tensions. Furthermore, textual analysis allows for a deeper understanding of the narratives and discourses that sustain these conflicts. The paper concludes that addressing these conflict drivers could have prevented or significantly mitigated the resurgence of conflicts in Plateau State during the period under review. By unpacking the philosophical underpinnings of these conflicts, this study provides a nuanced understanding of their persistence and suggests pathways for more effective conflict resolution strategies.

Keywords: Political Economy; Conflict; Ethnicity; Religion; Plateau State.

INTRODUCTION

Prolonged and gruesome conflicts have plagued Nigeria, particularly the northern region, over the years, sparking significant demographic movements both within and outside the

country (Peace, 2020). The intrinsic nature of human history, characterized by the movement and conquest of land from both nature and fellow humans, explains this phenomenon (Akpan & Itighise, 2019; Akpan & Babayemi, 2022). As a result, people frequently leave their birth and upbringing in search of greener pastures or due to circumstances beyond their control. The convergence of people from diverse backgrounds, coupled with their engagement in social, economic, and political activities, has historically generated tensions that frequently escalate into conflicts (Marchetti & Tocci, 2020). Whether these conflicts degenerate into violent confrontations or resolve peacefully depends on the management of these conflicts.

Nigeria is not alone in experiencing an increase in identity-based, intra-ethno-religious, and communal violence; the end of the Cold War marked a shift in global conflicts from ideological to identity-based contestations (Akpan & Uko, 2019). Like many other developing countries, Nigeria has struggled with various forms of ethno-religious and inter-communal conflicts. These conflicts stem from a range of issues, including socio-political disputes, economic resource competition, chieftaincy rivalries, and land/boundary disagreements (Okide et al., 2016; Okoli & Ukwandu, 2021). The identity postures created by these conflicts, as well as their attendant effects, have led to the displacement of communities and forced migrations across the country.

Since Nigeria's independence, conflicts have significantly disrupted the state's functionality, with the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1971) being a notable example (Osaghae, 1998). While the conflict in Plateau State shares similarities with other regional conflicts, it stands out due to its use of indigene status as a criterion for political, economic, and resource allocation. Religious differences have often acted as catalysts, intensifying the violence between indigenes and settlers competing for access to resources. In Jos, the state capital, the insecurity has reached alarming levels, marked by frequent ethnic and communal clashes and other social vices, leading to annual episodes of violent conflict and bloodshed (Mamman, 2020; Nwagbo & Okide, 2017).

With the return to civilian rule in 1999, civil disturbances and violence became widespread in various parts of Nigeria. Notable crises include the major conflict in Jos in 1994, the Ijaw and Itsekiri crisis in Warri over the Olu of Warri kingship in 1999, the Aguleri and Umuleri violent conflict in Anambra in 1999, the Sharia conflict in Kaduna in 2000, the Tarok and Bogghom crisis in Wase, Plateau in 2001, the violent clashes between armed youths and Fulani "settlers" in Mambila, Taraba State, and the 2003 land dispute between Tiv clans in Katsina-Ala, Benue (Udefi, 2014; Iniobong, et al., 2012). These examples, among others, illustrate the persistent and widespread nature of violent conflicts across Nigeria, many of which remain intractable.

The persistence of ethno-religious militias and warlords, who pledge allegiance to dominant religious and ethnic groups, has exacerbated insecurity in Plateau State, broadening the scope of conflict to include drug trafficking, armed robbery, looting, kidnapping, and other criminal activities by non-state actors and conflict entrepreneurs. Tensions between indigenous populations and Hausa/Fulani settlers largely drive the complex political economy of conflicts in Plateau State. Thus, the political economy of conflicts in Plateau State is a manifestation of deep-seated ethno-religious tensions, exacerbated by socio-economic and political disparities. Effective conflict management strategies are essential to prevent further escalation and to foster lasting peace and stability in the region.

This paper investigates how the manipulation of ethno-regional and ethno-religious dynamics in political and economic activities serves to perpetuate, rather than mitigate, conflict in the state. Through critical analysis, the study dissects how these dynamics contribute to conflict, highlighting their role in intensifying tensions. The paper concludes that addressing these conflict drivers could have prevented or significantly mitigated the resurgence of conflicts in Plateau State during the period under review. By unpacking the

philosophical underpinnings of these conflicts, this study offers a nuanced understanding of their persistence and suggests pathways for more effective conflict resolution strategies.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF CONFLICT IN PLATEAU STATE

Plateau State is among the most ethnically and linguistically diverse parts of Nigeria. The state government recognises more than fifty ethno-religious groups as "indigenous" (Abdulyakeen, 2023). In addition to these indigenous groups, the Hausa and Fulani migrated from the far north to settle in the state before and during colonial times. The state is also home to Yoruba, Urhobo, and Igbo from the South, as well as other migrants from the North Central (Middle Belt). The coming together of people from diverse cultures and backgrounds breeds conflicts, and this conflict has always been between the indigenes and the Hausa/Fulani settlers. Here's a list of some of the conflicts the state has witnessed:

The 1994 Jos Crisis: This crisis began in 1991 when a settler, Alhaji Aminu Mato Hausa/Fulani, was appointed Caretaker Chairman of Jos North local government area. Following the appointment, Plateau Indigene protested against it and asked for the caretaker chairman's immediate removal (Abioro, 2016). Counterprotests by the Hausa and Fulani led to violent clashes. This protest claimed many lives and destroyed parts of Jos ultra-modern market, Gada Bieu market, an Islamic school, and a mosque in the city (Best, 2007).

The 2001 Jos Crisis: On September 7, 2001, the city of Jos witnessed the first major ethno-religious conflict in history. According to Human Rights Watch (2001), the crisis was the result of a quarrel between a Christian lady and a group of Muslim faithful who tried to stop her from crossing the blockage mounted by the Muslims during their prayer on Friday. This quarrel degenerated into a full-fledged fight between indigenous Christians and the Hausa/Fulani.

Alhaji Muktar Mohammed, a Hausa/Fulani settler, became the poverty eradication coordinator for Jos North a week prior to this crisis. The appointment incited violent protests among the indigenes, prompting both sides to issue threats and counter-threats. The violence started on September 7–13, 2001, and extended to other local government areas in the state. Reports indicate that the violence claimed the lives of over 1,000 people and destroyed properties valued at billions of naira. The crisis also affected other parts of the country, such as Kano, where the Hausa/Fulani mobilised, attacked Christians, and set fire to churches (Anyansi, 2021). In Onitsha, located in south-eastern Nigeria, those who escaped the violence in Jos and Kano returned with dead bodies, which infuriated the locals and resulted in the killing of Hausa and Fulani in Onitsha, Aba, and other areas (Atidoga & Ishaq, 2018).

The Eto Baba PDP Ward Congress Crisis took place in 2002. The crisis started in the Eto Baba community in Jos when the Hausa/Fulani attempted to sway the outcome of the PDP ward congress in favour of their candidate. Sensing the manipulation by the settler, the indigenes, primarily Christians, confronted the Muslims and engaged in a fierce battle to ensure their rights (Fagbite, et al., 2018). Before the restoration of order, the indigenes, mostly Hausa/Fulani, lost over one hundred lives, injured many others, and destroyed many properties. This crisis led to social segregation, the emergence of exclusive educational institutions, and religious settlement in Jos (Para-Mallam, 2013).

The Yelwa-Shendam Conflict 2002–2004: Yelwa, a cosmopolitan area, has a large Hausa/Fulani population, as do inhabitants from other tribes in the Shendam local government area. The conflict was on two fronts (Dewan, 2018):

(1) inter-marital squabbles,

(2) There is a contest to determine which tribe should produce the PDP ward chairman in the area.

While Yelwa has a larger Hausa/Fulani population, Shendam is mostly Christian, with a strong influence in the local government administration. The conflict from 2002–2003 was passive, but by 2004, it had turned violent, mainly because what they had agitated for previously did not materialise.

According to Higazi (2008), by 2004, the conflict had become violent following an attempt by the Christian youths to stop their ladies from marrying Hausa/Fulani residing in the area. This occurred despite the local government authority, through the paramount ruler, intervening in the conflict. The conflict resulted in the deaths of over 200 Christians and the destruction of churches, houses, and properties. On the other hand, over 600 Hausa and Fulani lost their lives in a reprisal attack.

The Wase Conflict, 2002–2004: In terms of land mass, Wase is the largest local government area in Plateau State. The crisis in the area was a spillover of the Yelwa/Shendam conflict, which happened simultaneously. The crisis was about the contest for land, political positions, and space. Large populations of Hausa/Fulani (Muslims) and the Torah and Ngas tribes, predominantly Christian and traditional religious worshippers, dominate the Wase region (Olisaemeka, 2022). The crisis started as a result of the killing of the Torah elders, who were invited to a peace meeting by the Emir Emirate on July 3, 2002, although the Emirate denied having a hand in the killing. Best (2007) highlights that the Christian community strategized a retaliatory strike that resulted in numerous Muslim deaths. On the whole, the Wase crisis claimed over 250 lives, with the displacement of hundreds of indigenes of the local government, both Christian and Muslim, to the neighbouring local government areas of Langtang North and South. The intensity and severity of the Yelwa and Wase crises led to the declaration of a state of emergency by former President Olusegun Obasanjo in May 2004.

The November 2008 Jos Crisis: The rejection of the local government election results that year initiated the crisis. According to the report, while the results were still collapsing, the Muslim population in the city declared Alhaji Aminu Baba, a Muslim candidate, the winner of the Jos North local government area election. They took this action to prevent the Plateau State Independent Electoral Commission from declaring PDP candidate Barrister Timothy Buba, a Christian who garnered 92,907 votes, as the election winner, rather than Aminu Baba of the ANPP, who received 72,890. They initiated nocturnal meetings, followed by the installation of roadblocks in Muslim-dominated areas of the Jos metropolis. On November 28, 2008, Muslim and Christian youth started attacking themselves in the city with weapons. They killed over 50 people, mostly women and children, and destroyed houses, churches, mosques, shops, and other properties. The election was the first in Jos North's local government area since 1999. The Plateau State government then established the Judicial Commission of Inquiry to identify the crisis's remote and immediate cause. Retired Hon. Justice Ajibola chaired it, and the Commission of Inquiry has not yet made its report public (Ambe-Uva, 2012).

The January 2010 Jos Crisis: On Sunday, January 17, 2010, fighting erupted again in the city of Jos. House fires during the 2008 crisis led to the relocation of some Muslims. The local Christian community resisted their attempts to rebuild those houses (Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Okorie, 2016). Consequently, they invaded a nearby ECWA church, resulting in the deaths of worshippers. Subsequently, the crisis extended to other areas of Jos City, resulting in the loss of lives, displacement of populations, and destruction of properties. Before the state's security agencies intervened, the crisis claimed over 300 lives.

The Dogo-Nahawa Massacre of March 7, 2010: Dogo and Nahawa communities are located in Du district in Jos South local government area, where a former governor of Plateau State, Jonah Jang, comes from. The crisis started as a result of the invasion of the communities by the Hausa/Fulani militia, which attacked, killed, maimed, and burned down houses. Ultimately, the attack claimed the lives of over 300 people, primarily women and children. The attack ultimately claimed the lives of over 300 people, primarily women and children. The attack burned down almost all the homes in those communities.

The December 24th Christmas Eve Bombing (2010) The Christmas bombing of some strategic locations in the state capital, home to the Christian community, once again disrupted Jos' peace. Boko Haram later claimed responsibility for the bombing, complaining that it was in retaliation for the killings of Muslims in Jos, Maiduguri, Bauchi, and other parts of Nigeria, and even threatened to continue the bombing. The twin bombings claimed the lives of over 80 people and displaced over 200 others.

The 2012 Crisis: This crisis took place in the state's northern zone, particularly in the Barkin-Ladi and Riyom local government areas. Gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen or mercenaries from neighbouring Chad and the Niger Republic attacked several communities in the local government areas. The attack, which lasted for several hours simultaneously in those villages at night, left no fewer than 140 people dead.

During all the aforementioned crises in Plateau State, the federal and state governments consistently established the Judicial Commission of Inquiries to investigate the root causes of the crisis and provide recommendations to prevent future crises. People argue that the government's failure to implement post-conflict justice and the report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiries between 2001 and 2010 are responsible for the persistence of conflicts in states.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To analyse the conflict on the Plateau, this paper will explore the human needs theory. This theory's position is quite similar to frustration, aggression, and relative deprivation theories. Its main assumption is that all humans have needs that they seek to satisfy, and that the other group's denial and frustration with these needs could affect them immediately or later, resulting in conflict. Basic needs in this context include physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs, and denying them access to one, i.e., food or belongingness, could make groups resort to violence (Maslow, 1970). Additionally, Burton (1979) enumerates basic needs as "response stimulation, security, recognition, distributive justice, meaning, needs to appear rational and develop rationally, needs for a sense of control, and needs for self-defence."

Plateau State, as a pluralistic society, is always conflict-prone, largely due to the indigene/settler syndrome, which has favoured and marginalised some groups on the basis of their identity. It has encouraged a keen competition among various ethnic and religious groups over the scarce resources available in the state.

CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN PLATEAU STATE:

The indigene/settler conundrum: In the 1940s and 1950s, the British colonialists enforced a policy of rigid residential segregation between "natives" and "settlers" in the North, despite the fact that before this time they were living peacefully together in the same area. As pointed out by Nnoli (1980), during colonialism, the British began to see African tribes as linguistic groups and tribes with different cultures, and this led to separate residential environments in places like Kano (Saboh Gari) and other quarters for the indigene. This British arrangement altered intergroup relations in Nigeria (particularly the North) and other African states. The post-colonial Nigerian government has done little or nothing to change this policy. When people live together and relate, the tendency for them

to suspect one another is minimal. But when they live apart, they suspect that every move made by the other groups is against them. This mentality breeds conflict.

Economic Inequalities: The dominant economic groups in Jos are Igbo and Yoruba, who are well established and wealthy in their businesses. The Hausa/Fulani are also having their fair share of the economy as they engage in economic ventures like trading and transport businesses. The settlers' dominance has created significant disparities between the indigenous people and the settlers. The indigene saw this dominance as a threat, fearing they could lose their land, women, and girls to the settlers, especially the Muslims.

Cultural Inequalities: There has always been tension between the indigenous tribe of Berom in Plateau and the Hausa/Fulani immigrants in the state (Okide, 2019). The indigenous tribe of Berom has long harboured resentment towards the Hausa/Fulani for marrying their women, citing cultural differences and the settlers' pride. The indigenous people often accuse the Hausa/Fulani of cultural arrogance, and even the indigenous Muslims have complained about religious discrimination, such as road blockages during their service. This is largely due to the prevalence of fundamentalist Islamic reformist creeds among both the settler Hausa/Fulani and the indigenous Muslims.

Political Inequalities: During the colonial period, indigenous people in Plateau were subjects to the indirect Muslim Emirate rule of the British in the North. The Hausa/Fulani-dominated Northern region regarded these indigenous people as "ethnic minorities" after independence (Okide, 2020a; Okide, 2020b). The creation of Plateau State in 1976 brought some respite for the indigenous people, but domination of governance by the core Northern military elites at the centre has led to continuous political domination in every state in the north. Even within the state, there has been a narrower field of politics with a zero-sum logic between the indigenous population on the one hand and the Hausa/Fulani on the other (Mustapha et al., 2013).

Poverty, unemployment, and political actions: According to some, poverty does not cause conflict, but associated factors such as hunger, marginalization, and manipulations can incubate and fuel conflict in society. Bello (2021) made this submission, blaming poverty, unemployment, and the negative activities of politicians, whether Muslims or Christians, for the ongoing crisis in Jos and other parts of the state. According to him:

a lot of youths who are educated are unemployed and those that are not educated are roaming the streets doing nothing. Some of these youths abuse themselves with drugs from the stipends they get from the politicians who abandon them the moment they are sworn into office after election.

He asked the government to give youth jobs and foster entrepreneurship so they can support themselves rather than look to politicians.

Youth and Education: The Berom and indigenous groups in the state had a head-start in western education through mission schools when they converted to Christianity in the 1930's. This educational advantage has placed them ahead of their Hausa/Fulani contemporaries when it comes to job placement, scholarships, and admission. This disparity has generated discontent among the Hausa/Fulani youth, who feel excluded on the basis of indigeneity, and is a powerful driver of feud within the settlers' communities.

Use and Abuse of Religion: The way Muslims practice their religion, even as settlers in Plateau State, has led to the development of fear among the Christian populations in their homeland. Both groups consistently aim to instill fear and intimidation through the abusive use of religious symbols, pamphlets, leaflets, Friday street prayers, and loud speakers. Both religious groups have consistently expressed their concerns about religious and political

marginalization by enforcing communal boundaries, a practice that ultimately leads to conflict.

Elite Manipulation: Political elites and conflict entrepreneurs from both religious communities play a crucial role in Plateau State violence. Successive leaders, such as Presidents Babangida and Yara Dua, have faced repeated accusations of favoring the Hausa/Fulani in federal appointments and the creation of local governments (Jos North). The indigene sees the Hausa/Fulani as an extension of the Hausa/Fulani domination conspiracy. On the other hand, at the state level, the former governor, Jonah Jang, and some state officials have at various times been accused of blatant and provocative bias against the Hausa and Fulani. Lack of trust in the political leadership at all levels, from federal to local government, has hampered the search for an effective solution to the Plateau crisis (Ostein, 2009).

Based on the aforementioned analysis, we can infer that the conflict and crisis in Plateau are intricate, multifaceted, and stem from inequalities. Karl Mark, in his political economy theory, opined that there is a structural link between the economic system and the political system on the one hand, and that this link affects other social structures in society. This relationship between economics and politics becomes the unavoidable foundation upon which any society's overall values, culture, and norms rest.

FRAMEWORK FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS

The belief that conflict is inherent in every society explains the need for conflict analysis. Groups naturally express and manage differences in interests and opinions, which determines whether the conflict primarily manifests in political (non-violent) or violent ways. Groups in a society, including the government, define a conflict as political when they pursue their objectives or interests through processes that align with the specific laws and established norms of the society. Political manifestations of conflict are not a subject of concern in the conflict analysis framework (CAF). When a group resorts to violence in conflict to achieve its objectives, and when the use of violence surpasses the use of political means, the conflict is primarily violent. Violent conflict takes a host of forms—political unrest with violent clashes on the rise, opposition clampdowns, and human rights violations. All these have been very visible in the Plateau and central Nigeria conflict in the 1990's and 2000's.

What is Conflict Analysis? Conflict analysis is a crucial tool for the design, implementation, and evaluation of peacebuilding programmes. It can be used to prevent armed conflict, attempt to bring war and violence to an end, help societies recover in the aftermath of war, or achieve greater justice and equality. Conflict analysis is the deliberate study of conflicts' causes, actors, and dynamics. Peace practitioners engage in conflict analysis in the same way that a doctor performs a diagnosis on a patient before determining how to proceed with treatment. However, social and political conflicts are much more complex than the diagnosis of a single patient, as they involve multiple actors, groups, issues, and other factors. Nonetheless, conflict analysis helps organisations trying to address conflict know how to promote changes in the situation to reduce the potential for violence and/or transform the conflict to make room for development and social justice.

The purpose of conflict analysis is to ensure that mediators, facilitators, NGOs, and the World Bank, on a global scale, enhance sensitivity to conflicts and their sources in poverty-reducing measures, thereby reinforcing a country's resilience to violent conflict. Other uses for conflict analysis include

- a) Examining the sources and consequences for conflict
- b) Determining the factors that can be addressed through donors/World Bank assisted strategies, and the modalities through which they can best be managed.

- c) Examining a country's resilience to outbreak or escalation of violent conflict, and its ability to de-escalate violent conflict.

Conflict Analysis as a Tool for Conflict Sensitivity: In some cases, an organisation does not intend to address conflict factors directly, but want to ensure that its humanitarian or development programmes are sensitive to conflict dynamics.

Conflict Analysis as a First Step towards Programmes Development: In this case, analysis is a diagnostic tool for understanding the problem(s), in order to design ways to address them programmatically. This type of analysis can be done by conflict experts within an environment or in an internal organisational process among staff, although it can also be done in a participatory manner with key partners organisation.

Conflict Analysis as Preparation for Working with Stakeholders or Parties to the Conflict: Once a team have decided to intervene in a conflict, it is important to understand the perspective of those directly involved e.g. the origin of the conflict, the perspectives of the different parties, their needs and demands etc.

Conflict Analysis as a Conflict Resolution or Transformation Process: This is definitely an intervention exercise and must be done with utmost carefulness. The parties in the conflict each have their own view of the causes, history and current tensions. Most times, the history and origin of the conflict are themselves contested issues that must be handled sensitively.

When to Conduct Conflict Analysis: Conflict analysis framework normally is intended for societies that have been ravaged by conflict or experiencing violent conflict and this analysis can be carried out at the country or regional level. The aim is to assess the level of poverty in the environment and contribute its quota to poverty reduction within the available strategies and expertise at its disposal. It can be used as a stand-alone analysis or as a part of an upstream macro-social analysis.

Conducting conflict Analysis: If a state or society is found to be at risk of violent conflict, or is already experiencing large scale violence, as in the case of Plateau state or the North East region of Nigeria which is presently ravaged by conflict, a full scale conflict analysis should be conducted. Conflict analysis framework (CAF) uses six categories of variables related to conflict. These are social and ethnic relations, governance and political institutions, human right and security, economic structure and performance, environmental and natural resources and eternal forces. The categories consist of several variables, each with corresponding indicators on the three levels of intensity – (early warning, increasing intensity, de-escalation), that reflect changes in the level of violent conflict. These indicators are used to estimate the impact of a variable on a country's level of conflict and its link with poverty. The importance of the different variables differs from country to country or region to region and from conflict to conflict. This is because a factor that has a strong impact on conflict in country or region A, might have less relevance in country or region B and none in country or region C. In this case, the framework tries to be very comprehensive and flexible to guide analysis in every different country situation, each with unique characteristics. In this case, the World Bank is advising its team in each country to adopt conflict analysis strategies that best suit the region. The team's country knowledge is important in determining the specific dynamics and linkages (Chiagas and Woodrow, 2010).

Analysis of these variables is done along seven dimensions to determine the way it relates to conflict and poverty:

- i. **History/Changes:** How the issue has evolved over a pertinent time span.

- ii. **Dynamics/Trends:** What is determining the future path of the issue, and how it is likely to develop
- iii. **Public Perceptions:** Public attitudes and biases regarding the issue.
- iv. **Politicization:** How the issue is used politically by different groups.
- v. **Organisation:** The extent to which the issues have led to the establishment of interest groups, and/or influenced political parties and militant organisations.
- vi. **Links to Conflict and Intensity:** How the factors contribute to conflict and the current level of intensity.
- vii. **Link to Poverty:** How the issue relates to poverty.

The results of the analysis on the above dimension help to develop a prioritized list of factors, according to their degree of importance. Factors with a high degree of impact on conflict and poverty, especially if their degree of importance is increasing, should be considered priority areas and be of special concern in country strategies. The analysis of each variable would provide essential information about how the factors play out in this country, and should guide development assistance on the issue.

Based on the needs and opportunities of the specific country, conflict analysis can be conducted along the following steps:

- 1) Re-interpretation of existing information on the conflict situation or a country or region along the lines of CAF.
- 2) Workshops with country/regions team specialists to cover each of the CAF categories.
- 3) Follow-up studies, as needed, on issues identified in the workshop.
- 4) Country consultation with different stakeholder groups, as needed; and
- 5) Concluding workshops to discuss integration into the poverty reduction strategy, country/region strategy or other country/regional programmes.

The Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) is a technique that specifically aims to analyse the various aspects that conflict has proven to influence or influence. Conflict analysis can aid in the creation of conflict-sensitive ways to understand development from a conflict perspective. It can assist development actors in devising tactics that do not worsen conflicts and make society more resistant to violent conflicts.

Since the start of violent conflicts in the region, Plateau State and the North Central States of Nigeria have undergone extensive conflict analysis, according to the aforementioned research. The United Nations, along with its development agencies such as UNDP, UNESCO, the World Bank, the European Union, USAIDs, German, Norwegian, British development agencies, etc., has conducted numerous conflict analyses and assessments to determine the detrimental effects of violent conflict in various regions within the state and neighbouring states in the North Central region that are facing persistent conflict. By rehabilitating displaced communities, these institutions and agencies have made significant contributions to peacebuilding in communities throughout the state and region. They have reconstructed schools and markets that were damaged during the conflict and have also installed boreholes to provide water in various villages inside the state. The International Committee of the Red Cross has provided food and clothing to camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) located in various states within the region.

PEACE BUILDING EFFORTS IN PLATEAU CONFLICT

Over time, a variety of peacebuilding initiatives have implemented several mechanisms to manage and resolve conflicts in Plateau State. This initiative aims to foster peaceful coexistence by focusing on poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods, and ensuring food security within the state. The initiative employs a participative and inclusive strategy to guarantee that the affected and targeted communities have a sense of ownership.

Peacebuilding is a multifaceted and intricate process that involves various activities

and people working towards achieving their own understanding of change. Lederach (1997) defines successful peacebuilding as the active and flexible processes and structures that convert potential violent conflict into positive social transformation. The objective is to facilitate a harmonious, secure, and prosperous transformation in the social and economic spheres. When peacebuilding effectively mitigates conflict and fosters local initiatives, it is considered successful. The peacebuilding efforts in Plateau encompass all levels of society. It encompasses the participation of federal, state, and local governments, as well as non-state entities such as NGOs, religious groups, and international bodies.

The government's initiatives in conflict management, resolution, and peace in Plateau State have primarily employed a top-down approach. These efforts include the establishment of the Special Task Force (STF), Operation Rainbow, and the Plateau State Peacebuilding Agency. While these measures and activities have greatly helped reduce violence, they have not been successful in eliminating the mutual distrust, hostility, and lack of unity in the divided communities after the conflict. Additionally, there is the Plateau State Inter-Religious Council and the State Emergency Management Office. The Special Task Force (STF) and Operation Rainbow are joint efforts between the Nigerian government and the Plateau state administration, with close oversight from the state governor (Krause, 2018; Mustapha et al., 2018).

At the local government level, there exists a network of peace consultation initiatives facilitated by religious institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and inter-faith initiatives led by religious bodies. The movement comprises various organisations, such as the Islamic Counselling Initiatives of Nigeria, the Centre for Advocacy for Justice and Rights, the New Era Educational and Charitable Support Foundation, the Peace Initiative Network, the Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria, Community Action for Popular Participation, Dialogue Reconciliation and Peace Centre, and Justice Development and Peace Carriers. From 2001 to 2012, several peace projects and groups have become involved in local governments and communities, promoting the importance of peaceful coexistence between Christian and Muslim groups in the state. The Christian communities have distributed food and clothing to both Christians and Muslims in the state (IPCR, 2016). The United Nations, European Union, and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have played a significant role in effectively assisting in the rehabilitation of communities and groups affected by violent conflicts at the global level. Some examples of organizations include the Humanization Dialogue Centre, Conciliation Resources, DFID-Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation, Mercy Corps, UN Women, and UNDP. The German Ministry for Economic Development and Employment supports the Peace Core, a Transitional Development Assistance Project. It has been offering aid to communities and individuals affected by the conflicts between farmers and herders, not only in Plateau State but throughout the entire Middle Belt region. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has collaborated on this project (Sarah, 2020).

The German and NGO partners have been providing developmental assistance to the Plateau Peacebuilding Agency. During times of crisis, the UNDP has assisted with the rehabilitation and payment of medical expenses for injured individuals. Plateau State has received substantial funding from several foreign organisations and has benefited from numerous interventions, especially when compared to other Middle Belt states. In addition, several local, state, and national entities, including several civilian-led peacebuilding organizations, have been operating in different communities and regions within the state (Hebgenfeld, 2020).

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CONFLICT IN PLATEAU STATE

We can approach the examination of the political economics of conflict in Plateau State from two angles: (1) the perspective of the state's populace, and (2) the viewpoint of the government at the local, state, and national levels. When economic and political forces intersect, it leads to the emergence of questions. The generation of questions and

subsequent replies frequently serve as deciding factors in whether individuals will turn to conflict and ultimately escalate into violent crises. Gilpin (1987) argues that the state, through its political processes, plays a crucial role in initiating conflict and shaping the economy of conflict. According to him, these processes are impacted by both the generation and distribution of wealth among citizens. Political decisions and interests also influence the geographical placement of economic activity and the allocation of costs and rewards associated with these activities. Ethnic, political, economic, and religious factors intricately intertwine with the economy of conflict in Plateau State. Initially, not all of these factors were there, but as other factions continue to migrate to the state, they enlist additional allies to bolster their cause, thus rendering the fight highly intricate. For instance, the Yelwa/Shendam conflicts that occurred between 2002 and 2004 had a significant impact on Kano. This led to the deployment of mercenaries to assist the Hausa/Fulani population living in areas of Plateau State. All state crises demonstrate the influence of ethnicity and religion as political and economic tools.

Furthermore, the core issue fueling the strife in the state revolves around the "indigene/settler" dilemma. In Nigeria, individuals deemed "indigene" or the original residents of an area are eligible for specific benefits, including government employment opportunities, scholarships, reduced school fees, financial assistance, and even political roles within their respective states. To qualify for these opportunities, individuals need to present an indigene certificate from their local government areas. These credentials and the subsequent benefits do not extend to individuals who are not native to a particular place, sometimes referred to as "non-indigene" or "settler." Hence, the term "indigene" is typically defined based on one's state of origin. However, the Nigerian constitution does not recognise individuals who were born or raised in a particular state or community but whose parents are not from that community as indigenes. While the Nigerian constitution acknowledges the notion of indigeneship, it has not provided a clear definition for it. In Nigeria, the application of the notion of indigeneship is discriminatory and violates Nigeria's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 2 of the ICCPR requires State parties to comply:

to respect and to ensure all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, population or other opinion, national or social origin, poverty, birth or other states.

It also violates provisions against discrimination within Nigeria's own Constitution, in particular Section 42, which explicitly prohibits restrictions, privileges, and advantages on the basis of a person's community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion.

Since 2000, there has been an illegal, criminal, informal, and underground economy in Plateau State, thanks to armed resistance and the proliferation of non-state institutions. The indigenously dominated Christian population and the Hausa/Fulani settler community have consistently used these forces to strategize for political positions. The "indigene," who assert that their ancestors were there before them, still view ethnic groups that have resided in a particular area for several generations as "settlers" in the Plateau State. In Yelwa, Shendam, and Jos, different groups lay claims to "indigeneity" or ownership of the same town or area, thereby generating violent conflict between these two parties. Since its creation in 1991 by Ibrahim Babangida's government, the Jos North local government area has given the Hausa/Fulani a soft landing in Plateau politics. Since its creation, the Hausa/Fulani have dominated it, leading to major crises in Jos. While the indigenous people of Jos have relied on the Judicial Commission of Inquiries to assert their ownership of the city, the Hausa/Fulani rely on their own investments in the area and their assertion that Jos did not exist when they arrived many years ago. They have nurtured Jos to its present-day city status (Mohammed, 2007).

In Plateau State, the use of land is another notable tool in the political economy of conflict. The indigenous people of the state are primarily farmers, whereas the Fulani are cattle herders, and they spread throughout the state. Year in and year out, they continue to migrate to the Plateau from the far north, looking for grass to feed their cattle. The indigene farmers resent this practice, as the Fulani permit their cattle to graze on their farms, causing damage. To halt the cattle rearers, the indigene resort to cattle rustling, where they steal Fulani cattle, leading to retaliatory attacks by the Fulani on those communities (Danfulani, 2006). The analysis reveals that the conflict between indigenous people and settlers in the state is not solely about religion but also about land and ethnicity. However, religious identity has progressively taken precedence over other factors in the state, effectively mobilising people during each crisis.

CHALLENGES IN THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS IN PLATEAU STATE

Plateau State is among the most ethnically and linguistically diverse parts of Nigeria, with more than 50 ethno-religious groups in the state recognised as "indigenous." Even among the indigenous people, there has been a struggle for space due to differences in cultures and traditions. During conflict or crisis, some of these ethnic groups see their fellow indigenes as foes instead of brothers. Since people from other parts of Nigeria migrate to Plateau State for better opportunities, defining settler and indigene is difficult. This is due to the prominence of ethnicity in state politics, which includes the ideology of indigeneity. In Plateau State, communal politics tends to override class politics. Considering the fact that Plateau State is a minority state in the north, every mobilisation revolves around ethnicity.

The current Nigerian state system upholds a person's constitutional rights as a Nigerian citizen in all parts of the country. Only the so-called indigenes receive certain benefits within states, and residents, regardless of their length of stay, frequently face denials, particularly those classified as settlers. In Nigeria, the state government recognizes and grants appointments, rights, and benefits to those with certificates of origin from local government areas.

The penetration of Plateau politics by the federal government led to the creation of the Jos North government area with the sole aim of giving the Hausa/Fulani "indigene" status, who claim to be indigenes of Jos. With this creation, they have gained rights that belong to indigenes in the state, such as a certificate of origin, and have even produced the chairman of the local government area in question (Mohammed, 2005). Other issues include ethnic groups' inability to assimilate. Christians, during their appearance at the Judicial Commission of Inquiries, complained that the Muslims always perceived the Christians in the state as people they could dominate because they were a minority in the North. This development has led to religious fundamentalism in Nigeria.

Finally, the state faces the challenge of implementing post-conflict justice effectively. The state's conflict has failed to transform or abate because of a lack of suitable and effective post-conflict instruments. Despite reports from the Judicial Commission of Inquiries in the state (Hoomlong and Dinshak, 2011), the state has not caught and punished conflict perpetrators according to the law of the land.

CONCLUSION

Competition for natural resources and political opportunities drives the conflict economy in Plateau State. Identity politics in the state is rooted in the ethno-religious coloration of conflict, as exemplified by various ethnic, religious, and cultural groups demanding greater economic, social, and political rights. Nigeria, a nation characterised by pluralism and deep division, vigorously and violently contests major political issues along complex ethnic, religious, and regional lines. In times of crisis, this conflict pattern has led to the recruitment of mercenaries and the use of sophisticated weapons. Conflicting parties also accuse security agencies of complicity.

The federal, state, and local governments, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and religious bodies (Christian and Muslim) have established peacekeeping operations as part of their peacebuilding efforts and conflict resolution mechanisms. These entities have engaged in both intra- and inter-faith peacebuilding activities, providing food, clothing, and shelter not only for members of their own faith but also for members of other religions, to the admiration of all. International organisations play a crucial role in these peacebuilding efforts, providing care and support to the internally displaced persons (IDP) in both the state and the region. As a result, this paper encourages all parties involved in the state conflict to come together, unite, and address the challenges to peaceful coexistence in Plateau State.

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